

APPENDIX A.

Central Telegraph Office,
Melbourne, 16th August, 1892.

SIR,—I beg leave to submit a scheme for the prevention of counterfeit Money Orders being sent by telegraph. It consists of lettered numbers.

1. The ordinary book of Money Orders as supplied to offices will do. The book to be used for orders issued and a prepared list of lettered numbers for orders paid.

2. No second book necessary.

3. All telegraph orders to pass through the Head Office.

The present Telegraph Money Order form may be used, but I would respectfully suggest the adoption of the form, copy herewith, to be used in the Chief Telegraph Office for the convenience of the Controller.

4. Orders may be issued to offices as at present, consecutively numbered, the only change proposed is in lettering the numbers, to be done as the Controller desires. Example—

AD	CF	BC	CA	EC	FA	AB
50	51	52	53	54	55	56, &c.

An almost unlimited number of different letterings can be made—about 14,000.

5. To illustrate the working of the scheme, Port Albert wishes to telegraph £2 to Melbourne.

The Money Order is made out in the usual way, the number and letters placed thereon by P.M. and the order sent. The Controller compares it with his duplicate slip; if correct the order is passed for payment.

The present system of telegraphing Money Orders is a source of temptation, for instance :—

Any intermediate station hearing a Money Order going through, knows what the next number is, and all particulars, and when the distant station has finished he can earth the line, thus cutting off the distant station, and send a counterfeit order, at the same time using the signal call of the distant station, without his being aware of it.

The system proposed effectually prevents the above, as it is scarcely possible to even guess what the letters of the next number are.

Again, Port Albert wishes to telegraph £2 to Ballarat. He telegraphs to the Controller, who compares or checks as before; the Controller then inserts Ballarat's next paying number, obtained from "The prepared list of lettered numbers for orders paid" (see paragraph 2); this is then sent to Ballarat, who in turn compares with his own duplicate list for orders paid.

6. Postmasters cannot telegraph Money Orders from one to another; the Controller only having knowledge of the lettered numbers of the different offices authorises payment. The scheme is applicable to other colonies. Perth, Adelaide, Hobart, Melbourne, Sydney, and Brisbane could arrange a lettered list respectively, and another list for their branch offices.

7. An objection may be urged against lettered numbers, owing to the liability of mistakes, but with the same care that is used by operators in transcribing the initials of the christian names of payee and remitter or of the signature and address of ordinary business messages, mistakes need not occur. Of course, Postmasters must not disclose the lettered numbers to anyone. *A relieving officer can take a supply with him, the P.M. placing those in his possession under lock and key till he resumes duty, or send them by registered mail to the Controller.*

No extra books or bookkeeping is necessary, merely two duplicate lists of the numbers required by the Controller; these can readily be compiled at the time that an order-book, or part of one, is being supplied to the different offices.

I have, &c.,

H. S. EDGAR, Operator.

The Deputy Postmaster-General, General Post Office.

APPENDIX B.

Referring to previous papers in the matter of Telegraph Money Orders, I now beg to forward herewith for consideration a set of amended Rules for the guidance of postmasters, etc.

The principal feature in these Rules, which I may say are based on the Rules in operation in the United Kingdom and also in New Zealand, are as follows :—

1. It is proposed to increase the rate of commission chargeable on Telegraph Money Orders to double the ordinary rate now charged, making the charge for sums under £5, one shilling; and for sums between £5 and £10, two shillings. Intercolonial rates to be increased in same proportion. At present no distinction is made in the Money Order charges whether the order is sent by telegraph or not, and I think it will be seen that the proposed rate is only reasonable when it is pointed out that the clerical work and the risk in connection with this class of order is more than twice as much as in an ordinary Money Order transaction. The charge in England is double the ordinary rate, and in New Zealand the extra charge is 3d. in the £, or 2s. 6d. extra for £10.

2. As it has been thought that a further check should be introduced as a preventative against fraud, it is provided in Rules 13 and 14 that the Telegram of Advice must be examined and initialled by the postmaster at the paying office on its receipt at his office, and the receipt from the payee must be initialled by the paying officer at the time of payment, and the payment must be verified by the signature of a responsible witness. With these exceptions the other alterations relate to detail instructions, and are, as I have already mentioned, based on the English and New Zealand Rules, and their adoption in this Colony would be a great advantage.

A. J. DOAK,
Superintendent.

The Secretary,
24th October, 1892.

TELEGRAPH