

1969

VICTORIA

TREASURY MINUTE

ON

REPORT

FROM THE

COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

ON

SUBSCRIBER TRUNK DIALLING
TELEPHONES

TOGETHER WITH

SUMMARY OF THAT REPORT

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, 9TH SEPTEMBER, 1969.

12. PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE.—Motion made, by leave, and question—That Mr. Cochrane, Mr. McDonald (*Rodney*), Mr. McLaren, Mr. Reese, Mr. Stoneham, Mr. Trezise, and Mr. Wheeler be members of the Committee of Public Accounts ; and that the Committee have power to send for persons, papers and records, to move from place to place, and to sit on days on which the House does not meet ; three to be the quorum (*Mr. Reid, Box Hill*)—put and agreed to.

REPORT

INTRODUCTION.

1.1. In the introduction to its Report entitled "Treasury Minute on Report from the Committee of Public Accounts on Unpaid Accounts 1966-67" (D.13, 1968-69), your Committee described the procedure which has been revived to provide a suitable follow-up to the Reports submitted by it to Parliament.

1.2. This Report sets out in comparative form the summary of your Committee's conclusions in its Report on Subscriber Trunk Dialling Telephones (D.1, 1967) together with the Treasury Minute which it has received and considered.

1.3. TREASURY MINUTE ON THE REPORT ON SUBSCRIBER TRUNK DIALLING TELEPHONES AND SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE'S CONCLUSIONS.

In the Report on Subscriber Trunk Dialling Telephones (12th September, 1967) your Committee concluded that :—

5. In October, 1966, the Treasury requested the Public Works Department for a detailed report and recommendation on measures which could be taken to control the level of expenditure on telephones, particularly in relation to S.T.D. facilities. On 2nd December, 1966, the Secretary of the Public Works Department advised the Treasury that the above request for a report had been noted and offered the following observation :—

"In regard to the provision of S.T.D. facilities which are being extended by the P.M.G.'s Department, it appears that control of expenditure in this field is difficult to obtain. It is possible to bar access on all lines, but the cost of \$20 a line for each year for providing the barring makes it so expensive that it seems it would be false economy to consider. In the case of the main switchboard, there are 84 outgoing lines, so that the annual cost of providing a bar would be \$1,680. The provision of S.T.D. facilities, whilst representing a big advance in telephone communication, presents administrative problems and it appears that the only control that could be exercised is for all departments to insist that all trunk calls by all officers must be booked from the switchboard."

6. On 2nd May, 1967, the Treasury advised the Public Works Department that in connexion with the installation of telephones in the new Public Offices building being constructed adjacent to the Public Offices in Treasury Place, the Treasurer had directed that action was to be taken to bar all telephones from access to S.T.D. facilities, other than the telephones of Ministers, Permanent Heads of Departments and a limited number of senior officers.

Treasury Minute (28th May, 1969) on the Report on Subscriber Trunk Dialling Telephones.

As the Committee is aware Treasury, in 1966, requested the Public Works Department to investigate the possibility of controlling the level of expenditure on telephone systems, particularly in relation to S.T.D. facilities and the following action has since been taken :—

(1) As selective barring is not possible with the existing equipment the State Public Offices P.A.B.X. (63-0321) has been completely barred access to S.T.D. When the existing P.A.B.X. is replaced selective barring will be possible. In the meantime approval has been given for certain officers to have access to S.T.D. facilities and this will be effected by providing direct exchange lines. The authorised officers are located in the undermentioned Departments :—

Agriculture	..	..	..	3
Chief Secretary's Office (with four extensions)	..	..	..	1
Education	..	..	..	6
Forests Commission	..	..	..	3
Premier	..	..	..	5
Treasury	..	..	..	1

Direct exchange lines already provided for Ministers or Permanent Heads are not included in the above. For the remainder of the staff trunk calls are still being made through selected switchboard operators who use S.T.D. where available, and record details of all calls on individual unpriced dockets which are periodically submitted to the respective Departments for checking. The practice of booking trunk calls, which has been in operation for many years, is still being continued in the case where an officer is not provided with a direct exchange line.

Committee Conclusions (12th September, 1967)

7. Subsequently, on 5th May, 1967, the Treasury received from the Public Works Department a report by its Assistant District Electrical Engineer, Metropolitan, dated 28th April, 1967, relevant to the effect of S.T.D. on the costs of operating the switchboards at the Public Offices in Treasury Place and 179 Queen-street. In that report (reproduced as Appendix "A" to this report) it was recommended inter alia that with certain exceptions all outgoing lines on the Treasury Place switchboard should be barred to S.T.D. facilities.

8. Acting on this recommendation, the Treasurer on 9th June, 1967, directed the Public Works Department to take action to bar all telephones, other than the exceptions previously referred to in Paragraph 6 of this report, connected to the switchboards at Treasury Place and 179 Queen-street and requested the Department to proceed with its proposal to examine the position in other public offices and buildings and in line with the general policy of progressively barring telephones from access to S.T.D. facilities in appropriate cases.

17. Your Committee consider that the key to the successful and economic use of S.T.D. lies in adequate supervision of staff having this facility and in the intelligent use of the facility by those staff.

24. We also consider that during the survey proposed in the preceding paragraph, the Public Works Department should review the need for all existing extensions and any telephones considered to be unnecessary or in excess of requirements should be disconnected. It is further suggested that such a review should be conducted annually by that Department. We believe that future applications by departments for additional telephones should specify whether internal or out-dialling facilities are required and be supported by reasons justifying the new installations. It is your Committee's opinion that such moves would reduce the number of telephones available to staff for private calls and permit closer telephone supervision.

1.4. Your Committee advise that we await Treasury Minutes on the following Public Accounts Committee Reports :—

Forestry Fund (D.3, 1967-68).

Public Works Department (D.2, 1968-69).

The Victorian Government Light Motor Transport System (D.4, 1968-69).

Committee Room,

22nd September, 1969.

Treasury Minute (28th May, 1969)

(2) The last P.M.G. owned P.A.B.X. to be installed is located at 278 Queen-street Melbourne (60-0461) and has been barred access to S.T.D. as have recent installations of purchased P.A.B.X.'s situated at the Apprenticeship Commission, Mines Department (with three authorized officers having access to S.T.D. facilities) and Soil Conservation Authority.

Although the Postmaster-General's Department has been requested to bar access to S.T.D. on P.A.B.X. (60-0511) located at 179 Queen-street, this has not been done as yet due to technical difficulties at the City West telephone exchange. It is now understood that these difficulties have been overcome and the P.M.G. will be proceeding with the barring.

It is agreed, as expressed by the Committee in paragraph 17, that the key to the successful and economic use of S.T.D. lies in adequate supervision of staff having this facility and in the intelligent use of the facility by those staff. It is felt that the action taken, as detailed above, will enable successful and economic use of S.T.D.

It should be added that the necessity for the direct exchange lines of "authorized" officers will disappear when the P.A.B.X. system will permit of selective barring from S.T.D. within the equipment.

Finally as suggested by the Committee all Departments have been requested by the Public Works Department to submit extension numbers which do not require exchange access. Some Departments have already submitted lists but some replies are still awaited. The Postmaster-General's Department has been requested to bar the extensions listed by the various Departments as not requiring exchange access.