

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

ANNO TRIGESIMO OCTAVO

VICTORIÆ REGINÆ

No. 6

An Act to facilitate the Proof of Telegraphic Messages
in Courts of Justice, and for other purposes.

[Assented to 17th July, 1874.]

WHEREAS it is desirable to facilitate the proof of telegraphic messages in Courts of Justice, and to extend the advantages of the electric telegraph: Be it therefore enacted by His Excellency the Governor of Western Australia and its Dependencies, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council thereof, as follows:—

Preamble

1. It shall be lawful for any party to any action or suit in any Court of civil jurisdiction, at any time after the commencement thereof, to give notice to any other party that he proposes to adduce in evidence at the trial or hearing of such action or suit any telegraphic messages that before the date of such notice shall have been received by electric telegraph in Western Australia: Provided that the time between the giving of such notice and the day on which such evidence shall be tendered shall not in any case be less than two days before the day of such hearing or trial; and every such notice shall specify the names of the sender and receiver of such messages, the subject matter thereof, and their dates as nearly as may be; and any such notice may be

Special notices to admit telegraph messages may be given in civil actions and suits, subject to certain provisions

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served and the service thereof proved in the same manner as notices to admit and produce may now be served and proved respectively.

After notice, a message received may be proved to have been sent by production of message, with evidence of due receipt from telegraph station

2. In any case in which such notice shall have been given the production of any telegraphic message described in such notice, and purporting to have been sent by any person, together with evidence that the same was duly received from a telegraph station, shall be *prima facie* evidence that such message was signed and sent by the person so purporting to be the sender thereof to the person to whom the same shall be addressed, without any further proof of the identity of the sender; but the party against whom such message shall be given in evidence shall be at liberty, nevertheless, to prove that the same was not in fact sent by the person by whom it purports to have been sent.

After notice, the sending a message may be proved by production of a message or a copy, and by evidence of payment of fees for transmission

Proviso

3. In any cause depending in a Court of civil jurisdiction the production of any telegraphic message, or a copy thereof verified on oath, together with evidence that such message was duly taken to a telegraph station, and that the fees (if any) for the transmission thereof were duly paid, shall be *prima facie* evidence that such message was duly delivered to the person named therein as the person to whom the same was to be transmitted; and the burden of proving that such message was not in fact received shall be upon the person against whom such message shall be given in evidence: Provided that notice shall be first given by the party adducing the same in evidence to the other party of his intention to do so, and such notice may be given in such manner and at such times as by the practice of the Court in which the proceeding is taken notices to produce or admit are required to be given.

Certain documents may be transmitted by electric telegraph, under restriction

4. It shall be lawful for the Governor, any member of the Executive Council, the Speaker of the Legislative Council, the Chief Justice or any other Judge of the Supreme Court, any Resident or Police Magistrate, the Magistrate or any two or more Justices of the Peace exercising the power of the Court under the 'Small Debts Ordinance, 1863,' any officer of Government or other person whom the Governor may authorise in that behalf by warrant under his hand or any attorney or solicitor, to cause to be transmitted by electric telegraph the contents of any writ, warrant, rule, authority, order or other communication requiring signature or seal,* subject to the provisions following, that is to say:—

*Also the contents of any affidavit or statutory declaration: 41 Vic., No. 12, s. 1

See 57 Vic., No. 34, s. 5

See 57 Vic., No. 34, s. 5

- (1) The original document shall be delivered at the telegraph station in the presence and under the inspection of some Justice of the Peace or Notary Public.
- (2) The person to whom the contents of any such document shall be so sent shall forthwith and under the supervision of a Justice of the Peace or Notary Public cause to be sent back by electric telegraph a copy of the message received by him, and in the event of any error appearing therein the process shall be repeated under the like supervision until it shall appear that a true copy of such document has been received by the person to whom it shall have been sent.
- (3) When it shall appear that such true copy has been so received such first-mentioned Justice or Notary Public shall endorse upon the original document a certificate that a true copy

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thereof has been sent under the provisions of this Act to the person to whom the same shall have been so sent, and shall forthwith by electric telegraph inform such person that such certificate has been so endorsed.

5. [Repealed by 41 Vic., No. 12, s. 4, and re-enacted by *id.*, s. 3.]

Copies so transmitted to be as valid as originals

6. Every original document, a copy whereof shall have been transmitted under the fourth section of this Act, shall be kept at the telegraph station at which it was delivered for the purposes of such transmission, and shall, after the expiration of two days from the date of the certificate under subsection 3 of that section being endorsed upon it, be open within reasonable hours to the inspection of any person, upon payment of a fee of one shilling.

Original document of which copies transmitted to be open to inspection

7 and 8. [Repealed by 57 Vic., No. 5.]

Penalty for wilful delivery of message to wrong person

Penalty for signing another's name without authority to message to be sent

9. Any Justice of the Peace or Notary Public who shall wilfully and falsely endorse upon any original document delivered at a telegraph station, for the purpose of being transmitted under the provisions of this Act, a certificate that a true copy thereof has been sent under this Act, or who shall by telegraph wilfully and falsely inform any person to whom such document shall have been so sent that a certificate under the provisions of this Act has been endorsed thereon, shall forfeit and pay a sum not exceeding one hundred pounds, to be recoverable summarily before any Justice of the Peace in Petty Sessions.

Penalty for false certificate of sending a message under section 4

10. Any person by this Act required to sign a certificate upon any copy of a document that such copy has been duly received under the provisions of this Act who shall wilfully sign such certificate knowing the same to be false, shall be guilty of a misdemeanour, and being convicted thereof shall be liable, at the discretion of the Court, to pay a fine not exceeding one hundred pounds, or to be imprisoned for any term not exceeding two years, with or without hard labour.

Signing false certificate upon copy under section 4 to be a misdemeanour

11. The following words within inverted commas shall, for the purposes of this Act, bear the meanings set against them respectively, unless where the context implies otherwise:—

Interpretation Clause

‘Electric Telegraph’—Any telegraphic line the property and under the control of the Government, and worked by electricity within the said colony.

‘Telegraphic Message’—Any message or other communication transmitted or intended for transmission, or purporting to have been transmitted by electric telegraph.

‘Telegraph Station’—Any station appointed by Government for the receipt and transmission of telegraphic messages.

‘Person’—Any corporation or corporate body or any individual.

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Shortening
Ordinance

12. Sections A, B, F, and G of 'The Shortening Ordinance, 1853,' shall be incorporated with and taken to form part of this Act to all intents and purposes, and in as full and ample a manner as if the said sections had been introduced and fully set forth in this Act.

Short title

13. The short title of this Act is the 'Telegraphic Messages Act, 1874.'

FRED. A. WELD,
GOVERNOR.
