

1873.

NEW ZEALAND.

REPORT OF INSPECTOR OF STORES.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by command of His Excellency.

No. 1.

Lieut.-Colonel GORTON to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,—

Inspector of Stores' Office, Wellington, 2nd August, 1873.

When inspecting Stores, it is my duty, under "The Public Stores Act, 1871," to report upon their state to the Minister of the Department to which they belong, but, in addition to that, I consider it my duty to report upon the working of the Act from time to time.

2. The duties performed by my Department under this Act may be classified as follows:—

First, The tracing of all articles purchased with public money to a proper account.

Secondly, The checking of all Store accounts to prevent misappropriation of property when received.

Thirdly, Furnishing the Audit Department with an account of moneys recovered for stores sold to be traced to Public Account.

Fourthly, The inspection of all Stores annually, to ascertain that articles borne on account are forthcoming.

In addition to this, the Defence stores are under its control, and it is my duty to see that stock is kept up at the various Stores, according to requirements of the districts.

3. Previous to the passing of this Act I may state that no proper check was made upon the large supply of stores daily accumulating, except for Defence, of which Department, at that period, the Inspector of Stores formed a branch; therefore the starting of a new system, whereby every one receiving public property has to account for it, is work of no ordinary nature, and, from the very fact of its being an audit necessitating queries sometimes about articles of apparently no great value, makes the work unpopular, consequently the more difficult to satisfactorily carry out.

4. There is a general improvement in the rendering of Store accounts and returns, and I am enabled to report that the feeling "because it is Government property no care need be taken" has greatly changed, and that the bringing of this Act into operation has decidedly had the effect of Government property being more carefully looked after. At the same time I occasionally meet with no small opposition in endeavouring to carry out the provisions of this Act.

5. During my inspections I have seen many instances where officers did not know whether some of the articles in their use belonged to the Government or not, informing me that they found them in the offices when they came, which has been rectified.

6. It is needless for me to observe how fortunate it was that a uniform system of Store Accounts was in existence for Public Works Department to adopt for the very large supply of their stores constantly arriving from England or being purchased in the Colony. The result is, that accounts of all material, &c., passing through the hands of the District or Resident Engineers is furnished to and audited in this office.

7. In conclusion I may remark, the checking of accounts, together with my personal inspections—not taking into consideration what loss such system may have prevented—have been the means of recovering value of property which would otherwise have been lost to the Colony.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

EDWARD GORTON, Lieut.-Colonel,
Inspector of Stores.