

documents and advertisements in the *Gazette*, and has many other miscellaneous duties to perform, which it is unnecessary to enumerate.

There can be no doubt that Mr. Didsbury has more duties devolving upon him than he can properly attend to. He informs me that he feels he is overtaxed with work, and, in consequence, is prevented from keeping up such a vigilant superintendence as he would desire in the thorough working of so large an establishment. He states that the time consumed in attending to the sale of printed papers, and attending to advertisements, involving a large correspondence with all parts of the colony, and in certifying vouchers referred to him for examination and not connected with his own department, occupies at least from two to three hours a day. This latter might equally well be done by the various departments—all that is necessary being that they should be supplied with the various scales of charges, and a foot rule to measure the advertisements. It is considered that he might with great advantage be relieved of the sales and advertisements, which would leave him at greater liberty to attend to his more legitimate duties. Great inconvenience is caused at present by there being no proper saleroom, the consequence being that, as a rule, a messenger has to be sent to the Government Storekeeper while the purchaser is kept waiting.

The Government Printer speaks highly of his two overseers; but under the present inconvenient arrangements, he considers that both are over-worked, and that, in fact, the whole department would be the better for greater supervision. There is no recognized foreman in the pressroom.

The Overseer's duties are to take charge of the composing and press rooms; to see that the rules are observed; attend to the execution of orders; keep the time-book; check overtime; report irregularities; give out copy; revise proofs for press; tell off hands for overtime; and keep record of proofs, revises, &c.

The Sub-overseer assists the overseer generally; looks over copy before giving it out, to secure uniformity; attends to the make-up of *Hansard*; sends out proofs; and sees that there is no waste of material, &c.

The wages and hours are better in the Government Printing Office than in private establishments. When men are found to be slow, they are dispensed with; consequently, the staff is considered a first-class one, and contains some of the best workmen in the colony.

While inquiring as to the superintendence of the department, I made some little investigation as to the possibility of providing against a strike of the workmen, such as took place a year or two ago. It does not appear that any effectual remedy can be adopted. The men would refuse to be put under bond, and it is at the same time objectionable to bind them, as they cannot then be dispensed with, if found unsuitable. For the same reason it is undesirable to take apprentices. The grievances leading to dispute are generally connected with the wages, and the only resource is to regulate the pay by the demand for labour.

Mr. McKenzie has reported as to the state of the machinery, and it is only necessary for me to note that the engine is a horizontal one of three horse-power and seven years old. The consumption of coals in the furnace is close upon  $1\frac{1}{4}$  ton per week. The engine is severely taxed to do the work required of it. The large paper cutting machine is fitted to work by steam, but when the whole of the printing and folding machines are at work, there is barely sufficient power left for this purpose, and it is apt to bring the engine to a stand-still, thereby incurring the risk of damage to the rest of the machinery when the belt is thrown off. A new engine will be required before long, if the business of the department continues to increase as it has done lately.

The work of the printing office is conducted as follows:—When an order is received, it is first of all entered in the order-book, and then it is passed to the overseer, who gives it out to be set up, and is responsible for its execution. After it is set up an impression is taken, which goes to the reader to be read. After correction it is returned to the pressman to be printed off (if a proof is not required). All paper required is drawn as wanted by the pressman from the Government Store. A pass-book is kept with the Storekeeper, which is taken by the pressman to the Store, and the paper required is drawn, entered in the pass-book, and a receipt signed for it in the Storekeeper's book. Paper required by the lithographer is obtained in a similar manner, on a requisition signed by the Government Printer.

After being printed, the impression is taken to the publishing clerk, who writes out a receipt for it. The sheets are then counted, packed in parcels and delivered; Parliamentary papers and books being sent to the binding-room to be bound or folded, according to circumstances. As the work finally leaves the office, it is entered in the work book.

The Binding-room is in charge of a foreman, who is responsible for the completion of the work. The cutting, folding, and ruling machines are worked in this room. The whole of the work done in this branch is entered day by day in the work-book.

The Photographer, on receiving an order, enters it in the order-book which he keeps, and then proceeds to take a negative, reduced to the scale required. Much trouble and delay is frequently experienced by him, on account of the unsuitableness, or rather the antagonism, of the colours used in the drawing to the process practised. Sometimes it is found impossible to produce good work from them, and the original plans have to be altered. This might easily be remedied by a little forethought on the part of the draftsman. After a negative is taken, a print is taken on transfer paper, which is then handed to the lithographer to be put upon the stone. The Lithographer takes orders either from the photographer, Government Printer, or