

PRINTING DEPARTMENT.

Useless documents.

The large and costly printing establishment, employing 132 hands, is one to which we have been able to give no time. Our investigation of other departments has led us to the conviction that a great amount of useless work is thrown on this department, and an immense mass of documents printed that are of no public interest or utility.

TREASURY AND AUDIT DEPARTMENTS.

Complication of accounts.

These departments it has been impossible, in the limited time at our disposal, to inquire into in such a way as to attempt to report on them at present. There appears to be great complication without the real efficiency in practice in the distant parts of the colony, which is desirable. Serious inconvenience and loss of time is caused to surveyors, engineers, and others, who are imprest officers, by the amount of account-keeping thrust upon them. In some cases it is stated that they have to make a long journey to the town where the nearest bank is situated, in order to comply with the requirements of the Audit. In others, officers who have small payments to make are not made imprestees; consequently these payments have to be made by cheques from the Treasury, to which, on receipt, a counter-signature, involving a long journey to obtain, is required before payment. Several witnesses have stated that, while a number of complicated forms are insisted on, there is no such real audit of their accounts as would prevent a dishonest person from committing fraud. It is asserted that the cash-books only are examined, and the department is satisfied if they balance. This demands careful investigation, and is only referred to here as showing its necessity.

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT.

Improper appointments.

In the Department of Justice the necessity for an exhaustive and painstaking investigation was so evident that we could entertain no hope of completing our inquiries into that question before the necessity of reporting would be forced upon us. We have been able to find that the department is unnecessarily costly, and that appointments have been made to it for considerations other than those of capacity and fitness. In some instances this appears to have been done with a desire to reward military and other meritorious services; but even in such cases we believe the practice will not be found economical, and is, of course, open to objections of a more important character.

In many places the District Judges' and Resident Magistrates' districts might be extended, and the number of Resident Magistrates and their Clerks might be diminished; but without more careful and extended inquiry we are not prepared to say whether the Resident Magistrates' Courts should or should not be abolished and their places supplied in one direction by the District Courts, and in the other by the appointment of Police Magistrates and the assistance of Justices of the Peace. The existence of both the Resident Magistrates' and the District Courts appears unnecessary; but without much more investigation than we have had time to make into this subject we must decline to say upon which of these Courts the duties now divided between them could be placed with the greatest economy and public convenience.

Too many police.

In some parts of the colony we are quite satisfied that the number of police is much greater than it should be, and some highly-paid officers are residing where there is not the slightest occasion for their presence, and where less highly-paid men would be much more useful. In this direction immediate economy could be effected, and the number of the police in some parts of the colony could certainly be reduced without danger or difficulty. In one district, historically remarkable for its temperance, its freedom from crime, and the order-loving character of its population, we found that the number, and still more the expense, of the police had been largely increased during the last few years without any increase of population or other assignable reason. Employing the police to attend to their officers' horses and carriages, and act as personal attendants upon them, is a practice that should be kept within very narrow limits, if not entirely disallowed, as it offers a direct temptation to the officers to advise the maintenance of a larger number of constables than is required for the public service.