

1880.
NEW ZEALAND.

GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.

(REPORT OF COMMITTEE AS TO ITS ORGANIZATION, WORK, ETC., AND SUGGESTED
MODIFICATIONS THEREIN.)

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

SIR,—

Wellington, 30th July, 1880.

We have the honor to report that we have, at your request, made a careful inquiry into the system followed at Wellington in regard to Government printing, with the object more particularly of ascertaining in what directions a closer economy, compatible with efficiency, could be enforced.

Our investigations appeared to us to be more likely to be of use to Ministers, if we closely scrutinized the technical branches carried out by the department under the supervision of the Government Printer, and ascertained what checks were at present adopted to prevent unnecessary work being thrown, from any source, upon the Printing Department.

It is with great pleasure that we bear witness to the signs of good management to be found throughout the Printing Office under Mr. Didsbury, and the excellent description of work turned out by every branch. This struck us as being all the more creditable when we considered the difficulties under which the work has to be carried on—difficulties which arise as much from the unsuitable character of the buildings into which the department appears to have grown, as from the spasmodic and careless manner in which copy for the printer is often brought into the office from the various departments of Government. A more systematic and economical mode of management could, no doubt, be inaugurated if suitable buildings were provided.

It was satisfactory to find, although a deputation from the men requested to be allowed to wait upon us, that they had no complaint to make except as to the over-crowded state of the piece-room. They at the same time expressed a hope that, under the special circumstances of their position, the rate of wages at present paid would not be reduced.

There can be no doubt that the piece-room complained of is utterly unfit for the purpose it is now put to. We visited the room during the day and in the evening, accompanied on the last occasion by the Colonial Architect, who, at our request, has furnished us with a report upon the subject, which is appended hereto. Having considered the fact that the Government will not be in a position to build a printing office for some years to come, and that it is therefore probable that the existing buildings will be utilized for the remainder of the lease, we would respectfully recommend that an efficient scheme of ventilation should be at once adopted, even although it may entail a rather serious expense, as we wish emphatically to state that, in our opinion, the piece-room is not fit for the men to work in; while the time-room, though not so hot, is probably equally as injurious to the health of the men employed in it.

We were much struck with the very large amount of type kept standing in chase, galley, and otherwise in the office. No private office could allow so great a proportion of its plant to remain idle for an indefinite period. Mr. Didsbury complains that this waste of plant is enforced upon him, in a great many instances needlessly, on account of the orders sent in from time to time by the various departments not being followed up by definite instructions after the first, second, or even third proof has been returned.