

eliminating the railway tables, which it is hardly necessary should now be published in the Guide. Of late years, the constant alterations in the train time-tables have thrown upon the Guide an extra cost of over £100 per annum.

9. It appears that a saving of time and expense might be made if the permanent issue of *Hansard* were to be bound in cloth instead of half-calf as at present. The volumes would reach members of Parliament fully six weeks earlier than is possible if the present style is continued. We presume that a sufficient number of volumes in the present style would be issued for Government House, the Assembly Library, and Ministers' rooms. While referring to *Hansard*, we think it desirable that the attention of the Chief Reporter should be drawn to the importance of insisting that all copy sent in should be fairly decipherable. It came under our notice that copy forwarded by two members of the present reporting staff was not, after making every allowance for the difficulties under which the staff work, fair copy to go to the Printer. A very large expense, and no little delay in the publication of *Hansard*, are caused by the unreasonable extent to which honorable members of both Houses exercise their privilege of correcting proofs of speeches made. These corrections, in many instances, are made throughout the whole speech, and amount to an elaborate revision of the speech as uttered. To so great an extent is this carried by some members, that more than one speech on unimportant subjects which came under our notice would have been more cheaply re-set than corrected, and we were assured that the examples which were accidentally in hand at the time of our visit were fair average cases of the system pursued.

10. We have suggested to Mr. Didsbury that it would be wise to take a few additional apprentices into the composing-room to be bound for the legal period. The Government offices afford excellent advantages for turning-out highly-skilled workmen, and a fair proportion of apprentices being constantly employed in the offices would, in the course of time, steadily raise the standard of the average tradesman.

11. The pay of the men permanently employed, and the duration of working hours, have received our attention. We do not consider that the men are overpaid. It has to be borne in mind that printers must live near to the office, working by night and day, and that they are therefore shut out from availing themselves of the cheaper house-rents at the outskirts of the town, that might, under other circumstances, be taken advantage of. At the same time, there is no reason why the men should not be called upon to share in the sacrifice so generally demanded from all employés in the Government service at the present time. We have, therefore, to recommend that the hours of labour should be increased from forty to forty-five hours per week, and that the rates paid for overtime should be proportionately decreased, except in a few cases. The scale of payments for overtime recommended is attached to this report.

12. Mr. Didsbury hopes to be able to effect some reductions in the number of men engaged after the session. Whether this will be possible will depend upon the amount of printing ordered by the General Assembly. It is fair to add that the large amount of work caused by the various Royal Commissions has been a severe additional strain upon this department during the past year.

13. As the Printing Department has now grown to very considerable dimensions, we are of opinion that it would be very desirable that a report should be prepared showing the operations of the office for each year ending the 31st December. Such a report would be the best means of checking any undue increase in the expenditure.

14. Although not strictly perhaps within the scope of our inquiries, we thought it useful to make some cursory investigation into the printing ordered for the Government through private printing offices in various parts of the colony. We are of opinion that all work which has to be so printed in the larger towns should be offered by public tender, and that heads of departments should be so directed.

We have, &c.,

C. A. DE LAUTOUR.

J. WALKER BAIN.

W. S. WILSON.

The Hon. the Premier.