

1881.

NEW ZEALAND

GOVERNMENT PRINTING DEPARTMENT

(REPORT ON THE).

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.*Government Printing Office,
Wellington, 13th May, 1881.

SIR,—

I have the honor to submit the following report on the Printing Department and Stationery Store for the year 1880, in accordance with the recommendation of the Printing Commission of last year.

As many years have elapsed since the last departmental report was submitted, it may be desirable to describe more fully than would otherwise have been necessary the changes effected in the organization of the department, and the system under which operations are now conducted.

The building, which has undergone numerous alterations and additions from time to time, consists of 47 rooms, 27 of which are occupied by the Printing Department, 15 by the Stationery Store, and the remaining 5 by the lithographic branch of the Survey Department. A mere casual visit to the department would fail to impress a visitor with the extent and value of work done, the number of rooms into which the building is divided preventing a general view being obtained of the various operations carried on. The number of employés varies considerably at different seasons of the year, as may be gathered on reference to Table 4, attached. For instance, in June last there were 163 employed, while in the following December there were only 110, showing a reduction of 53 hands during the intervening five months. The extension of working hours from 40 to 45 per week had something to do in bringing about this result. The monthly average number employed throughout the year was 135·5. Instead of absolutely discharging a large number of married men when work fell off, I adopted the plan of putting them on half-time until we again became busy. Between sixteen and twenty men were so employed, and were thus enabled to remain at their homes instead of incurring the risk and expense of travelling elsewhere in search of work.

A reduction of 1d. per 1,000 in the price paid for piecework was effected during the year, the prices now being 13d. for general work, and 14d. for *Hansard*. This reduction is equivalent to that sustained by the time-hands by the extension of hours.

The apprentices are bound for a term of six years, and are paid from 8s. to 25s. per week. The females employed in the binding branch are paid at the same rates, but are not apprenticed to the business.

Some of the work-rooms have undergone alterations lately, with the double object of securing better ventilation and more light. The composing-room occupied by the piece-hands—usually very crowded during the session—is greatly improved in both these respects, and now presents a wholesome and cheerful appearance. The ventilation has been greatly improved in the stereotypers' room, where the fumes from the molten metal and gas rendered the atmosphere very unwholesome to work in.

There are altogether four apartments used as composing rooms—two by time-hands, 30 feet in width by 40 in depth; one large room used exclusively by the piece-hands, 25 feet by 50; and another set apart for apprentices, 15 feet wide by 20 feet long. In the machine and press rooms there are eight machines employed—four of Dawson and Son's Wharfdales, one double-crown Belle Sauvage machine, two Minerva jobbing-machines, and one envelope-printing machine called the "Little Tumbler." One of the Wharfdales, double demy-sized, is a recent purchase, having been obtained at second-hand for £110. As it now stands, it has been valued by a printer's broker at £250. Its acquisition has enabled me to dispense with the services of a boy, the machine being fitted with mechanical appliances for taking off the printed sheets. An addition has also been made to the hand-presses of a demy Albion, procured at auction at about half its value. There are now five of these presses in use—two being exclusively set aside for proof-pulling, in addition to the two galley-presses. In the machine room a newspaper-addressing machine is employed in printing the names and addresses of parties to whom the *Gazette*, *Kahiti*, Parliamentary Papers, *Hansard*, &c., are sent. It is one of Harrild and Sons' make, worked by treadle, and superintended by a man who attends to the Wharfdale machine. There are about 135 galleys of addresses kept standing, averaging 31 to each galley, which represent about 4,250 addresses.

In the proof-room and adjoining press-room, racks are fitted up to hold standing formes, and Bills, Parliamentary Papers, &c., which are undergoing revision prior to being passed for press. In the several racks there are at the present moment 645 formes in chase, varying in size from double-royal to