

which about 1,750,000 are annually imported, has been under consideration, and probably before long the necessity for importing so extensively will in a great measure be obviated.

LYTTELTON GAOL PRINTING OFFICE.

In November last, in accordance with instructions, I proceeded to Lyttelton to inspect the printing office established in connection with the gaol at that place, and to make what arrangements were necessary for turning it to more profitable account. I found that extensive use had been made of the office, especially by the Railway Department, and that forms of various kinds were being printed for the Supreme Court, Resident Magistrates, Survey, Land, Customs, and other departments, of which stocks were kept in the Stationery Store at Wellington. To put an end to this unnecessary duplication of work, I recommended that all orders should in future be sent to the gaol printing office through me—an arrangement the Government readily acquiesced in, and which, after three months' trial, I am glad to be able to report is working satisfactorily.

The various processes of printing, stereotyping, bookbinding, and paper-ruling are carried on under the superintendence of an intelligent printer's warder, who has succeeded in instructing the prisoners under his charge to become tolerably efficient craftsmen.

The monthly returns since 1st January last show a noticeable increase in the quality and value of work produced as compared with the previous quarter, although a reduction has been made in the scale of charges for valuing the work. The return of work for the three months since I took charge is as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
January	102	14	9
February	103	18	0
March	116	4	0
	<u>£322</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>9</u>

The work issued from the office is, generally speaking, creditably executed. Some of the books and forms done for the Railway Department are printed and ruled to elaborate patterns with neatness and accuracy and the specimens of half-calf binding are equal to the general run of work of that description turned out of private offices. The stereotyping and paper-ruling are performed by a long-sentenced prisoner, whose former avocation was that of a schoolmaster, and who undoubtedly evinces considerable aptitude for the work he is now engaged in.

THE STATIONERY STORE.

At the request of the Government, I took over the management of the Stationery Store on the 1st January, 1879. I found the practice prevailing of stowing in bulk all heavy goods, such as printing papers, &c., in premises situated in different parts of the town, some being placed in the stables adjoining the Native Hostelry, but the larger portion in sheds in Manners Street, for which a rental of £100 per annum was paid. Space was provided for collecting these goods in the stationery store by removing all redundant copies of Acts, Parliamentary Papers, *Hansard*, &c., to the cellars under the Government Buildings. The packages stored elsewhere were then brought to the Stationery Store, unpacked, and an inventory taken of the contents.

A rearrangement of the store was then made by dividing it into two branches—the first comprising printing and writing papers, official publications, and stationery; the second all printed forms, &c., issued to departments. In the latter there are 912 different forms kept in stock, which are distributed among the departments as follows: Justice Department, 379; Mines Department, 70; Public Works Department, 87; Commissioner of Stamps Department, 50; Crown Lands Department, 21; Colonial Secretary's Department, 78; Marine Department, 9; Treasury Department, 69; Education Department, 24; Insurance Department, 64; miscellaneous, 61: total, 912.

I found about 600 unsatisfied requisitions on hand. These were carefully sorted, and those received during the previous three months supplied; the remainder were filed, or returned (if records) to the offices from which they were received. Requisitions are now, as a rule, supplied on the day subsequent to their receipt. The number of requisitions received during the year 1880 was 8,570, or an average of 27·37 per diem, and contained 36,118 items, or 4·21 upon each.

Frequent errors in the issue of forms, involving considerable extra labour on the store and postal officials, were caused by many of the forms having no clearly defined heading or number by which they could be distinguished. To meet this difficulty I have had a requisition form printed and issued which shows in detail all the forms in stock, each form being placed under the heading of the department to which it belongs, a space being left opposite each for the officer requisitioning to fill in the quantity required. This will, I think, obviate any mistakes being made in future.

The amounts annually expended in the colony in purchasing stationery during the past five years have been as follow: 1876, £668 12s.; 1877, £742 16s.; 1878, £694 7s. 7d.; 1879, £4,196; 1880, £881 3s. 11d. The large expenditure incurred during the year 1879 was caused by the indent sent to England in November, 1878, being reduced by £2,500, and the length of time which elapsed before its arrival in the colony (nearly fifteen months).

The value of annual orders sent to England during the past three years has been as follows: 1878–79, £12,904; 1880–81, £9,643; 1881–82, £7,883. This steady reduction has been effected by the stock having been carefully examined, and the substitution of cheaper papers for the expensive hand-made descriptions formerly so extensively used. Requisitions have also been carefully scrutinized before being given out to supply, and reduced whenever the quantities applied for were considered excessive. For instance, one office employing four clerks, requisitioning for the annual supply asked for 4 reams blotting paper, 8 reams foolscap, 2 reams note- and 2 reams letter-paper, 250 quill and 240 barrel pens, 4,320 pen nibs, 1,440 paper-fasteners, 6,000 eyelets, 144 Faber's erasers, and 864 elastic bands. These were reduced to 1 4, 1, 1, 125, 128, 1,008, 720, 3,000, 24, and 288 respectively. Another office applied for 3,576 pens, 36 penholders, 72 blacklead pencils, 72 coloured pencils, 3,456 paper