

scheme of management with a view to economy but these changes had been mostly carried into effect before my return to the colony I allude to the consolidation of the Accountant's office at Christchurch with the General Accountant's office at Wellington, and the union of the whole management under one head, instead of under two Commissioners for the two Islands. This important improvement in the administration of our railway system sets at rest a matter which has caused some discussion, namely, whether the audit should be conducted at the seat of Government, or locally on the several sections. It is sufficient to say that there is, so far as I am aware, no country in which a railway system, belonging to one proprietary, subject to the same by-laws, and with a common tariff (excepting so far as local rates to meet exceptional circumstances are established in particular localities), are audited other than by one central Auditor, and as the railway system in this colony is extended, and the lines now isolated are brought into connection with one another, the introduction of a local audit would be no more than the establishment of a system which must be again altered. The union of all the lines into one system is only a matter of time, excepting as regards the two Islands; and in the latter case the use of fast steamers running across the Straits in connection with the trains, will become a necessity, to complete the establishment of a through traffic between all parts of the colony.

X.—OF STORES.

NEW SOUTH
WALES.

There are three stores in New South Wales—the Civil Service store, the Ordinance store, and the Railway store.

*The Civil Ser-
vice Store.*

In the Civil Service store are kept all the articles required for use in the Civil Service of the colony, except on the railways and by the military force; it also includes all stationery used in the service, and forms of value such as miners' rights, business licenses, &c. The value of the goods annually purchased is said to amount to nearly £100,000 a year.

All stores are, as a rule, bought on yearly contract, and a large part of those purchased are not passed into the store, but are supplied by the contractors directly to the departments, in compliance with requisitions sent in to the Storekeeper, upon which he orders the goods. All the stationery used in the Government Service is supplied from this store. The plant of the Telegraph Department, such as poles, wire, insulators, &c., is not passed through the store, but the articles for common consumption are bought and issued as other stores. As a general rule this store does not deal with articles for the construction of works, but only with those in current use.

The stores are purchased out of annual votes of Parliament, and the payments charged against them are treated as final in the accounts of the colony. Considerable quantities of stores consist of articles manufactured by prisoners in the gaols, such as tinware, boots and shoes, baskets, &c. The gaols are paid for these goods as ordinary contractors, out of the store vote, the payment being effected by a transfer in the Treasury books and credited to revenue, but not to the gaol votes.

The police force has a small local store which is supplied out of the Civil Service store, but goods sent to it are considered in the latter as finally issued to the department.

The stores are received accompanied by a receipt-note, which is signed by the Storeman after being checked with the articles, and they are also accompanied by the contractor's invoice; but in case the goods are delivered directly to a department without coming to the store, the invoice goes with them, and is returned to the Storekeeper with the receipt of the officer to whom they were delivered; and they are included in the store accounts, as if they had passed through the store. The first entry is made in the "Stores Received Day-book," which contains merely the name of the contractor, the total amount of the invoice, and the date of the receipt. The invoices are not copied into any book, but are numbered and filed. Stores are