

It does not appear that the books are ever balanced as regards money-values. The stores purchased being charged finally against a vote of Parliament instead of against a suspense account and the issues only against the vote, no use is made of the values except for statistical purposes, and for affording information required by the Government or by Parliament.

Stock is taken every half-year. The current value of goods in store at a time is under £9,000, and the value of discrepancies above excesses at the last stock-taking was only a few shillings.

*The Railway Store.*

The Railway Store and Workshops for the Queensland line in connection with Brisbane are situated at Ipswich, about twenty-four miles westward from Brisbane. The stores and workshops for the Rockhampton line are managed in the same manner, but are wholly independent of the Ipswich store. There are two sub-stores to the Ipswich store, but the accounts are included in those of the latter, and the goods are written off the books of the Ipswich store only as they are issued from the sub-stores.

All the stores procured in the colony are bought, except in cases of emergency, upon contracts. The English stores are ordered by indents prepared by the Storekeeper and approved by the Commissioner. All stores, whether for construction or for working lines, are taken on charge at the store, excepting rails, of which an account is kept separately but is not carried through the store-books. A suspense account of £20,000 is provided by permanent Act out of loan moneys for the purchase of stores. A book is kept at the store debited with the value of stores purchased and credited with the issues, and the balance carried out into the last column shows the value of the stock in hand, and the difference between this and the £20,000 shows the balance of the suspense vote available for issue at any time.

The stores are received at Brisbane by a Storeman kept there for the purpose, who also manages all the shipping business connected with imported stores. He gives a receipt for the packages, and way-bills them to Ipswich, which is taken as a sufficient receipt unless any discrepancy between the goods and the invoice is noted on their arrival. The store is roomy and well arranged, and the price of the goods is marked upon every package. Goods of the same kind but of different prices are kept separate in the store and are treated in the accounts as different articles. The Storeman at the same time keeps a book for his own information, in which the prices of all the goods in the store are entered from the invoices. By this means all goods are issued from the store at the exact price at which they were bought, increased by freight and other charges, which are distributed *pro rata* over the goods of each consignment. Hence one serious element of error is eliminated from the store accounts, and it is shown that the difficulty of keeping stock of different prices separate in a store is not, as is frequently asserted by Storekeepers, an insuperable one. An inspection of the store itself leads to the conclusion that the system here adopted is thoroughly carried out in practice. The Storekeeper asserts that at the stock-taking, which is made once a year, the discrepancies between the balances on the books and those in the store are very trifling.

Goods are accompanied by invoices. As soon as they are received they are entered by the Storeman in a Rough Goods-received Book, with their values. Contractors send in their vouchers, as a rule monthly, comprising all the invoices for the month, and the "Goods Received Book" is posted monthly, being mainly a copy of the vouchers after being checked with the rough-book kept by the Storeman, and the invoices. It states the date of receipt, from whom received, the description of the articles, the quantity, the rate, and total value. It also shows in two columns the total value of the goods bought in the colony and of those imported from England. The latter are entered in a "Store Invoice Book," which shows the additional charges for freight, package insurance, &c. These charges being distributed proportionally on the goods, the whole is carried out in