

1882.
NEW ZEALAND.

GOVERNMENT PRINTING DEPARTMENT

(REPORT ON, FOR THE YEAR 1881).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

Government Printing Office,
Wellington, 29th May, 1882.

SIR,—

I have the honor to submit the following report on the operations of the Printing Department and Stationery Store for the year 1881.

In no previous year have the requirements of the several departments been more promptly met, or so few complaints made of delays in the execution of orders. These, however vexatious, are unavoidable at times, and beyond the power of ordinary prudence and foresight to guard against; but a judicious subdivision of labour, combined with the hearty co-operation of the overseers, and improved machinery and appliances, have enabled the department to deal more promptly with the numerous orders for printing received.

DEPARTMENTAL RETURNS.

The returns appended to this report are—(1) Balance-sheet of the department for the year 1881; (2) return of the printing and binding executed; (3) the number and classification of the employes; (4) the quantity and value of paper and parchment consumed; (5) the value of work performed at the Lyttelton Gaol.

The balance-sheet is given in greater detail than formerly, and affords fuller information under the various heads in which the expenditure is divided. One noticeable feature is the large reduction which it shows in the expenditure for printing as compared with that of the previous year. In 1880 the expenditure of the department was £17,742, which, with the addition of £294 paid to local printers during the session for work which the department could not undertake, amounted to £18,036. Last year the total expenditure was £14,733, and, as no work was given out during the session, the reduction in expenditure amounted to £3,303. In the amount for wages and overtime alone the respective totals for 1880 and 1881 were £16,711, as against £14,076, or less during the latter year by £2,635.

The receipts from *Gazette* advertisements and subscriptions, and from sale of Government publications, &c., show a steady increase, and amounted to £2,757 17s. 2d.

The return of employes shows the number engaged in the department during each month in the year. During the month of August last the number reached 145, but was reduced in December following to 91. The average per month was 121, as compared with 135 5 for the previous year.

With reference to the return of work performed at the Lyttelton Gaol, it will be found that during the year work to the value of £586 4s. 8d. was performed for the Railway Department. The work sent from the Printing Department to be executed consisted almost exclusively of legal and other forms, to keep up the stock in the Stationery Store. Returns of work performed are sent to me by the Chief Gaoler at the end of each month, accompanied by files containing a copy of each job printed. With the quality of the work I have no fault to find.

MACHINERY, ETC.

The gas-engines recently imported to take the place of steam as a motor fully bear out the economic and other advantages claimed for them by the makers (Messrs. Crossley Brothers). The two engines now at work (of 3½- and 6-horse-power respectively) are estimated to effect a saving of about £225 a year; and if to that be added the greatly-reduced risk from fire, the cleanliness, and the saving in time effected by being able to start them at full power whenever wanted, the change from steam to gas may be regarded as in every respect a most desirable one.

The folding machine has been rendered much more serviceable by the improvement in the mode of delivering the sheets, effected by the engineer to the department. Formerly only certain descriptions of paper could be folded, but now no difficulty is experienced, however limp or flimsy the sheets may be.

Among the new machinery introduced into the binding branch during the year is an embossing press, which now enables the requirements of departments to be met which were formerly dependent on private establishments for this class of work.

One of Brehmer's wire-stitching machines, also recently introduced, is found so great a convenience that I propose ordering one or two more of them. It enables books, pamphlets, &c., to be fastened with wire staples instead of thread. The machine is adjustable to various-sized staples, according to the thickness of the book to be stitched. The inconvenience experienced occasionally, during the session, by the operation of the Females Employment Act, will be overcome by its use.