

Among the productions of the binding branch may be mentioned the copying portfolios now so generally used by departments. Polygraphs are also made when required, but the demand for them is diminishing since the introduction of the portfolio.

EXAMINATION OF PRINTERS' ACCOUNTS.

The examination of all accounts for printing and advertising is a duty with which the department is charged. The number of vouchers which passed under review during the last year was 4,480, and the deductions made therein amounted to £150 12s. 8d., being at the rate of 5½d. off each account. This average is about the same as that for the year 1880.

ELECTORAL ROLLS.

Though not strictly coming within the scope of this report, I deem it my duty to offer a few remarks on the printing of the electoral rolls, which were executed at the private printing offices in the colony prior to the late general election. The whole of the accounts for this printing having been submitted in the ordinary course for inspection, placed me in possession of all necessary information as to the cost of printing the rolls in each electoral district. Tenders were invited for the work in every instance, but there was little or no competition in many places, owing to the short time allowed for executing the work. Where competition was keen the prices were reasonable, and exhibit a marked contrast to those obtained by printers who had the field to themselves. For instance, in some districts the work was done for 8s., 8s. 6d., and 9s. per page, while in others 30s., 31s. 6d., and in one case actually 50s. per page were demanded and paid. The total cost of printing the rolls for the ninety-one electorates was £2,154 14s. 7d.

It has been found desirable in some of the Australian Colonies to purchase a sufficient stock of type and material to admit of the whole of the electoral rolls being kept standing from year to year, thus saving the cost, labour, and delay of resetting whenever a reprint is required. Should it be thought advisable to adopt a similar plan in this colony, it would be necessary to purchase a supply of type sufficient to keep 2,550 pages standing, representing 21 tons weight of material, which, at £120 per ton, would cost £2,520. The amount paid for printing the rolls for the last election (£2,154 14s. 7d.) would, within a few hundred pounds, have been sufficient to defray the cost of the necessary material. The first cost of setting up the type would not be more than 7s. per page, or, say, £892; after which any subsequent editions could be got out for the whole of the electorates at a cost of not more than £150. While on this subject, I would point out that the cost for composition and the outlay for type would be considerably lessened were the tabular form dispensed with. The alteration in style would be found equally as convenient for all practical purposes, while the ugly blanks in the last column caused by the introduction of the residential qualification would be avoided.*

WANT OF ACCOMMODATION.

The necessity for the enlargement of the premises is becoming year by year more pressing. But for the inconvenient and unsuitable character of the building, one of the gas-engines at present used could be made to supply all the power required. Much space is lost by the number of rooms into which the building is divided; and, in many of these, the light is very indifferent. The yard has been gradually encroached upon until now barely sufficient space is left for a cart to enter. The lithographic branch of the Survey Department occupies a portion of the building, and is unable to introduce some much-needed machinery in consequence of the lack of accommodation. The buildings are erected on leasehold ground, and, as the lease will expire in a few years, representations were made to the Minister of Lands, which led to half an acre being reserved on the reclaimed land as a site for the erection of a new printing and lithographic office, and the necessary provision being made on the Estimates for the erection of a portion of the structure to accommodate the lithographic branch.

STEREOTYPE AND ELECTROTYPE BRANCH.

During the past year a new series of postage- and revenue-stamps have been turned out. They consist of seven electrotyped plates, of 240 stamps in each, of values ranging from one penny to one shilling. These stamps are entirely of local production, the credit of which is due to the combined efforts of Messrs. W. H. Norris, A. Bock, and W. H. Kirk. The design and execution compare favourably with those now in use in the Australian Colonies.

A new series of beer-duty-stamps have been designed, and are now in course of execution. They are about twice the size of those now used, being 2¾ inches square. These, like the new postage- and revenue-stamps, are entirely of local production.

Amongst the new industries added to this branch during the past year is the manufacture of rubber-stamps, which are extensively used by Government departments, and have hitherto been purchased from private manufacturers, at prices varying from 15s. to 25s. each. The advantages of carrying on the industry in connection with the stereotyping branch are that the moulds can be taken by the same process, and the work performed by the stereotyper in addition to his other duties, thus enabling the stamps to be manufactured at a cost of not more than 1s. 6d. each. The necessary ink, ink-pads, and turned handles for the stamps are all made on the premises. Autograph and departmental stamps have been supplied to departments as requisitioned for, and in future the requirements of the public service throughout the colony can be provided for at a merely nominal cost.

* The following specimen is given as an illustration of the style recommended :—

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| 5. Alexander, Joseph; Naseby, miner; residential | 10. Jopp, William, Rough Ridge, miner; residential |
| 6. Allen, Peter, Serpentine, miner; residential | 11. Jones, George, Idaburn, labourer; residential |
| 7. Anderson, John, Blackstone Hill, farmer; residential | 12. Robinson, John, Hamilton, settler; freehold land, Hamilton |
| 8. Askin, John, Hyde, farmer; residential | 13. Rice, William, Kyeburn, carrier; freehold land, Kyeburn |
| 9. Coram, James, Naseby, hotelkeeper; freehold land, Naseby | 14. Mountain, Thomas, Eden Creek, shepherd; residential |