

Stationery Office.—This branch has been fully engaged during the year in dealing with requisitions for stationery. Owing to the cramped accommodation available it has not been possible to appoint additional staff, and it has been necessary to work overtime for a portion of the year. Details of the operations of the branch with those of previous years for the purposes of comparison, are appended :—

Year.	Number of Requisitions.	Number of Items.	Number of Typewriters supplied.	Value of Stationery and Publications supplied.	Value of Typewriters supplied.	Total value.
				£	£	£
1933-34	12,938	119,368	121	35,425	1,552	36,977
1934-35	13,828	124,987	223	35,823	3,840	39,663
1935-36	15,820	137,952	380	44,433	6,406	50,839
1936-37	16,706	160,486	599	51,127	9,968	61,095
1937-38	18,657	176,295	881	64,737	14,648	79,385

Paper.—The sharp rise in prices experienced during the latter half of the year 1936-37 continued through the year, and by December prices had advanced by approximately $33\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on prices as at the 31st March, 1937. The consumption of paper was approximately 18 per cent. greater than that of the previous year, the total issues amounting to £60,191, comprising 128,815 packages of paper and boards and 5,980,000 envelopes. In addition, 13,197,000 envelopes were issued through the Stationery and Issuing Offices.

Machinery.—The purchases of new machinery comprised one folding-machine for the Bookbinding Branch, one vulcanizer for rubber-stamp manufacture, and two portable elevators for use on storage premises not previously equipped with adequate handling machinery. The use of these latter has not only resulted in rapid handling of bulk paper, but has reduced the risk of accident to the storemen.

Staff.—The large increase in the volume of work handled by the Department has, of course, been reflected in the statistics relating to the staff. As at the 31st March, 1938, the total staff comprised 576 officers, an increase during the year of 75 officers.

Both the efficient handling of the work and the welfare of the staff (from the point of view of provision of amenities) are severely handicapped by lack of space in the present building.

Apprentices.—At the present time the Department employs twenty apprentices, who are engaged in the various trades. The progress of these apprentices is subject to constant review, and a full and comprehensive training is afforded each one in his chosen trade. The system of recruitment is from boys engaged with a view to apprenticeship if suitable. Each lad is given an opportunity of electing to be apprenticed in the trade he personally prefers, after consultation with his parents or guardians, and this election is given effect to when vacancies arise.

Work of the Year.—The foregoing tables and reports are indicative of the general high volume of work dealt with during the year. The turnover has reached its highest level in the history of the Department. While the number of jobs handled is not greatly in excess of the number dealt with last year, the average quantity ordered has steadily increased. The general activity in all Departments of the State is reflected in the operations of this Department, which, with the present accommodation, is approaching its maximum output.

Finance.—The operations of the year resulted in a turnover of £304,148, which is £59,763 in excess of that for the previous year.

The profit for the year amounted to £12,036 5s. 11d., after allowing for interest on capital and depreciation.

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E. V. PAUL,

Government Printer.

The Hon. the Minister in Charge.