

## REPORT ON THE GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.

Government Printing Office,  
Wellington, 26th September, 1868.

SIR,—

In submitting the following Report on the working of the Department under my control, I desire to state that my object in doing so is to afford the fullest information as to the results of our labours for the past financial year, and to point out what I consider still wanting to render the establishment prepared for the rapidly increasing demands made upon it during each succeeding Session of the Assembly.

Before doing so, however, I may be permitted, in this my first Report, to notice the origin of the Printing Department, and the extent to which it has increased since its first establishment.

A Commission, appointed by the Government in 1862, in accordance with a resolution of the House of Representatives, to inquire into the advisability of establishing a printing office in connection with the Government, reported in favour of the proposal, and an order was sent to Mr. Morrison, in England, to purchase the necessary plant, which arrived in Auckland in June, 1864, when a small staff of eight men and two boys were engaged, and the printing of the *Gazette*, departmental forms, and some of the Parliamentary Papers, was undertaken. The cost of the original plant was £844. It was, however, found totally inadequate to meet the requirements of the Government, and was immediately supplemented by a small order from Sydney, while the printing press and type used by Mr. Gorst in printing the *Pihoihoi*, at Te Awamutu, proved a small but very acceptable addition to the original plant.

On the removal of the Department to Wellington the work increased very rapidly, rendering necessary the erection of a wing to the present building; a very considerable addition was at the same time made to the plant, while the acquisition of a printing machine, worked by steam power, contributed greatly towards placing the establishment on a much more efficient footing than it had been hitherto; but the resources of the Department, even with these additions, were insufficient to enable it to cope with the work that came pouring in.

Further additions of considerable importance have been made to the plant of late. By the timely arrival of the "Henry Adderley" from London last month, a large supply of new type was received, which has enabled the whole of the Bills brought before Parliament this Session to be printed at this office—an achievement which I have never before been able to accomplish—a portion of the work having, in previous Sessions, been performed at the private printing establishments in this City.

The men and boys now permanently employed in the Department, exclusive of the Printer, consist of thirty persons—namely, two Overseers, one Reader, twelve Compositors, three Pressmen, one Machinist, one Engineer, three Apprentices, and seven Boys. It is proposed to add two more Compositors to the permanent staff this year, the increase of work in the Office fully justifying the proposed addition. During the Session the services of an extra Reader are engaged for the *Hansard*, while the staff of extra Compositors varies according to the pressure of work—fifteen being the number at present employed.

Next in importance to a sufficiency of type, is the necessity of providing proper Office accommodation. During the recess, the present building is found sufficiently large for the ordinary work of the Department; but when the Assembly is in Session, and the necessity arises for the employment of a large staff of extra hands, very great inconvenience is felt—an inconvenience which has materially increased since the Department undertook the work of printing the Parliamentary Debates. Should the work continue to increase in the same ratio as in the past two years, the demand for additional space will become an absolute necessity.

Two printing machines—double-crown Belle Sauvage—are now in use in the Office, each capable of producing eleven hundred impressions per hour. In addition to these, there are also five hand-presses, varying in size from crown to double-demy, which are capable of producing, collectively, about one thousand three hundred impressions per hour. It will thus be perceived that the machines and hand-presses combined are capable of producing three thousand five hundred impressions per hour if they were all in full work.

One of the machines above referred to was procured from Melbourne about twelve months ago, and was purchased mainly with a view to facilitate the printing of the Acts for circulation after they had received the Royal Assent. Great complaints were made at the delay which usually took place in printing the Statutes—more especially when many of them had actually come into force. But this delay was quite unavoidable as far as the Printing Department was concerned. When it is remembered that out of ninety-five Acts passed last Session, ninety-two of them only received the Royal Assent on the last day of the Session—the 10th of October—it will be perceived that the whole work of printing the Statutes could only commence at a period when it was highly necessary they should have been completed, and ready to be placed in the hands of the public. Had the Royal Assent been obtained to the Bills from time to time as they were passed through the Legislature, a considerable portion of the Statutes—more than one-half probably—might have been printed off and in the hands of the public before the termination of the Session. The very large number of these Acts which have to be printed necessarily occupy a considerable time in machine work alone—especially when the Statute Book assumes the proportions of that of 1867. The Legislature, however, have endeavoured to remedy the evil this Session, by deciding that all Bills be laid before the Governor for the Royal Assent from time to time as they pass the House, with a view to enable the printing to be proceeded with during the Session.