

SESS II.—1891.
NEW ZEALAND.

PRINTING AND STATIONERY DEPARTMENT.
(ANNUAL REPORT ON THE)

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

SIR,—

Printing and Stationery Department, Wellington, 9th July, 1891.

I have the honour to submit my annual report on the operations of the Printing and Stationery Department for the year 1890.

The period under review has been one of considerable activity in all branches of the department. The number of separate orders received largely exceeded those of any previous year, and the printing machines in use—fourteen in number—were kept fully employed throughout the year. The result shows that 4,062 orders were received, consisting of 23,935 forms or pages, from which 31,596,355 copies were printed, the total value of the work amounting to £32,486 18s. 1d., being an increase of £3,728 5s. 2d. over the previous year. The expenditure on account of wages and overtime was £18,206 19s. 5d., being £1,897 5s. 4d. over that for previous year. The rate of progression exhibited by the returns of work during the past three years shows a steady advance in the several branches, equal in value to about £4,000 per annum, and indications of a still greater proportionate advance are perceptible during the current financial year, which will render it necessary to largely supplement the working plant to keep pace with the rapidly-increasing demands upon the department.

Among the proposed additions to the plant under consideration is the advisability of procuring type-casting machinery and apparatus. The inconvenience experienced at times by particular letters or “sorts” running short, and the difficulty of keeping large quantities of type standing in periodically-recurring tables, returns, &c., will be practically overcome when possessing facilities for type-casting on the premises. As the foundry could be worked in connection with the stereotype branch, at little or no extra cost for labour, the carrying into effect of this proposal is expected to yield satisfactory results.

The annual balance-sheet appended to this report contains full information summarised from the various books kept, the result showing a credit balance in the Profit and Loss Account of £6,686 14s. 7d., yielding a net return on the capital employed of over 10 per cent.

The stringent audit to which all printing and advertising accounts are subjected may be gathered from the fact, that out of 3,147 accounts which came under review, the deductions made therefrom amounted to £183 0s. 3d., being equal to about $1\frac{3}{4}$ per cent of the total value of the accounts passed for payment.

THE FIRE AT THE OLD PRINTING OFFICE.

The destruction of the old printing office by fire, in October last, was a serious misfortune, and was accompanied by a considerable loss of Government property, the lithographic branch of the Survey Department being the principal sufferers. I am thankful to say the whole of the valuable printing machinery and plant, together with the greater portion of the stock of printing papers, had been removed to the new premises before the fire occurred, otherwise the catastrophe would have resulted in very serious loss and inconvenience to the public service. The detached building at the rear of the old office, in which all the departmental forms were kept, was only partially destroyed, and the damage to the forms was not extensive, being mostly caused by water. A large quantity of Government publications, including Statutes, Parliamentary Papers, and nearly the whole of Vols. ii.-v. of White’s “Ancient History of the Maori,” which were stored in the main building, were unfortunately destroyed. A list of the principal works lost in the fire is appended. Steps will have to be taken at an early date to replace some of these losses. For instance, thirteen out of thirty-two volumes of the statutes of the colony are practically out of print, and not obtainable by the public when applied for. The exhaustion of the stock is partly due to