

the late fire, and partly to the unequal demands upon the stationery office for particular volumes. The matter is one which requires to be promptly dealt with, and provision made for either reprinting the volumes or publishing them in an abridged form, by eliminating all repealed or obsolete legislation, and publishing the local and personal Acts in a separate volume. By this plan it is estimated that the unrepealed Acts included in the thirteen volumes now out of print could be got into four moderate-sized volumes.

STAMP-PRINTING BRANCH.

The Stamp-printing Branch was placed under my control on the 1st October last, and is located in the room specially built for the purpose. It is satisfactory to note that the new machinery introduced has had a perceptible effect in cheapening and expediting the production of stamps, thus enabling the requisitions from the Treasury to be promptly met, without recourse to overtime and with a less expensive staff. The output has considerably exceeded that of any previous year, while the quality of the work, for which the Stamp Printer, Mr. H. Hume, is responsible, is admittedly superior to many of the stamp productions of the sister colonies.

A return of the number and description of stamps printed during last year is appended, showing the total issues to be 37,489,113, and the value, £816,556 16s. 10d. Of special probate-duty stamps, fifteen were issued, amounting to £36,986, the average value being £2,465 per stamp. Among these was one for £5,076, one for £3,987, and others ranging from £3,574 to £461. A small issue of Samoan stamps was made during the year, likewise of the new series of Government Insurance stamps. The new 2½d. and 5d. foreign postage-stamps were also produced for the first time during the month of December last. The complaints which were at one time made respecting the gum used have been remedied, leaving nothing to be desired in that respect.

STEREOTYPE BRANCH.

The number of stereotype plates cast last year was 1,994; of electrotypes, 6,167 (included in which are 3 plates of postage-stamps, and 6 plates of Government Insurance stamps, 240 heads in each). The number of rubber-stamps manufactured for Government Departments was 411.

The railway-ticket printing executed by this branch during the year was as follows: Railway tickets, 2,265,258; season tickets, 12,826; flag-station tickets, 379,000; luggage tickets, 80,000; parcels tickets, 58,350; weighbridge tickets, 15,200; Volunteer tickets, 13,100. Of railway newspaper stamps, the number printed during the year was 661,440.

STATIONERY OFFICE.

The number of requisitions received and complied with during the year ending the 31st December last was 12,881, or at the rate of about 39 per day. The number of separate items in the requisitions was 42,792. The quantity of waste paper shipped was 48½ tons, representing in value £143 3s. 6d. The local paper-mills purchase all waste material of this description.

I have, &c.,

GEO. DIDSBURY,
Government Printer and Stores Manager.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.