

1950
NEW ZEALAND

PRINTING AND STATIONERY DEPARTMENT

(ANNUAL REPORT OF THE) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1950

Presented to Both Houses of the General Assembly by Leave

Printing and Stationery Department,

Wellington, 30th August, 1950.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit the annual report upon the working of this Department for the year ended 31st March, 1950.

The tables accompanying the report show the nature and extent of the year's working.

Gazette.—The number printed of each issue was 1,000, the number of subscribers 579, and the amount received from sales and subscriptions £2,377.

Hansard.—The number printed of each issue for session 1949 was 4,000, the number of subscribers 158, and the amount received from sales and subscriptions £146.

Stamp-printing.—Stamps to the value of £3,504,176 and postal notes to the poundage value of £43,461 were printed during the year.

Stereo-plates.—The number of stereo-plates cast during the year was 47,628, of which 4,219 were nickel-plated, the weight being 39,051 lb. The output over the last six years is shown in the accompanying table :—

NUMBER OF STEREO-PLATES CAST

Year.			Ordinary.	Nickel-plated.	Total.	Weight of Metal.
						lb.
1944-45	..	..	54,238	891	55,129	34,830
1945-46	..	..	53,241	1,377	54,618	37,021
1946-47	..	..	48,597	3,163	51,760	32,156
1947-48	..	..	40,515	3,462	43,977	31,017
1948-49	..	..	48,362	5,207	53,569	37,675
1949-50	..	..	43,409	4,219	47,628	39,051

Rubber Stamps.—The number of rubber stamps made was 20,967. The details set out in the table appended show the output of this section over the last six years :—

Year.			Number of Stamps.	Year.			Number of Stamps.
1944-45	..	..	13,466	1947-48	..	..	12,325
1945-46	..	..	21,507	1948-49	..	..	15,291
1946-47	..	..	24,567	1949-50	..	..	20,967

Railway Tickets.—The number of tickets printed was 7,409,035, the largest number printed in one month being 713,952 in November, 1949.

Photo-litho and Process Engraving Branch.—The output from this branch during the last six years is shown in the table set out below :—

Year.			Number of Maps, Plans, and Diagrams.	Number of Process Blocks.	Number of Muxtex Plates.
1944-45	..	..	237	3,111	..
1945-46	..	..	372	2,649	..
1946-47	..	..	453	2,433	..
1947-48	..	..	405	2,903	289
1948-49	..	..	349	4,692	536
1949-50	..	..	492	4,328	440

Offset lithography continues to play an increasingly important part in the production of printed matter and great advances are being made in the development of this branch of the printing trade in Europe and the United States of America. In the Department this process is utilized principally for the production of maps, charts, and posters. There is a growing demand for this type of work, and after consultation with the Armed Services Mapping Committee and the Lands and Survey Department it has been decided to extend this branch considerably to meet the expected requirements of these two bodies over the next few years. Accordingly orders have been placed for additional cameras and offset printing presses of various sizes, together with subsidiary plant.

This equipment when installed should enable the Department to handle all the mapping work required for some years and will also provide a margin of machine time which will be available for work at present being printed by letterpress process but which is more suitable for production by offset.

During the year two model R.K.L. and one model R. 30 Rotaprint machines were installed in this branch and, although limited in size and capacity, have proved invaluable in the production of small jobs or work required at short notice. They have afforded considerable relief to the larger letterpress machines. The outstanding advantages of this type of offset printing machinery is its simplicity and the speed with which work can be produced.

One of the difficulties facing this branch at the present time is the extreme shortage of skilled offset lithographers in New Zealand. Owing to the rapid development of this branch of the trade during recent years the labour supply has been unable to cope with the demand and there is now practically a world-wide scarcity of competent litho printers. Efforts made by the Department through the Labour and Employment Department to recruit suitable labour in the United Kingdom have met with scant success, and the high remuneration available in New Zealand for skilled operators places the Department at a disadvantage in competition on the local labour market. In an attempt to overcome the difficulty the Department engaged the services for a period of a skilled operator recently arrived from England who conducted a series of classes, and the knowledge and experience gained by the tradesmen from these classes has been of great advantage.

Stationery Office.—Some alleviation of the accommodation problem in the Stationery Office was possible during the year by the transfer of the branch from the main departmental building to premises in Thorndon Quay where more modern handling facilities and increased and more congenial working space was provided. It was realized, however, when this transfer was effected that the move would not provide a final solution to the accommodation problem, but conditions in the Stationery Office at the time were so congested that advantage was taken of the Thorndon store to secure at least some temporary relief. Another store in Aotea Quay of sufficient capacity to accommodate both the Stationery Office and the storage and distribution of departmental forms has been obtained and is now being fitted out for this purpose. Upon the removal of these two branches to the new premises they will once again be under unified control and their work, which is to a large extent complementary, can be more easily co-ordinated than is possible at the present with the branches located in different buildings.

Another development during the year affecting the Stationery Office was the decision to establish branch stores in Auckland and Christchurch. Acquisition of suitable accommodation in these two centres has proved a difficult problem and up to the present it has been possible to secure premises only in Auckland. These premises have been equipped to accommodate a staff of eight, and the branch is now in operation servicing all the stationery requirements of Government Departments in the Auckland Province.

The establishment of offices in Auckland and Christchurch will afford considerable relief to the Wellington Stationery Office and should render possible a faster and more efficient stationery service to Departments throughout the Dominion. By the spreading of orders for locally manufactured goods and the diversion of overseas indents, a considerable saving in internal transportation of bulk stock and completed orders will result.

Stocks of stationery maintained by the Department in the past were generally at a very low level, resulting in chronic shortages of many lines. The shortages of stock were due to delays in manufacture, erratic deliveries, and to insufficient ordering on the part of the Department. During the past year the manufacture and supply situation has improved to some extent and, in addition, the Department has adopted a more liberal basis of reserve stocks. Consequently the stock position has shown a marked

improvement and the Department is now in a better position than for some years to meet demands for stationery lines. A summary of the operations of the Stationery Office over the past six years is appended :—

Year.	Number of Requisitions.	Number of Items.	Number of Typewriters Supplied.	Value of Stationery and Publications Supplied.	Value of Typewriters Supplied.	Total Value.
				£	£	£
1944-45	17,542	154,674	361	121,795	9,332	131,127
1945-46	17,733	175,105	419	136,059	10,621	146,680
1946-47	17,843	180,652	330	143,990	9,190	153,180
1947-48	18,332	208,241	538	168,345	17,071	185,416
1948-49	20,015	220,706	379	209,472	10,748	220,219
1949-50	20,063	194,599	474	222,721	12,152	234,873

Publications.—An examination was made recently of the wide range of publications held in stock by the Department. It is certain that many of its publications are almost unknown to the general public and it is most desirable that some progressive step be taken to ensure more effective sales. The Department's present method of display and sale leaves room for much improvement, and suitable premises which will provide good display and an opportunity to view the wide range of Government publications are necessary. Consideration is now being given to the acquisition of suitable premises for this purpose.

Paper. Due to the shortage of dollar exchange the Department has for some years been compelled to purchase all its requirements of paper and binding materials from soft-currency sources, often under adverse conditions regarding quality and price. While, in general, the quality of materials purchased from United Kingdom manufacturers has been satisfactory, goods arriving from the continental countries have frequently either not been up to sample or have been so damaged by successive transshipments as to cause delays in production and a high spoilage rate. The Department has therefore confined its purchases almost entirely to United Kingdom sources and has adopted the policy of calling tenders in New Zealand from the local representatives of British manufacturers. Since this method of purchasing was reinstituted after its abandonment during the war years the Department has received excellent service from the local agents, and a marked improvement in quality and availability of various lines has been evident. Due to delays in manufacture and shipment and the previous purchasing policy of the Department, stocks of paper and binding material had been at a very low level for some years and heavy buying on the local market had frequently to be undertaken. Large orders were placed in the latter part of 1949 to increase the stock reserve to what was considered a safe level, and the Department's stock position is now improving as delivery of these orders proceeds.

The paper-supply position from sterling areas is very precarious at the present time. Some manufacturers and merchants have reached the point where they are reluctant to accept further orders, and certain mills in the United Kingdom have definitely refused to take further commitments, while others are specifying delivery dates from October, 1951, onwards. This position arises from a variety of causes, chief among which are—

- (1) Depletion of reserves of pulp during the war when many forests and stock-piles of timber in continental and Scandinavian countries were either destroyed or used as fuel.
- (2) Increasing consumption in the European countries.
- (3) The sale of pulp by European countries to the United States of America in preference to Great Britain for the purpose of creating dollar credits.
- (4) Shortage of basic materials used in paper-manufacture.

The Department is fortunate in having placed large orders before the present crisis developed and so far has not been unduly affected. Nevertheless, the future position is most uncertain and it is evident that the utmost economy will require to be exercised in the use of paper for some considerable time.

During the early part of 1949, prices of paper and binding material, which had reached record high levels in 1948, fell considerably, but this drop was arrested, and an upward movement again began towards the end of 1949 and is still continuing. As an example, one of the principal lines of paper used by the Department, the 1939 price per ton of which was £29, rose to £130 in 1948, and after receding to £66 has now risen again to £93 per ton. With wide fluctuations in the price of materials such as the one quoted, it is very difficult to estimate the expenditure on stores and supplies from year to year.

The availability of adequate storage accommodation for the stocks of paper and materials necessary to maintain production is a constantly recurring problem. The growing pressure upon space within the factory has necessitated the removal of bulk stocks to outside stores, and storage space in the immediate vicinity of Wellington has proved extremely difficult to obtain. The Department held tenancies at one time of several stores in the Aotea Quay area. These have now either been terminated or reduced to such areas as are uneconomic for use as bulk storage, and it has been necessary to seek storage accommodation in the Hutt Valley, where the main bulk stores for paper, &c., are now located. The additional transport costs and time involved in maintaining supplies to the factory from such remotely situated bulk stores adds materially to the final costs of production.

In previous reports the difficulties of obtaining adequate and regular supplies of envelopes have been referred to, and on occasions the situation was extremely critical. The Department has no envelope-manufacturing plant of its own and consequently has to rely in the main on local manufacturers to meet Government demands. Local plant proved unequal to the task, and as a result heavy imports were arranged from United Kingdom makers. Since the end of the war a considerable quantity of envelope-making plant has been installed by manufacturers in New Zealand, and I am pleased to report that, while further improvement is still possible, the Department has at present little difficulty in obtaining its major requirements of envelopes from local sources.

The total value of paper and envelopes issued for printing during the year was £214,449, comprising 158,254 packages of paper (1,738 tons) and 1,766,570 envelopes; in addition, 34,666,400 envelopes were issued through the Stationery and Issuing Offices.

Machinery.—Following an examination of the plant and production methods in 1949 it became evident that an extensive plant-replacement programme was necessary. Much of the present plant is slow producing and obsolete and many operations which should be mechanized are at present performed manually. Early in 1950 the Works Manager and Chief Engineer were sent to England to investigate the advantages of rotary printing for much of the Department's larger work and to examine the most modern production methods in all branches of the printing trade. On the recommendations made by this mission the re-equipment of the plant on modern lines to enable it to economically produce the wide diversity of Government work is being undertaken. While a commencement has been made with the replacement of some of the older machinery by the more readily available types of modern machinery, much of the required plant is of a type specially designed for use in Government printing offices and will require two to three years for manufacture.

The following are the principal new items of plant installed during the year under review—Composing Machinery: Two Morproof proof presses; Varityper (on loan to Census and Statistics for the preparation of statistical material); Ultra Simplex type-high-testing machine; space-band cleaner. Letterpress Machinery: Waite demy letterpress machine; Thompson automatic platen; Heidelberg automatic platen. Binding Machinery: Three Halley joggers; Brehmer stitching-machine; Union drilling press; Greig rotary cutting, creasing, and scoring machine; Challenge paper-drilling machine. Offset Machinery: Two small model R.K.L. and one model R. 30 Rotaprint machines. Process Engraving Plant: D.O.N. vertical camera. In addition, several items of mechanical handling plant were purchased for use in the bulk stores.

Buildings.—The Department continues to operate under a severe handicap with regard to accommodation. The present building is old and has been extended from time to time to cope with the expansion of the Department, but the point has now been reached where any further expansion either horizontally or vertically is impossible. The last addition was the erection of a new wing in Featherston Street where the letterpress machines, binding, and part of the composing branches are situated. In consequence of this piecemeal erection the layout and design of the building are far from satisfactory for modern industrial needs, and working conditions, judged by present-day standards, can only be regarded as poor. So far as the structural limitations of the building and the space available will allow, improvements are continuously being effected to provide better conditions, the most recent being the addition of a cafeteria on the top floor, the installation of fluorescent lighting throughout the factory branches, and of modern heating and ventilating plant in the letterpress branch. Painting and general repair work is being carried out all the time by tradesmen attached to the Department's staff.

The age and condition of the building and the method of construction add considerably to the difficulties of organized economic production and preclude the attainment of anything approaching a smooth flow-through of output. Congestion is apparent in every branch, and the Department has been compelled to utilize to an increasing extent outside premises for storage and for particular processes which can be removed from the main building without too great a disadvantage.

When the Stationery Branch is moved to Aotea Quay, the Thorndon Quay building will then be utilized for the accommodation of the Lithographic Branch. There is a limit to which the decentralization of the Department into small units at widely scattered points can be carried, however, as such renders control more difficult and involves a large amount of unproductive and expensive transport.

Of a total area of 175,000 square feet now occupied by the Department, only 77,000 square feet is situated in the main building.

Production Control. In past years very little attention appears to have been given to this important aspect of the Department's internal organization. From the very nature of the work performed it is difficult to institute and maintain a rigid system of control, as the Department is at all times liable to be required to perform jobs bearing the highest priority to which all other work must be subjected, and, furthermore, is unable to decline any work demanded of it on the grounds that production schedules are already full.

The Production Section was accordingly set up in August, 1949, and already a great improvement in job control has become apparent. Much more appears possible by the introduction of a system whereby some knowledge of forthcoming work is available to the Department in advance and a closer supervision is exercisable over the progress of orders through the factory. It is hoped that in a short time a complete schedule of routine and repeat work will be in the possession of the Department, enabling it to forecast its commitments in printing and to arrange a system of production so that the fullest economy and efficiency in man-power and machines can be attained.

Staff.—The past year has been a most difficult one from the staff point of view, and the staff at 1st April, 1950, stood at 518, as against 630 just prior to the war. The total establishment of the Department at the present time is 743, thus showing a shortage of 225. Although the number of officers employed shows an increase of 36 over the number as at 1st April, 1949, the advance represents mainly unskilled staff and general assistants. Tradesmen and skilled workers are becoming increasingly difficult to recruit, and although every assistance possible is being given by the Labour and Employment Department by immigration, the number recruited from this and local sources is still insufficient to overcome the losses from retirements, resignations, and other causes. A disturbing feature has been the loss of tradesmen withdrawing from the printing trade to take up more remunerative occupations in the unskilled-labour field. This has been common to the whole printing trade, and the Department is suffering severely through commercial printers, in the resultant general shortage, offering much higher wages than those paid by the Department, thus further depleting the ranks of departmental tradesmen. One worth-while feature of the past few months has been the recruitment of apprentices. The Department has been making strenuous efforts to attract youths to the various branches of the printing trade and has increased the number of its apprentices from 26 at 1st April, 1949, to 35 at 1st April, 1950.

The general staff training and apprenticeship training are well organized in association with the Commissioner of Apprenticeship and the Printing Trades Union, and a survey of apprenticeship training is being undertaken with the object of preparing a more thorough syllabus than that in use at the present.

A technical library has been established and the books and current trade papers are widely read by the staff, particularly apprentices and young tradesmen. Trade and technical films are being shown to staff gatherings or selected members of the staff, and the Department now has its own film projector which is used to show trade films to training classes.

I have, &c.,

R. E. OWEN,

Government Printer.

The Hon. the Minister in Charge.

RETURN OF ADHESIVE STAMPS, POSTAL NOTES, ETC., PRINTED FROM 1ST APRIL,
1949, TO 31ST MARCH, 1950

Description.	Sheets.	Number.	Value.
			£
Postage	7,499	871,440	11,866
Postal notes	302,000	3,020,000	43,461*
Post-cards	133,850	2,134,200	8,893
Letter-cards	143,750	1,713,700	14,281
Duty	16,252	2,489,123	1,429,009
Social security	52,000	12,247,680	2,021,281
Newspaper wrappers	171,440	1,359,038	1,080
Embossed envelopes	1,736,048	1,727,634	14,766
Totals	2,562,839	25,542,825	3,547,637

* Poundage value.

**RETURN OF VALUE OF PRINTING AND STATIONERY ISSUED TO DEPARTMENTS FOR THE
YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1950**

Office or Department.	Value of Printing.	Value of Stationery.	Office or Department.	Value of Printing.	Value of Stationery.
	£	£		£	£
Agriculture	8,082	7,642	Legislative Council	1,317	283
Air	10,509	6,737	Bills	367	..
Army	6,681	9,140	Journals	432	..
Audit	230	467	Order Papers	121	..
Bankruptcy .. ..	..	55	Maori Affairs	5,248	3,501
Census and Statistics	7,235	1,084	Marine	2,279	976
Crown Law	117	131	Marketing	1,053	1,232
Customs	3,430	3,176	Mental Hygiene	1,714	2,614
Dominion Laboratory	784	471	Mines	1,008	879
Dominion Museum	123	70	National Provident Fund	471	361
Dominion Observatory .. ..	..	59	Navy	1,814	3,783
Education	50,308	23,538	New Zealand Broadcasting	4,676	5,884
Electoral	4,593	4,281	New Zealand Forest Service	2,917	5,770
External Affairs	376	800	Patents	4,759	281
Gazette	11,850	..	Police	8,095	5,688
Government Film Studios	389	503	Post and Telegraph	88,074	974
Government House	323	47	Prime Minister's	1,011	1,387
Government Life Insurance	2,013	1,542	Prisons	574	419
Government Superannuation Board	444	539	Public Service Commission	1,891	1,645
Health	11,197	7,557	Public Trust	3,561	2,206
House of Representatives—			Railways	51,623	6,223
Head Office	8	864	Registrar-General	1,774	543
Appendices to Journals	5,541	..	Rehabilitation	1,237	2,342
Bills	3,682	..	Reserve Bank	820	387
Hansard	14,933	..	Scientific and Industrial Research	4,298	4,825
Journals	1,551	..	Social Security	6,719	6,465
Library	523	121	Stamp Duties	2,014	1,403
Order Papers	792	..	State Advances	2,738	4,494
Statutes	421	..	State Coal	161	1,751
Housing Construction	1,982	2,796	State Fire Insurance	6,782	5,807
Industries and Commerce	4,125	2,397	State Hydro-electric	5,092	6,481
Internal Affairs	8,004	4,431	Tourist and Health Resorts	8,367	2,848
Island Territories	2,567	5,347	Transport	2,639	2,060
Justice	2,248	4,218	Treasury	7,501	2,257
Labour	10,683	4,824	Valuation	1,726	1,948
Land and Deeds	897	388	Ministry of Works	10,889	23,800
Land and Income Tax	21,770	9,804			
Lands and Survey	8,172	9,659			
Law Drafting	26	22			
			Totals	452,383	224,227

SUMMARY

—	Printing.	Stationery.	—	Printing.	Stationery.
	£	£		£	£
1949—			1949—		
April	31,498	8,406	November	36,046	16,059
May	42,976	19,098	December	51,524	24,338
June	33,161	15,606	1950—		
July	33,299	22,780	January	21,739	14,428
August	45,244	24,503	February	49,957	17,816
September	30,899	17,920	March	52,685	26,935
October	23,355	16,338			
			Totals	452,383	224,227

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given: printing (659 copies), £23.

By Authority: R. E. OWEN, Government Printer, Wellington.—1950.