

1924.
NEW ZEALAND.

PRINTING AND STATIONERY DEPARTMENT

(ANNUAL REPORT OF THE) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1924.

Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by leave.

SIR,—

Printing and Stationery Department, Wellington, 7th August, 1924.

I have the honour to submit the annual report upon the working of this Department for the year ended 31st March, 1924.

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

Gazette.—The number printed of each issue was 970, the number of subscribers 411, and the amount received from subscribers and sales £2,436.

Hansard.—The number printed of each issue for session 1923 was 6,375, the number of subscribers 116, and the amount received from subscribers and sales £168.

Stamp-printing.—Stamps to the value of £14,609,633 and postal notes to the value of £19,340 were printed.

Stereo and Electro Plates.—The number of stereo-plates cast during the year was 28,865, the weight being 24,846 lb. The number of electrotypes was 18,682, and the weight 1,730 lb.

Rubber Stamps.—The number of rubber stamps made was 1,842.

Railway Tickets.—9,447,408 railway tickets were printed, the largest number (1,632,535) being printed in November.

Work of the Year.—During the past year all branches of the Department were kept fairly busy. In addition to producing the regular publications, the Department undertook the printing of the special booklets, folders, and leaflets required for distribution at the Empire Exhibition and by the Publicity Office. The aggregate number of copies printed amounted to 440,000, for which 25 tons of paper, to the value of £2,000, were used. In addition to this work several important publications, including Museum Bulletins and Monographs written by Mr. Elsdon Best, and Volume II of Cowan's "New Zealand Wars," were printed. The work in the Photo-lithographic and Process-engraving Branches was exceptionally strenuous. Apart from the amount involved in dealing with the general work in connection with the production of maps and plans for the Lands and Survey, Geological, and State Forests Departments, coloured posters for the Railway Department, and the illustration blocks for the numerous publications, there was the extra work in connection with the Empire Exhibition. Extra work was also created by the activity in the Hydro-electrical Branch of the Public Works Department, necessitating the printing of the numerous plans required for the Awapuni and Mangahao Power-stations.

Paper.—Although there was an extraordinary demand on the paper stocks, these have been well maintained, and at very satisfactory prices. The last purchases were made while the market was low, which resulted in the amount expended during the year being very much lower than the estimate.

It is difficult to predict what the future state of the market will be. Prices for printings and paper in that class have, however, reached a low level, and any change in the market may be in an upward direction. There has been an advance in the prices for the higher grades of paper owing to the increased cost of raw material, rags having advanced about 100 per cent.

During the year the purchases in this Department for paper, boards, envelopes, &c., amounted to £47,092, and the issues £37,035, comprising some 51,300 packages of paper and board, and 8,250,000 envelopes, requiring a storage-capacity for 1,622 tons of material.

Machinery.—Some of the machinery in the branches has been in use for a very long period of years, and is not conducive to efficiency. As it is desirable to have more up-to-date machinery in those branches, some of the oldest machines have been disposed of at satisfactory prices, and replaced by machines designed to give a much greater output. A quad-royal machine with automatic feeder and extension delivery is now being erected. This machine is to be used for the printing of the regular publications. A Wharfedale machine fitted with a pile suction feeder is now being run on trial, and a satisfactory output has been maintained.