

1869.

VICTORIA.



GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.

PROGRESS REPORT (No. 1)

OF THE

BOARD APPOINTED TO ENQUIRE INTO AND REPORT UPON THE
MANAGEMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.

PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY'S COMMAND.

By Authority:
JOHN FERRES, GOVERNMENT PRINTER, MELBOURNE.

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Crown Law Offices,
Melbourne, 6th January, 1869.

To the Honorable The Minister of Justice, Victoria.

PROGRESS REPORT (No. 1) OF THE BOARD APPOINTED TO ENQUIRE
INTO AND REPORT UPON THE MANAGEMENT OF THE
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.

1. The Board consist of :—

THE HON. THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (G. PATON SMITH),
MR. ANGUS MACKAY, M.L.A.,
MR. HUGH GEORGE,
MR. J. B. CREWS, M.L.A., and
MR. B. G. DAVIES, M.L.A.

2. The Board commenced their labors on the 15th December, 1868 ; and Mr. W. B. Gilbert was appointed to the office of Secretary.

The following witnesses have been examined by the Board :—

The Government Printer (partially).
The Registrar-General.
The Chief Commissioner of Police.
The Deputy-Postmaster.
The Acting Surveyor-General.
Mr. Arthur Morrah (*of the Crown Lands Department*).
Mr. John Lascelles (*Editor of the Government Gazette*).
Mr. Atkinson (*Superintendent of Printing and Inspector of Stores, General Post Office*).
The Superintendent of Electric Telegraphs.
The Engineer-in-Chief, Victorian Railways.
The Secretary of Railways.
Mr. Robertson (*Draftsman, Crown Lands Department*).
A Commissioner of Audit (Mr. Agg).
The Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.
The Collector of Customs (Mr. J. C. Tyler).

3. A circular was addressed to Ministers of the Crown requesting that from every department under their control samples of each form of printed document in use in every branch of such department should be furnished for the information and guidance of the Board : and the examination of the witnesses above-named has proceeded upon a careful observation of the sample forms so supplied.

4. The result of that examination has satisfied the Board that a very considerable reduction in the annual expenditure of the Government Printing Office may be effected, without detriment to the service, by the adoption of a system which shall accomplish the following objects :—

- 1st. Curtailment of the size of the paper on which many of the forms now in use are printed. These forms are unnecessarily large, and in cases where they are stored away for reference, are inconveniently cumbrous.
- 2nd. The substitution of a less expensive paper than that in general use. The Board find that in a large number of instances costly hand-made paper has been used for purposes which would have been equally well answered by the employment of much cheaper material. This remark may be applied generally to almost all the forms which have been brought under the notice of the Board, with the exception of some of the more important book forms used in Her Majesty's Treasury as the Public Ledger, and a few others which it is considered should be of durable material as being public records and liable to frequent reference.

3rd. The discontinuance of the practice of ruling tabular forms with variously colored ink, which necessitates the passage of the form through the ruling machine a number of times (in some instances as many as six). This process involves the expenditure of a large amount of skilled manual labor.

5. The Board are of opinion that it is desirable to establish, as far as practicable, an uniformity of sizes for all forms, tabulated and otherwise, which issue from the Government Printing Office to the various branches of the Service; and the evidence taken goes to show that there will be no difficulty—either on the part of the officers of the various Departments who have been under examination before them, or of the Government Printer—in carrying out this system. Great waste appears to have been occasioned by the use of irregular sizes of paper; although the Board are persuaded that it has arisen in all instances from the thoughtlessness or technical inexperience of the officers ordering the work, as on every occasion where the evil has been pointed out, the Board have met with the most cordial assurances of assistance in preventing its recurrence. For the guidance of the various departments, the Board has ordered that a gauge form shall be furnished to each of them, showing the kinds and sizes of paper which it is recommended shall in future be kept in stock and conformed to.

6. In the examination of the Chief Commissioner of Police, the Board, amongst other subjects not already treated of, directed their attention to an enquiry into the practical utility and the cost of the compilation and printing of the Police Criminal Statistics. The evidence of the Registrar-General was also taken upon this subject; and the testimony of these two officers leads the Board to the opinion that the printing of this work may be discontinued, and the material compiled in the Chief Commissioner's office be furnished to the Registrar-General, to be incorporated, to such an extent as he may consider advisable in the interests of the public, with the general "Statistics of Victoria." It was ascertained that the Registrar-General at present employs such portions of the Criminal Statistics as he thinks desirable, and embodies them in his work. The officers referred to are in conference on the subject of an amalgamation of the two publications, and as there appears to be no difficulty in the way of its accomplishment, the Board hope, when they shall have received this report, to be able to recommend a further saving in this direction. It has also been found that the Customs Department publishes what is called an Annual Account, the Registrar-General at the same time publishing the Customs Statistics as furnished to him by the Department. Mr. Tyler, the Collector of Customs, in his evidence this morning has suggested an amalgamation of these two publications, which the Board recommend.

7. A careful examination of the *Government Gazette* and the *Police Gazette* for the last quarter disclosed the fact that a considerable quantity of matter set up in the latter was only a reprint of that which appeared in the former publication, as well as that notices were inserted with unnecessary frequency. As the *Police Gazette* is only issued to the officers or constables in charge of stations, and as the *Government Gazette* is supplied to all Clerks of Petty Sessions, the Board are of opinion that the ends of justice will be sufficiently answered, so far as this publication is concerned, by the discontinuance of the repetitions referred to, the omission of such matter as appears in the *Government Gazette*, and an epitome of the police intelligence of the week printed on a single sheet. It will be obvious that such alteration would result in a saving, both in printing and paper. (*Sec. ii. of par. 5 may be referred to in reference to this suggestion.*)

8. The evidence of Mr. Lascelles (who was examined in the presence of Mr. Morrah, and other witnesses, interested in the *Government Gazette* publications,) satisfied the Board that by the exercise of forethought on the part of officers of the service using the *Government Gazette* as a vehicle for transmitting official information to the public, its issue more than once a week might be dispensed with, and that only in exceptional cases of State exigency would the publication of a supplement be necessary. A judicious re-arrangement of the matter and the abolition of useless tabulated forms are also recommended. Although the Board have not yet received replies from all the departments of the service on the subject of this important item of retrenchment, they are assured by the representatives of the Department of Lands and Works that no appreciable difficulty would result from the adoption of the suggestions offered by Mr. Lascelles, and unhesitatingly recom-

mend them to the favorable consideration of the Government. The annual saving to the State in this item has been approximately estimated by the Government Printer at £2,000.

9. The Board have, in the course of their investigation, observed that printing is performed in several departments of the service other than the Government Printing Office ; and to this branch of the enquiry they have given much attention, visiting the various offices at which the work is being carried on, with a view to ascertaining whether the whole of the printing of the country cannot be conveniently executed under one roof. The principle of concentration is regarded by the Board as being decidedly advantageous, although its general application is surrounded by difficulties. For example, the postage stamps it would appear should almost necessarily be struck off, as they are at present, under the supervision, and be kept under the immediate control of the permanent head of the General Post Office. The appliances there are of a very complete character, and with the general arrangements the Board are highly satisfied. Again the Lithographic branch of the Lands and Works Department is, in the opinion of the Board, conducted on as complete a system as is consistent with the important requirements of this branch of the Service ; but it was found that work to a considerable extent (the returns of which, and a statement of its expense have been called for by the Board) was being done here for other departments. The Board find that the Railway Department also has its separate lithographic staff; and the Engineer-in-Chief has been requested to give his attention to the question of amalgamating it with that of the Board of Land and Works. Thus the principle of concentration which is strongly recommended by the Board, may to a considerable extent be adopted ; but, upon this branch of the subject it will be necessary that the Board should pursue their investigations further before submitting a definite scheme.

10. The Board have not yet entered upon the question of wages, cost and system of management, and purchase of material and plant, but these branches of the enquiry will at once engage their attention.

11. For some years past it has been the practice to publish a Public Works Circular, which has been admitted to be of no practical value whatever, and at the suggestion of the Board the Public Works Department has agreed to discontinue it.

12. The Board are only in a position to submit an approximate estimate of the value of the retrenchment to result from the adoption of the above suggestions and recommendations, but they think it will not amount to less than an annual saving to the State of £10,000 (Ten thousand pounds).

(Signed)

G. PATON SMITH,
Chairman.

