

STATIONERY STORE.

The operations of the stationery store have been carried on satisfactorily, without any addition to the staff, notwithstanding a considerable augmentation in the work of the department. The requisitions received show an increase of 2,926 over the previous year, being 10,135, as against 7,209 in 1881. The receipts from the sale of publications amounted to £1,768 8s. 3d., being an increase of £382 16s. over those of the previous year. There is a slight diminution in the quantity of waste paper exported, 40½ tons having been shipped to England during last year, and sold at prices ranging from £5 10s. to £6 10s. per ton. The value of the last annual order for stationery, &c., sent to England was £10,063. The system at present adopted for procuring these supplies might, I think, be improved upon. The goods received are generally of inferior quality, and in some instances when articles of a particular make were ordered inferior descriptions of other manufacturers have been substituted. The goods are professedly examined before shipment and passed by an inspector employed by the Agent-General. Ordering direct from the manufacturers would doubtless be found preferable to the present system, and be worth while trying as an experiment. In the last contract for stationery entered into by the Agent-General, the fact of a paper-manufacturing firm having obtained the contract at prices equal to an advance of £685 on what they had previously offered to supply the same goods if ordered direct, may be quoted as an illustration in favour of the plan now proposed.

The storage of large quantities of stationery, &c., in the buildings at present used is attended with considerable risk, the structure not having been originally designed to carry the weight it has now occasionally to bear. A thorough inspection of the building by the Architect would be advisable.

I have, &c.,

GEO. DIDSBURY,
Government Printer.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.
