

begets another, and soon the penalties of the Act may become a dead-letter, with the obvious result that the stamp duties, of which the payment is induced by a fear of the penalties, may cease to be paid, and that these duties may not yield the revenue that they are expected and ought to yield. And, so far as the colony must raise by taxation from other sources than stamps a revenue in addition to the stamp revenue, every such sacrifice of stamp revenue as the want of a faithful and vigorous administration of the Stamp Act may entail can only be at the expense of other taxpayers—of those who pay the land-tax, the income-tax, the Customs duties, &c. This surely is anything but a trumpery matter.

J. K. WARBURTON, Controller and Auditor-General.

The Under-Secretary, Mines Department.

I do not share the hopeful view which the Audit Office has taken of the intention of the Government in this particular instance. However, it is clear the Audit Office will not allow the imprestee credit as matters now stand, so I hope you will see that my suggestion is carried out at once, and the imprestee can take steps to recover his money afterwards.

31st August, 1897.

JAS. B. HEYWOOD.

DEAR SIR,—

Mines Department, Wellington, 31st August, 1897.

Through an unfortunate misunderstanding on your part, the last received account you sent me for the £2 15s., coach-fare for W. McKegg and myself from Roxburgh to Lawrence, has been returned to me, and I am requested to pay into the Treasury the amount in full, which will not be released until I obtain a proper receipt from you. Under these circumstances, will you kindly forward me another one on receiving this? Make out a bill for the amount, and date it, stamp it, and obliterate the stamp on the day and date you make it out—not on the 9th June as you did before.

The whole thing is exceedingly vexatious, and a piece of childish red-tape; but as I shall be deprived of the £2 15s. until you comply with the Audit regulations I hope you will comply with my request.

There are now no less than three penny stamps affixed to the voucher, but what they want is the stamp gummed on and obliterated not on the day the money was paid, but now on your receiving this.

Mr. Craig, Lawrence.

Yours, &c.,

T. PERHAM.

WE really do not know what is required. If you will write out the form of receipt you require, will sign it. Perhaps if you indicate in pencil. Kindly return the old receipts marked where wrong.

H. CRAIG AND Co.

Under-Secretary, Mines.

MR. CRAIG evidently does not understand what the Audit Department requires even now. I forward the letter for your information and action.

6th September, 1897.

T. PERHAM.

For Cabinet.—This appears now to be getting farcical.—A. J. CADMAN, 9th September, 1897.

In Cabinet, 10th September, 1897.—Referred to Premier.—A. WILLIS, Secretary.

Mr. Heywood.

THE sum of £11 4s. 6d. is outstanding on Mr. T. Perham's imprest for the 19th June last. The vouchers in support of the expenditure have been five times submitted to Audit, lastly on the 30th August last, and each time queried over the provisions of "The Stamp Act, 1882," not being properly complied with. I understand that the question raised by the Audit has been submitted for the Right Hon. the Premier's decision.

4th November, 1897.

C. MEACHAM.

Hon. the Colonial Treasurer.

THIS matter should be cleared off our books. It is now over five months since the expenditure was incurred by Mr. Perham. If Mr. Perham cannot furnish a voucher which the Audit Office will pass for his credit, the only alternative is for the amount to be paid into the Public Account by the imprestee.

22nd November, 1897.

JAS. B. HEYWOOD.

The Solicitor-General.

KINDLY look through these papers and advise.

23rd November, 1897.

R. J. S.

I HAVE read these papers, and find that a receipt for £2 15s. was originally taken without being stamped. On this being pointed out a stamp was put on the document, and it was cancelled as of the date of the original receipt. This was erroneous in point of law; and, in my opinion, the Audit has been right in the view it has taken as to the proper mode of cancelling receipt-stamps under the Stamp Acts. Subsequently receipts were then obtained, but instead of the stamps being cancelled as of the date of actual cancellation they have been all cancelled as of the date of original payment. The law on the subject is correctly stated by the Assistant Controller and Auditor-General on the back of the original voucher. In strict law there is only one way of making the present position legal—viz., to submit one of these receipts to a Deputy Commissioner, who could then stamp the same, under section 125 of the Act of 1882, on payment of a fine of £10; but I would advise that another bill be made out by Craig and Co., showing the original date when the coach-fare was