

State to which applications for access to papers were necessary. In this respect, I was greatly indebted to Mr. Meade, of the Colonial Office, for his unvarying courtesy, all my applications being attended to and forwarded by that gentleman with the greatest promptitude, so that I met with no delay in entering on my duties. A detailed statement of the work done in the different offices will be found in a subsequent part of this Report.

In carrying out your instructions, I considered that the best method of doing so was to concentrate my efforts, as much as possible, and to take such copious notes as would enable me to place on record so clearly what was done, that no necessity would arise for a fresh examination of the papers on which I have now the honour to report. But in doing this, very considerable time was necessarily spent in comparing the sets of papers deposited in the different Departments of State, those, for instance, in the Colonial, the Foreign, and the War Offices, the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations, now known as the Board of Trade, and the collections of State papers in the British Museum, on which I formerly reported. The object of this comparison was two-fold: to avoid needless expense in re-copying duplicates, and to prevent the consequent accumulation of copies of the same papers, that might be found in two, three, or even four series. To guard still further against this useless multiplication, I left very carefully written instructions for the guidance of the copyists and the revisor, by which, and by the indications given in this Report, I trust that the chance of duplicating copies will be reduced to a minimum.

The State papers deposited in the Public Record Office can be examined only in accordance with rules laid down by the Department to which they belong. With the strongest possible desire to interpose no obstacles in the prosecution of my searches, the Deputy Keeper of Records and his assistants could only act as these rules directed. The obstacles their strict observance present to a thorough search may easily be seen, when it is understood that, by the regulations, no papers belonging to the Foreign Office can be examined of a date subsequent to 1760, or by special permission, up to 1802; of the Colonial Office, to the same date (1760), the Board of Trade papers being included in the latter; of the Treasury, to 1759, &c. In the case of a search being required for any special *named* subject, permission has sometimes been granted for access to papers subsequent to these dates, but as the investigations I was directed to make were of the most general nature, it was necessary to obtain general permission to examine all papers, down to the most recent date, for which leave could be secured. In the case of the Colonial Office papers, this leave was most willingly granted by the Earl of Derby, and His Lordship also placed himself in communication with the other Departments of State, to obtain for me the same privilege in regard to their papers. The Foreign Office, on the 27th August, informed the Colonial Office, in answer to my application, that I would be allowed to examine the papers down to 1815. There being, however, many documents subsequent to that date,