

## GOVERNMENT LIFE INSURANCE.

The number of policies registered at this office amounted in the past year to 561, representing £183,469, the amount insured. The number of premiums received in 1912 was 822, amounting to £5,163 4s. 3d., and the amount of annuities paid was £2,354.

In addition to the receipt of premiums and payment of annuities, transactions connected with loans and surrender of policies have been completed by this office, as well as the procuring of birth and other certificates from various parts of the United Kingdom.

## STATE FIRE INSURANCE.

The Department acts as the intermediary between the State Fire Department and the underwriters, and, as usual, arranged the reinsurance cover with the latter upon satisfactory terms to the former. The various schedules of reinsurances, renewals, &c., received are transmitted to the brokers, and afterwards the policies are checked and compared therewith. Any questions of variations in the contract are dealt with from time to time.

## OLD-AGE PENSIONS.

This office also obtains, when possible, under instructions from the Pensions Department in the Dominion, the necessary proofs of age in cases where applicants apparently have been unable to furnish proof. Schedules of such cases are received regularly from the Dominion, and the amount of correspondence with all parts of the United Kingdom necessary to obtain proof is very great, and several hundred certificates and other forms of proof were obtained and sent to the Dominion last year. The proofs obtained, however, do not give any idea of the amount of work, as the correspondence in cases where no proof is obtainable is always heavier than in successful cases.

## INFORMATION BUREAU.

I attach a printed paper (not printed) containing a list of the publications, &c., relating to the Dominion which can be seen or obtained at the Information Bureau.

The number of persons calling personally at the Bureau for information respecting New Zealand and the prospects it holds out to those who desire to settle in one of the colonies has been great, and the number of visitors from the Dominion, as usual, very large. It cannot be adequately realized the amount of time taken nor the work involved in meeting New-Zealanders and assisting them when in the Old Country. Whilst this office is only too pleased to be of assistance, I regret it is absolutely impossible for me to see all such visitors, otherwise pressing work would require to be shelved. Everything is done to assist them in seeing as much of interest in this country as possible. This, of course, involves a very great amount of work and correspondence in obtaining special permits for places of interest, and in the furnishing of very many letters of introduction. During the year 1,897 orders were obtained from various authorities, enabling 2,185 New Zealand visitors to see over various places of interest in London.

The extent to which this office is utilized by visitors from New Zealand is shown by the fact that 18,257 letters, &c., addressed to them "care of the High Commissioner," were received for the purpose of their being forwarded to addresses entered in the visitors' book.

The reading-room attached to the Bureau, where files of the New Zealand papers and parliamentary and other publications can be seen, has been resorted to by a large number of visitors and others seeking information. The work of filing in connection therewith is considerable.

Inquiries made on subjects other than those relating to the prospects of intending settlers have been very numerous, and the official publications belonging to the library of the Department have been in constant requisition in respect to matters relating to New Zealand legislation, powers of attorney, intestate estates, old-age pensions, mining, formation of companies, Customs duties, education, labour legislation, defence, finance, and other matters.

## SHIPPING, EMIGRATION, AND ADVERTISING BRANCH.

I do not propose to detail here the particulars of the work carried out by this branch, as that is fully dealt with in Mr. Donne's report, which will follow by an early mail; but I should like, in the first place, to draw your attention to the satisfactory financial results in connection with the working of the branch. I find that after paying the salaries of the staff, office rent, stationery, and the whole of the upkeep of the branch for the year ending 31st December, 1912, there remains a credit balance of about £500, which, I am sure you will agree with me, is a very satisfactory result.

The shipments of goods in 1912 comprised 24,482 tons dead-weight, and 30,536 packages of measurement goods, as compared with the shipments of the previous year—i.e., 22,232 tons dead-weight and 27,501 packages of measurement goods.

The number of persons to whom reduced-rate passages were granted, and who duly proceeded to the Dominion, was 3,508, taking with them £25,113 declared capital, making a total of 28,716 persons with £794,428 declared capital who have proceeded to the Dominion under the reduced-rate passage scheme since March, 1904, the date on which the new regulations came into force. But it must be borne in mind that many persons take with them a much larger amount than that which they specify on their application forms, so that the actual amount which has been taken out by these reduced-rate passengers during that period greatly exceeds that mentioned above. I may point out that during the last four years the granting of reduced-rate passages has been limited exclusively to persons of the agricultural and dairying and domestic classes and to those nominated through the Government Immigration Office in New Zealand, and in respect to this part of the work it is gratifying to note that the reports of the Immigration