

30. STRENGTH OF THE FORCES.

The strength of the New Zealand Defence Forces on the 30th April, 1916, was as under:—

Territorial Force	26,839
Senior Cadets	27,063
General Training Section	3,437
Rifle Clubs	7,928
Total	65,267

In addition to the home defence above quoted there are some thousands of reinforcements in continuous training at the permanent camps to maintain the New Zealand Army at the front.

31. DISTRICT AND GROUP ORGANIZATION.

The District, Group, and Area Staff now consists largely of officers drawn from the Territorial Force, and the work carried out, under the circumstances, has been very satisfactory. It has been found advisable, however, to appoint an extra officer to each District Staff to assist the General Staff Officer, and to relieve him of Assistant Adjutant-General's duties and work in connection with returned soldiers.

Since the last annual report a certain increase in recruiting-work has been caused by the addition of new units to the Expeditionary Force, and by the provision for preliminary dental treatment of the recruit. Employment of temporary clerks has been found necessary to cope with this increase.

The evacuation, care, supervision, and final disposal of the returned sick and wounded has very largely added to the work of group officers and their staffs. The sick and wounded are now returning in monthly drafts, and it must be expected that this will continue until the end of the war. An enormous amount of clerical work is entailed in keeping check on returned soldiers, and the provision of extra clerical assistance has been found necessary in each group.

The new group organization, as described in last year's annual report, has now been firmly established, and is proving satisfactory in so far as can be judged under the present abnormal conditions.

A card-index system for the recording of personal files of the Territorials, General Training Section, and Senior Cadets has now been installed in each group at a moderate expenditure. The personal files have taken the place of the old record-books, and a complete and efficient record of the services of every man in the New Zealand Military Forces will be in the possession of the Department. The difficulties of effecting this change during the stress of work in connection with the Expeditionary Force have been considerably lightened by taking advantage of offers of voluntary assistance from patriotic people who are willing to place their services at the disposal of the Department.

The system of recording correspondence at the District Headquarters has during the year been brought into line and made identical with that in use at General Headquarters. It is intended to carry this uniformity of system into the groups during the coming year, and it will then be universal throughout the service.

32. CHANGES IN ORGANIZATION OF THE FORCES.

(a.) *New Zealand Dental Corps.*

To meet the dental requirements of recruits before they are called up, and of members of the Expeditionary Force whilst in camp and at the front, it has been found necessary to establish the New Zealand Dental Corps.

(b.) *New Zealand Army Nursing Service.*

The formation of the New Zealand Army Nursing Service received the sanction of Parliament last year, and all nurses now serving abroad have been placed on the strength of this unit.

33. LEGISLATION.

The following Acts affecting this Department have been brought into force during the current year: (1) Military Manœuvres Act, which provides for rights over land required for training and manœuvres; (2) War Pensions Act; (3) Expeditionary Forces Act.

Various amendments to the Defence Act, 1909, referred to in my report of last year, which were desirable for the benefit of the administration of the Defence Forces, were passed during the last session.

War regulations to meet the exigencies of the present national emergency have been made from time to time by Orders in Council.

34. DISCIPLINE.

The discipline of both the Territorial Force and Senior Cadets has been quite satisfactory during the past year. The great majority of the Territorials attending the annual camps have been men who are unable to join the Expeditionary Force. All ranks seem to have realized that a high standard of discipline is necessary for success in modern warfare, and have done their best to attain an even higher standard than in previous years. Considering the many difficulties inseparable from the training of Territorial Troops at such a time, the result attained reflects the greatest credit on all concerned.