

*War Funds Act, 1915.*—The inquiries made by the Government prior to the passing of this Act entailed considerable work by this Department, and the administration of the Act itself has necessitated the organization of a special staff.

The National War Funds Council provided for by section 3 has been set up, and was called together in November.

There have been two conferences of representatives of Patriotic Societies. The second conference affirmed the desirability of a federation of New Zealand Patriotic Societies to be managed by an Advisory Board. Pending the establishment of the federation a provisional Advisory Board consisting of representatives of the most important societies has been appointed. The Board has twice met since the close of the financial year, and its value, even at this early stage, is apparent.

Looking back it is clear that the conferences, the Board, and the work carried out under the Act have been the means of furthering the necessary co-operation of Patriotic Societies in their common object, of preventing overlapping in their work, and helping to co-ordinate their work and that of the Government.

The report of the officer in charge of the War Funds Office is printed in the appendix hereto. Regulations under the Act have been issued.

*War Contributions Validation Act, 1914 (No. 2).*—During the year six funds and the conditions of control and expenditure thereof were approved.

*Permits and Passports.*—The War Regulations of the 15th November, 1915, making it necessary for persons leaving New Zealand to be provided with permits granted in accordance with the regulations, are being administered by this Department, and have enormously increased its work, and in addition that of the Police Department.

It has also been considered desirable in the interests of the travelling public to establish agencies in the more important ports of the Dominion. The complete list of agents outside Wellington is as follows: At Auckland and Dunedin, Registrar of Births; Christchurch, Government Tourist Agent; Oamaru and Hokitika, Chief Postmaster; Dargaville, Postmaster; Bluff, Customs Officer; Whangarei, Thames, Gisborne, Napier, Wanganui, New Plymouth, Blenheim, Timaru, Invercargill, Greymouth, Westport, and Nelson, the Collector of Customs.

The detail work involved is great, and each case is the subject of a special report from the Police Department. The fact, too, that in the great majority of cases very little time is available in which to make the necessary inquiries has added not a little to the strain upon the officers dealing with the work. In the Head Office alone, in addition to the Assistant Under-Secretary and myself, I have found it necessary to detail no fewer than eight officers to deal entirely with permit and passport matters, and it has also been necessary to increase the record and accounting staffs through this exclusively war work. With the exception of Sundays and Christmas Day the office has been open for the conduct of permit business every day since the 15th November last. The overwhelming increase in the issue of passports during the past five months is due principally to the provision in the Imperial Defence of the Realm Regulations making it necessary for British subjects desiring to leave or enter the United Kingdom to be furnished with passports. In the earlier months of the year there had been a considerable increase through a similar necessity in the case of travellers to France, Egypt, and other countries.

From the 1st November, 1915, to the 31st March, 1916, 870 passports were issued, as against a dozen or less in an ordinary year. This is exclusive of permits, which run into several thousands.

*The Gaming Amendment Act, 1915.*—The passing of this Act for the purpose of regulating the raffling of articles for patriotic objects, and for these objects allowing property of any nature to be the subject of raffle permits instead of, as hitherto, only works of art, literature, &c., has resulted in a further large increase in the work of the Department. It has not, however, been necessary to increase the staff for this purpose. It is pleasing to note that the stringent requirements of the Department have been met in every case. Whilst enabling patriotic gifts which were ordinarily unsaleable to be thus easily turned into money, the strict limitation and advertising of raffles to the provincial districts in which they originated has prevented anything in the nature of a gambling mania, whilst the utmost care is taken to secure to the fund the full benefit possible of the money thus raised. A very large sum has thus been obtained for patriotic purposes which would not otherwise have been secured.

*Relieving Staff.*—The relieving staff of this Department was instituted by the Public Service Commissioner before the outbreak of war to furnish a staff of officers who should be available for emergency work in all Departments as occasion required. The war has been the means of largely increasing this staff, the practice up till quite recently being, where possible, to meet the call for assistance through officers going to the front by appointing cadets who were placed on the relieving staff. These cadets have now been placed on the establishment of various Departments, and the relieving staff is now used as a means of supplying clerical assistance to deal with extra work caused by the war. This has had the effect of largely increasing the staff-work of the Department.

*Sub-Departments.*—The effect of the war on these branches of the Department is shown in the attached reports from the officers in charge, but special reference may here be made to a few points. The Government Statistician is now completing the work in connection with the National Register. I take this opportunity of placing on record the extremely valuable help rendered by the Post and Telegraph Department. Without the services of the expert sorters and other officers loaned by that Department the preliminary sorting and classifying of the schedules could not have been completed as efficiently and expeditiously as was actually the case. The report of the Registrar-General shows the effect of the war on marriages, the increase during the year being 894.

*New Zealand Gazette.*—During the year no fewer than thirty-nine *Gazettes* Extraordinary, containing matter dealing with the war, have been issued.