

1917.
NEW ZEALAND.

DEFENCE FORCES OF NEW ZEALAND.

REPORT OF THE GENERAL OFFICER COMMANDING THE FORCES, FROM 1st JUNE, 1916,
TO 31st MAY, 1917.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

SIR,— Headquarters, New Zealand Military Forces, Wellington, 17th July, 1917.

I have the honour to submit herewith the annual report on the Defences Forces. The report covers the period from the date of last year's report to the 31st May, 1917.

Regular Reinforcements have been despatched monthly during the year to maintain our Forces in the field. It is a matter for thankfulness and congratulation that again during the military year ending the 31st May, 1917, no serious accident or delay has occurred in despatch or during transit of the transport or freight ships to their destinations or on returning ships conveying invalids back to the Dominion. From reports and memoranda from reliable military authorities in the United Kingdom, France, and Egypt it is satisfactory to know that the class of men and their training supplied by the New Zealand Forces have been pronounced very good. Minor defects or differences of opinion as to the training have regularly been adjusted by the method of a complete report on the training of each draft being forwarded to arrive with the draft concerned. In return, changes in training requirements and methods are regularly received from abroad, and are at once put into practice in the training-camps.

The work and responsibilities of the various branches of the Defence Department continue to increase. During the year it was necessary to establish a special section for recruiting under the ballot system of the Military Service Act. This is at present situated in the Wairarapa Farmers' Co-operative Association Buildings, Lambton Quay, and is working in close co-operation and harmony with the Recruiting Board, the Government Statistician, and Registration and Ballot Offices.

The method and details for demobilization and the reversion of the Military Forces to a peace footing, both as regards personnel and material at the conclusion of the war, is having due consideration, and will be in readiness when the time arrives.

It gives me great pleasure to bring to your notice the continued and excellent work of the Board of Advice *re* Munitions and Supplies, Financial Assistance Board, Discharged Soldiers' Employment Bureau, Base Records, War Expenses Branch, Transport Board, Embarkation and Disembarkation staffs, Shipping Section, Camp and Barrack Construction, Military Service and Medical Boards, and the Harbour Board, in which many voluntary officials and staff so willingly labour in a manner which has proved itself by the efficient results achieved. Every credit is due to the staff and other ranks of the Defence Department, military, civil, and temporary, serving in all branches of the Defence Forces throughout the Dominion and in the training-camps, many of whom are Territorial officers, not themselves eligible for foreign service but relieving the regular permanent staff. It is entirely due to the loyal work of the above, their cheerful co-operation night and day, early or late, that the strenuous duties in this unprecedented emergency are on the whole being so smoothly carried out.

I also desire to express my appreciation of the very cordial assistance accorded by the civil Departments of the Public Service of the State in the many varied and often urgent demands made upon their time and material.

The thanks of the Defence Department are due to the officers and crews on the troop transports and freight ships conveying troops, also to all workers ashore, and the waterside, who have so well laboured to refit, load, and man the above ships, enabling them to be despatched generally up to time and perfectly seaworthy in every respect.

I have, &c.,

A. W. ROBIN, Major-General,
Commanding New Zealand Military Forces.

The Hon. the Minister of Defence, Wellington, New Zealand.