

(4.) *Fire Brigades Act.*

*Fire Districts.*—No new districts were constituted during the year. One district (Ohakune) was abolished.

*Inspection of Fire Brigades.*—The Inspector of Fire Brigades continued his work without interruption during the year. His report up to the end of the Fire Boards' year, 30th June, is contained in a separate parliamentary paper (H.—6A).

*Fire Brigades Conference.*—The resolutions passed at this Conference deal with several matters of importance. They are at present under consideration.

(5.) *Motor Regulation Act.*

Ten County Councils adopted Part II of the Act during the year.

Letters and numerals as identification-marks were allotted to 12 registering authorities.

(6.) *Weights and Measures Act.*

During the year just ended good progress has been made in improving the administration of this Act, particularly with regard to the inspection of weighbridges.

The better class of scales now coming into general use shows that public and commercial opinion is being aroused to the importance of correct weight being given in all sales of goods. It is safe to say that both buyers and sellers lose many thousands of pounds in the course of a year through imperfect scales, weights, and measures.

As indicated in my report last year, the Act requires amendment in various directions before it will be possible to place the inspection of weights and measures on a really satisfactory basis.

(7.) *Board of Science and Art.*

The Board of Science and Art held its second annual meeting on the 1st February, 1917. In the report of the Director of the Dominion Museum a summary will be found of the Board's work during the year.

(8.) *Censorship of Films.*

Pursuant to the Cinematograph Film Censorship Act, 1916, a Censor of Films was appointed on the 16th September, 1916. From that date to the 31st March, 1917, separate films of a total length of 2,107,310 ft. were examined. Approval was refused in seventeen cases. In 114 cases approval was granted only after excisions had been made to the satisfaction of the Censor. One appeal was made against the Censor's decision. The appeal was dismissed.

Inspection and other fees amounted to £733 9s. 11d., which more than covered the expenditure during the period.

Various requests have been made for an amendment of the Act to provide for the censorship of posters advertising films, and in accordance with your direction legislation will be drafted to deal with the matter.

(9.) *Hector Observatory.*

Much useful work has been done at the Observatory during the year. In accordance with your desire Dr. Adams delivered lectures in other towns in the Dominion. As the result of a lecture in Wanganui the local astronomical society has offered the Government the use of the society's equatorial telescope, which is the largest in New Zealand. It is expected that much valuable work will be undertaken as the result of this offer. Dr. Adams's report is printed in the schedule hereto.

(10.) *Old Soldiers' Graves.*

It is now some four years since the Department was given the care of the graves of soldiers who fought and died during the various wars.

In the interval a large amount of work has been done in the renovation of these graves throughout the Auckland and Taranaki Provinces under the supervision of Miss Statham, Inspector of Old Soldiers' Graves. The rate of progress after the passage of so many years since the Maori wars is slow, because of the difficulty in locating graves in the various cemeteries; but already exceedingly good work has been done. In a number of cases cemeteries which were nothing but wildernesses when the Department undertook the work are now in good order. This change has been a source of comfort to the relatives, and has been appreciated by those who desire to honour the memory of the men who were called upon to make the great sacrifice in the early years of our national existence.

The practice followed by the Department, when the graves are located and the names obtained, is to endeavour to trace the relatives and request their concurrence in the proposed renovation of the graves. If the relatives are in a position to meet the cost they are asked to do so, and in many instances are only too glad to pay for the work. Where the relatives cannot be found, or are in poor circumstances, the Department meets the cost.

In cases where there were no headstones suitable monuments have been erected in the various cemeteries, with the names, ranks, and regiments of the men inscribed thereon. Where, as occasionally happens, it is not possible to ascertain the names, a special inscription commemorating the deeds of these nameless heroes is cut on the monument.