

APPENDIX.

I. REPORT OF GOVERNMENT STATISTICIAN.

Census and Statistics Office, Wellington, 21st June, 1917.

THE statistical work has continued to increase by leaps and bounds, and has imposed a severe strain on the few senior officers on the permanent staff. Additional work was thrown on the office during the year in the taking of the quinquennial census, and in the enrolment and balloting of Reservists under the Military Service Act passed last session. To cope with the consequent enormous increase in the work a very large number of temporary clerks had to be engaged, and the office accommodation extended more than once. The total number on the staff is 68 males and 172 females, of whom only 36, including 5 females and 16 cadets, are permanent officers of the Public Service. The staff is housed in three separate buildings, viz.: those engaged on the census compilation and on statistics in the Public Trust Building, Lambton Quay, and Routh's Building, Featherston Street; and those engaged on military service registration work in Nathan's Building, Featherston Street.

The whole staff, both permanent and temporary, has loyally responded to the great demands made upon the office, and has worked willingly and well under very trying conditions. The utilization of such large numbers of inexperienced women clerks for this work has on the whole proved satisfactory, and they have undoubtedly justified their employment.

MILITARY SERVICE ACT.

On the passing of the Military Service Act the necessary organization for the enrolment of the Reserve was immediately taken in hand. The various forms for use of Reservists were prepared, printed, and distributed to every post-office throughout the Dominion. A very extensive publicity campaign was organized so as to bring the requirements of the Act conspicuously before the male residents of the Dominion; advertisements were inserted in practically every newspaper, while explanatory articles were published in the news columns at short intervals.

I am glad to take this opportunity of acknowledging the very great assistance and valuable services rendered by the Press of the Dominion in making the various provisions of the Act clear to all concerned. To the work done in this connection by the Press is due in no small measure the successful initiation of the scheme.

In addition to the Press notices large posters setting out concisely the obligations of Reservists and employers were displayed at every post-office, police-station, and railway-station, at wharves, &c., in shipping-offices, shops, factories, and other public places; while small placards (a facsimile of the large poster) were exhibited in all tram-cars, railway-carriages, coastal boats, &c., and in the larger centres were delivered by the postal carriers into every household.

The enrolment of the First and Second Divisions of the Reserve was proclaimed on the 1st and 2nd September, 1916, and during the month of September enrolment cards, notifications of change of address, and applications for certificates of enrolment poured into the office in enormous quantities daily. Some indication of the work involved in handling these will be gained from the fact that during three weeks of the month it took twenty-one clerks to do nothing more than open the mail, which averaged ten large sacks per day, while the account for postages for the month amounted to over £2,500.

The preparation of the Register of the Reserve necessitated the examination and classification of over three hundred thousand schedules obtained under the National Registration Act, as well as dealing with new enrolments, the recording of over eighty thousand notifications of change of address, and the classification of Reservists into twenty-one recruiting districts. However, notwithstanding the enormous amount of work involved, the first ballot of the First Division of the Reserve was taken on the 16th November—exactly two months after the closing of the enrolment period.

It has to be acknowledged that mistakes were made, many of them due to circumstances beyond the control of the staff; but considering the magnitude of the task, the fact that the work was entirely new, that no similar system existed previously from which precedents for guidance could be obtained, that all methods and procedure had to be devised and evolved for the purpose, that the staff consisted largely of inexperienced clerks, and recognizing the element of human error inseparable from such large undertakings, I submit that the number of mistakes resulting was remarkably few.

The ballot processes adopted were new and, so far as I know, entirely original. Experience has proved them in principle to be sound and efficient, but with the view of increasing the speed of operation several minor improvements have been introduced since the first ballot, with satisfactory results. The time occupied by the actual drawing of 4,140 names at the first ballot was eighteen hours, while the drawing of 8,545 names at the eighth ballot occupied only twelve hours and a half. The listing, checking, proof-reading, &c., of the names drawn preparatory to the issue of the *Gazette* calling the men up for active service have also been greatly expedited.

The unanimity with which the whole Press of the Dominion and the various representatives who have from time to time seen the system in operation have acknowledged the absolute fairness and impartiality of the ballot has been most gratifying. The Mayor of Wellington (J. P.