

REPORT.

I. THE WORK OF THE YEAR.

I. WORK ARISING OUT OF THE WAR.

A HEAVY volume of correspondence with the Government Statistician and the Defence Department respecting persons drawn in ballots has been dealt with.

The Military Service Act, 1916.—The most important work under this Act during the year was the balloting of members of the Second Division. This matter is discussed in detail in the Government Statistician's Report.

A number of applications by Reservists under section 42 of the Act for permission to change their names were received and dealt with. A peculiar feature of this work was that many of the applications were for permission for the Reservists to use their real names, this arising from the fact that the Act makes it compulsory for every Reservist to use the name by which he was customarily known on the 1st November, 1915.

Permits and Passports. The number of applications from persons for permission to leave New Zealand for other countries is well maintained, a noticeable feature being the increased number of travellers to Canada, the United States of America, and Japan.

Reservists who are classed fit for service are not allowed to leave the Dominion except under a substantial bond to ensure their return within a specified period.

In order to conserve the man-power of the Dominion the departure of men over military age, and those of military age whose services are not required in a military capacity, but who are of value for civilian occupations, is restricted in a manner similar to that pertaining to fit Reservists, with the exception that when the reasons adduced are deemed to be of pressing necessity permission is granted such men to remain absent for an indefinite period.

Returned soldiers discharged after service abroad and exempted from further service are granted permission to leave the Dominion unconditionally.

The Imperial Government's restrictions against women and children joining a ship traversing the danger-zones, which came into operation during February, 1917, are still in force, but during the last few months the pressure of applicants has relaxed, owing to the shortage of accommodation on vessels sailing by direct routes and the substantial increase in fares.

The War Regulations of the 21st August, 1916, and the 26th February, 1917, governing the landing in the Dominion of persons arriving by oversea vessels, are proving to be of great value, for, in addition to the check kept on all such persons, it has been found possible effectively to prevent men of military age coming to the Dominion to accept lucrative employment whilst evading their responsibilities under the Military Service Act, 1916. This has been accomplished without harassing the *bona fide* visitor.

During the year the American Government has issued directions that no alien will be allowed to land in the United States of America unless in possession of a passport viséd in the country in which the passport was issued. Visé may be effected by the Consul-General at Auckland, or the Consular Officers at Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin.

The Japanese Government has made a similar provision, and all travellers to Japan must obtain visé of their passports by the Consul-General for Japan at either Sydney or Honolulu, according to the route taken.

Registration of Aliens Act, 1917. In the Government Statistician's report is given an interesting table showing birthplaces by ages and sexes of aliens registered under this Act as at 1st July, 1917. Despite the extremely short time available after the passing of the Act in which to make regulations and the necessary arrangements with the Police and Customs, the work has proceeded smoothly from the beginning. The Act not applying to aliens naturalized in New Zealand, the figures given are, of course, not a true indication of the total number of persons in the Dominion of foreign extraction; in particular they do not show anything like the number of so-called Austrians. Chinese head the list, the total number being 1,826. Austro-Hungarians (the great majority of whom are Dalmatians) come next, with 1,123; Germans, third, with 785; Danes fourth, with 595. In the whole of the Dominion there are but six Japanese. The numbers of French and Syrians, 103 and 153 respectively, are also surprisingly low.

Changes of Names of Persons other than Reservists.—The usual number of applications by alien enemies under the War Regulations for permission to change their names were received. In addition many British subjects with German names are seeking permission to adopt English names. Each application is treated on its merits, and where inquiries made on behalf of the Department disclose that the applicant is thoroughly loyal and beyond doubt of British nationality the desired permission is usually granted.

War Funds Act, 1915.—The legislation of last session which made it necessary for those promoting patriotic entertainments to obtain permits therefor has led to a great increase of work in the War Funds Office.

The system of monthly statements of transactions of Patriotic Societies has been discontinued, the societies now being required to furnish quarterly statements only.

Societies now generally recognize that the War Funds Office exists not to keep a check on their activities, but to help them, with the result that whatever little difficulties in the way of satisfactorily administering the Act existed in the first year or so have now been overcome. Returns are furnished promptly, and societies readily seek advice from the office on various matters.

The regulations under the Act were amended in view of the fresh legislation, and the Patriotic Societies' Handbook was rewritten, published, and distributed to all societies.

A very valuable statistical return showing the transactions of all societies for the past three years has been prepared by the officer in charge, and will be presented to Parliament as a separate paper.