

To His Excellency the Right Honourable Arthur William de Brito Savile, Earl of Liverpool, Member of His Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, Member of the Royal Victorian Order, Knight of Grace of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief in and over His Majesty's Dominion of New Zealand and its Dependencies.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY:

As Commissioner appointed under the Public Service Act, 1912, I have the honour to submit the following report, as required by section 15 of the Act.

REPORT.

CONDITION AND EFFICIENCY OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE.

1. LOOKING back on the period of war, it is a satisfaction to be able to report, notwithstanding the great strain applied to the Public Service, that, after making minor allowances, the Service has never been in such a satisfactory condition as at present. Nor has the loyalty of the staff ever been at a higher pitch. Praise is due to Permanent Heads, Controlling Officers, and their staffs alike for such a satisfactory result. While the Public Service has been largely overshadowed by the carrying-out of military operations, the time has come when the devotion to duty and zeal of all public servants should be given adequate recognition.

2. The closing year of the war accentuated the difficulties in providing staff not only for the established Departments, but for the War Departments and for temporary establishments. In addition, developments of some Departments referred to in last year's report did not lessen the difficulties. While the duty of the Commissioners is to find suitable staff for the extension of the activities of Departments, it would have materially eased the situation during the year if some of the extensions of business had been postponed until after officers had returned from their military duties. In one particular case extensions have necessitated the transfer of trained officers from many Departments, a combing-out which has been severely felt by the Departments which lost their trained officers.

3. It is fortunate for the Dominion that a system of central recruiting was an essential feature of the Public Service Act. Without this the satisfactory results alluded to above would have been impossible. Whatever may be decided as to the future management of the Public Service, it is imperative, if its successful carrying-on is to be maintained, that all new appointments, promotions, fixing of scales of salary, and regulations for the whole Service should be made by a central office.

4. The number of officers absent with the Expeditionary Force on the 31st March, 1919, was 1,907, a decrease of 602 over the previous year. The total number of officers who volunteered or who were drafted for military service since the beginning of the war was 3,165. Discharges numbered 844, and 414 were killed in action or died of wounds, &c.

5. The Commissioners are much indebted to Government for agreeing to recommend Colonel J. J. Esson, C.M.G., as an Assistant Commissioner during the period occupied in the regrading of the Public Service. This has not only facilitated the regrading, but has enabled inspection to be brought up to date. Colonel Esson's wide experience as Assistant Secretary of the Treasury and Assistant Quartermaster-General of the New Zealand Division and Commandant of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force in Egypt has proved of valuable assistance.

In the course of a report to the Commissioner Colonel Esson remarks :—

During the past few years I have had exceptional opportunities of noting conditions in the Departments under the Commissioner's control, and think it is only just I should say how much I