

CHAPLAINS.

Apart from those serving with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, the Chaplains had little opportunity of performing service, but when their services were required they have nobly responded. This particularly applies to the "epidemic" period in November, 1918, when, at considerable risk and sacrifice, the Chaplains at the Expeditionary Force camps, &c., worked untiringly to relieve the suffering of the sick troops and to comfort the dying.

A total of 141 Chaplains have served overseas with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, and six of this number have either been killed in action or died while on service abroad.

By recently gazetted regulations the retiring-age for Chaplains has been fixed at fifty-five years, but in special cases extensions of service may be granted up to the age of sixty years.

BASE RECORDS.

The work in this branch has shown a regular but considerable increase during the year, and there are now 99,695 files for members of the Expeditionary Force who have proceeded overseas, and 16,200 subject files on various matters arising out of the war. In addition some 50,000 files from the Recruiting Branch have been amalgamated with the files of the Expeditionary Force. During the present year it is anticipated that the work will further increase, as it is intended to house the recruiting records, and when the War Expenses Branch removes to the new building Base Records will be responsible for the whole of the records for both branches. The general improvement in condition and saving of time and labour by having all records dealing with the Expeditionary Force at home and abroad housed in one building will be incalculable. In the General or Subject Record Section it became necessary, owing to the Director of Military Hospitals Branch and the Educational and Vocational Training Section being located here, to start systems of records dealing with each matter.

With the signing of the Armistice the work in the Casualty Section has practically ceased, and the ledgers received from London containing casualties on the western front are now being checked with this office records preparatory to the issue of a final casualty-book and a general alphabetical index of all casualties suffered by members of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force.

The number of men returning from overseas is increasing rapidly, and the demobilization of the fit men from the ship's side entails long hours and heavy work on the part of the staff to keep the discharges up to date and so prevent any inconvenience to the returned soldier.

A considerable number of applications for discharge overseas have been received, and this has added considerably to the work of the branch.

The cessation of casualties, and the fact that Army Casualty Forms, Active Service, are now being received with each returning draft, make it possible to reduce the work on the history-sheets which have proved so valuable in the past in the accurate and expeditious handling of casualty returns, rolls of returning drafts, and notifications to next-of-kin. It is anticipated an early reduction of this section will be effected.

The preparation and issue of medical rolls and service certificates will shortly require to be put in hand. The King's Certificate is now being issued.

The Honorary Staff was demobilized on the 31st March, 1919, after practically three and a half years' invaluable work.

RECRUITING.

The work of recruiting for the New Zealand Expeditionary Force progressed satisfactorily until, on the cessation of hostilities with Germany, the despatch of Reinforcement drafts to camps ceased.

Experience gained in previous years was taken advantage of, which enabled further minor improvements in the administration of the Military Service Act to be put into effect. At this date the whole of the First Division and Classes A, B, and C of the Second Division were exhausted either by voluntary enlistments or by the operation of the ballot. Owing to the Armistice intervening, the members of Class D of the Second Division—namely, those with three children—were not balloted for.

As time went on the Government Statistician was enabled to still more accurately classify the Second Division Reservists, and consequently the gross numbers drawn in the later ballots did not suffer to the same extent as in the earlier ballots by the striking-off of men wrongly drawn.

The position as at the 12th November, 1918, regarding the 134,632 Europeans called up under section 10 of the Military Service Act is as follows:—

Total Men called up.

First Division (single men)	..	..	..	80,083
Class A, Second Division (married men without children)	..	..	..	13,466
Class B, Second Division (married men with one child)	..	..	..	17,507
Class C, Second Division (married men with two children)	..	..	..	23,576
Total called up	..	..	..	134,632