

MILITARY SERVICE ACT.

This branch of the Office has practically ceased to exist. Since the signing of the Armistice and the consequent cessation of the despatch of troops overseas no initiative work has been undertaken, and only routine work for new registration or changes of address received is being carried on pending the issue of a Proclamation cancelling the Reserve. Two clerks are sufficient to cope with all the work.

REGISTRATION OF ALIENS ACT.

The work of registration of aliens has proceeded smoothly during the past twelve months, there being surprisingly little friction between aliens and registration officers, and I have to record my appreciation of the tactful manner with which the latter have carried out their duties under the Act.

Experience has brought to light a slight defect in the Act as passed, legal advice having been obtained to the effect that there is at present no necessity for registration in the case of aliens whose letters of naturalization have been revoked under the Revocation of Naturalization Act, 1917. A short amendment to the Act is therefore necessary to ensure registration in all such cases.

During the year regulations were made providing for exemption from registration being granted by the Minister of Defence in the case of an alien who has served overseas in any portion of His Majesty's Forces during the war and has received an honourable discharge. Advantage of this provision has so far been sought in some three or four cases only.

A table is appended showing the birthplaces and ages of all aliens on the register at the 1st July, 1919.

POPULATION CENSUS.

The compilation of the census results is nearing completion, and the last part (containing an entirely new set of tables relating to the constitution of households) is practically ready for the Printer. Another part (Fertility) is still in the Printer's hands, but the remaining ten parts, as well as five appendices (A to E), have been published. The publication of all the parts will be closely followed by the Government Statistician's General Report, now in course of preparation, covering the whole of the census.

PUBLICATIONS.

It is with regret that I have again to record delays in the publication of the principal statistical works of the Office, due mainly on this occasion to the late session of Parliament, and the consequent impossibility of obtaining at the usual time much of the necessary material from parliamentary papers or from Departments. Now that the war work of the Office is over, and matters are returning to normal, every effort will be made to expedite publication, as it is recognized that much of the value of the statistics is lost by undue delays.

There were no new departures worthy of special mention in the 1918 issue of the Year-book, and the various volumes of statistics were in much the same form as in previous years. A noteworthy alteration was the omission of the usual summarized comparative trade tables from Volume II, a step rendered necessary by the request of the Home Government, after the tables had been actually printed, that all trade statistics be published exclusive of gold specie and gold bullion. The continued prohibition of the publication of figures of imports and exports of gold will adversely affect the value of the annual trade statistics for 1918.

Interest in the monthly Abstract continues to be well maintained, the cost of living and price statistics being probably the principal attraction. The Abstract once again contains the detailed trade statistics, which were omitted for a period of eighteen months at the request of the Home Government, and reinstated shortly after the granting of the Armistice. The embargo placed on the despatch of the Abstract outside of New Zealand has just been removed, and attention is being given to improving and extending the usefulness of the publication.

Another edition of the Municipal Handbook of New Zealand containing information (mainly statistical) concerning the activities of the various City and Borough Councils and Town and Harbour Boards is in course of preparation, and will be issued this year. This is a very valuable record of New Zealand's municipal activity and progress, but could be made even more valuable and comprehensive by being extended to cover the activities of all local governing bodies, including Hospital and Charitable Aid Boards, &c., and issued annually as a Local Authorities' Year-book.

GENERAL AND SPECIAL STATISTICAL WORK.

The general work of the Office has been kept up to the standard of previous years, with alterations and additions to meet new circumstances. A good deal of extra work has been placed on the Vital Statistics Branch through inquiries for statistical information concerning the influenza epidemic, and a comprehensive special census of stocks, requirements, &c., of certain specified medical requisites was recently taken on behalf of the Public Health Department. Quarterly censuses of stocks of coal are still taken regularly on behalf of the Hon. the Minister of Munitions and Supplies.

I cannot conclude this report without again acknowledging the very efficient and willing services rendered this Office by both the Police and Post and Telegraph Departments. The former, in connection with the collection of agricultural and pastoral statistics, the military-service work, and the registration of aliens, has rendered great service; and without the help of the postal officers, who all took great personal interest in the work, the Office could not have carried out the various special censuses required of it at such short notice, and at such a small cost. My sincere thanks are accorded the officers of these Departments.

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