

1920.

NEW ZEALAND.

DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION

(ANNUAL REPORT OF).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

Sir,—

Department of Immigration, Wellington, 1st July, 1920.

Herewith I have the honour to submit the annual report upon the immigration which has taken place into New Zealand from the United Kingdom during the year 1919–20.

There has been a considerable increase in the number of immigrants arriving in the Dominion during the last twelve months, and the amount of work involved necessitated additions to the staff. I have pleasure in reporting to you that the members of my staff have carried out their duties in a very creditable manner.

The special concessions granted to members of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force are still in operation, and a large number of nominations from these persons have been received.

In addition to the above a great number of permanent residents of the Dominion have taken advantage of the privilege of the nomination system of immigration, and the persons nominated are now commencing to arrive in the Dominion. I am of the opinion that under the nominated system, the best class of immigrant is to be obtained, and I consider that the time has arrived when the scope of this scheme should be broadened to allow any permanent resident of the Dominion the privilege of nominating any person in the United Kingdom, irrespective of relationship or occupation, for an assisted passage under the usual conditions governing the granting of such passages. (NOTE.—The above has since been decided upon, and is now in operation.)

In my last annual report I stated that it was hoped to secure accommodation for nominated passengers about last September. However, the repatriation of New Zealand soldiers was not completed until some time after that date, and consequently there has only been a limited amount of accommodation available. There were also a large number of New-Zealanders who had been in England during the war and who had to be brought home. These people were compelled to remain in England for a much longer period than they desired, this, of course, being due to the small amount of berthing-accommodation on the outgoing steamers.

The Imperial Government has commenced its free immigration scheme for ex-service men—viz., officers and men of the Royal Navy, the British Army (excluding Dominion and Colonial Forces), or the Royal Air Force who have served in the present war and who wish to settle within the Empire overseas, such persons being granted free third-class passages for themselves and their dependants, provided that they are approved under one of the agricultural-settlement schemes of the overseas Governments, or are going to assured employment and are otherwise acceptable to the Government of the territory to which they desire to go. This privilege will also be extended to the widows and dependants of ex-service men as defined above provided that they are entitled to draw pension from Imperial funds under the terms of the pensions warrant.

While it is not desired to put a damper on this class of immigrant altogether, it is only fair to point out the present difficulty which exists in regard to securing suitable housing for the married men and their wives and families. Instructions have been issued to the High Commissioner in London to acquaint such intending immigrants of this difficulty. This does not apply to single men and women, as they cannot be placed in the same category as married people with young families.

It has so far not been possible to arrange for the despatch of parties of domestic servants. However, it is anticipated that the new arrangements whereby domestics will be granted free third-class passages with an allowance of £2 for expenses will be the means of securing a much larger number of suitable girls for the Dominion.

During the past year two women delegates—Misses Watkin and Girdler—who were sent out to New Zealand by the British Government, have been travelling through the country making inquiries regarding openings for women eligible for free passages under the Imperial Government's free immigration scheme. As these delegates only left New Zealand in May last their report has not yet been submitted to the Home authorities. I am not in a position to state definitely the result of the inquiries made; however, I am of the opinion that there is not a great deal of scope to place women settlers, other than domestic servants, in this Dominion.