

VI. REPORT OF OFFICER IN CHARGE, WAR FUNDS OFFICE.

War Funds Office, Wellington, 18th June, 1920.

As a result of peace being declared it was found necessary early in the year to take steps in the direction of closing the accounts of purely collecting War Funds organizations which had no further scope for their activities, and to arrange for the transfer of the funds in hand to the central provincial associations controlling the granting of relief and assistance to soldiers and their dependants.

The arrangement has generally given satisfaction, and, except in the Wellington Province, where numerous incorporated societies had been established, the bulk of the available moneys has been placed under the control of the principal provincial organizations, which supply their subsidiary branches with funds for local distribution by way of imprest. The question of rearrangement of the Wellington District incorporated societies is in the hands of the Advisory Board, and a mutually satisfactory arrangement is expected.

The Red Cross Funds are being similarly treated, and are held by the Dominion Executive, Wellington, and the sub-centres at Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin, and Invercargill.

At the 31st March, 1920, there remained 326 approved War Funds operating within the Dominion, whilst eighty-nine sub-branches of the Red Cross centres are still carrying on their activities.

The latest statistics available show that at the 31st March, 1920, the cash and assets of the existing War Funds amounted to £1,507,058, made up as follows:—

	£
Incorporated societies	1,019,744
Other War Funds not incorporated	63,170
Red Cross and St. John Ambulance Funds	224,531
Women's League and Parcels Funds	20,677
Church and Social Funds	81,642
Sundry other funds	97,294
Total	£1,507,058

The total funds raised by patriotic effort during the war period accounted for by this Office approximate £5,700,000, an average of about £4 18s. *per capita*; £1,488,803 of this amount was remitted for overseas funds. Gift goods shipped by the Internal Affairs Department for the comfort of New Zealand troops and for New Zealand hospitals abroad were valued at £557,536.

There remains in the hands of the High Commissioner for New Zealand at the 31st March, 1920, an amount of £56,695 which is in excess of the overseas needs for which the money was raised, and arrangements have been made with a view to having the sum returned to the Dominion, to be administered for the benefit of relief and assistance to soldiers and their dependants.

In October last a comprehensive scheme for dealing with the position arising in connection with the surpluses held by societies at the end of the war was laid before the executive committee of each approved War Fund and sub-centre of the British Red Cross and Order of St. John, who were requested to make recommendations as to the disposal of their funds. The suggestions were dealt with on their merits, and resulted in the proposals being brought to a conclusion satisfactory both to the contributors to the funds and the executive officers of the societies concerned.

The outstanding feature of the year's work has been the heavy claims for relief of soldiers and their dependants; and, though each society has been governed by its incorporated rules, much attention has been given to the safeguarding of sufficient funds to meet prospective claims for men for assistance who, now apparently well and not in need, owing to the nervous strain of active service may break down in health in after-years. With a view of meeting such contingencies practically every incorporated society has earmarked a portion of its present assets.

The funds at present available are safely invested in accordance with the provisions of the War Funds Act, the average rate of interest exceeding 4 per cent.

NATIONAL WAR FUNDS COUNCIL.

At the close of the financial year ending 31st March, 1920, the National War Funds Council had a credit balance of £37,494 6s. 8d., included in which is a donation of £5,000 received from the War Office Cinematograph Council, London.

The personnel of the Council has been added to by Mr. H. H. Holland, C.B.E., of Christchurch, and Mr. J. J. Clarke, C.B.E., of Dunedin, ex-Mayors of the cities mentioned, who have been valuable members of the Council since its inauguration.

In connection with the bursaries granted to returned soldiers who through war service had their University courses interrupted, it may be mentioned that eighty-three men were able to avail themselves of the privileges afforded them by the Council, which assistance has been much appreciated by the students.

In view of the fact that the Repatriation Department made arrangements whereby all educational grants should be dealt with by that Department, it is only in very exceptional cases that fresh bursaries are granted by the Council.

Much good work has been done by the Council during the year in connection with providing relief and assistance to soldiers and their dependants, and the Council still continues to control and administer the following funds which were handed over to them: Westland Patriotic Committee; Buller Sick and Wounded Soldiers Fund; The Public Service Sick and Wounded Soldiers Fund; The Commercial Travellers and Warehousemen's Mercantile Marine Fund.

GEO. DAVIES,
Acting Officer in Charge.

The Under-Secretary, Department of Internal Affairs, Wellington