

RANGERS' INSPECTIONS.

The Crown Lands Rangers have again had a strenuous year. In a few districts they have been able to devote a good deal of attention to the work of statutory inspections; but as a general rule the vast number of inspections required in the valuation of stock and improvements, &c., for discharged soldiers has fully occupied their time.

INSPECTION OF OFFICES.

During the year the whole of the District Offices have been inspected, and care has been taken to see that proper and adequate checks are applied for the safeguard of revenue. Special visits are made by the Inspector for this purpose, and many notices asking for a verification of outstandings appearing on the books have been issued to the tenants.

During each annual inspection all phases of work conducted by the Department are carefully investigated, and special attention is paid to the securities under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act, in order that the Department may run no risk of loss owing to defective documents.

It is also the duty of the Inspector to report on all members of the clerical staff, the manner in which they perform their duty, &c., also to endeavour to arrange for uniformity of practice in the various offices. Such reports are of much value in connection with transfers or promotions.

The Inspector has necessarily to use the utmost tact in the discharge of his duties, to be thorough in his work, and at the same time be fearless and impartial in his criticisms and investigations. In this connection the Inspector has discharged his duties in a very efficient manner and at the same time has acted as an advisor to junior officers. The Inspector has gained the confidence of the staff, which is of material importance.

STAFF OF DEPARTMENT.

On the 31st March, 1921, there were in the employ of the Department 648 permanent officers and 82 temporary officers, or a total of 730. During the ensuing twelve months, in consequence of the Government's decision to reduce staffs wherever possible, 19 officers were retired on superannuation, whilst 9 more had their services terminated under sections 12 and 51 of the Public Service Act, 1912. In addition 26 officers resigned from the Service, 5 officers were transferred to other Departments, and 5 officers died; whilst the services of many temporary officers were also dispensed with. To balance this, 57 officers were newly appointed or transferred from other Departments. The result was that at the 31st March, 1922, there was a decrease of 47. The staff now consists of 631 officers permanently appointed and 42 officers temporarily appointed, or a total of 683.

DEPARTMENTAL CHANGES.

The following are the respective changes in the personnel of the Department that took place during the year:—

Deaths.

Harold Armstrong, draughtsman and computer in the Napier office of the Department, died on the 19th June, 1921. He carried out good work in several offices, having proved himself to be an exceptionally reliable officer who never spared himself in the performance of his duties.

Alexander Francis Browne, draughtsman in charge of the Native Branch of the Napier office, died on the 21st April, 1921. He was an officer with high ideals who served the Department faithfully and with ability, and during his term of service in the Gisborne and Napier offices had shown himself a careful and reliable officer.

Robert Leckie, Chief Clerk, Christchurch office, had been in the service of the Department since the 1st March, 1885. He was formerly Private Secretary to the Minister of Lands, and subsequently was a member of the staff of the Auckland office. He was promoted to be Chief Clerk in the Christchurch office and Secretary to the Canterbury Land Board on the 3rd October, 1911. He manifested a keen interest in his work, proving himself zealous, tactful, and reliable, and during the stress of work in connection with discharged-soldier settlement afforded very valuable assistance to the Government. Unfortunately, he had a breakdown in health in October, and died at Rotorua on the 1st November.

George John Logan, a draughtsman in the Blenheim office, died on the 20th May, 1921. He had been a member of the Expeditionary Force, and returned from service with impaired health. Mr. Logan first worked on the staff of one of the Government surveyors, and was subsequently appointed to the draughting staff of the Blenheim office, where he proved himself to be a steady, conscientious, and willing officer.

N. S. C. Porch, Record Clerk in the Auckland office, died suddenly on the 13th September last. He had been on the Clerical Branch of the Department since October, 1905, his service being mostly in the Auckland office, where he carried out his duties in a very satisfactory manner.

Retirements.

The principal retirement from the Department during the year was that of Mr. Thomas Noel Brodrick. Although the date of his retirement was not until after the close of the period covered by this report, it is more convenient to include it with the retirements for the preceding twelve months. Mr. Brodrick served his survey apprenticeship with the late Hon. G. F. Richardson, and passed his examination as a surveyor before entering the Public Service. He joined the Department on the 9th May, 1877, first taking up duty as an assistant surveyor on Banks Peninsula, Canterbury, and after performing many services of a diverse character in the Canterbury District he was