

(e) RETIREMENTS OF STAFF.

It became possible under the provisions of section 39 of the Finance Act, 1930 (No. 2), to retire a number of the staff of the Department, both military and civil, as from the 31st March, 1931. The Act referred to authorized the retirement on superannuation of any member of the Permanent Force or the Permanent Staff under the Defence Act, 1909, or of the clerical staff of the Defence Department whose age or length of service was such that if five years had been added thereto they would have been enabled as of right or with the consent of the Minister of Defence to have given notice to retire voluntarily.

A total of seventy-six officers and other ranks was accordingly retired on superannuation as from the 31st March, 1931, under the authority of the section of the Act referred to. The suspension of military training and a reorganization of the work of the Department allowed also of the termination of the services of a number of others who were not entitled to a superannuation allowance. Sixty-seven members of the staff came under this category.

The following table summarizes the reductions effected as described above, together with those effected during the year prior to the passing of the Finance Act, 1930 (No. 2):—

Unit.	Officers.	Other Ranks, including Temporary Military Personnel.	Civil Employees.	Total.
N.Z. Staff Corps.. .. .	8	..	..	8
N.Z. Permanent Staff	..	21	..	21
Royal N.Z. Artillery	2	34	..	36
N.Z. Permanent Army Service Corps	..	6	..	6
N.Z. Army Medical Corps	1	..	..	1
N.Z. Army Ordnance Corps	6	38	..	44
N.Z. Army Pay Corps	2	4	..	6
General Duty Section	..	14	..	14
Civil staff	..	..	33	33
Totals	19	117	33	169

(f) ORDNANCE AND PAY SERVICES.

The personnel of the N.Z. Army Ordnance Corps (except officers and artificers) and the N.Z. Army Pay Corps, to a total of seventy-four, were transferred to the civil staff.

(g) EARTHQUAKE RELIEF.

On account of the disastrous earthquake at Napier and Hastings on the 3rd February last, the Defence Department was called upon at short notice to supply tents, blankets, bedding, cooking and eating utensils, for use in the stricken areas. The total value of the stores issued from the Ordnance Stores at Trentham was £35,000.

The Ordnance staff did particularly good work in despatching these stores and equipment.

All members of the military staff in the earthquake area were detailed for relief work, as well as personnel from other centres, and on the 6th March, 1931, there were twelve officers and forty-six other ranks employed in connection with the relief camps.

All ranks so engaged are deserving of great credit for the manner in which they carried out their duties under trying conditions.

2. CIVIL UNDER-SECRETARY.

Under section 34 of the Finance Act, 1930 (No. 2), provision was made to appoint an officer of the Public Service, under the Public Service Act, 1912, to be Under-Secretary of Defence. In pursuance of this authority Mr. H. Turner, Assistant Public Trustee, was appointed to the position. Mr. Turner assumed the duties of Under-Secretary as from the 10th November, 1930.

3. AIR SERVICES.

(a) N.Z. PERMANENT AIR FORCE.

The strength of the N.Z. Permanent Air Force is now ten officers and forty-five other ranks, which represents a slight increase over that of the previous year.

Owing to pressure of economy, the liaison office at the Air Ministry was closed down in February, and Squadron-Leader T. M. Wilkes, M.C., who had been carrying out valuable work as liaison officer, was recalled.

Squadron-Leader J. L. Findlay, M.C., after completion of training in England, returned to the Dominion in November, and resumed command of Wigram Aerodrome, Christchurch.