

RETIREMENT.

From a departmental point of view, undoubtedly the principal event of the year was the retirement of Mr. William Charles Kensington, I.S.O., from the position of Under-Secretary for Crown Lands on the 31st March, 1912. Mr. Kensington was appointed to this position on the 1st January, 1902, and consequently held it for more than ten years. As he filled it with such conspicuous success and ability, a glance at his past career may be of general interest.

Mr. Kensington was born at Criccieth, North Wales, on the 2nd August, 1845, being the eldest son of Mr. C. Jephson W. Kensington, of Prince Hill, Worton, Wiltshire. He was educated at Grosvenor School, Bath, and the King's School, Bruton, Somerset. He came to New Zealand in November, 1862, and twelve months from that date volunteered for active service with the Imperial troops on the east coast, who were then engaged in the Maori war. He accompanied expeditions to Tauranga and Maketu, and subsequently conveyed a message from Major Colville from Maketu to Tauranga, arriving in time to witness the attack on the Gate Pa on the 28th April, 1864. He was promoted to be ensign in the Auckland Militia on the 3rd June, 1865, and gazetted captain commanding the cadet companies of the Auckland Rifle Brigade in March, 1872. The Imperial War Medal was awarded him for his services.

Mr. Kensington joined the General Government Survey staff in September, 1864, and served his time with the District Surveyor for the Waikato. He obtained his land surveyor's first-class certificate on the 12th June, 1866, and was then employed subdividing lands at Waiuku and elsewhere. In 1868 he proceeded to Hawke's Bay as special Commissioner to settle the dispute between the Hawke's Bay Provincial Council and the General Government as to the values of triangulation to be charged to the latter authority. He then prepared sketch topographical maps, upon which the Government purchased the Seventy-mile Bush (between Takapau and Eketahuna) from the Maoris. In 1871 he was appointed Deputy Inspector of Surveys, and for the ensuing three years assisted in land-purchase surveys and roadworks. In 1877 he was appointed Chief Draughtsman of the newly combined Survey Office at Auckland, and held this position until his promotion to the office of Under-Secretary in 1902.

After appointment as Under-Secretary, Mr. Kensington was successively appointed to other positions, which he held in conjunction therewith, comprising the following: Under-Secretary for Immigration; member of the Board of Land Purchase Commissioners; member of the Civil Service Guarantee Board; member of the Public Service Superannuation Board; member of the Public Service Classification Board; member of the Tongariro National Park Board; Chairman of the Board appointed to select sites in both Islands for central military training-grounds and camps. In June, 1909, His Majesty the King was graciously pleased to appoint him a Companion of the Imperial Service Order in recognition of his long and faithful service in the Civil Service of New Zealand.

I may also draw attention to the fact that Mr. Kensington personally supervised the operations of the Land Drainage Branch of the Department, frequently inspecting the extensive drainage-works in the Hauraki and Rangitaiki Plains, to enable him to acquire a complete knowledge of the situation in each locality; that he also exercised administrative control over the operations of the Afforestation Branch of the Department, comprising five nurseries and twelve plantations; that he had an intimate knowledge of the conditions governing the sale and disposal of timber on Crown lands and in State forests, and gave personal attention to such matters; and that not only in the details of land-administration, but also in all the varied technical and other duties now devolving upon the great Department of Lands and Survey, he showed a thorough and intimate acquaintance with every phase of the manifold duties entrusted to him.

The career of our late Under-Secretary is a striking example of the manner in which energy and ability may be displayed in every branch of the public service, and for the general good of the community. His unfailing courtesy, patience, and kindness have endeared him to all those officers who have been fortunate to be associated with him in any capacity, and the deep interest he always took in all matters tending towards the advancement of the Department and its members will never be forgotten. It is as a friend rather than as a chief that he is universally regarded, and on behalf of the Department I desire to express our heartfelt appreciation of his long and meritorious services, which we trust are but a prelude to a happy and prosperous period of retirement.

DEPARTMENTAL CHANGES: PROMOTIONS, TRANSFERS, APPOINTMENTS, ETC.

Consequent on the retirement on pension of the late Mr. E. C. Gold Smith, Commissioner of Crown Lands and Chief Surveyor for Auckland, Mr. H. M. Skeet was appointed from Southland to succeed him, while Mr. G. H. M. McClure, of Westland, took Mr. Skeet's place. Mr. H. D. M. Haszard, Chief Draughtsman at Christchurch, was promoted to Commissioner of Crown Lands and Chief Surveyor for Westland, while Mr. H. G. Price, Chief Draughtsman at