

As an example of this I may quote the inscription (one of three) on the most notable monument unveiled by the Minister during the past year, that at Tuakau, on the site of the Alexandra Redoubt :—

TO THE MEMORY OF THOSE MEMBERS
OF HER MAJESTY'S FORCES WHO FELL IN ACTION IN THIS DISTRICT DURING THE YEARS 1863-64,
AND WHOSE NAMES CANNOT BE TRACED.

There's none of these so lonely and poor of old
But, dying, has made us rarer gifts than gold.—*Rupert Brooke.*

The Department has in addition had added to this work the care of historical graves. One of the latest renovated is that of Governor Hobson, in Symonds Street Cemetery, Auckland.

The Department also undertakes the care of the graves of British sailors as well as those of our Allies who have died while in New Zealand.

(11.) *Graves of Soldiers dying in New Zealand during the Present War.*

The question of caring for graves of members of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force dying in the present war is receiving very careful attention.

The first important step taken was to define the sphere of action of the Departments interested, the decision arrived at being that the Defence Department should be responsible for all graves beyond New Zealand, and that the Department of Internal Affairs should undertake the care of graves in the Dominion.

So far as this Department is concerned, therefore, the men whose graves are to be attended to are those who die while in hospital or in camp, or on their return to New Zealand after active service abroad, and while they are still members of the Expeditionary Force—*i.e.*, before their discharge.

After careful consideration the following line of action has been adopted :—

- (1.) The Registrar-General will give full particulars of the men with whose graves the Department will deal.
- (2.) A standard type of grave is being decided on, simplicity and artistic design to be the main features. The Government Architect has submitted designs, and several sample gravestones are being made for inspection before any particular design is adopted.
- (3.) The actual work will be commenced at Wellington, Featherston, and Auckland, where, of course, most of the soldiers who have died in New Zealand are buried.
- (4.) The next-of-kin will be informed in each case of what the Government is doing.

The following circular has been sent to all Borough and County Councils and Town Boards, certain Road Boards, and all Boards of Cemetery Trustees appointed by the Governor-General :—

"I have the honour to inform you that the question of funeral and burial expenses of members of the Expeditionary Force who die prior to their discharge from such Force has recently been under consideration. In connection therewith I have to ask whether your Board would, from a patriotic point of view, be prepared to supply burial-plots for such soldiers free of cost, and, if so, on what conditions, if any, and also if the Board would later permit the erection by the Government of suitable headstones or memorials."

With one exception the replies already to hand indicate the willingness of those controlling cemeteries to supply burial-plots free of cost, and to permit the Government to erect suitable headstones or memorials.

3. THE WORK OF THE SUB-DEPARTMENTS DURING THE YEAR.

As already pointed out, the war work of the sub-departments has shown a marked increase. In the performance of their ordinary peace-time functions they have been worked efficiently, with a special view to economy.

Census and Statistics Office.—Altogether apart from that created by the Military Service Act and the taking of the census, the work of this office has increased in volume, importance, and intricacy.

Registrar-General's Office.—With a revenue of £13,684 from fees of various kinds, against an expenditure of £9,175, this office would justify its existence on revenue grounds alone. Its value to the Public Service apart from the general public may be gauged from the number of searches made by the central office for various Government Departments—15,662. In addition, 8,000 children's allowance searches were made for the Defence Department.

Attention is particularly drawn to the difficulties under which the office labours in the registration of Maori births, deaths, and marriages. Steps have, however, been taken by which it is hoped an improvement will be secured.

Dominion Laboratory.—The Laboratory has now been fifty years in existence, and it is interesting to note that during the whole of that period the position of scientific head has been held by but two men—the late Mr. William Skey, F.C.S., from 1866 to his death in 1899, and the present Dominion Analyst, Mr. J. S. Maclaurin, D.Sc., F.C.S., who succeeded Mr. Skey. Conducting its activity in fields altogether apart from those in which almost all the other Government Departments have their being, it is not altogether surprising that the great economic importance and usefulness to the Dominion of the Laboratory are not fully realized.