

On the 31st March last the number of soldier members reinsured in the fund was 8,521, and the total amount of cover for which these members were insured was £356,202. The experience of the fund so far goes to show that the war mortality has not been so high as was anticipated at the outset, and this would appear to confirm the latest experience elsewhere. The total number of men with the colours includes those in reserve, sick, wounded, and so on, and the actual number in the firing-line is therefore smaller in proportion to the total on service than in the early days of the war.

The societies are experiencing other financial difficulties, particularly in connection with the contributions of their members who have gone on active service. At the outbreak of war almost all societies decided to maintain the membership of these men, the society undertaking to make good their contributions while absent. In many societies, however, through the unexpected prolongation of the war, this liability has become very heavy.

I am now considering a scheme for providing such financial assistance as may be found necessary in connection with the sick and funeral funds in so far as these funds have been affected by the military services of members.

TOURIST AND HEALTH RESORTS.

The falling-off in overseas traffic has naturally affected this Department, but the revenue has been well maintained, being £32,935, or only £202 short of the previous year (£33,137), which was the highest ever recorded. The increase in prices of all commodities has resulted in a rise in the expenditure from £45,782 to £48,732. After the war a large influx of visitors to the Dominion may reasonably be anticipated, and the valuable work of this Department will considerably increase, and the revenue of the office will be added to in proportion.

DISCHARGED SOLDIERS' INFORMATION DEPARTMENT.

The work of this Department, which was inaugurated by the Government in August, 1915, to assist discharged soldiers to settle down in the civil life, is steadily increasing, and the register now contains over twenty thousand names.

Quite a number of partially disabled soldiers who are unable to resume their old occupations are learning new trades at technical schools and in factories, workshops, &c. These men are receiving financial assistance from the Government over and above their pensions, and the trades in which they are being trained include tailoring, bootmaking, wire-mattress making, watchmaking, electrical engineering, vulcanizing, hairdressing, motor mechanics, &c. A few men are also being trained in different branches of agriculture on the State farms.

LIGHTHOUSES.

The erection of a tower for an automatic light on Flat Rock, in the Hauraki Gulf, has been commenced, but owing to exceptionally bad weather the progress has been slow. Soon after the work was started a very heavy sea washed away the concrete and casing which had been put down.

The erection of a new tower for Dog Island Lighthouse is now being carried out. This has become necessary owing to the perishing of the mortar in the present stone tower. The new tower is being built in ferro-concrete round the present structure.

Three new houses have been erected for the keepers at Puysegur Point to replace the old houses, which had become decayed. New houses are also being built at Tiritiri owing to the present houses becoming uninhabitable.

Incandescent lights have been installed at Mokohinou, East Cape, Portland Island, and Moeraki, and new revolving cowls have been put on the towers at the two first-mentioned lighthouses. An Aga acetone-acetylene light has been erected on the beacon at Jackson's Head in place of the Pintsch-gas light formerly there.

HARBOUR-WORKS.

Owing to the need for economy, very little has been done in the way of works in the harbours under the control of the Government. A beacon has been obtained for the Brothers Rock, in the Bay of Islands, and it will shortly be erected. A large number of plans of works to be carried out by Harbour Boards have been