

nine hundred. Letters for visitors sent care of the office and readdressed totalled nearly thirty thousand, whilst newspapers and parcels ran into many thousands.

During the past year many thousands of invitations were issued, including those for the reception given by the High Commissioner on the removal of the office from Victoria Street to the Strand, the review at Hornchurch Camp, and the service in Westminster Abbey on Anzac Day.

The Library also deals with an important section of correspondence, and innumerable personal interviews on matters relating to New Zealand, generally including trading with the enemy and Customs questions necessitating familiarity with the statutes, regulations, *Gazettes*, parliamentary papers, and the many other volumes and papers of the Dominion.

BRANCH FOR PRISONERS OF WAR AND CONTINGENT WAR MATTERS.

The steady increase in the volume of work which this branch has been called upon to perform in connection with the war has necessitated the establishment of a special section to deal with various matters which could be conveniently co-ordinated, and in July last I appointed an officer specially to take charge of the work.

I propose to refer to the matters dealt with by this section under their appropriate headings.

PRISONERS OF WAR.—MILITARY.

As a result of the Gallipoli campaign there were, on the 1st January, 1916, twenty-two members of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force in the hands of the Turks, three others having died shortly after they had been captured. Their number was later increased to thirty-four by the capture on the 3rd August, 1916, of an officer and eight men during operations on the Suez Canal. Six of these have since died.

A sum of £500, cabled by the New Zealand Government for the purpose, has been paid over to the Foreign Office in October, 1915, for the relief of New Zealand prisoners of war in Turkey, and it was arranged that one-fourth of this amount should be utilized for the provision of winter clothing, and that the balance should be available for the payment to each prisoner at the rate of 20 piastres per week.

I was, in the first instance, advised not to send food or clothing to Turkey, as so little evidence of the arrival of parcels could be obtained, and more especially as I was informed that the American Ambassador in Constantinople was taking a most sympathetic interest in the welfare of British prisoners of war in Turkey, and believed that it would be possible to supply all actual necessities for the winter season.

It appeared some months later, however, that the men were in many cases not receiving food and clothing suitable to their standard of living, and I therefore decided to despatch weekly supplies of food from this end to all New Zealand prisoners in Turkey and take the risk of parcels not reaching them. It is regretted that, owing partly to the difficulties of transport to the prisoners' camps in Turkey, which in many cases are far removed from railways, but mainly to the action of the Austrian postal authorities in holding up, for many months at a time, the bulk of parcels destined for British prisoners of war, very few acknowledgments of parcels or money were received for some time, but these are now coming to hand in considerable numbers, some of the men having received as many as nine parcels at a time; and by a recent mail fifty-seven receipts for money were received through the International Red Cross Society, Geneva.

During the month of August the first notifications were received of members of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force having been captured by the Germans on the western front, and the Department has been notified of the following New-Zealanders interned in Germany—viz.: fifty officers, non-commissioned officers, and men attached to the New Zealand Expeditionary Force; fifteen officers, non-commissioned officers, and men attached to Imperial units, including a seaman in the Royal Navy. There is also an officer (Captain E. T. R. Carlyon) interned in Switzerland.

In the case of prisoners in Germany, it is satisfactory to note that communication with them has been on the whole well maintained, and that, with the exception of petty annoyances to which they have now and then been subjected, such as the opening of tinned foods before distribution, their parcels have reached them regularly and in most cases in good condition.

CIVILIAN PRISONERS OF WAR.

There are eleven civilian New-Zealanders interned in Germany who are receiving relief through this Department. Parcels have been despatched until recently through the Australasian Association at Ruhleben, but owing to the establishment of the Central Prisoners of War Committee, which has made certain regulations on the subject, parcels must now be addressed only to individuals and not to an association.

One civilian New-Zealander, Mr. Charles J. King, of Napier, a gentleman who was in delicate health and over forty-five years of age, was released from Ruhleben in March, 1916, but only after I had made most urgent and repeated representations on his behalf.

Negotiations have been opened by the British Government with the German Government in respect of the mutual release of civilian prisoners of war either by means of repatriation or by transference to a neutral country.

As a result of the Convention recently held at the Hague, at which British and German delegates met to discuss questions relating to prisoners of war, it has been announced (28th July, 1917) that the Dutch Government will provide for the accommodation of 2,000 civilian prisoners, invalids being given a preference.