

## STAFF OF THE DEPARTMENT.

The calls made upon the Public Service generally in connection with the present war have naturally been felt to a large extent by this Department. At the outbreak of war the staff of this Department totalled 572, comprising 506 permanent and 66 temporary officers. Since that date to the 31st March last 171 officers have joined the Expeditionary Force, 25 of whom have given up their lives in defence of the liberties of the Empire. Twelve other officers died during that period, while 114 have retired from the Department and left the Service, and 22 have been transferred to other Departments. To cope with this serious abatement 88 new appointments have been made to the permanent staff, 43 officers who were formerly on the temporary staff have been permanently appointed, whilst 96 temporary appointments have been made, and 13 officers have been transferred from other Departments; so that the staff at the end of the last financial year comprised 398 permanent officers and 74 temporary, or a total of 472, thus showing a diminution of 100 officers from the previous strength of the Department.

With a view to economizing as much as possible, and to enable the present staff to cope with the abnormal position occasioned by the war, the work of the Department, wherever possible, has been curtailed. Triangulation has been stopped, and standard surveys nearly so, no inspections of surveys have been made other than those absolutely necessary, and the travelling of officers and the attendant expenses have been reduced to a minimum. In every office the substitution of new maps for old and dilapidated ones, the arrears of mapping, and preparation of plans dealing with compilation of surveys have also been postponed as much as possible. All work that is not deemed of first importance or immediately required for settlement or current operations has been allowed to stand over, leaving only the absolutely essential work to be carried out by the reduced staff till the end of the war, when better conditions will enable such work to be once more undertaken. The settlement of discharged soldiers on the land has added much new work to the Department, and in every direction demands are constantly being made upon the services of the staff. This will be better understood if it is remembered that this Department makes all advances under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act besides assisting the soldiers in their purchases and keeping accounts of their transactions. The utmost willingness has been displayed by all officers to keep the work up to date and have it promptly attended to, whilst, where necessary, officers have been permitted to take up duties outside the Department (such as on Military Service Boards, &c.) to deal with war work and new problems.

In every possible way the Department has co-operated with other branches of the Public Service in carrying out its respective duties satisfactorily notwithstanding a curtailment of staff. The loss of trained officers, and the consequent frequent changes of the duties of others necessitated by the departure of the former at short notice, have added considerably to the difficulties of the administration and of the individual officers affected, but I can conscientiously say that all have responded to the calls made upon them in a most loyal and efficient manner.

## DEPARTMENTAL CHANGES.

*Retirements.*

Mr. F. T. O'Neill, Assistant Under-Secretary of Lands, retired on the 30th April, 1918, but gave up active duty on the 1st February, on which date he commenced three months' leave prior to retirement. Mr. O'Neill joined the General Crown Lands Office on the 17th October, 1872, and had therefore completed forty-five years' service on his retirement. During all this period he served in the Head Office of the Department, and was appointed Chief Clerk on the 1st February, 1902, being promoted to the position of Assistant Under-Secretary on the 1st April, 1912. In addition, he acted as Secretary to the first Conference of Land Boards in December, 1904, and as Chairman of the departmental conference of clerical officers in May, 1914. Whilst the Immigration Department was a branch of this office Mr. O'Neill also acted as Chief Clerk in connection therewith. During his long career Mr. O'Neill carried out the duties entrusted to him in a loyal, zealous, and conscientious manner.

Mr. H. G. Price, Commissioner of Crown Lands and Chief Surveyor, Blenheim, retired on the 30th June, 1917, after a period of continuous service of forty-three years. Mr. Price first served in the Westland District, and was appointed Assistant Surveyor in 1881. He was transferred to the Hawke's Bay District in 1882, and joined the office staff as a draughtsman in August, 1892. He was promoted to be Land Transfer Draughtsman at Wellington in September, 1901, and appointed Chief Draughtsman in the Napier Office in March, 1908. On the 1st April, 1914, he was promoted to be Commissioner of Crown Lands and Chief Surveyor of the Marlborough District. During his long service Mr. Price proved himself a capable and energetic officer.

Mr. H. A. R. Farquhar, Draughtsman and Computer in the Head Office, retired on the 30th April, 1918, having been on three months' leave prior to retirement. He joined the Department on the 1st May, 1878, served as a survey cadet in the Otago District, and was appointed Assistant Surveyor in December, 1881. He remained in the field until 1885 and was then transferred to the Wellington District, and entered the Head Office as a draughtsman. From November, 1903, until March, 1905, he acted as Land Transfer Draughtsman, Auckland, but at the latter date rejoined the Head Office staff. During his long period of service he proved a hardworking and conscientious officer, who always endeavoured to perform work allotted to him in the best manner possible.

Mr. F. W. Hunt, Draughtsman, Christchurch, retired on the 7th November, 1917, after forty years' service in that office, where his local knowledge, wide experience, and attentiveness to his duties proved of very great benefit to the Department and the public.