

1919
NEW ZEALAND

DEFENCE FORCES OF NEW ZEALAND.

REPORT OF THE GENERAL OFFICER COMMANDING THE FORCES, FOR THE PERIOD FROM
1ST JULY, 1918, TO 30TH JUNE, 1919.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

SIR, Department of Defence, Headquarters Office, 15th August, 1919.

I have the honour to submit herewith the annual report of the Defence Forces covering the period 1st July, 1918, to 30th June, 1919.

The Expeditionary Force abroad up to date of the Armistice (11th–12th November) was fully and efficiently maintained, having at no period during the war been below strength, or short of equipment, Reinforcements, and supplies.

Shortly after confirmation of the Armistice, instructions to cease sending Reinforcements were received, when demobilization of camps and certain Home Services commenced. The late epidemic, however, delayed and lengthened the process, greatly interfering with the general work of the Department throughout the Dominion, entailing an immense amount of extra work, especially to the Medical and Equipment and Supplies Sections.

Up to date the transport of returning drafts of the Expeditionary Force on demobilization from abroad has been generally satisfactory. At the present rate the troops still abroad should be all *en route* by the end of August or early in September.

The Territorial and Cadet Forces have been carried on. Every endeavour was made to meet the various industries and shortage of labour. When the necessity for more Reinforcements ceased the Territorial camps and concentrations for the year were cancelled to still further meet commercial and pastoral industries. The experience gained amply proves that a more concentrated period of training at the ages of eighteen to twenty inclusive, instead of extending over the ages of eighteen to twenty-five, as at present, is very desirable. A condensing of the seven years' present training obligations into three years would, I feel sure, prove much more economical and convenient to industries and pastoral affairs.

In further reference to reducing the years of liability, on account of the uncertainty as to date of return of camp equipment, accoutrements, arms, guns, and stores, &c., which were sent abroad with the Expeditionary Force, and the natural necessity for post-war reorganization, the training of the Territorial Forces for the year ending May, 1920, must be continued on present regulations and somewhat similar to this year. This will enable a policy for sea and air defence to be discussed and formulated. The suggested reconstruction of training our land Forces above outlined should be considered at the same time, absolute co-ordination of the three services being an essential factor in regard to economical administration and finding of personnel.

When the war broke out in 1914, on the recommendation of the Inspector-General, Oversea Forces (General Sir Ian Hamilton), the system of reorganization by the appointment of an Officer in Charge of Administration was about to be introduced. For obvious reasons this had to stand over, but it is now being brought into effect, Brigadier-General G. S. Richardson, C.B., C.M.G., C.B.E., being the first appointed General Officer in Charge of Administration. General reorganization throughout the Dominion will follow in due course concurrently with demobilization. Thus by the end of 1919 it is hoped to return to normal peace establishments of the New Zealand Staff Corps and other Permanent Services, when, except for obligations to sick, wounded, and incapacitated soldiers requiring treatment, the service of Defence will assume pre-war conditions.

There are certain vacancies in the New Zealand Staff Corps for officers, and in the Permanent Staff for instructors and non-commissioned officers, only temporary appointments having been made during the war. Selection to fill these vacancies will be made after a qualifying course to be held towards the end of this year. Conditions and terms of service can be obtained from District Offices. It is hoped to thus secure suitable and efficient officers and non-commissioned officers from the late Expeditionary Force to fill these vacancies.