

## PRODUCE.

The Department still continues to earn good revenue from the sale of waste products. During the period under review the sum of £3,520 2s. 11d. has been paid to the Public Account in respect of sales effected in this connection.

## WAR ACCOUNTS.

The work of the War Expenses Branch, which steadily grew with the despatch of each draft of Reinforcements, reached very heavy proportions, and, since the signing of the Armistice, has heavily increased owing to the large drafts of men returning to the Dominion in quick succession. The increase in staff necessitated by the handling of the pay accounts of these large numbers of returning troops has rendered necessary the provision of additional accommodation, and the larger portion of the staff has now been transferred to the new building in Whitmore Street. In appointing fresh staff preference has in all cases been given to returned soldiers, a large number of whom are now employed in this office.

## SOLDIERS' ACCOUNTS.

During the voyage to New Zealand the pay-books of the men are carefully checked with the active-service ledger cards, and the men are paid up to date of arrival, with a further advance on disembarkation of approximately £10 to officers and £5 to other ranks, which amounts cover a portion of the twenty-eight days' demobilization leave given after disembarkation. The active-service ledger cards are then checked with the Base Pay Ledgers, and the full amounts due to the soldiers are posted approximately ten days after their arrival. The large number of men returning each month to be dealt with in this manner has necessarily thrown a very heavy strain upon the ledger staff, which has had to be increased considerably to meet requirements. When demobilization has been completed there will be a gradual easing off of the staff.

In my last report reference was made to a proposed alteration in the system of keeping the accounts of soldiers abroad. The arrangements for this change having been completed, however, simultaneously with the signing of the Armistice, it was not advisable to put the scheme into operation, as the cost of the change over would, under the new circumstances, have been too great, and, on account of the migration of troops to New Zealand, the results anticipated would have been negligible. Matters regarding pay of troops *en route* and after arrival in New Zealand have been so arranged as to meet the altered circumstances.

## ALLOTMENTS.

The issue of warrants for allotments and dependants' allowances since January last shows a gradual decrease as the troops return. The number of warrants issued in November, 1918, was 61,670; in March, 1919, 40,424; and in May, 1919, 25,486.

## SOLDIERS' REMITTANCES.

The Department still performs a large volume of work in arranging remittances to and from soldiers, there being a large demand from the soldiers or relatives in New Zealand for remittances to cover expenses during furlough leave prior to departure from England. The total amount remitted to the Staff Paymaster to the 31st May, 1919 (including deposits with the Staff Paymaster by banking institutions, &c., in London) was £373,717; while the remittances from soldiers to relatives and others in New Zealand, United Kingdom, &c., to the 31st May, 1919, totalled £34,818 (including cash found in the effects of deceased soldiers, which amounts are included in the balances of pay accounts paid over to legal representatives).

In the matter of remitting money to soldiers every assistance was given by the Department to soldiers and relatives in the way of quick despatch. Owing to the heavy demands on cable traffic and the congestion of the lines during the last few months, private messages from soldiers to their friends in New Zealand showed very heavy delay, usually the request reaching New Zealand about a month after the cable was handed in at London. To meet this contingency it was arranged in February last for soldiers to hand in their requests to the Staff Paymaster, London, who included them all in one packed official cable message daily to the War Expenses Branch. This system, which was agreed to by the cablegram companies, had the effect of making the cost of cabling cheaper to the soldiers, and the further advantage of quick despatch and receipt, as, being sent at Government rates, precedence was obtained over ordinary traffic. Upon the arrival of the daily packed message at the War Expenses Branch in Wellington the requests are transmitted to the relatives named in the cable, with full directions as to how the money is to be remitted. This system is giving every satisfaction.

## RETROSPECTIVE MARRIED ALLOWANCES.

Commencement was made in the first week of June with the issue of retrospective married allowances in accordance with the authority given by Cabinet for an amount of £495,000 under this heading. From the 5th to the 14th June 4,933 warrants had been despatched, representing a total value of £180,708 1s. 9d. The largest individual amount issued was £179 8s., which was payable to the wife of a Lieutenant of the Main Body. Included in the total of £180,708 1s. 9d. issued were 105 payments representing amounts over £100. The largest amount payable in respect of these retrospective allowances is £179 8s. for a Lieutenant, and £132 3s. for rank and file of the Main Body. Including the graduating smaller amounts payable on account of Reinforcements, the average amount worked out at about £36.

## DECEASED SOLDIERS' ESTATES.

The new system of wills instituted by Headquarters, London, has greatly expedited the settlement of deceased soldiers' accounts, as definite information has been received within a few months of the casualty in practically all cases, either (a) forwarding a will, (b) stating by whom a will is held, or (c) forwarding a signed statement that the soldier did not wish to make a will. This has been of