

*Fencing Act.*—Requests for a further Order in Council under section 20 of the War Legislation Amendment Act, 1916, fixing the minimum half-cost recoverable, were received. Inquiries were under way at the end of the year particularly as to the present cost of erecting fences in boroughs.

*French Monuments.* In June, 1918, a request for information as to commemorative monuments or tombs erected in New Zealand in honour of French citizens was received from the Vice-Consul of France at Auckland. A circular letter was sent to local bodies and cemetery trustees. The replies were surprising. In the whole of New Zealand, apart from headstones on graves, there is, so far as the Department was able to ascertain, but one that could properly be said to be a monument erected to the memory of a French citizen. That one is a mortuary chapel at Wakapuaka, erected by public subscription in 1889. The inscription on the memorial stone runs, "This Chapel is erected as a Memorial to the Venerable Archpriest Garin, S.M. He was the Pioneer Priest of this District, and the first to found Schools for the Education of its Youth. He died April 14th, 1889. R.I.P."

*Land Agents Act.*—A number of machinery amendments of this Act are necessary. In addition the various land agents' associations have made representations for alteration of provisions directly affecting them. These are being considered. During the year the revenue from licenses was £4,612, of which £4,151 was paid to Hospital Boards, £345 15s. being credited to Justice Department, and £115 5s. to this Department.

*Maori Antiquities Act.*—A large number of applications for permission to export articles of Maori workmanship were dealt with. Most of the articles were of modern manufacture and were clearly not subject to the restrictions imposed by the Act.

*Messenger Service.*—This service is expanding to meet the growing needs of Government Departments. In Wellington particularly, where the war has brought new Departments into existence, the interdepartmental carriage of letters and parcels has increased at least threefold. The Department at present maintains three motor-vans and one motor-cycle for this work.

*National Efficiency Board.*—During the time the National Efficiency Board was in existence its recommendations to the Government were formally placed on record in this Department.

*Information and Inquiries.*—One of the Department's functions is to supply information respecting the Dominion in reply to overseas inquiries, to trace missing friends last heard of in New Zealand, and to make inquiries through the High Commissioner on behalf of persons in the Dominion. During the year a request for specimens of certain New Zealand shells thought to be suitable for certain manufacturing purposes was received, and suitable specimens were despatched. The usual number of searches for missing persons were made, mostly with satisfactory results. Cable inquiries to and from the High Commissioner have grown very considerably since the war began, and during the last year a large number were despatched and received, the senders paying the cost thereof.

#### (16.) *Accountant's Section.*

The most noteworthy feature of the Accountant's Section is the large variety of matter dealt with. This is due principally to the fact that the whole of the expenditure of the various sub-departments is controlled by Head Office. The sub-departments referred to are—Ministers' Secretaries; Messengers, Office-keepers, and Charwomen; Registrar-General's Office; Census and Statistics; High Commissioner's Office; Dominion Museum; Dominion Laboratory; Electoral.

Every payment incidental to the administration of each and all of the above sub-departments has to be dealt with and recorded. This includes the salaries of the various staffs, which are all prepared at the Head Office, with the exception of those of the High Commissioner's Office. The average monthly number of salaries prepared is about 1,500. Another reason for the variety of matter dealt with is the fact that a great deal of expenditure which cannot properly be charged to any one Department is dealt with under this Department's vote for miscellaneous services. These items consist largely of assistance to deserving objects. In effect, the Government holds out a helping hand to many struggling societies whose efforts are deemed to be in the public interest. The following examples are taken from the Appropriations for 1918–19: Grant to the New Zealand Amateur Swimming Association, £100; grant to the Royal Life Saving Society, £75; grant to the New Zealand Institute for Research Work, £2,250; grants to Societies for Protection of Women and Children, £300; Y.W.C.A. subsidy on account of accommodation provided for girls employed in the Civil Service, £600.

Relief is also granted both in cases of general and individual distress. An instance of the former is the grant of £100 made for the relief of distress caused by the Opotiki floods. The latter are mostly grants to the dependants of Civil servants who died while in harness. It is only in rare instances that these dependants are adequately provided for. Other instances are those of the widows of members of Parliament, the general practice in these latter cases being to make a grant of £400.

Patriotic societies and members of the Expeditionary Forces also receive a considerable amount of assistance under this vote, as the following items show: Audit of patriotic accounts, £500; expenses in connection with the raising and distribution of various relief funds, &c., £7,500; difference between ordinary and special railway fares for members of the Expeditionary Forces, £13,000; expenses in connection with cinematograph films taken in France, &c., £1,000. Science and art is also assisted: Books on New Zealand birds, £187; investigation of mosquitoes in New Zealand, £100; preservation of aboriginal rock-paintings, £250; scientific and industrial research, £250.

The assistance given by the Government is not necessarily confined to New Zealand. During the year just ended £10,000 was contributed to the Halifax Relief Fund, and £10,000 was provided for the establishment and maintenance of the New Zealand Hospital at Etrambieres, France. This hospital was established for the relief of the French repatriates at the time when the exchange of civilian prisoners was first arranged between the Allies and the enemy nations.

Another interesting item on this vote is that of £10,000 for the purchase of the late Mr. A. H. Turnbull's residence. This substantial building, which is situated in Bowen Street, just opposite the Parliamentary Buildings, is now used to house the Turnbull Library.