

The number of soldiers suffering from war disability who are inmates of hospitals, sanatoria, and convalescent homes (who are supplied with extra comforts from Red Cross Funds) is happily decreasing, the matter of reorganizing the service has received the attention of the governing body of the New Zealand Branch of the British Red Cross and Order of St. John (Incorporated), and the closing of the Red Cross and Social War Funds at an early date has been undertaken.

The provision of relief and assistance to Maori soldiers having fallen almost entirely upon the War Relief Associations in the past, principally through the capital of the trustees of the Maori Soldiers Fund Council being locked up, a policy of transferring such funds to the National War Funds Council for administration has been formulated, and received by the Maori societies concerned with approbation.

All these amounts are properly invested and secured under the provisions of the War Funds Act, and, though applications for relief are at present very numerous, largely attributable to the economic conditions existing throughout the Dominion, the administration of the funds is on a sound basis, and it is expected that the moneys available will be sufficient to meet claims for relief and assistance to soldiers and their dependants so long as it is needed.

National War Funds Council.—During the year the personnel of the National War Funds Council was reconstructed with a view to providing the fullest representation to the approved Incorporated War Funds Societies and also to the Returned Soldiers' Association.

The Council at 31st March, 1922, had funds invested, at short call, amounting to £127,623, and is fully carrying out the functions set out under the provisions of the War Funds Act.

A system of uniformity in the granting of relief is aimed at. Relief to Imperial, Australian, and other Allied soldiers is met from Council funds, and in every case where the needs of a soldier or his dependants are not covered by the functions of an approved fund, provision for his care is made by the Council.

The Council assembles as near as possible quarterly, and urgent matters are the care of an executive committee which meets fortnightly.

The operations of the various local advisory committees and their relationship with the Council have been very satisfactory, and during the year the funds of the Foxton Patriotic Society were transferred to the Council in accordance with the provisions of the Act, and a local advisory committee was set up and is supplied with funds by means of imprest, on the principle adopted with the Westland and Buller organizations.

STAFF.

It is with pleasure that I acknowledge the true-hearted co-operation of my executive officers, heads of sub-departments, and staff. I regret to record the continued absence, through illness, of Dr. J. Allan Thomson, Director of the Dominion Museum.

The generous assistance rendered by other Departments is gratefully acknowledged.

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