

SESSION II.
1923.
NEW ZEALAND.

NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE FORCES.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL OFFICER COMMANDING, FOR THE PERIOD
1st JULY, 1922, TO 30th JUNE, 1923.

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

REPORT.

SIR,— Headquarters, New Zealand Defence Forces, Wellington, 11th August, 1923.
I have the honour to submit herewith the annual report on the Defence Forces covering the period 1st July, 1922, to 30th June, 1923.

The Hon. the Minister of Defence.

E. W. C. CHAYTOR, Major-General,
Commanding N.Z. Military Forces.

GENERAL.

THE three main features of the year under review were—

- (1.) The constant pressure of economy, which prevented the holding of training-camps for Territorial units, or the re-opening of the School of Instruction (which reduced the training to a minimum), and also caused the postponement of the purchase of much of the annual supply of clothing, &c.
- (2.) The Turkish crisis in September, 1922, which clearly emphasized the necessity for maintaining the Military Forces in an efficient state and with sufficient available reserves of clothing and equipment to allow of a small Expeditionary Force being mobilized and despatched without the undue delay and cost that would be incurred if clothing and equipment had to be obtained hurriedly. Though no call for volunteers was made, and though registration was limited to men between twenty and forty-five years of age, and (except in the case of officers and non-commissioned officers who were unmarried), 790 officers, 11,187 other ranks, and 300 nurses offered their services within four days. The staff had great difficulty in coping with the extra work entailed, but rose nobly to the occasion; the result showed that the present staff organization could have dealt efficiently with the mobilization and despatch of a force had such a course been necessary. An analysis of the registrations, however, shows the necessity for training the young men who are coming of age for service, since over 60 per cent. of those who registered were too young to have served in the late war.
- (3.) The purchase of the Sockburn aerodrome from the Canterbury Aviation Company. This aerodrome will form one of the "key" aerodromes required for either defence or communication services in New Zealand. Others required in the immediate future are one at or near Auckland for both land and sea planes and, later on, one near Wellington, also for land and sea planes. The Sockburn aerodrome has been renamed the "Wigram" aerodrome, in recognition of Mr. H. F. Wigram's services in support of aviation in New Zealand, and of his generous donation of £10,000 towards its purchase.

PERMANENT FORCES.

The Permanent Forces, though much reduced in numbers, have worked loyally and without regard to hours in endeavouring to carry out the provisions of the Defence Act. Almost all, but more particularly those engaged in instructional duties, are overworked, and have to turn out on a large proportion of holidays and evenings; so much so that no one, unless keen on the work, would remain for long under the present conditions.