

Departments, and I hope in my next report to be able to mention the adoption of a comprehensive and satisfactory scheme for dealing with these animals.

An open season was again fixed for opossums in a number of districts. The prospects for the coming season are extremely good, but it is becoming evident that, with the growing popularity of the industry, some check will have to be provided against trappers who have not sufficient knowledge of the manner in which skins should be treated. At present the difficulty is partially overcome by arrangement, but if the industry increases at its present rate, then it is evident that some check will be required with the object of the preservation of these valuable skins. The Department is watching the whole question of opossums very carefully, and the operations of each season are tending more and more to keep the matter on a satisfactory basis, by providing against any anomalies or disabilities found in the present system. With regard to the animals becoming a nuisance, this aspect of the matter is also being carefully watched, but in the meantime no authorities are being granted to permit further liberation of opossums in any locality.

PERMITS AND PASSPORTS.

The War Regulations requiring all persons over the age of fifteen years to obtain permission to leave New Zealand for any place beyond the seas were revoked by Order in Council dated 18th September, 1922. With the exception of British subjects travelling to the Cook Islands, Western Samoa, and the Commonwealth of Australia, all persons journeying overseas must be in possession of passports to facilitate landing at their destination. In regard to the round steamer service of the South Sea Islands, from Auckland, arrangements have been concluded with the governing authorities of Tonga, Fiji, and Samoa whereby all passengers (whether British or alien) may land at each port of call, during the temporary stay of the vessel, without being in possession of passports. British subjects travelling to France, Luxemburg, Netherlands, and Spain do not require to obtain a visa on their passports to land in those countries, and arrangements are now under way for the reciprocal abolition of the visa system in respect of Italy and Switzerland. 3,313 passports were issued during the year, an increase of eighty-two as compared with the preceding year, while the number of renewals of passports increased from 528 to 1,055.

MOTOR REGULATION ACT.

The County Councils of Otorohanga and Taumarunui have been approved as registering authorities under Part II of the Motor Regulation Act, 1908. It is considered to be difficult to read two letters and five numbers on a rapidly moving motor-vehicle, and in the case of the Christchurch City Council, which was approaching the ten-thousand mark, the following distinguishing letters and numerals were approved: CH. A 1 to 999; CH. B 1 to 999; and so on throughout the alphabet.

GAMING ACT, 1908.

Raffles.—A large number of licenses authorizing the disposal of works of art, &c., have been issued. A number of applications for permission to raffle real or personal property were declined. Attention is drawn to section 39, which expressly prohibits the disposal of real or personal property by lottery.

Regulating Admission to Racecourses.—The regulations made by clubs under section 33 have recently been amended and adopted by the governing authorities of racing and trotting. It is now competent for any person who, by reason of any conviction, comes within the scope of the regulations to appeal to the joint Stipendiary Stewards Committee, and for such committee, if they so decide, to grant exemption.

Totalizator Inspection.—The reports furnished by the Inspector and his deputies indicate that the control and working of the totalizator throughout the Dominion is satisfactory. As the racing season does not end until the 31st July, particulars of the total investments, &c., for the current year are not yet available.

SOLDIERS' AND HISTORICAL GRAVES.

Veterans' and Historical Graves.—The most important work carried out was at Tauranga, where there are approximately one hundred graves of soldiers, the majority of whom fell in the battle at Gate Pa on the 29th April, 1864. The cemetery was levelled, concrete paths were laid, and arrangements made for the proper maintenance of this historical spot. Notifications of additional veterans' graves in various parts of the Dominion total fifty. Inspections were carried out in conjunction with those of the graves of men of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force who died since their return from the Great War.

War Graves (in New Zealand).—The total number of burials recorded at the 31st March last was 2,308, and of this number 1,807 are deemed to be war graves. At O'Neill's Point, Auckland, where there are 37 war graves, permanent work consisting of the formation of concrete kerbing and floor and the erection of universal headstones of Coromandel granite has been completed. Headstones were also placed over war graves at Palmerston North (13), and at Featherston (159), bringing the total erected for the year to 209. Specifications have been prepared for the carrying-out of similar work at Waikaraka (30), Purewa (45), Waikumete (132), and Birkenhead (2). The total number of orders for headstones forwarded to the contractors was 353.

War Graves (Overseas).—By arrangement with the Minister of Defence all clerical work in connection with war graves overseas is being carried out by this Department on behalf of the Defence Department. The work comprises the despatch of burial reports, photographs of graves, and the distribution of cemetery registers to approximately sixteen thousand next-of-kin.