

in volume of timber-control activities brought about by the war emergency and to the constant changes among the personnel necessitated by the calling-up of officers for military service overseas and in Territorial units. In consequence it has been found necessary, in common with other branches of the Public Service, to replace many experienced officers by untrained temporary employees, with the result that much added responsibility has been cast upon senior officers. Similar difficulties are being met with at the sawmill and box-factory at Whakarewarewa, which came into production during the year. Owing to the large numbers of experienced bushmen and sawmill hands of all categories who are now on active service overseas, an ever-increasing difficulty is being experienced in procuring and retaining a full staff of trained operatives. Nevertheless, despite the many difficulties encountered, members of the staff have given of their best. Some have had to work extremely long hours to meet the constantly-recurring emergencies of a war period, but one and all have cheerfully accepted and performed such duties as a humble contribution to war service.

The permanent staff was increased from 176 to 193. Of the 17 new appointments, 1 was clerical, 2 were technical trainees, and 12 were cadets, 4 of these being supernumerary cadets required to fill vacancies occurring in the junior ranks through the calling-up of young officers for military service. The only important appointments were a Check Appraisal Officer and an Assistant Accountant at Head Office, the former to supervise and check the ever-increasing amount of timber-cruising work and the latter to cope with the additional work arising out of the general expansion of departmental activities. As mentioned in the last report, more permanent officers are required to meet the rapidly-growing demands of the Service, but the filling of the more-important positions will have to await a return to more settled conditions.

The positions of Conservator of Forests in Southland and Westland (two first-grade conservancies), rendered vacant by the appointment last year of a Senior Working Plans Officer at Head Office and a Senior Utilization Officer to supervise logging, milling, creosoting, and factory activities at Rotorua, were filled by the promotion of the two second-grade Conservators at Nelson and Christchurch respectively, the consequential vacancies in turn being filled by the promotion of two Senior Rangers. The Conservator of Forests in Westland was appointed to command the 15th Forestry Company (New Zealand Engineers) for service overseas, and this required the temporary appointment of a Senior Ranger as a Conservator.

To carry on the work of officers absent on military service, to provide for increased timber-control activities, and to establish a supervisory foreman personnel for the expanding utilization work of the Department, the temporary staff was increased from 99 to 116.

14. The response to the call for military service has been excellent: 31 officers are serving with the Army overseas, 16 are attached to Territorial units, 6 are serving with the Air Force, 27 are in the National Military Reserve, and 81 in the Home Guard and E.P.S., making a grand total of 161 officers, or over 50 per cent., of the total permanent and temporary staff on some form or other of military service.

SECTION B.—CASUAL STAFF.

15. The average monthly casual staff of conservancies was 1,194, as compared with 1,399 for the previous year. During the year a large number of the casual employees in the North Island conservancies were drafted to farm employment and, combined with voluntary enlistments and the calling-up of men for military service, resulted in the total number gradually falling from 1,362 at the commencement of the year to 1,074 as at the 31st March, 1941. The Rotorua Conservancy, the largest employer, suffered most in this respect, the numbers falling from 617 to 378, the monthly average being 468, or 39 per cent. of the total, as compared with 51 per cent. for the previous year. The longer the war continues the greater will be the difficulty experienced in obtaining men capable of undertaking forestry work, which calls in most instances for a high standard of physical fitness.