

1916.

NEW ZEALAND.

NEW ZEALAND EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.

REPORT OF LIEUT.-COLONEL THE HON. R. HEATON RHODES, T.D. M.P. (COMMANDING THE CANTERBURY MOUNTED RIFLES BRIGADE. ON HIS MISSION TO THE NEW ZEALAND EXPEDITIONARY FORCE IN MALTA, MUDROS, GALLIPOLI, AND EGYPT. AS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GOVERNMENT.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Leave.

SIR,—

Parliament Buildings, Wellington, 11th May, 1916.

On the 31st August, 1915, I was officially informed by you that I had been appointed by the Government to proceed to Egypt, Malta, Gallipoli, and, if necessary, to England, to inquire into and report upon various matters, which you mentioned, concerning our Expeditionary Force.

I accordingly left New Zealand on the 2nd September, and disembarked at Port Said on the 6th October, immediately beginning my work with the inspection of our No. 1 Stationary Hospital which had been established there. From Port Said I proceeded to Alexandria, where, excepting for an occasional visit to Cairo to report myself to General Sir John Maxwell, G.O.C. the Forces in Egypt, and to confer with Surgeon-General Ford, D.M.S., Egypt, I remained until the 19th October, when I left by transport for Mudros, in the Island of Lemnos. During my stay at Alexandria I was fully occupied visiting hospitals, convalescent homes, and camps where our men were located, inquiring into postal matters and the distribution of gift goods, and conferring with the military authorities.

At Mudros, where I arrived on the 23rd October, I was met by General Sir Alexander Godley, who had come down specially from Anzac to meet me, and with him inspected our Infantry and Mounted Brigades, which were resting there after the August operations. I also visited hospitals and camps on the island.

On the 26th idem, with General Godley, I left by destroyer for Anzac, expecting our troops to return from Mudros to the peninsula in a day or two. Their return being delayed, I took the opportunity of visiting Helles and going over the ground where our Infantry Brigade had fought in May. I also visited the trenches at Sulva and Anzac, and all positions where our Artillery were stationed.

After the return of the troops I spent some days visiting the Infantry in the trenches and the Mounted in camp at Bauchop's Hill.

I left Anzac by ferry-boat for Mudros on the 16th November, calling at Sulva on the way, and Mudros by transport for Alexandria on the 24th idem. While waiting at Mudros for the transport to leave I spent as much time as possible in paying further visits to the hospitals and camps where New-Zealanders were located, but for some days, owing to a storm that was raging, I was unable to go ashore. I arrived at Alexandria on the 27th November, and stayed there until the 8th December, when I left for Cairo.

On the 23rd December I embarked on the P. and O. "Nagoya" at Port Said for Malta, but the vessel did not sail until two days later.

Arriving at Malta on the 28th December, I stayed there until the 12th January, visiting New Zealand sick and wounded in twenty-seven hospitals, convalescent homes, and camps. I also visited the adjoining Island of Gozo, where there were a few of our convalescents.

On the latter date I embarked by the P. and O. "Kaisr-i-Hind" for Port Said, where I arrived on the 15th and proceeded at once to Cairo. I remained at Cairo until the 19th March, when I left for Ismailia with the intention of seeing as much as possible of our troops in their stations on the canal, but, as the boat I had booked my passage by was timed to sail on the evening of the following day, I regret that it was not possible for me to pay other than a hurried visit to the 1st Infantry Brigade and the Rifle Brigade on the 19th, and on the following day to visit our Mounted men, who were in the trenches some ten or twelve miles east of the canal. On the way there I had the pleasure of seeing the Rifle Brigade cross the canal. They marched well,