

appliances. There is conclusive evidence that these inspections have been the direct means of saving a number of fires, particularly in the case of school-buildings.

The United Fire Brigades Association at its last conference decided to establish a depot for the supply of fire plant and appliances to the various fire brigades throughout the Dominion. It has been represented that this arrangement will lead to standardization, with a consequent higher efficiency. In response to a request received the Government has agreed to place the advice of the Department's experts at the disposal of the association, and to assist in the procurement of equipment which is not manufactured in the Dominion.

#### WAR FUNDS ACT, 1915.

The policy of the consolidation of patriotic funds has been carefully conducted, with a result that 204 separate funds operating in the Dominion have been closed during the last twelve months, thus leaving at the 31st March 211 active accounts. The total funds held by the remaining societies amount to slightly in excess of one and a quarter millions.

Owing to the revoking and cancelling of permits for collections or receiving or raising of moneys for war funds (*vide Gazette* No. 28, of the 6th March, 1919) the establishment of further war funds has been considered undesirable; but, in view of the urgent necessity to afford relief to children in the devastated area of Central Europe, Government authorized the raising of funds by a general appeal and placed the services of the War Funds and the High Commissioner's offices at the disposal of persons and societies, &c., who were charitably inclined. As a result thereof over £50,000 was handled and transmitted free of cost.

In response to an appeal from the British Legation, Peking, to assist famine-stricken Chinese the machinery of the Department was made available, and a sum of over £1,200 was transmitted free of charge.

#### SOLDIERS' AND HISTORICAL GRAVES.

The index of the old soldiers' and historical graves, embodying all the information collected since 1911, denotes that there are 954 veterans' and sixty-five historical graves. There are forty-six monuments of historical interest; and in many old burial-grounds the graves of veterans of the Maori wars are unmarked, and approximately thirty small monuments still require to be erected.

Shortly after the signing of the armistice the N.Z.E.F. War Graves Committee, as advisory body to the Government, was appointed to consider the policy of the Imperial War Graves Commission as applicable to the graves of members of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force who died in New Zealand. The Committee's recommendations were approved by Cabinet, and the treatment of graves in New Zealand will be carried out on lines similar to that being done by the Imperial War Graves Commission in Belgium, France, Egypt, and the United Kingdom. "War graves" are deemed to be—(1) Graves of soldiers who died while still serving; (2) graves of members of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force dying within twelve months from the date of discharge, and whose deaths were due to disabilities contracted in or aggravated by war service; (3) those who die as the result of a war disability after having been continuously under treatment since discharge from the New Zealand Expeditionary Force. In addition to these graves the Government will undertake similar work at Samoa, Niue Islands, at ports of call *en route* to and from the overseas bases, and on the graves of all soldiers and sailors of the Allied Forces coming within the meaning of the conditions laid down. The design of the headstone selected is the same as that erected on overseas graves, but the material is to be New Zealand granite in place of Portland stone. The headstones are to be 2 ft. 6 in. in height, 1 ft. 3 in. in width, and 3 in. in thickness, on which will be cut a cross bearing the New Zealand emblem (the fern-leaf), the letters "N.Z.E.F.," and the soldier's regimental number, rank, name (in full), unit, and date of death. In all cemeteries in which there are not less than fifty war graves two memorials, the "Cross of Sacrifice" and the "Altar of Duty," will be erected. In memory of those of our men who were buried at sea from transports and hospital ships voyaging between New Zealand and the overseas bases, monuments are to be erected at Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin, bearing the names of the men from the respective districts.

The total deaths of returned soldiers and details in the training-camps in the Dominion is approximately two thousand, but it is anticipated that the number of war graves will not exceed one thousand six hundred.

In the meantime temporary crosses are being placed over war graves, and to date graves have been temporarily marked in this manner in the following cemeteries: Waikumete, Waikaraka, Purewa, O'Neill's Point (Auckland), Hamilton, Cambridge, Te Aroha, Rotorua, Palmerston North, and Karori—a total of three hundred and fifty.

Arrangements have also been made to keep all the graves tidy, pending the completion of permanent work.

#### WAR MEMORIALS.

Subsequent to the termination of the war the question of granting financial assistance in connection with the erection of war memorials was considered by the Government, and it was decided not to subsidize collections of this nature, it being deemed that such moneys should be raised locally. The powers and authorities of local bodies were accordingly extended under section 15 of the Finance Act, 1919, to include the provision and maintenance of approved war memorials as therein defined. This legislation also provided for the erection of a memorial on any road or street under the control of the local body concerned.

During a visit to Great Britain Mr. Hurst Seager, of Christchurch, interested himself in war-memorial designs, and, having collected a number of illustrations representing the best work which had been produced by British artists, he very kindly presented these to the Government. Many of the exhibits are photographs which Mr. Seager was enabled to take in the Royal Academy Exhibition through the courtesy of the artists and the Royal Academy authorities. The designs reached Wellington in June, 1920, and immediately thereafter were exhibited at Wellington, Auckland, Christchurch, and Dunedin. A selection of thirty-eight of the designs considered to be most suitable