

In keeping with the retrenchment in the New Zealand Service, reductions have been made in Samoa in both emoluments and personnel.

The Departmental expenditure in 1921–22 amounted to £21,478, whilst the estimated expenditure in 1922–23 is £18,756, a reduction of £2,722.

#### COOK ISLANDS AND NIUE.

The past year has been one of fairly satisfactory progress, for notwithstanding the depression, the trade and revenue of the islands have been well maintained.

The expenditure in 1921–22 amounted to £15,406, whilst for the current year an amount of £20,521 is asked for. The principal item of increase is a charge due to the Postal Department on wireless services.

#### GOVERNMENT INSURANCE DEPARTMENT.

The Life Branch of this Department had a very successful year. The new business, which comprised 4,986 policies, for £1,631,250, was, with the exception of that of one year, the largest ever transacted, and brings the total policies in force to 59,189, insuring, with bonus additions, £17,279,734.

The premium income (including consideration for annuities) was £471,438—a record amount; and the funds increased by £183,804, now totalling £5,726,356.

The Department was one of the few life offices to maintain its bonus rates with but a slight diminution in the face of the severe strain imposed by the heavy war and post-war mortality, and it is most satisfactory to find that notwithstanding the larger business in force the death claims in 1921 were lighter than for a good number of years past.

The Accident Branch has also had a successful year, the premium income—£35,932—being the largest in the history of the Branch. A sum of £23,212 was transferred to reserve, and after deducting this the funds stand at £11,472. The statutory Reserve Fund amounts to £115,020.

A substantial reduction has been made in the number of officers, in spite of the fact that the Department has opened three new branches and that the business of the Department is steadily on the increase. It is expected that a further reduction will be made in the staff as the result of the amalgamations and otherwise.

#### STATE FIRE INSURANCE.

The State Fire Insurance Office has had a good year, and, although fire losses were much heavier than for the previous year, a profit of £39,324 was made after providing £30,230 for income-tax, reserve for unearned premiums, and investments fluctuation reserve.

The net income increased by £14,403, the gross amount underwritten by over £2,800,000, and the accumulated funds by £45,080.

The working-expense ratio of this office already compares very favourably with that of private offices conducting a similar business, and amalgamation with the Government Insurance Department is expected to effect further economies.

#### VALUATION DEPARTMENT.

The number of special valuations made during the year ended the 31st March, 1922, for stamp duty and death duty assessment, for determining the prices paid for acquiring the freehold of Crown lands under the Land Laws Amendment Acts, for assessing the value of Native lands in connection with alienations, and for the purpose of advances on mortgage from the State lending Departments, amounted to 10,875. The work of revising the valuations on the district rolls supplied to the Land and Income Tax Department and to local rating authorities has almost been completed, with the result that the expenditure on this work will show a material reduction during the current year. Last year over 50,000 valuations were revised.