

In the Settlers and Workers Branches the limits have similarly been varied from time to time, and the limit in the case of settlers' applications now stands at £1,000, while in the case of the Workers Branch the Board is lending up to the full amount allowed by the law.

In the Settlers Branch we are now lending money for the repayment of existing mortgages not exceeding £450, and we are also lending under this Branch up to £450 for the purpose of building homes in urban districts.

The following table will show the total amount advanced and the total commitments for the year ending the 31st March, 1915:—

AMOUNTS OF ADVANCES PAID OVER DURING YEAR ENDED  
31ST MARCH, 1915.

				£
Advances to Settlers	..	..	..	1,136,475
Advances to Workers	..	..	..	313,025
Advances to Local Authorities	..	..	..	336,295
				£1,785,795

COMMITMENTS AS AT 31st MARCH, 1915.

				£
Advances to Settlers	..	..	..	267,157
Advances to Workers	..	..	..	79,640
Advances to Local Authorities	..	..	..	335,625
				£682,422

PUBLIC SERVICE SUPERANNUATION FUND.

The Government Actuary has completed the second triennial investigation of the fund under section 48 of the Act, and in his report, which will be presented to Parliament before the close of the session, he estimates that the Government contribution to the fund for the current and succeeding two years will amount to £66,000, being £18,000 more than last year's payment. The Government has decided to pay, until the date of their return, the contributions of all public officers who are absent with our Expeditionary Forces.

NATIONAL PROVIDENT FUND.

The Act was amended after the outbreak of war in order to provide for the reduction of one-half the contributions of members of the fund while on active service with the Expeditionary Forces.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

A considerable number of friendly-society members have enlisted in the Expeditionary Forces. In order to enable societies to deal liberally with these members while absent on service, a short amending Act was passed last session granting these societies, when registering new rules, exemption from certain financial restrictions provided in the main Act.

The Government also decided to assist the societies by offering to pay half-cost of reinsuring the funeral benefits of their members on active service, and a vote providing for this appears in the estimates.

CUSTOMS.

The estimated Customs revenue for the financial year ended the 31st March, 1915, was £3,300,000. This would doubtless have been realized but for the outbreak of the war, as the returns received up to the end of August exceeded the