

on short-dated securities, and invested the amount in the Imperial loan. This investment also possesses the great advantage of providing an additional £5,000,000 of gilt-edged securities for use from time to time in London for financing the Dominion should such at any time be necessary.

The ordinary revenue reserve referred to above contributed £2,073,000 towards this £5,000,000.

I may mention that there are still some other moneys invested in Imperial Treasury bills or on deposit in London. All these investments can, of course, be realized as occasion requires, but as the whole of the investments, with the exception of the ordinary revenue reserve, represent portions of certain funds which are not at present being used in the Dominion the moneys when realized must necessarily be used for the purposes of the respective funds from which they were drawn. At the 31st May the total amount invested in London was £7,048,000.

SOLDIERS' DEPENDANTS.

It has been determined to make provision for granting additional allowances to dependants of soldiers, and the House will be asked to amend the war-pensions legislation this session. The necessary expenditure, the amount of which I am not in a position to state at present, will be provided for in the supplementary estimates.

OLD-AGE, MILITARY, WIDOWS', AND MINERS' PENSIONS.

Some relief on account of the extra cost of living should be given to old-age and military pensioners, widows, and miners, and to enable this to be done I propose to provide £120,000. This will give to old-age and military pensioners, widows, and miners suffering from pneumoconiosis some substantial assistance during the present unusual conditions. I feel sure that the additional sum for these purposes, in the trying times through which those of small means are passing, will not be grudged by the country as a whole.

WAR BONUS.

There can be no doubt that those who are in receipt of a fixed income by way of salary feel the pinch due to war conditions without having the opportunity of adding to their incomes, and it is necessary that the State, as the largest employer of labour, should recognize this. A war bonus to make provision similar to that of last year will therefore be authorized, and Parliament will be asked to vote a sum of £400,000 for this purpose.

EXTRAVAGANT LIVING.

The National Efficiency Board has put forward proposals with the view of placing a restriction during the war on the importation of certain articles which may be considered luxuries, and by this means checking the extravagance of some of the people of New Zealand. The Customs estimate a reduction of revenue of £230,000 if these proposals are carried out.

While I entirely sympathize with the objects which the Efficiency Board seeks to attain, I regret to say that after making full inquiries I find that there are so many difficulties in the way that I am not able to give effect to the Board's recommendation. If this were done I should have to obtain the deficiency of revenue by some other means of taxation. At present it is impossible to give up revenue without restoring an equal amount through some other avenue.

MOTOR-CARS.

Regarding the suggestions made from time to time that a further duty should be imposed upon motor-cars, I wish to state the position for the information of honourable members.

The amount of duty collected on motor-cars imported last year was £148,345. This is an amount of revenue that cannot at present be dispensed with. It is not my province as Minister of Finance to place such a duty on any articles which bring in revenue as to prevent importation or bring about