

The operations of the firewood depot have been extended in order to cope with the increased demand created by the shortage of coal for domestic purposes.

PENSIONS.

Under this head the amounts paid during the year, excluding war pensions, are as follows :—

	Statutory Pensions. £	Allowance under Finance Act. £	Total Pensions. £
Old-age pensions	473,059	259,909	732,968
Widows' pensions	136,815	....	136,815
Military (Maori War)	35,596	9,489	45,085
Miners' pensions	16,652	....	16,652
Totals	<u>£662,122</u>	<u>£269,398</u>	<u>£931,520</u>

This shows the total payment as £931,520, but against this must be credited the sum of £37,815, representing £33,851 from national endowments on account of old-age pensions and £3,964 from gold duty in respect of miners' pensions, making the net charge against the State £893,705.

The allowance under the Finance Act, 1917, by way of bonus was incorporated in the widows' and miners' pensions in the increases granted by the amending legislation of last year. The bonus in respect of old-age and military pensions can be continued until January, 1921, and legislation making the bonus permanent will be introduced this session.

The annual value, the total number in force at close of year, and the amount of the average pension are as follows :—

	Number.	Statutory Pensions. £	Allowance under Finance Act. £	Total. £	Average Pension £
Old-age pensions	19,993	471,826	259,909	731,735	36
Widows' pensions	3,444	185,968	....	185,968	54
Military (Maori War)	939	33,804	9,490	43,294	46
Miners' pensions	415	23,543	....	23,543	56
	<u>24,791</u>	<u>£715,141</u>	<u>£269,399</u>	<u>£984,540</u>	

There has been an increase in each class of pension during the year, with the exception of military pensions, and the following figures set out the particulars :—

	New Grants.	Deaths and Cancellations.	Increase.	Decrease.
Old-age pensions	2,289	2,168	121	....
Widows' pensions	767	534	233	....
Military pensions	5	106	....	101
Miners' pensions	237	62	175	....

It is proposed to introduce legislation permitting military and miner pensioners to draw their pensions notwithstanding temporary absence from the Dominion.

WAR PENSIONS.

The total payments under this head for the year show an increase on the previous year as follows :—

	1918-19. £	1919-20. £
Payments made in New Zealand	1,159,455	1,752,900
Payments made in London	28,623	58,447
Payments made in Australia	10,870	....
Payments made in Canada	192	474
Other foreign payments	295	258
Allotments paid after casualty	120	....
Lump-sum payments	200	340
Totals	<u>£1,199,755</u>	<u>£1,812,419</u>