

RAILWAYS SUPERANNUATION FUND.

This fund amounted on the 31st March, 1921, to £464,491, as compared with £408,232 on the 31st March, 1920.

The contribution from the Consolidated Fund for the year was £75,000.

GOVERNMENT INSURANCE DEPARTMENT.

In the Life Branch of this Department the past year has been a most successful one. New business amounting to £1,659,660 has been effected, which brings the total number of policies in force at the 31st December, 1920, to 57,321, representing a total insurance, with bonus additions, of £16,259,310. This is the largest new business the Department has transacted in any one year since its establishment.

The funds at the end of the year amounted to £5,542,552. Notwithstanding that claims arising out of the war and the influenza epidemic, amounting to £228,465, were paid during the triennium, an actuarial valuation of the Department's liabilities and assets as at the 31st December last disclosed a surplus of £238,704, of which £217,706 has been divided amongst the policy-holders, representing additions of £339,388 to the sum assured given above.

It is a matter of satisfaction that the Department's financial position has been maintained on so strong a basis as to enable it to meet the severe test imposed by the war and the influenza mortality, and yet show a large surplus upon a stringent valuation.

The operations of the Accident Branch have also been very successful, both the premium income (£29,852) and the interest income (£4,954, after deducting taxes) being greater than in any previous year. As a result of the year's operations the funds show an increase of £9,325, which, with one exception, is the largest increase for any one year.

During the year legislation was passed amending the law relating to workers' compensation. The amendments, which include an extension of the definition of a "worker," an increase in the maximum death payment, an increase in the rates of compensation from 50 to 55 per centum of the wages, and the granting of compensation from the date of the accident where the incapacity lasts three days or over, came into force on the 1st February last. As these amendments provide for substantial increases in the benefits, an increase in the rates of premium as from that date has been made necessary. In this connection it may be stated that the Department's careful tabulation of the whole of the New Zealand statistics relating to workers' compensation upon a scientific actuarial basis not only enabled it to furnish valuable and reliable data to the Legislature as to the cost of the increased benefits, but also placed it in a position to effectively regulate the rates to be charged in connection with workers' compensation insurance throughout New Zealand.

PUBLIC TRUST OFFICE.

The work of this Department has been further decentralized during the past year, and the administration of estates is now largely carried out by the Local Deputy Public Trustees controlling the districts where the assets of estates and the persons interested are located. This alteration in the system of control has been fully justified by results, and there is every reason to believe that the change has been fully appreciated by the public.

The organization of the Office has been further extended by the appointment of officers to the permanent charge of districts where the business warranted such a course, and it is confidently expected that by bringing the benefits of the Office under the immediate notice of the public in the remoter localities a further increase of business will result.

The value of the funds and assets under administration on the 31st March, 1921, was £22,364,319. The new estates placed in the Office during the year numbered 2,803. The amount advanced to local bodies and private mortgagors during the year amounted to £2,869,075, and the total funds invested are £13,636,815. The sum of £147,800 was invested in the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Loan.