

MINERS' PENSIONS.

The Miner's Phthisis Act, 1915, as it stood at the time of its re-enactment in the Pensions Act, 1926, provided for payment of pensions to miners totally incapacitated by miner's phthisis contracted while mining in New Zealand, an unmarried man receiving £1 5s. a week and a married man or a widower with one or more children £1 15s. a week. By the Finance Act, 1929, the definition of miner's phthisis was widened to include cases of serious and permanent incapacity, and the scale of pensions was amended as follows: Miner, £1 5s. a week; wife, 10s. a week; each child under fifteen, 10s. a week. The pensions of children (only) were to be reduced at the rate of £1 per annum for every £1 of income of the miner in excess of £104 per annum, with a maximum pension of £4 5s. a week (£221 per annum). By the National Expenditure Adjustment Act, 1932, the scale was further amended as follows: Miner, £1 2s. 6d. a week; wife, 9s. a week; each child under fifteen, 9s. a week. At the same time the maximum family pension was reduced from £4 5s. to £3 16s. 6d. a week.

The following summary of operations for the year ended 31st March, 1932, has been supplied by the Commissioner of Pensions, whose Department administers the scheme:—

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Payments from 1st November, 1915, to 31st March, 1931	504,472
Payments, 1931–32	69,785
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	£574,257
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Number of new grants for year 1931–32	175
Annual value of new grants	£16,041 5s.
Number of pensions in force at 31st March, 1932 ..	991
Annual value of pensions in force at 31st March, 1932	£74,035
Average pension per annum	£74 14s. 2d.
Number of pensions granted to 31st March, 1932 ..	1,957
Dissection of pensions in force at 31st March, 1932:—	
Unmarried miners	171
Married miners	411
Miners' widows	409
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	991

COAL-MINERS' RELIEF FUND.

The Miners' Sick and Accident Funds having been abolished as from the 1st April, 1926, and incorporated in the Coal-miners' Relief Fund, all accident relief payments are now made from the latter fund, which is administered by the Public Trustee.

The balance at the credit of the Relief Fund is still steadily decreasing, the decrease for the year ended 31st March, 1932, being £768 9s. 10d., as against £289 12s. 2d. for the previous year.

The rate of interest allowed on the fund was decreased from $5\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. to $4\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. as from the 18th December, 1931.

The interest earned for the twelve months ended 31st March, 1932, was £1,188 15s. 6d., as against £1,240 17s. 6d. for the previous year, while for the same periods the receipts from the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per ton contributions were £4,404 17s. 10d. and £5,579 12s. 1d. respectively.

The total expenditure for the year ended 31st March, 1932, amounted to £6,362 3s. 2d., as against £7,110 1s. 9d. for the previous year.

The amount standing to the credit of the fund as at the 31st March, 1932, was £23,122 4s. 7d., as against £23,890 14s. 5d. at the 31st March, 1931.