

SUBSIDY TO JUBILEE INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND.

28. The Government has in the past given liberal support to this institution, which is, however, in the fortunate position of having considerable reserve funds, on which, together with any donations received from the public, it could exist for the present. The Institute has assets valued at £166,000, of which a considerable amount is in more or less liquid securities, and in view of this the subsidy might meantime be withheld, and we recommend accordingly. The saving at the present time would amount to approximately £2,500.

29. The following is a statement of the subsidies paid in recent years to this institution :—

Period.						Hospital and Charitable Institutions Act, 1923, and 1926. (Jubilee Institute for the Blind, Auckland.) £
1925-26	..	..	..	..	..	10,000
1926-27	..	..	..	..	..	4,933
1927-28	..	..	..	..	..	1,742
1928-29	..	..	..	..	..	1,221
1929-30	..	..	..	..	..	1,390
1930-31	..	..	..	..	..	987
						£20,273

UNIVERSITY BURSARIES.

30. We are of the opinion that University bursaries should be discontinued. In the past they have been the means of stimulating University education, but the cost per head of population for such education has arisen from 7d. in 1914 to 1s. 8d. in 1931, and we feel that it is now impossible for the State to continue to help students as liberally as in the past. We understand that the colleges have been informed that the bursaries will be continued until 31st December, 1932, but recommend that an early notification be given that the bursaries will thereafter be discontinued.

Estimated saving, £9,000.

WORKERS' EXTENSION LECTURES (GRANTS FOR).

31. We also recommend that grants to University colleges for Workers' Extension lectures, £1,800, be discontinued.

Estimated saving, £1,800.

SUBSIDIES AND ALLOWANCES, NATIONAL PROVIDENT FUND.

32. We have carefully considered the position in regard to the operations of the National Provident Fund. We note particularly that those who receive pensions from this fund are nevertheless entitled to receive widows' and old-age pensions under the Pensions Act, 1926, and this appears to us to be quite unwarranted. We are of the opinion that the law should be amended by deleting the exemption for income derived from National Provident Fund benefits, and our recommendation in this respect appears under the heading of "Pensions."

33. We would here draw attention to the fact that the Consolidated Fund at present provides an annual contribution of approximately £95,000 towards the National Provident Fund. Of this amount the sum of over £51,000 is in respect of subsidy on contributions to the fund. Careful consideration should now be given to the possibility of altering the basis of contributions in the direction of making the fund a self-supporting one. With this end in view we strongly recommend that the active canvass for new members should be suspended, and that the collection of subscriptions at present undertaken by active collectors should be abandoned. If contributors will not pay their contributions except as a result of door-to-door canvass, the Government should not be expected to pay commission on collections. In addition to the expense incurred in collection, the Government subsidy is maintained at a high level. Subscribers are definitely getting a handsome Government subsidy on their contributions, and if they do not display sufficient self-interest to keep up their payments, we see no reason why the Government should go to any expense in persuading them to do so.

34. We further recommend that no new contributors should be enrolled on the present basis, as we are of the opinion that contributions in the future should be on a self-supporting basis—in other words, that the Government subsidy on contributions from new members should be withdrawn. This would involve the recasting of the scales of contributions for new entrants and the making of modified contracts in respect of new entrants from local authorities and business firms whose superannuation schemes are arranged through the fund. We hold the view that this class of scheme, particularly, should be self-supporting, and cannot see any justification for the granting of a Government subsidy on the contributions.

35. We understand that at the present time very few new contributors are being enrolled due to the present depression, and that the saving as a result of this recommendation would amount to approximately £500 per annum. The net result is, however, greater than this, in that, if our recommendation is adopted, the growth of the liability on the Consolidated Fund will be stopped. There is no reason, however, why the fund should not be retained with subscriptions on a self-supporting basis, and thus be an encouragement to thrift, as it has been in the past. The fund might be made to form a valuable adjunct to the pensions schemes of the Dominion, and in time, if put on a proper basis, reduce the liability on the State for old-age and widows' pensions.