

463. The expenditure in 1914-15 and in 1930-31 is shown as under :—

1914-15.			1930-31.		
Salaries.	Other Charges.	Total.	Salaries.	Other Charges.	Total.
£ 178,144	£ 56,530	£ 234,674	£ 371,529	£ 85,143	£ 456,672

464. This Department appears to be economically administered, and we have no recommendation to make in regard to the vote.

VOTE—PENSIONS DEPARTMENT.

465. The net expenditure under this vote in 1914-15 and 1930-31 is as under :—

1914-15.			1930-31.		
Salaries.	Other Charges.	Total.	Salaries.	Other Charges.	Total.
£ 5,112	£ 4,768	£ 9,880	£ 38,887	£ 134,289	£ 173,176

466. In 1914-15 the numerical strength of the staff was 29, while in 1931-32 it was 160. The increase is mainly due to the extra duties in connection with the administration of epidemic and war pensions, which have come into force since 1914-15.

467. We dealt extensively in our interim report with the general question of pensions provided under permanent appropriations. The vote now being reviewed is to provide the administrative cost of the Department, and, in addition, the medical treatment to ex-members of the New Zealand Expeditionary Forces and certain special annuities which are voted annually by Parliament.

468. The percentage of administrative expenditure to total payments on account of pensions is as shown hereunder :—

Year.	Cost per Centum.					
	£	s.	d.			
1927 2 5 1
1928 2 6 1
1929 2 7 1
1930 2 6 7
1931 2 5 5

469. In regard to the administration expenses we recommend the following economies :—

Item—Medical Fees, £7,000.

470. This item is to provide for the cost of medical inspection of disabled discharged soldiers. A fee of £1 ls., less 10 per centum, is payable by the Pensions Department, and it is understood that a second reduction of 10 per centum is not to be made. **We consider that a fee of 15s. per examination should suffice, and recommend that the scale be reduced accordingly.**

Estimated saving, £1,200.

Medical Treatment, Burial Expenses, and Expenses incidental thereto :

Item—Ex-members of New Zealand Expeditionary Force, £76,000.

„ *Ex-members of New Zealand Defence and Naval Forces, £100.*

„ *South African War Veterans, £50.*

471. Under these items the sum of £64,000 was paid to Hospital Boards and to the Department of Health for in-patient treatment in hospitals during 1930-31. It is estimated that a reduction of £5,000 will be possible during 1931-32 on account of a lesser number of patients requiring treatment.

Saving, £5,000.

Item—Post and Telegraph Department for Services of Officers, £16,614.

472. This item is to provide for payment to the Post and Telegraph Department in respect of services of officers in connection with the payment of pensions. Arrangements have now been made for certain pensions to be paid direct by the Pensions Department, and a reduction of £2,000 in this item should result.

Saving, £2,000.