

Item—Postages, telegrams, &c., £5,200.

473. This item should be reduced by £1,500.
Saving, £1,500.

Item—Rent of Offices, £1,322.

474. This item should be reduced by £250.
Saving, £250.

Item—Special Annuities, £4,799.

475. This item is to provide for the payment of certain special annuities on account of accidents, compassionate allowances, &c., and to officers of various Departments of State and also, in a few cases, to supplement superannuation received. Annuities are also paid to certain ex-members of Parliament and to the widows of certain ex-members. **We recommend that all *ex gratia* payments such as are provided under this item be strictly limited in future.**

SUMMARY.

476. The savings recommended, as far as they can be assessed, are as follow :—

Item—	£
Medical fees	1,200
Medical treatment, burial expenses and expenses incidental thereto, &c. ..	5,000
Post and Telegraph Department for services of officers	2,000
Postages, telegrams, &c.	1,500
Rent of offices	250
	<u>£9,950</u>

VOTE—MINES DEPARTMENT.

477. The expenditure under this vote for 1914–15 and 1930–31 was as follows :—

1914–15.			1930–31.		
Salaries.	Other Charges.	Total.	Salaries.	Other Charges.	Total.
£	£	£	£	£	£
9,415	15,966	25,381	10,240	22,221	32,461
			Less credits-in-aid ..		1,527
		<u>£25,381</u>			<u>£30,934</u>

478. While there has not been any abnormal increase in the expenditure since 1914–15, it must be remembered that there is now another branch of the Department—namely, State Coal-mines—the cost of which is not included in the above figures, and we shall deal with that branch separately.

479. The staff in 1914–15 numbered forty-three and in 1930–31 twenty-seven.

480 The net cost of administration for 1930–31, including interest and depreciation and taking credit for rents, royalties, and fees under the Coal-mines Act, 1925, amounted to £21,247.

481. There is not much scope for economy in this Department.

482. After a review of the appropriations, we have to report as follows :—

SUBDIVISION II.—ASSISTANCE TOWARDS MINING.

Item—Prospecting for Gold and other Minerals, £7,000.

483. This item is to provide assistance to enable prospecting to be carried out. Considerable expenditure is now being incurred by the Unemployment Board for the same purpose, and **we are therefore of opinion that this charge on the Consolidated Fund should be suspended as assistance should not be given from two sources.**

Saving, £7,000.

Item—Bounty payable to Onakaka Iron and Steel Co., £3,200.

484. This is a non-recurrent item, and represents a reduction on 1932–33 appropriations.
Saving, £3,200.