432. The first Licensing Act was passed in New Zealand in 1842, and that Act prescribed a license fee of £40 for an hotel in a borough and £30 for an hotel outside a borough. A uniform fee of £40 is now charged, and thus the fee for a publican's license in a borough has not been increased in a period of ninety years. Under the original Act the fees were paid to the Colonial Treasurer or to the Treasurer of the county or district, but the Act did not prescribe which fees should be paid to the Colonial Treasurer and which to local bodies. The Licensing Act of 1842 was replaced by that of 1873, and by virtue of that Act all fees were paid to local bodies. The Licensing Act of 1881 repealed all previous Licensing Acts and enacted what is practically the present licensing law.

433. The reason for the payment of the fees to the local authorities is obscure, and, as they have practically no responsibility for the administration of the licensing law, it is considered that the continuation of the present practice is not warranted. **In England license fees are paid into the National Exchequer and there appears to be no reason why a similar course should not be followed in New Zealand.**

434. **We accordingly recommend that the law be amended to provide that hotel license fees shall be credited to the Consolidated Fund as a contribution towards the cost of the administration of the licensing law.**

435. There is another aspect of the case to which attention should be drawn—namely, the amount of the fee. This should have some relation to turnover, and there seems to be no good reason why hotels in metropolitan areas should pay the same fee as small country hotels. **We accordingly recommend that the scale of fees be revised.** It is evident that additional revenue would accrue from this source, as a considerably higher fee should undoubtedly be charged for the licensing of metropolitan hotels.

436. We also draw attention to the license fees paid by chartered clubs. These clubs are under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Internal Affairs, and the fee of £5 fixed by section 261 (*a*) of the Licensing Act, 1908, is payable to the local authority of the district in which the club is situated. Here again we see no reason why this revenue should be paid to local authorities, who have little or no direct responsibility in connection with the licensing law. The fee also appears to be low, and should have some relation to turnover, as in the case of hotels. **We recommend that club fees be credited to the Consolidated Fund.**

437. It is difficult to estimate the saving to the Consolidated Fund by virtue of these recommendations, but the amount would be considerable.

Notices for sending Liquor into No-license Areas.

438. At present no charge is made for the issue of notices in connection with the despatch of liquor into no-license areas. **We recommend that a charge of 1s. per notice be made in the future.** This should produce approximately £1,000 per annum.

Saving, £1,000.

Subdivision VIII.—Registrar-General's Office.

439. This office, which was hitherto under the Department of Internal Affairs, is now a part of the Department of Justice.

440. The operations for the year ended 31st March, 1931, resulted in an excess of expenditure over income, after charging interest and depreciation, of £646. **We consider that this loss should be obviated, and that the fees charged by the office should be increased.**

441. The total collections for 1930–31 were as follow:—

	£	s.	d.
Registration of births, deaths, and marriages	19,212	7	6
Dentists' Act	20	10	0
Miscellaneous	74	17	3

442. We recommend that the scale of fees be increased as follows:—

Fee on notice of marriage	From 2s. 6d. to 5s.
Fee on certificate authorizing marriage	From £1 to £1 5s.
Fee on certified copy of marriages or of births or deaths ..	From 2s. 6d. to 5s.

443. The foregoing recommendations should result in increased revenue, to the extent of approximately £5,000 per annum, virtually a saving.

Saving, £5,000.

444. In addition to the foregoing recommendations, which are not strictly applicable to any item in this subdivision, it should be possible to effect small economies in respect of the following:—

Item—Postage and Telegrams, £1,000.

445. This item should be reduced by £200.

Saving, £200.

Item—Rent of Offices, £880.

446. This item should be reduced by £150.

Saving, £150.

Amalgamation of Departments.

447. We have recommended in connection with the Prisons Department that the Prisons and Justice Departments be amalgamated under one Permanent Head. This will result in administrative economies, which we are unable to assess, but a considerable saving should result.