

£100 per annum as previously. **We have considered the general question as to whether the bonus should be continued indefinitely, and are of opinion that there is no justification for this, particularly in view of recent reductions in the cost of living, and we recommend the abolition of the bonus.** This does not necessarily mean that these superannuitants will be unable to obtain any further payment from State funds. As has been stated previously, they are eligible, if qualified by age, to apply for an old-age pension under the pensions legislation, and while this avenue is open to them a special payment by way of a cost-of-living bonus from the public funds is unjustified. **We see no reason why these superannuated public servants should be placed on a different plane to other sections of the community.** There will be a saving on this item in the vote of £5,200, but this may be offset to a certain extent by increased payments for old-age pensions. However, the latter at this stage may be disregarded.

Saving, £5,200.

*Item—Deer Herds, Reduction of, in certain Acclimatization Districts: Bonus to assist in (part recoverable), £4,900.*

547. In addition to the expenditure provided under this item, there is the salary of the Inspector in charge of deer-destruction operations and his assistant. The actual cost for the current year will approximate £5,000, against which it is estimated that the sum of approximately £1,000 will be recovered from the proceeds from the sale of deer commodities.

548. It should be observed, in the first instance, that one of the reasons for the necessity for the State undertaking deer-destruction operations is the failure of certain acclimatization societies to use their funds for this purpose, **and stricter control of the operations of the acclimatization societies should be exercised in future, with a view to ensuring that their functions in the direction of the control of pests, such as deer, will be carried out.** We would also comment on the fact that it has been necessary for the Government to take active steps to keep down the increase in deer herds while at the same time acclimatization societies in some districts proclaim "close seasons" for the destruction of deer. **This seems to be an anomaly, and we are of opinion that while the Government is expending large sums on the destruction of deer no restriction should be placed on stalking by private individuals.**

549. We would also suggest that the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research should investigate the possibility of the destruction of deer being undertaken by means of poisoning. We believe that this system has been adopted in other countries with some degree of success, and suggest that it should be cheaper to operate in this way rather than on the present expensive basis.

550. In regard to the bonus paid to private individuals for deer destroyed, the Department insists on the production of deer-tails and a royalty is paid on each tail. In view of the possibility of obtaining a market for deer-hides, we suggest that it would be preferable if the bonus of 1s. 6d. at present being paid for deer-tails be discontinued, and in lieu thereof a bonus be paid for skins. It should be possible to fix the amount of such bonus at a price that will enable the Department to dispose of the skins at a minimum of loss. In any case the system should be more advantageous than the present system of bonus of 1s. 6d. per tail.

551. **We also recommend that the operations of the Department next season be confined mainly to the Westland District, where the deer are said to be very numerous and are doing considerable damage to the forests.**

552. In conclusion, **we recommend that the operations of the Department be continued only until such time as the market for deer-skins is definitely established,** and in this connection the indications point to the fact that the time will not be far distant when there will be a market for all the skins New Zealand can supply. When this time comes it should be possible to leave the destruction of deer to private enterprise. A saving of £1,700 per annum should result from these proposals.

*Item—Entertaining Visitors to the Dominion, and Official Functions, Cost of, £900.*

553. We note that the expenditure on this account has been considerably reduced during past years. We believe that this is as it should be, and recommend that every effort be made to ensure continuing economy under this heading.

*Item—Grants, Franklin County Council, in respect of late Waikato River Board, £3,780.*

554. This item is non-recurring, but should nevertheless be referred to. The position is that certain river-works were carried out near Mercer by the now defunct Waikato River Board. This Board was constituted at the request of the ratepayers in the river district, and spent a considerable sum of money in endeavouring to lower the level of the river above Mercer for land-drainage purposes. The proposals of the Board were based on inaccurate levels, and generally the result was that the works carried out in the main stream were quite without any beneficial results. The Board subsequently ceased to exist, and the liabilities incurred by it were apportioned by a Commission appointed under section 3 of the Rivers Boards Amendment Act, 1910, between the Franklin, Raglan, and Waikato County Councils. These three local authorities are authorized by the Local Legislation Act, 1927, to raise a joint special loan for the purpose of meeting certain liabilities of the defunct River Board and by the same Act the three County Councils have been given all the powers of a River Board appertaining to the classification of land and the levying of rates on those portions of the river district within their boundaries. The effect of this legislation is that the three County Councils have all the necessary powers to call upon the ratepayers in the original river district to meet their liabilities by way of special rates on loans raised. However, the Government,