

984. The Act provides for the setting-up of an Assessment Court, which is in the nature of an Appeal Court, and if the decision of the Appeal Court be not accepted **the owner should have the option to require the Government to purchase the property within one year, or reduce the valuation at the conclusion of that term in conformity with his valuation which would then be established.**

985. The amendment should provide that the respective parties should have the right to withdraw or purchase at any time during the period of one year.

986. **We recommend that the law be amended in this direction.**

987. In general, this Department is economically administered. The following items would, however, appear to be capable of reduction :—

*Item—Postage, Telegrams, &c., £1,100.*

988. This should be reduced by at least £250.  
Saving, £250.

*Item—Travelling Allowances and Expenses, £6,400.*

989. As the volume of work should be falling off, a reduction of £400 in this item should be possible.  
Saving, £400.

990. The savings as a result of the foregoing recommendations as far as they can be assessed are as follow :—

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(1) Increased fees from State Advances Office.. .. .	3,000
(2) Increased fees from Land and Income Tax Department and local authorities	2,400
(3) Savings in items on vote .. .. .	650
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	£6,050
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VOTE—ELECTORAL DEPARTMENT.

991. This is a separate vote, which is now under the control of the Department of Justice, the Permanent Head of which is directly responsible for the Electoral Department.

992. In 1931–32 the total amount appropriated was £69,218, but provision was therein made for the expenses of a general election. The sum of £6,000 should suffice for 1932–33.  
Saving, £63,218.

VOTE—DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

993. There have been various changes in the constitution of the Department of Agriculture since 1914–15, particularly in the direction of extended services, consequently a comparison of the expenditure in that year with the present expenditure is rendered somewhat difficult.

994. The following statement will, however, illustrate in general terms the extent to which the expenditure has increased. In 1914–15 the Department of Industries and Commerce was amalgamated with the Department of Agriculture, and to that extent the comparison of the cost of the Head Office organization is misleading. Similarly, there are various items now appearing under the heading “Miscellaneous services” in the present vote which did not appear in the appropriations for 1914–15.

Subdivision.	1914–15.			1930–31.		
	Salaries.	Other Charges.	Total.	Salaries.	Other Charges.	Total.
	£	£	£	£	£	£
I. Head Office .. .. .	13,573	109,808	123,381	35,752	32,553	68,305
II. Live Stock Division .. .. .	32,757	14,463	47,220	95,459	40,527	135,986
III. Horticulture Division .. .. .	6,765	4,978	11,743	19,550	10,638	30,188
IV. Dairy Division .. .. .	10,246	4,710	14,956	50,323	15,538	65,861
V. Fields Division .. .. .	29,866	63,177	93,043	31,651	22,012	53,663
VI. Miscellaneous services .. .. .	..	..	..	..	127,720	127,720
			290,343			481,723
Less credits-in-aid .. .. .	..	..	83,612	..	..	93,446
Net expenditure .. .. .	..	..	206,731	..	..	388,277

995. While expenditure under the heading of “Other charges” has increased considerably there has also been an increase of over 100 per centum in salaries. The personnel of the Department has increased from 404 in 1914–15 to 727 in 1931–32.

996. As the duties of the Department are largely instructional and inspectorial, and since the services given have been largely increased over a period of years, the increase in the numerical strength of the staff can be understood. It is essential that there must be a drastic reduction in the expenditure