

The scheme, which originated in the Miner's Phthisis Act, 1915, is administered by the Pensions Department, and the following summary of operations for the year ended 31st March, 1936, has been supplied by the Commissioner of Pensions :—

Payments from 1st November, 1915, to 31st March, 1935	£	752,371
Payments, 1935-36		67,834
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		£820,205
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Number of new grants for year 1935-36—		
Miners	119	
Widows	23	
		<hr/>
		142
Annual value of new grants	£13,589	
Number of pensions in force at 31st March, 1936—		
Miners	717	
Widows	134	
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		851
Annual value of pensions in force at 31st March, 1936	£73,331	
Average pension per annum	£86 3s. 5d.	
Number of pensions granted to 31st March, 1936	2,391	
Dissection of pensions in force at 31st March, 1936—		
Unmarried miners	207	
Married miners	510	
Miners' widows	134	
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COAL-MINERS' RELIEF FUND.

The Coal-miners' Sick and Accident Funds having been abolished as from the 1st April, 1926, and incorporated in the Coal-miners' Relief Fund, all accident relief payments are now made from the latter fund, which is administered by the Public Trustee.

The rate of interest allowed on the fund was decreased from 4 per cent. to 3½ per cent. as from the 1st April, 1933.

The interest earned for the twelve months ended 31st March, 1936, was £872 9s. 3d., as against £837 10s. 3d. for the previous year, while for the same periods the receipts from the ½d. per ton contributions were £4,150 18s. 7d. and £4,094 4s. 5d. respectively.

The total expenditure for the year ended 31st March, 1936, amounted to £3,880 19s. 1d., as against £4,199 3s. 1d. for the previous year.

The amount standing to the credit of the fund at the 31st March, 1936, was £25,625 9s., as against £24,482 0s. 3d. at the 31st March, 1935.

STATE AID TO MINING.

(a) MINES DEPARTMENT.

As in previous years, considerable use was made of the Government prospecting drills. They were hired by nineteen parties, and a total of 20,827 ft. was drilled.

The five alluvial drills manufactured in New Zealand in 1933 have been in constant use and have given good service.

The sum of £4,363 was voted for expenditure by way of subsidies for prospecting. The balance of unexpended authorities at the 31st March, 1935, and those issued during the year, less cancellations, amounted to £4,815 15s. 6d. Of this amount, £1,928 11s. 9d. was expended by way of actual subsidies during the year, leaving a balance of £2,887 3s. 9d. authorized but not spent at the 31st March, 1936. The number of men given employment through the subsidies granted by the Mines Department was 46.

In addition, the Department found the sum of £81 2s. towards the cost of supervising prospectors subsidized from the Employment Promotion Fund.