

Waterfront Control Commission.

The scheme of control of the Waterfront Control Commission, appointed under the Waterfront Control Commission Emergency Regulations 1940, provides generally that ships' cargo will be loaded or discharged by the Commission at fixed rates of charges payable by the shipping companies concerned, and that the companies will advance to Central Pay Offices at the ports sufficient funds to pay award wages to the watersiders engaged in the work and will pay to the Head Office of the Commission any surplus of those advances remaining after payment of the fixed rates for handling the cargo. The scheme provides, further, that out of the surplus received by the Commission bonuses will be paid to the Central Pay Offices for distribution among watersiders engaged in working the particular cargo. The shipping companies are also required to pay a levy to cover the cost of administering the Central Pay Offices.

Regulation 16 (5) provides that "the accounts and stores (of the Commission) shall be audited by the Audit Office or by an auditor to be appointed for the purpose by the Audit Office."

The accounts of the Head Office of the Commission, which were audited by the Audit Office, and those of the Central Pay Offices, which were audited by auditors appointed by the Audit Office in terms of the regulation, were found to have been kept satisfactorily.

Departmental Balance-sheets.

The Revenue Accounts and Balance-sheets for the year 1940-41 prepared in terms of section 57 of the Finance Act, 1932, have been audited. In past years the accounts have appeared in parliamentary paper B.-1 [Pt. IV], but as an economy measure Treasury decided to include in that publication only certain of the 1940-41 accounts, most of the others having been published in the annual reports of the relative Departments.

As a further measure of economy it has been decided to discontinue the preparation of some fifty departmental accounts as from the 1st April, 1941.

Patriotic Funds.

The accounts of Provincial Patriotic Councils, with one exception now under action, have been audited to the 30th September, 1941, and audit reports thereon have been submitted to the Minister of Internal Affairs, as required by regulation. The audit of the balance-sheet of the National Patriotic Fund Board will shortly be completed to the same date, and a copy of these accounts is required by regulation to be laid before Parliament by the Minister.

Marketing Department, Export Division.

It was mentioned in my last report that during the Export Division's financial year ended 31st July, 1940, the Division purchased produce to the value of £54,000,000 and that purchases exceeding £58,000,000 in value had already been made during the 1940-41 season, eleven months of which had then elapsed. Completed accounts are now available for this season and disclose that the value of all produce purchased and exported or held on account of the United Kingdom Government amounted to £62,000,000. These accounts are the first to cover a full year's operations in meat and wool. For the nine months already completed of the 1941-42 season over £56,000,000 has been paid out, the payments for March alone exceeding £11,000,000.

Canteen Board.

The transactions of the Canteen Board increased considerably during the year ended 31st March, 1942, reaching a total turnover of £570,057. In spite of staffing difficulties a steady control has been kept upon the stocks and moneys of the Board. Month by month the Board balances the moneys banked against the value of the stores disposed of as ascertained from the stock records and from stocktaking. These figures have been reconciled satisfactorily in the case of most canteens, the most unsatisfactory case being a shortage of 2.6 per cent. of the turnover for the particular canteen. Most of this shortage was revealed to have taken place during one month of the year, and the Board promptly took appropriate remedial steps. Over all dry canteens the average shortage of cash against stock was 0.241 per cent. of the total turnover. It is not, however, possible to get an equally accurate control over the wet canteen revenues, and an entirely satisfactory system in this regard has yet to be devised.