

### THE MAGISTRATES.

An attempt will be made during the next session of Parliament to place the Stipendiary Magistrates of the Dominion upon a more satisfactory footing. The responsible nature of the duties performed by these gentlemen warrants the State in paying adequate salaries. In some cases they are underpaid, and no fixed principle appears to have been laid down for regulating the annual increment which the habit of years has led them to expect. For the thirty Magistrates at present employed by the State there are ten different grades of salaries.

To place the Magisterial Bench in the same position as Judges of the Supreme Court is not in the existing circumstances practicable; but there is no reason why the Magistrates should not be classified into, say, two or three divisions, appropriate salaries being fixed by law for those in each division, and the present objectionable system of voting annual increases on the estimates abolished. Such a system would help to remove existing anomalies and any discontent which may exist at the present time, and it would probably induce more men of experience and ability to offer their services as Magistrates.

### THE MINING INDUSTRY.

The gold-mining industry, which has been such a potent factor in the past in promoting the prosperity of New Zealand, will have the sympathetic attention of the Government, and assistance will be afforded wherever it can be demonstrated to be genuinely needed.

The same remarks apply to coal-mining. The enormous deposits of coal that are known to exist in various parts of the Dominion should prove a great source of wealth in the future, and are worthy of being effectively developed.

### STATE COAL-MINES.

The Under-Secretary of Mines, on the 1st August, 1912, reported as follows:—

“The time has now arrived, however, when further capital should be authorized, and it is accordingly proposed to insert a clause in this year's Coal-mines Amendment Bill to sanction the raising of another £100,000, partly for the purpose of paying the balance of the cost of the development-works at the new mine and partly for repaying to the account the amount that appears in the balance-sheet as sinking and reserve funds and profit, but which has actually been expended in development-works at the new mine.”

Regarding the question whether the assets are worth their book value or not, he states that a revaluation is now being made by the officers in charge of each mine and depot. Personally, the Under-Secretary considers that “the depots, hulks, &c., are probably full value for the amounts now appearing against them, but the old mines and the briquette-works doubtless are not. The deficiency, however, will probably not be more than about £50,000, so that, even though the amount standing in the balance-sheet as unallocated profits (£50,648 11s. 1d.) may have to be written off to cover this deficiency, the Department will still probably have the sinking and reserve funds intact, as well as having written down the capital in the form of ‘depreciation’ by over £55,000.”

The whole question will be fully dealt with when the report on the revaluation is handed to the Government.

### THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE.

The Government finds that it has not hitherto been the practice to print the annual reports of the High Commissioner on the general business of his office. As details of loan transactions are not included in the subject-matter of such reports, but are separately dealt with, the Government has decided to have the material parts of the report for the year ending the 31st March, 1912, printed for the use of honourable members; and in future years the same course will be adopted. Honourable members will be enabled to appreciate the methods of business and the cost of management as detailed by the late High Commissioner, and to follow more readily any proposals which may be made by the Government or by the new High Commissioner when he assumes control.