

*Item—Post and Telegraph Department: Reception of British Official Wireless News, £100.*

161. This item is to provide for a payment to the Post and Telegraph Department for the reception of British official wireless news. This service was inaugurated by the British Government with the object of providing British peoples throughout the world with an authoritative and reliable source of information on questions of foreign and Imperial interest. Communications are issued through the Rugby Wireless Station free of cost to the New Zealand Government. The service is, no doubt, of considerable importance, and prior to the reception of the messages and the distribution thereof to the press probably much of the material would have been transmitted to New Zealand through the ordinary Press Association channels. From the evidence we have obtained, it appears that the cost of the service is in the region of £2,000 per annum, and that arrangements have been made with the Press Association for a payment of only £250 per annum in respect of the service. **This appears to be quite disproportionate to the value, and we recommend that the matter be reopened with a view to a more adequate contribution being obtained.** We do not suggest that the whole cost should be recovered, but the sum of £1,000 per annum would not be in excess of the value of the service.

This would result in a saving of £750 per annum.

## VOTE—TREASURY.

162. There does not appear to be much scope for economy in the administrative expenditure of the Treasury. The expenditure in 1914–15 was £18,810, as against expenditure for 1930–31, £40,329. The bulk of the increase was, however, in respect of salaries, and this is accounted for mainly by the increase in the level of salaries since the war and by the increased staff employed by the Treasury to cope with the increased volume of work.

163. There are, however, certain economies which we consider should be possible. These are as follow:—

*Item—Local Government Loans Board: Fees, Travelling Allowances and Expenses of Members, £350.*

164. We are of opinion that local bodies should be required to pay fees in respect of applications to the Local Government Loans Board for sanction to the raising of loans. The item under discussion provides only for the fees and expenses of members of the Board, and there are, in addition, other office expenses, such as salaries of officers engaged on Loans Board work, &c., which are an essential part of the cost in the administration of the Government Loans Board Act, 1926. We recommend that local authorities be required to pay fees with all applications to the Local Government Loans Board, and that a suitable scale of fees be drawn up.

165. It should be possible to recover a sum of approximately £1,500 per annum from this source, virtually a saving.

*Staff Economy.*

166. We consider that an immediate overhaul of the legislation relating to Government borrowing and the administration of the public debt of the Dominion should be undertaken. A review of the statements published with the Public Accounts, and the accounts themselves, disclose a multiplicity of authorities under which moneys have been or may be raised, the present method having created a cumbersome and costly system of accounting. Consolidation of the law should permit of simplification and considerably reduce the clerical work both in the Treasury and Audit Office, with a consequent saving difficult to estimate. In the Treasury alone, however, it is considered it would amount to at least the salaries of two officers.

167. As there is a definite saving involved, we recommend that the several Acts dealing with the raising and administration of loans be consolidated at the earliest opportunity, with a view to the issue of securities under the one statutory authority where the loans affected are secured on the public revenues of the Dominion.

Estimated ultimate saving, say, £500 per annum.

168. Total estimated saving on Vote, Treasury Department, ultimately £2,000.

## VOTE.—NATIONAL PROVIDENT AND FRIENDLY SOCIETIES DEPARTMENT.

169. The appropriation for 1931–32 provided for a net charge of £4,670 in respect of this Department. This amount is the cost of administration of the Friendly Societies Branch of the Department, the costs incidental to the administration of the National Provident Fund being recouped to the Consolidated Fund from the National Provident Fund itself. The latter fund is therefore, with the exception of the Government subsidy on contributions, self-supporting, and there is no charge on the Consolidated Fund for administration expenses.

170. In so far as the general administration expenses in respect of friendly societies is concerned, there appears to be little scope for economy. We have considered each item on the vote, and have come to the conclusion that savings are possible in the following directions:—

*Item — Commission on Money-orders for Approved Friendly Societies' Maternity Claims, £60.*

171. We have recommended in our interim report that the payment of maternity allowances for friendly societies be discontinued. If this recommendation be given effect to, the above item will disappear from the appropriations. In any case, we see no justification for commission on money-orders being specifically provided by the State.

Estimated saving, £60.