

Payments from Public Account.

	Number of Vouchers.	Increase over 1913-14.	Amount. £	Increase over 1913-14. £
1913-14	196,455	17,106,489
1919-20	377,859	181,404	87,596,662	70,490,173
1920-21	352,319	155,864	73,275,613	56,169,124

The administrative work connected with payment of Imperial pensions, the care and treatment of disabled Imperial soldiers, and matters relating to the pay and allowances of members of the Naval, Military, and Civil Services from all parts of the Empire, which has grown considerably, has now been taken over by the Pensions Department. As the result of the change a considerable economy will be effected.

CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT.

The estimated revenue from Customs duties, including excise beer duty, for the year ended 31st March last, as compared with the amount actually realized and with the amount collected for the previous year, is as set forth hereunder, viz. :—

	Estimated Reve- nue, 1920-21. £	Amount realized, 1920-21. £	In Excess of Estimate. £	Amount collected, 1919-20. £
Customs	6,000,000	8,408,726	2,408,726	4,830,324
Excise beer	360,000	360,525	525	355,403
Totals	<u>£6,360,000</u>	<u>£8,769,251</u>	<u>£2,409,251</u>	<u>£5,185,727</u>

When the estimate for 1920-21 was made it was anticipated that many delayed orders would come to hand and that there would be a revenue greatly in excess of that of any previous year. The estimate was accordingly fixed at £6,360,000 for Customs and Excise beer duty, being over £1,000,000 in excess of the amount realized for 1919-20.

As will be seen from the figures, this generous estimate was greatly exceeded, and it is now evident that the quantity and value of the delayed orders have been much in excess of what was expected. The delay was so great in some cases that the delivery of goods was not desired, owing to the fall in prices since the orders were placed.

The number of gallons of beer brewed during the financial year 1920-21 was 14,926,626 gallons, and the average duty per gallon was 5·796d. This is an increase of 376,550 gallons over the year 1919-20.

The values of imports and exports during the past four financial years are as follows :—

	Imports. £	Exports. £
1917-18	20,983,612	31,298,270
1918-19	26,437,284	32,263,792
1919-20	32,162,029	50,776,650
1920-21	67,463,269	48,219,672

The import values represent the fair market value in the country of exportation, plus 10 per cent. Owing to high freights, the actual landed cost considerably exceeds these values. The export values are the f.o.b. values. It will be noted that during the last financial year the value of imports has, for the first time in many years, exceeded that of our exports, and to the extent of over £19,000,000.

An analysis of the imported goods shows that the proportion received from Great Britain is 46·4 per cent. of the total value, as against 37·5 per cent. last year and 51·5 per cent. in 1914.

The United States has increased from 11·6 per cent. in 1914 to 19·1 per cent. in 1920, while the trade with Japan has dropped from 4·3 per cent. in 1919 to 2·5 per cent. in 1920.

It is evident from these percentages that the imports from Great Britain have been inflated by the fulfilment of delayed orders already referred to.