

1894.

NEW ZEALAND.

# OLD-AGE PENSIONS COMMITTEE

(REPORT OF THE), TOGETHER WITH APPENDIX.

*Brought up 27th September, 1894, and ordered to be printed.*

## ORDER OF REFERENCE.

*Extract from the Journals of the House of Representatives dated the 26th day of June, 1894.*

Ordered, "That a Committee, consisting of ten members, be appointed to examine into and report upon the question of making provision for old age: with power to call for persons and papers: three to form a quorum. The Committee to consist of Mr. Bell, Mr. Buddo, Mr. Green, Mr. Hall, Mr. G. Hutchison, Mr. W. Hutchison, Mr. R. McKenzie, Mr. Pirani, Mr. G. W. Russell, and the mover."—(Hon. Mr. CARROLL.)

## REPORT.

THE Committee have the honour to report that they have had numerous meetings, and have had several specific schemes (copies of which accompany this report) before them for consideration. After mature deliberation they have arrived at the following resolutions:—

- (1.) That a system for the provision of pensions for the old of both sexes should be established by the State if a practicable method for providing the necessary funds can be devised.
- (2.) That, though it would for many reasons be desirable to fix the age for commencement of pensions at sixty years, the Committee are of opinion that it would not be within the scope of practicable finance to fix it below sixty-five.
- (3.) That all applicants for a pension must have resided in the colony for at least twenty years immediately previous to their application.
- (4.) No pension will be granted to any applicant who has been convicted of an indictable offence, unless he or she has received a free pardon from the Governor; or to any one who has been convicted of drunkenness three times during the last seven years previous to his or her application.
- (5.) That every male and female pensioner should be entitled to a weekly sum of 8s., and in the case of a husband and wife the joint allowance be 15s. per week.

The subject, however, is so large, and has so many ramifications, that, with the limited time at their disposal, your Committee are unable to recommend any particular scheme without further statistics; and they are of opinion that the Government should appoint a Royal Commission during the recess to inquire fully into the question, take evidence as to the numbers and condition of the aged in the colony, the probable annual increase of such numbers, as to the financial methods possible; also that statistics be obtained giving the amount earned in wages by persons receiving less than £300 per annum, and as to the amount which will annually be required for the necessary provision, besides other questions which may be precedent to the determination of any of the various proposals.

The Committee desire to record their thanks to the officers of the Government with whom the Chairman had occasion to communicate for their uniform courtesy and readiness to afford such information as was required, especially to Mr. Richardson, the Commissioner of the Government Insurance Department, for the able and comprehensive *résumé* of schemes for old-age pensions as formulated in various countries of Europe.

Your Committee had also important evidence from Mr. Mark Cohen, of the Dunedin *Evening Star*, giving his view of old-age pensions as bearing upon friendly societies. His evidence is not attached because the Committee were unable to go exhaustively into that view of the question.

27th September, 1894.

WILLIAM HUTCHISON,  
Chairman.

## APPENDIX.

## PROPOSAL BY THE CHAIRMAN.

LOOKING at the precarious nature of the employment of working-men in the colony—one week in work and another out of it—only the smallest number of this class could contribute regularly to the establishment of any pension fund, and where the contribution cannot be general it would be unfair to make it particular. I am, therefore, of opinion that such a fund should be provided