

1900.
NEW ZEALAND.

OLD-AGE PENSIONS:

REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED THE 31st MARCH, 1900.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly pursuant to Section 62 of "The Old-age Pensions Act, 1898."

The REGISTRAR of OLD-AGE PENSIONS to the Right Hon. the COLONIAL TREASURER.

SIR,—

Old-age Pensions Office, Wellington, 15th June, 1900.

I have the honour to furnish the following statement of particulars required for presentation to Parliament, in terms of section 2 of "The Old-age Pensions Act, 1898," for the year ended the 31st March, 1900.

In my first report I was able to state that the Act had been smoothly and effectively administered from its inception. To this, after a year's additional experience, I may add that the usefulness of the measure is now generally recognised, and that the anticipated difficulties raised by adverse critics are not apparent in its practical working. As a consequence of its success there is very little matter for comment.

Up to the 31st March, 1899, the number of pensions granted was 7,487, thirty-eight pensioners had died, and six pension-certificates had been cancelled, leaving 7,443 pensions in force at that date, representing a yearly payment of £127,319.

During the year ended the 31st March, 1900, 4,699 pensions were granted, 786 pensioners died, sixty-five pension-certificates were cancelled (inclusive of thirty-seven renewal claims rejected), and six pensions lapsed through non-application for renewal.

The number of pensions, therefore, in force on the 31st March, 1900, was 11,285, representing a yearly payment of £193,718.

Tables are attached showing—(1) The number of pensions in force on the 31st March, 1900, at each rate; (2) the number and annual value of such pensions in each old-age pension district; and (3) the number of pensions granted since the Act came into operation, the number of deaths of pensioners, the number of certificates cancelled, the number of pensions lapsed, and the number of pensions in force at the end of each year.

The total amount paid in respect of pensions during the year was £157,342 15s. 2d. This amount includes £248 1s. 10d., charged to a vote of £300 provided for the purpose of paying forfeited instalments in special cases and portions of instalments accrued up to date of death. The cost of administration was £2,360 8s.

The total amount of absolutely forfeited instalments during the year was £1,036 5s.

During the year 425 pension-certificates were transferred from one old-age pension district to another.

On the 31st March, 1900, the number of pensions in force, exclusive of those granted to Maoris, was 10,281.

According to the last census returns, the number of persons in the colony (exclusive of Maoris and Chinese) on the 31st March, 1896, aged sixty-five years and upwards, was 20,679.

It is estimated that on the 31st March, 1900, the number of such persons was 24,800. On this estimate the ratio of the number of pensioners of European descent to the number above the pension-age was, on the last-mentioned date, over 40 per cent.

The number of applications for the second year's pension-certificate received and dealt with up to the 31st March, 1900, was 6,178. Of these, 6,141 were granted, and 37 were rejected.

The number of claims rejected under the respective subsections of section 8 of the Act were, one under subsection (5), twelve under subsection (6), and twenty-four under subsections (7) and (8).

While in some instances the pension has been misapplied, the number of beneficiaries reported as so offending is relatively small. Testimony to the good character of old-age pensioners generally is also borne by the fact that out of 6,178 claims for the second year's pension-certificate dealt with up to the 31st March, 1900, only thirteen were rejected on the ground that the conditions set forth in the subsections of section 8 of the Act relating to character had not been fulfilled.

The ratio of the number of old-age pensioners to total population varies according to locality. This variation is due partly to differences in the percentage of persons above the pension-age, and