

Number of pensions at 31st August, 1905	11,830
Add new grants during September	201
Deduct deaths during September	97
„ cancellations during September	19
	— 116
	85 increase.
Number of pensions at 30th September, 1905	11,915
Add new grants during October	210
Deduct deaths during October	84
„ cancellations during October	18
	— 102
	108 increase.
Number of pensions at 31st October, 1905	12,023
Add new grants during November	178
Deduct deaths during November	75
„ cancellations during November	13
	— 88
	90 increase.
Number of pensions at 30th November, 1905	12,113
Add new grants during December	196
Deduct deaths during December	84
„ cancellations during December	11
	— 95
	101 increase.
Number of pensions at 31st December, 1905	12,214
Add new grants during January, 1906	224
Deduct deaths during January	96
„ cancellations during January	11
	— 107
	117 increase.
Number of pensions at 31st January, 1906	12,331
Add new grants during February	218
Deduct deaths during February	51
„ cancellation during February	18
	— 69
	149 increase.
Number of pensions at 28th February, 1906	12,480
Add new grants during March	231
Deduct deaths during March	108
„ cancellations during March	21
	— 129
	102 increase.
Number of pensions at 31st March, 1906	12,582
Total increase for year, 812.	

NEW CLAIMS.

The number of new claims made throughout the colony during the year was 3,027, being 1,344 in excess of the 1,683 received in the previous year. These, with the 528 outstanding at the beginning of the year, made a total of 3,555 to be dealt with. Of this number, 2,073 were established, 590 were rejected, while there were on hand awaiting investigation at the end of the year 892. The incoming pensioners for the past year, therefore, exceed the 1,210 admitted in the previous year by 863. Although this increase is numerically a large one, the percentage of these new participants to the people who became eligible remains practically the same as last year, the percentage for the two years being 34 in 1905, and 35 in 1906. Reference to the last available census figures shows that there were in 1901 approximately 5,900 people who were then 60 years of age and over, and twenty years and over in the colony; and it was from the ranks of these that the 2,073 new pensioners for the past year have been drawn, as against the 3,500 (approximately) who supplied the new pensioners in the previous year. A factor which is to be considered as having some bearing on the increase which now must be looked for each year is the gradual wearing-away of the disinclination on the part of a number of people to apply for the old-age pension. There is abundant evidence that the pension is regarded almost universally in the light that the framers of the Act intended it should be—namely, as a right; and, further, people who did not consider the £18 was worth applying for are now finding that £26 is a very useful sum to be possessed of in their declining years.