

The rejections represent 23 per cent. of the total claims lodged, and it is without doubt that had it not been for the introduction of the system above referred to, in regard to which the Magistrates of the Dominion expressed themselves so favourably (see my report dated the 18th July, 1904), a much larger number of pensioners would have been added to the roll. Prior to 1903, 78 per cent. of those who applied were granted pensions; since 1903 the percentage has dropped to 72 per cent.

Further details regarding the nationality, age, sex, and conjugal condition of the new pensioners will be found in the Appendix, together with a comprehensive return setting out the number of new claims received in each district since the Act came into force, the number lodged during the past year, and the manner in which these latter have been dealt with.

ANNUAL PAYMENTS.

The gross payment by way of pensions for the year amounts to £325,199 3s. 2d., being approximately £10,000 short of the amount appropriated by Parliament for the purpose, and £11,015 in excess of the gross amount disbursed in the previous year. Deduct the sum of £163 0s. 8d., being overpayments refunded to the Public Account, and the net charge against the Consolidated Fund is found to be £325,036 2s. 6d.

The payment made in each month of the year is as follows:—

							£	s.	d.
1907.									
April	..	..	..	..	..	26,597	10	5
May	..	..	..	..	..	26,924	6	9
June	..	..	..	..	..	26,935	19	10
July	..	..	..	..	..	27,209	16	2
August	..	..	..	..	..	27,108	16	0
September	..	..	..	..	..	27,126	18	6
October	..	..	..	..	..	27,149	18	0
November	..	..	..	..	..	27,155	6	7
December	..	..	..	..	..	27,110	3	4
1908.									
January	..	..	..	..	..	27,252	16	5
February	..	..	..	..	..	27,272	11	3
March	..	..	..	..	..	27,354	19	11
							£325,199	3	2

The following table shows the number of individual payments and the total amounts paid in each Postal district during the year:—

Postal District.	Number of Payments.	Amount.		
		£	s.	d.
Auckland	33,147	67,914	19	1
Thames	5,795	12,169	1	6
Gisborne	1,238	2,263	5	2
Napier	5,580	11,018	1	3
New Plymouth	2,902	5,798	17	3
Wanganui	4,592	9,575	15	6
Wellington	14,821	30,022	10	7
Nelson	3,397	6,887	12	3
Blenheim	1,797	3,665	7	9
Christchurch	26,008	53,565	2	6
Timaru	5,500	10,957	9	9
Greymouth	6,016	12,744	12	2
Hokitika	6,303	13,360	7	0
Westport	3,651	7,754	16	2
Oamaru	3,365	6,930	10	4
Dunedin	24,828	50,225	6	8
Invercargill	9,842	20,366	18	3
Totals	158,782	£325,220	13	2

[NOTE.—The total of these figures does not quite agree with the total which immediately precedes them, by reason of the fact that they include a number of payments which through some informality have not been brought into the Treasury accounts. The following figures show the balance with the Treasury:—

		£	s.	d.
Payments in abeyance on 31st March, 1907	..	25	11	8
Plus payments during year 1907-8	..	325,220	13	2
		325,246	4	10
Less payments in abeyance on 31st March, 1908	..	47	1	8
Gross charge against vote "Old-age Pensions Act, 1898"	..	325,199	3	2