

WEALTH OF PENSIONERS.

The following particulars relate to the amount of accumulated property owned by the 16,509 old-age pensioners who were on the roll at the end of the year, and by the husbands and wives of these who were themselves not old-age pensioners. The grand total, it will be observed, now exceeds £1,000,000 :—

Owned by pensioners—		£
Homes (including furniture and personal effects)		780,381
Land (not used as a home), stock, &c.		162,835
Cash		111,338
		<u>1,054,554</u>
Less mortgages on this property... ..		162,536
		<u>892,018</u>
Owned by the husbands or wives of pensioners—		£
Homes		124,814
Land and other property		29,669
Cash		19,160
		<u>173,643</u>
Less mortgages on this property		41,875
Total net property owned by husbands or wives of pensioners (not themselves pensioners)		<u>131,768</u>
Grand total		<u>£1,023,786</u>

The total income earned by these pensioners, exclusive of the amount exempted in terms of the 1908 Amendment Act by reason of the loss of employment, was £125,175, and by their husbands or wives (not themselves pensioners), £25,823. The average amount of income earned by each pensioner was £7 11s., and the average amount of property held, after the deduction of mortgages, £54. The averages in 1906, when the exemption from property on account of the home was £150 instead of £340 as now, were—Income, £8 4s.; property, £28 12s.

The income and property of the 1,313 widows' pensioners at the end of the year were as follows :—

Income—		£
From property		8,431
From other sources (including personal earnings)		38,998
		<u>£47,429</u>
Total		£47,429
Average income per pensioner		£36
Property—		
Homes		115,885
Cash		36,791
Other property		41,172
		<u>193,848</u>
Less mortgages		53,178
		<u>£140,670</u>
Total		£140,670
Average amount of property per pensioner		£107

In conclusion, I would like to take the opportunity of expressing the Department's appreciation of the earnest and careful work performed in connection with the investigation of claims for old-age and widows' pensions by the various Registrars of Pensions throughout the Dominion, most of whom are Clerks of Court or police officers acting as Clerks of Court, and the State is indebted to these officers for the manner in which its interests have been so thoroughly safeguarded. To the Magistracy of the Dominion I take the liberty of expressing my best thanks for hearty co-operation at all times.

This tribute would be incomplete without reference to the interest taken in the old soldiers who applied for the military pension by the various officers in charge of area-groups and sergeants-major of the Defence Department, and the ready manner in which they have performed the duties appertaining to the position of Examining Officer under the Military Pensions Act, often under great stress owing to the nature of their ordinary work in connection with the administration of the Defence Act. The efforts of these officers have been cheerfully seconded by those members of the Headquarters Staff in Wellington who have been associated with the work, mainly that phase of it relating to the award of war medals. To these I tender my best thanks.

G. C. FACHE, Commissioner.