

GROSS PAYMENTS.

Class of Pension.							1923-24.	1924-25.
War							1,315,560	1,244,483
Old-age							767,805	806,953
Widows'							202,818	236,378
Maori War							30,350	26,848
Miners'							36,084	38,506
Epidemic							32,702	22,881
Boer War							3,146	3,071
Sundry pensions and annuities							8,033	9,327
Civil Service Act, 1908							21,145	19,115
Blind	1,036
Totals							2,417,643	2,408,598
Cost per head of European population							£1 17s. 4d.	£1 16s. 4d.

The following figures relate to the war and other pensions paid by the Department during the year on behalf of other Governments :—

Government.	Class of Pension.	Number at 31st March, 1925.	Annual Value.	Average Pension.	Payments, 1924-25.
Great Britain	War	1,859	£ 104,749	£ 56	} 150,554
"	Army and civil	572	28,267	49	
Australia	War	575	24,571	43	24,750
India	Army and civil	82	18,066	220	23,619
South Africa	War	2	252	126	331
"	Civil	28	2,787	99	3,031
Crown colonies	"	25	5,887	235	6,621
Totals		3,143	£184,579	..	£208,906

LEGISLATION.

During the year an amendment of the Pensions Act, 1913, passed into law, the main provisions of which are as follow :—

Old-age Pensions.—(a.) A uniform exemption of £52 per annum in respect of income, except that a pension of any amount payable under the War Pensions Act, 1915, and its amendments may be substituted for the said amount of £52 per annum.

(b.) The exclusion of furniture and personal effects from the computation of any pension.

(c.) An increase in the exemption in respect of a home from £390 to £520.

(d.) An additional pension of 2s. 6d. a week to those pensioners who have no income or property.

(e.) An additional pension not exceeding 5s. a week to old-age pensioners who saw service in the South African War of 1899-1902, provided total income and pension do not exceed £91 per annum.

Widows' Pensions.—(a.) An increase in the weekly pension of from 7s. 6d. a week to 10s. a week to widow and to each child under fourteen, with limit of total pension of £4 a week.

(b.) A variation of income exemption to provide for increase of 15s. weekly in the total of income and pension combined.

(c.) Increase in exemption in respect of home from £340 to £520.

(d.) Provision for pension in special cases on recommendation of a Magistrate.

Pensions for the Blind.—Statutory provision was also made during the year for the payment of a weekly pension of 15s. to blind people of the full age of twenty or over who became blind in New Zealand and have had ten years' residence. The qualifications in respect of unearned income and property are similar to those relating to old-age pensions, but in regard to earned income an additional pension equal to 25 per cent. of the said earnings is granted, with a proviso that total income and pension must not exceed £3 10s. a week. Thus a blind pensioner with £50 in cash and a home the net value of which does not exceed £520 may earn £2 4s. a week and receive a pension of 15s. a week, plus 11s. a week additional as subsidy on wages, making the total income £3 10s. a week.

The estimated annual cost of the increased benefits was as follows :—

	£
Old-age pensions	60,000 per annum.
Widows' pensions	80,000 "
Blind pensions	18,000 "
Total	£158,000