

1908.
NEW ZEALAND.

OLD-AGE PENSIONS DEPARTMENT

(TENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE), FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1908.

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 MINISTER OF FINANCE.

SIR,—

Old-age Pensions Department, Wellington, 1st July, 1908.

I have the honour to submit herewith my report on the working of the Department for the financial year ended the 31st March, 1908.

PENSIONS IN FORCE.

As is to be expected, with an increasing population, and a practically universal desire on the part of those in whose interest the Old-age Pensions Act was framed to take advantage of the benefits provided thereby, the number of participants in the scheme is being added to year by year. Although this increase in actual numbers is taking place, the percentage of pensioners to the population eligible by age and residence shows no upward tendency, and this fact can, I think, be safely taken as a reflex of the maintenance of the general prosperity of the Dominion.

On the 31st March last there were on the books of the Department a total number of 13,569 pensioners, being an increase of 312 on the number at the corresponding date in the previous year. Thus :—

New pensions granted	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,740
Deduct,—							
Deaths	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,189
Cancellations	..	..	..	..	..	..	239
							1,428
Net increase	..	..	..	..	..	..	312

The increase in the two preceding years—this is, since the date on which the pension was increased to 10s. a week—was 812 in the year 1905–6, and 675 in the year 1906–7. The number in excess of those on the roll on the 31st March, 1902, is only 793.

Included in the total number of pensioners are 657 members of the Native race.

The percentage of pensioners to the population eligible by age and residence in each year since 1902 is set out in the following table :—

On 31st March.		European Population eligible by Age and Residence.	European Pensioners.	Percentage.
1902	...	(Estimated) 27,993	11,721	41
1903	...	" 29,384	11,589	39
1904	...	" 30,890	11,197	36
1905	...	" 32,013	11,138	35
1906	...	(Actual) 37,367*	11,915	31
1907	...	(Estimated) 38,611	12,597	32
1908	...	" 39,336	12,912	32

* See results of census 1906, page 238.

The percentage of pensions to the population eligible by age is 29 per cent.

Of the total number of pensioners 10,774, or 79 per cent. of the whole, are in receipt of the full pension of £26. There are 5 pensioners drawing the minimum pension of £1.

Of the 7,487 pensioners who were admitted to the roll during the financial year in which the Act was passed—i.e., for the three months ended 31st March, 1899—2,476, or 33 per cent., are still drawing the pension, as against 38 per cent. last year. Included in the total number of deaths for the year—i.e., 1,189—are 337 of these original pensioners.