

In regard to these figures, it may be noted that the estimate of the population eligible by age and residence at 31st March, 1911, quoted in my last year's report at 41,556, and based on the 1906 census figures in conjunction with the mortality rate for the intervening years, shows a variation of only 434 from the actual figures disclosed by the census taken on the 2nd April, 1911.

The distribution of the pensioners, European and Maori, in the various districts throughout the Dominion, together with the annual amount payable in these districts, is embodied in Table I of the appendix.

Of the total number of pensioners, 14,209, or 85 per cent., were in receipt of the £26 pension, as against 87 per cent. in the previous year. The number payable at each rate is set out in Table II of the appendix.

Those pensioners who were admitted to the roll during the first three months of the Act, thirteen years ago, are rapidly passing away, only 1,351, or 18 per cent., of the total of 7,487 remaining. The death-rate amongst these during the past year reached the high rate of 17 per cent., the previous year's percentage being only 14 per cent. The numbers remaining on the roll of the various groups admitted year by year, together with the percentages, are shown in Table III of the appendix.

The total deaths of pensioners during the past year numbered 1,469, the percentage of these to the total pensioners who were on the roll during the same period being 8 per cent.—a rate which has obtained now for two years. For five years previously the rate was 7 per cent.

The pensioners of an advanced age continue to bear a high proportion to the whole, those who had reached 90 and upwards numbering 114. Seventeen were 95 and over, and one had topped the century. Table IV of the appendix contains details of the ages of all the pensioners.

There were 1,737 married couples drawing pensions at the end of the year.

The conjugal conditions of the pensioners admitted since the Act came into force are as follows: Married, 16,139; single, 6,186; and widowed, 12,426.

Particulars of the occupations, original nationalities, sexes, and conjugal conditions of all pensioners now on the roll are embodied in Tables V, VI, and VII of the appendix.

#### NEW CLAIMS.

The total claims lodged during the year numbered 2,975, being an increase of 14 on the number made during the previous year. These, with the 671 awaiting investigation at the seventy-three agencies of the office on the 31st March, 1911, made a total of 3,646 dealt with, which were accounted for as follows:—

|                                               |     |     |     |     |     |             |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------------|
| Granted                                       | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2,318       |
| Rejected (including deaths, withdrawals, &c.) | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 638         |
| Being investigated on 31st March, 1912        | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 690         |
|                                               |     |     |     |     |     | <hr/> 3,646 |

Of those granted, 191 represent applicants who were previously on the roll.

The total claims lodged since the Act came into operation now number 45,243, of which number 34,751 have been established, 47 per cent. of these still being on the books.

The new pensioners include 81 members of the Native race. Of the remainder, all but 100—i.e., 2,137—are of British extraction, including 88 whites born in New Zealand. There has now been a total of 343 New Zealand whites admitted to the roll, of whom 299 are still alive.

Of the 2,975 who applied during the year, 928 Europeans were unable to produce any documentary evidence of their ages, and the usual assistance was rendered to these, inquiries being made by Head Office in all quarters of the globe, with the following results:—

|                        |     |     |     |     |     |           |
|------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----------|
| Proved to be eligible  | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 574       |
| Proved to be under age | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 140       |
| No proof obtainable    | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 146       |
| Replies outstanding    | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 68        |
|                        |     |     |     |     |     | <hr/> 928 |
| Total                  | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 928       |

In 114 of those cases where no proof was obtainable the Magistrate exercised the discretion allowed by section 23 of the original Act and granted pensions. In only 18 of the 81 Maori claims established during the year was documentary evidence of age available.

The total number of applicants who have been proved to be short of the pension-age during the past six years is 932.

Searches were made for verification of date of arrival in 597 cases, in 9 of which the applicant was found to be disqualified by insufficient residence.

The number of claims lodged in each district during the year, and how dealt with, are shown in Table VIII of the appendix.

Tables IX and X contain particulars of the nationality, sex, and conjugal condition of the new pensioners.

The number of pensions granted in each year since 1898, and the deaths and cancellations over the same period, are set out in detail in Table XI of the appendix.

#### ANNUAL PAYMENTS.

The gross payments made on account of pensions during the year totalled £406,255 16s. 4d., an increase of £22,863 5s. 8d. on the figures of the previous year. The previous year's increase was £20,896 19s. 8d., the average annual increase over the past five years being £18,414. The fluctuations since the Act came into operation are embodied in Table XII of the appendix.