

OLD-AGE PENSIONS IN UNITED KINGDOM.

The latest figures available relating to the old-age-pension scheme in operation in the British Isles are for the year ended 31st March, 1912, from which the following particulars have been extracted :—

	Claims lodged during Year.	Total Pensions in force at close of Year.	Deaths of Pensioners during Year.	Percentage of Pensioners to Total Population.	Payments for Year.
England	119,659	602,441	65,096	1·79	£ 7,452,189
Wales	8,595	40,083	4,721	1·66	495,827
Scotland	18,059	94,319	10,662	1·98	Not available.
Ireland	40,653	205,317	19,698	4·68	„
Total United Kingdom..	186,966	942,160	100,177	2·08	..

The percentage increase of pensions for the three years ended 31st March, 1912, is 45·5 per cent.

The percentage of pensioners to eligible population (*i.e.* 70 and over) in England and Wales is 60 per cent. Taking the present number of pensioners in New Zealand 70 and over, and comparing it with the European population of the same age in 1911, the percentage in New Zealand is 42 per cent. At the actual date of the census in April, 1911, it was 39 per cent.

It is interesting to note the effect that the payment of old-age pensions in Great Britain, which began on the 1st January, 1909, has had on outdoor relief in that country. In a memorandum prepared by the Local Government Board as recently as August, 1913, and presented to both Houses of Parliament by command of His Majesty, statistics are quoted relating to both indoor and outdoor relief in England and Wales, and from these it will be found that, whereas we in New Zealand can point to a 40-per-cent. reduction in the cost of outdoor relief over a period of fourteen years, England has in half the time experienced a 95-per-cent. reduction in the number of her aged persons in receipt of such relief. The following figures are extracted from the memorandum in question :—

Aged Persons in receipt of Outdoor Relief over 70 Years of Age.

	England.	Wales.	Total.
31st March, 1906	154,578	13,518	168,096
1st January, 1910	127,061	11,162	138,223
„ 1911	84,156	9,021	93,177
„ 1912	7,945	1,585	9,530
4th January, 1913	7,352	1,211	8,563

Compared with the figures for 1906, those for 1913 show decreases as follows : England, 147,226, or 95·2 per cent. ; Wales, 12,307, or 91 per cent. ; England and Wales, 159,533, or 94·9 per cent. In none of the English counties was the reduction less than 91 per cent., while in two it exceeded 99 per cent. In Wales the decrease ranged in counties from 87 per cent. to 96 per cent.

The change in regard to aged persons in receipt of indoor relief has not been so marked, the figures for 1913 showing a reduction on those of March, 1906, as follows : England, 11,909, or 20 per cent. ; Wales, 262, or 13·7 per cent. ; England and Wales, 12,171, or 19·8 per cent.

G. C. FACHE,
Commissioner of Pensions.

APPENDIX.

Table	I. Number and annual value of pensions in districts—old-age and widows'.
„	II. Number of pensions in districts—military.
„	III. Pensions at each rate—old-age, widows' and military.
„	IV. Ages of European pensioners—old-age, widows', and military.
„	V. Percentage of pensions granted in each year now in force—old-age.
„	VI. Nationalities of pensioners—old-age and widows'.
„	VII. Sex and conjugal condition of pensioners—old-age.
„	VIII. Ages at death during 1913–14—old-age.
„	IX. Pensions granted, deaths, and cancellations ; also annual liability and average pension—old-age, widows', and military.
„	X. Pensions in force and payments in each year—old-age.
„	XI. Sizes of families of pensioners—widows'.
„	XII. Regiments of military pensioners.
„	XIII. Amounts paid to homes and hospitals—old-age and military.