

The above table would read thus: Out of a hundred men of the age of thirty-five, fifty-seven would attain age sixty-five, forty-five would attain seventy, thirty would attain seventy-five, and so on.

These figures show that the prospects of survival to old age are much greater than one would be at all inclined to fancy from a superficial consideration of the question.

In order that a fair idea may be obtained of the number of persons who would be affected by a scheme of old-age pensions, I have calculated the number alive at various ages over sixty, sixty-five, &c., at the present time, and at intervals of five and ten years hence.

TABLE showing the NUMBER ALIVE in VICTORIA, at AGES over those under mentioned, at the CENSUSES of 1881 and 1891, and the ESTIMATED NUMBER over SIMILAR AGES at 1896, 1901, and 1906.

*I.—Males.*

Date.	Number alive over the Age of				
	60.	65.	70.	75.	80.
Census, April, 1881 ... ..	24,769	12,723	6,567	2,881	1,099
" " 1891 ... ..	43,848	23,625	12,480	5,233	2,025
Calculated at April, 1896 ... ..	51,279	31,760	14,922	6,523	2,117
" " 1901 ... ..	54,786	36,746	20,516	7,853	2,724
" " 1906 ... ..	54,234	38,136	23,138	10,964	3,265

*II.—Females.*

Date.	Number alive over the Age of				
	60.	65.	70.	75.	80.
Census, April, 1881 ... ..	15,390	8,382	4,581	2,057	842
" " 1891 ... ..	28,674	15,753	8,571	3,768	1,501
Calculated at April, 1896 ... ..	36,232	21,559	10,545	5,052	1,814
" " 1901 ... ..	43,234	27,088	14,594	6,177	2,468
" " 1906 ... ..	47,456	31,946	18,212	8,672	2,995

It will, of course, depend on the scope of the pension scheme what proportion of the above numbers would come under its provisions. Some schemes which have been advocated are universal in character, and would thus embrace the whole numbers given. Others, again, embrace only those who are in destitute circumstances.

The latter is the most practical, and possesses altogether a better *raison d'être*. But we are, unfortunately, in comparative ignorance of the numbers or proportions of destitute old men and women, and will probably have to assume, in the meantime, that the proportion in this colony will correspond with that shown to exist in Britain.

In Britain it has been tolerably well established, through the operations of the poor-law and benevolent and charitable organizations, that about 40 per cent. of those who die after reaching the age of sixty-five will have received parochial relief in some form during the concluding years of their life. If the wage-earning class alone be taken it is estimated that the proportion is at least 50 per cent.

If sixty-five be assumed to be a fair age at which pensions should commence, and 40 per cent. fairly represent the proportion which will permanently require this aid, then the numbers in receipt of aid will be approximately those shown in the following table:—

TABLE showing, on the Basis stated, the NUMBER of PERSONS who would be in RECEIPT of AID at VARIOUS DATES.

Date.	Males.	Females.	Total.
At April, 1896 ... ..	12,704	8,624	21,328
" " 1901 ... ..	14,698	10,835	25,533
" " 1906 ... ..	15,254	12,778	28,032

The capital cost of an annuity of 5s. per week for the numbers stated would be: At April, 1896, about £2,100,000; at April, 1901, about £2,450,000.

THE AGE AT WHICH THE PENSION SHOULD COMMENCE.

Two considerations are important: (1) As to whether the recipients contribute to its cost; or (2) whether it is to be paid by the State. If the first case hold, then the age of sixty-five would probably be a fair approximation to the period when the pension should be assumed to commence.