

By reason of the new method adopted, extra work of a most important character has been cast upon the Head Office, as well as upon the various Deputy-Registrars. The machinery is doing all that is required of it, and is working satisfactorily.

It is gratifying to find the pension looked upon, as the Legislature intended it should be, as a right, and not a charity.

#### HOMES, HOSPITALS, AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS.

During the year various institutions and homes where pensioners reside were visited, and the inmates were found to be well housed and cared for by the governing authorities. The pensioners were quite content, and had no complaints to make about their treatment.

#### MAORI PENSIONERS.

The investigation of Maori pension-claims is one that demands the most careful attention of investigating Magistrates.

It is thought that it would be to the advantage of the aged Natives if Magistrates availed themselves more fully of the power contained in section 10 of the Amendment Act of 1901, which reads as follows: “(1.) Where, on the application by a Maori for a pension or a renewal certificate, it would, in the opinion of the Magistrate, be more advantageous to the applicant to receive an allowance out of the moneys appropriated for Native purposes under ‘The Civil List Act, 1863,’ he may, in lieu of granting a pension, report the circumstances of the case to the Native Minister, with such recommendation as he thinks fit to make.” If this were done, Government officers could see that necessary food and clothing were supplied direct to them.

In consequence of the advanced age or physical disability of some of the Maori pensioners, they are not capable of protecting themselves from the younger branches, who, it is feared, spend the aged pensioners’ money.

The Civil List vote would require to be increased to meet the increased expenditure under this head, which, however, would be more than compensated for by the decrease in the charge upon the Consolidated Fund on account of payment of pensions.

Tables are attached as under: (1.) Number and annual value of pensions granted to Europeans and Maoris in force on the 31st March, 1903. (2.) Sexes of pensioners on the rolls at 31st March, 1903. (3.) Pensions in force on 31st March, 1903, in North and South Islands. (4.) Number of pensions granted in each financial year, together with the number of such pensions in force on 31st March, 1903. (5.) Ages of European pensioners on the rolls at 31st March, 1903. (6.) Ages of European pensioners who died during the year ended 31st March, 1903. (7.) Number of pensions granted since the Act came into operation, together with the number of voids each year, and number in force at end of each year. (8.) Comparative statement of pensions in force, and payments made in each financial year since the Act came into operation. (9.) Cost of administration for the financial year ended 31st March, 1903. (10.) Number of old-age pensioners in charitable institutions on 31st March, 1903.

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