

one year since 1900, and £7,689 less than the amount paid last year. Add to this decrease the sum of £1,501 recovered during the year by Court proceedings and demands and paid to the credit of the Public Account, together with £25 recovered by way of fine and paid in stamps, and the actual cash saving for the past twelve months, stands at £9,215. The net expenditure from the Consolidated Fund stands at £193,973 13s. 5d. It has already been pointed out that the natural increase during the past three years is represented by a total of 782 pensions, which number, it may be stated, represents at £18 per annum each a total sum of £14,076. If, then, this natural increase had not been interfered with, the State would to-day have been paying per annum £14,000 more than the £210,140 paid in 1903—*i.e.*, a sum exceeding £224,000, instead of the £195,475 actually paid last year. In other words, the present annual expenditure under the Act is, approximately, £29,000 less than the amount which, under ordinary circumstances, would have been required.

The accompanying table shows the total amount paid by way of pensions since the Act came into force, together with the cost per head of the population (exclusive of Maoris), in each year:—

		Gross Payments on Account of Pensions. £	Population at End of Year.	Cost per Head of Population. s. d.
Three months ended 31st March, 1899	...	3,124	746,676	0 1
Year ended 31st March, 1900	...	157,342	758,617	4 1 $\frac{3}{4}$
" " 1901	...	197,292	772,719	5 1 $\frac{1}{4}$
" " 1902	...	207,468	789,994	5 3
" " 1903	...	210,140	814,842	5 2
" " 1904	...	203,164	838,954	4 10
" " 1905	...	195,475	864,971	4 6
Total	...	£1,174,005		

A comparison of the amounts paid month by month for the past three years is shown by the following figures:—

Month.	Year 1902-3.	Year 1903-4.	Year 1904-5.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
April	17,374 0 4	17,342 12 4	15,907 11 4
May	17,654 7 7	17,234 7 1	16,185 2 9
June	17,417 12 10	17,038 18 11	16,150 11 6
July	17,617 8 2	17,131 4 9	16,331 0 9
August	17,460 0 1	17,052 12 0	16,344 10 6
September	17,592 8 8	16,926 17 8	16,500 5 6
October	17,579 18 0	16,994 13 2	16,393 16 3
November	17,436 1 11	16,840 16 7	16,280 10 6
December	17,548 9 4	16,833 17 6	16,470 15 9
January	17,435 2 10	16,643 8 4	16,167 5 9
February	17,543 19 11	16,750 18 11	16,500 15 5
March	17,481 6 10	16,373 0 9	16,242 18 2
Special payment	...	0 16 8	...
	£210,140 16 6	£203,164 4 8	£195,475 4 2

RECOVERIES.

Closely allied to this question of annual expenditure and the marked decrease shown therein, is the further cash-saving that has been effected during my term of office by the recovery of those pensions illegally obtained during the early years of the Act. My former reports have told you that the misstatement by pensioners of their true positions and the extent of the imposition practised were almost incredible, and confirmation of this is to be found in the accompanying table, showing the amount of overpayments which have been recovered and paid to the credit of the Public Account in each year since the Act came into operation.

		£	s.	d.
Year ended 31st March, 1899	...	Nil.		
" " 1900	...	25	15	0
" " 1901	...	63	18	4
" " 1902	...	127	1	11
" " 1903	...	1,039	11	1*
" " 1904	...	2,349	14	7†
" " 1905	...	1,526	10	9‡
Total	...	5,132	11	8

* Including £55 fines. † Including £30 fines. ‡ Including £25 fines.

It will be noticed that of the total of £5,132 refunded, no less than £4,915 has been recovered during the past three years. If to this amount is added the actual cash drop in the expenditure since 1903 of £14,665, it will be found that the total cash-saving in three years has reached the sum of £19,580.