

Of the 2,073 new pensions, 125 were Maoris.

1,779 were born in the British Islands, the rest of the Empire accounting for an additional 54.

Of the 1,948 Europeans admitted, 532 only were of the minimum age of 65, there being 73 of the age of 80 and over.

Further details regarding the nationality, age, sex, employment, and conjugal condition of these new pensioners will be found in the Appendix, together with a comprehensive return setting out the total number of claims received in each district since the Act came into force, the number made during the past year, and the manner in which these latter have been dealt with.

Of the total number of claimants—namely, 28,662—21,846 have been admitted as pensioners.

ANNUAL PAYMENTS.

As was to be expected, the amount paid by way of pension during the year shows a considerable increase, the actual payments being represented by a total of £254,366 16s. 6d. Deduct from this amount the sum of £404 11s., being overpayments in the early years of the Act recovered by Court proceedings and otherwise, and the net expenditure from the Consolidated Fund on account of pensions is shown to be £253,962 5s. 6d. It is estimated that the sum of £350,000 will meet all requirements for the year now current.

The following table shows the payments made in each month during the year :—

	1905.				£	s.	d.
April (at £18 rate)	16,139	5	3
May	"	16,521	16	11
June	"	16,431	18	0
July	"	16,364	8	3
August	"	16,322	1	5
September (at £26 rate)	23,906	8	10
October	"	24,455	14	3
November	"	24,482	12	1
December	"	24,724	7	10
1906.							
January	"	24,660	17	6
February	"	25,022	13	3
March	"	25,334	12	11
					£254,366	16	6

A further table is submitted showing the total amount paid 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
" " 1901	...	197,292	772,719	5 1
" " 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
" " 1906	...	254,367	889,968	5 8
Total	...	£1,428,372		

RECOVERIES.

The amount recovered and paid to the credit of the Public Account during the year—namely, £404 11s.—shows a considerable falling-off when compared with the figures of the previous three years. This sum can be taken to represent the balance of the overpayments in the early years of the Act disclosed by the clearing-up under the new system of investigation introduced in 1903. It is only an isolated case that now necessitates the penal clause of the Act being brought into operation.

The accompanying table shows the overpayments recovered in each year since the Act came into operation :—

					£	s.	d.
Three months ended 31st March, 1899	...	...	...	...	Nil.		
Year ended 31st March, 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‡
" " 1906	...	...	...	...	405	11	0§
Total	...	...	...	...	£5,538	2	8

* Including £55 fines.

† Including £30 fines.

‡ Including £25 fines.

§ Including £1 fine.