

HOMES AND HOSPITALS.

The amount paid to the controlling bodies of the various homes and hospitals in New Zealand during the past year totalled £17,973 10s. 10d. Full details in regard to these payments, which do not carry a Government subsidy, are set out in the appendix.

The decrease in the annual expenditure on outdoor relief since the Old-age Pensions Act came into force in 1898 is indicated by the following table:—

Year ended				European Population.	Annual Cost of Outdoor Relief. £	Cost per Head of Population. s. d.
31st March, 1899	...	...	...	746,676	50,850	1 4 $\frac{1}{4}$
" 1900	...	...	...	758,617	41,790	1 1 $\frac{1}{4}$
" 1901	...	...	...	772,719	42,181	1 1
" 1902	...	...	...	789,994	38,934	0 11 $\frac{3}{4}$
" 1903	...	...	...	814,842	43,421	1 0 $\frac{3}{4}$
" 1904	...	...	...	833,954	42,618	1 0 $\frac{1}{4}$
" 1905	...	...	...	864,971	40,799	0 11 $\frac{1}{4}$
" 1906	...	...	...	889,968	39,547	0 10 $\frac{1}{2}$
" 1907	...	...	...	913,873	38,305	0 10
" 1908	...	...	...	937,587	33,998	0 8 $\frac{3}{4}$
" 1909	...	...	...	968,313	37,537	0 9 $\frac{1}{4}$

GENERAL.

The usual assistance has been rendered by the Department to applicants in securing the necessary evidence of age. Of the total number of applicants during the year—i.e., 2,834—no less than 812 were unable to prove their ages; and, as a result of the inquiries made by Head Office in these cases, 498 were enabled to get their pensions, while 157 were found to be short of the pension age. In 92 cases no evidence could be traced, and in the remaining 65 replies from outside the Dominion are still awaited.

Now that the Old-age Pensions Department is about to become incorporated with the Post and Telegraph Department, this will be my last report on the working of the scheme, and when the time comes for me to hand over the administration to my successor, it will be with the feeling that I have done my duty alike to the State, to the old-age pensioners, and to myself.

J. EMAN SMITH, Commissioner.