

SESSION II.
1923.
NEW ZEALAND.

ACCIDENT INSURANCE BRANCH OF THE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE DEPARTMENT

(ANNUAL REPORT ON THE) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1922.

Laid before Parliament pursuant to Section 22 of the Government Accident Insurance Act, 1908.

Government Insurance Office, Wellington, 26th March, 1923.

I HAVE the honour to submit my report on the business of the Accident Insurance Branch of the Department for the year ended 31st December, 1922, together with the Revenue Account and Balance-sheet.

The gross premium income amounted to £33,983, and, after deducting reinsurances, to £33,348. The premium income, depending as it does upon wages paid in the various industries, has been to some extent adversely affected by the prevalence of unemployment.

The claims were £20,330, an increase of £3,544 as compared with the previous year.

The gross return from interest was £7,598, as compared with £6,794 in 1921. The sum of £1,489 was paid in taxes.

The ratio of management expenses to premiums was 28·8 per cent., and to total income 24·3 per cent.

The balance-sheet shows an increase of £6,000 in New Zealand inscribed stock, the total holding by the Accident Branch being now £103,500, in addition to £10,000 debentures under the Finance Act, 1915, the two together representing 74 per cent. of the total invested funds.

The statutory Reserve Fund stands at £115,020.

The total assets at the end of the year amount to £169,215.

During the year the Workers' Compensation Act was consolidated and amended, the most important amendments being—

- (1.) Increase in the weekly allowance on incapacity in respect of non-fatal accidents from 55 per cent. to 58 per cent. of the average weekly wages.
- (2.) Increase from £750 to £1,000 in the maximum amount of damages claimable under the Act in respect of the negligence of a fellow-servant.
- (3.) Reduction of the period of engagement necessary to bring domestic service under the Act, from seven days to three days.
- (4.) An increase in a minor benefit in the Second Schedule.

It has been decided to cover the extra benefits above mentioned without any increase in the premium rates, pending the usual actuarial investigation which will shortly take place.

It is a source of gratification to be able to report that, by means of the scientific analysis of the experience of the whole of the workers' compensation insurance business of New Zealand which is systematically made by the Actuary, the Department was enabled not only to supply the Legislature with the estimated cost of the various suggested amendments to the law, but also to furnish reliable advice of an expert character.

An amendment to the Government Accident Insurance Act was also enacted during the year giving power to allow of rebates to policyholders in respect of premiums. This takes the place of the previous clauses making provision for bonuses, and it is hoped that the new provisions will prove satisfactory in their operation.

As, owing to my approaching retirement, this is the last report I shall be making, I may perhaps be permitted to refer to the fact that the Accident Branch, which commenced operations in 1901, has been from its inception continuously under my control; that during the whole period of its existence the goal aimed at has been the regulation of the rates charged to the public, and not the accumulation of large profits; and that up to the present this policy has been consistently and successfully carried out. The Department has effected its aim by the conjunction of two methods; firstly by scientifically demonstrating the precise net cost of the risk in each class of business, and secondly by its active competition with the private insurance companies. On relinquishing my office I am able to point to the fact that the rates current in New Zealand, thanks to the Department, are