

From the figures shown in the preceding tables, a large increase, with a consequential increased cost of expenditure, is revealed in the number of civil pensions in force, notably old-age and miners' pensions and family allowances, and the following figures indicate more clearly what an abnormal increase has taken place during the past two years :—

	Old-age Pensions.	Widows' Pensions.	Miners' Pensions.	Family Allowances.
Average annual increase in number of pensions over ten years ended 31st March, 1929	612	89	34	*
Increase in number of pensions for year ended—				
31st March, 1930	799	41	19	105
31st March, 1931	2,086	193	97	749
31st March, 1932	3,322	143	115	2,715

* Came into force 1st April, 1927.

The underlying cause of this increase is the financial and industrial depression which the Dominion has been experiencing during this period, and a return to normal increases of pensions can only be looked for with the return to prosperous conditions generally. Economic necessity has undoubtedly brought forward many applicants who in normal times would not have been required to seek aid by way of pension or family allowance.

The following figures relate to the war and other pensions paid by the Department during the year on behalf of other Governments :—

Government.	Class of Pension.	Number at 31st March, 1932.	Annual Value.	Average Pension.	Payments, 1931-32.
Great Britain	War	1,624	£ 83,716	£ s. d. 52 0 0	} £ 122,161
"	Army and civil ..	728	50,664	70 0 0	
Australia	War	518	22,597	43 12 6	24,626
India	Army and civil ..	71	16,007	225 0 0	20,023
South Africa	War	2	115	57 8 6	92
"	Civil	28	3,127	112 0 0	2,706
Crown Colonies	"	26	7,661	295 0 0	8,932
Canada	War	2	360	179 19 7	630
Totals	2,999	184,247	..	179,170

FAMILY ALLOWANCES.

The claims lodged during the year totalled 3,443, which, with the 279 outstanding from the previous year, made a total of 3,722 dealt with. Of these, 3,040 were accepted and 350 rejected. Of the rejected claims 146 represent cases where the income of the family was in excess of the limit allowed. 389 new claims from Maoris were finally dealt with during the year, 260 being granted and 129 rejected.

The total children of the 7,332 allowances in force as at 31st March, 1932, and those in excess of two in a family numbered 34,546 and 19,882, the average per family being 4·71 and 2·71 respectively.

The total amount paid during the year was £90,100, while the total annual value of all allowances in force at the close of the year was £101,608.

Weekly Rates at which Allowances granted.

Weekly Rate.	1s.	2s.	3s.	4s.	5s.	6s.	7s.	8s.	10s.	12s.	14s.	16s.	18s.
Number granted	6	1,127	10	946	9	508	..	264	105	52	7	4	2