

AGE PENSIONS IN AUSTRALIA.

How the Scheme Has Worked so Far.

PERSONS OVER SIXTY-FIVE YEARS RECEIVE \$130 A YEAR.

Sydney, N. S. W., June 19.—The system of old age pensions, at present confined to New South Wales and Victoria, must be regarded somewhat in the light of an experiment, and its adoption by the Commonwealth Government will depend largely on the success of the working details and the means of obtaining the necessary funds, the latter necessarily involving some form of additional taxation, probably through the federal customs.

In New South Wales the old age pension scheme, as sanctioned by the state parliament, specifies a pension of 26 pounds sterling, (130), a year diminished by one pound sterling for every one pound sterling of income above 26 pounds sterling a year, and by one pound sterling for every 15 pounds sterling that the pensioner possesses. Where a husband and wife are each entitled to a pension, the amount is fixed at 19 pounds sterling, 10s. a year each, unless they are living apart under a decree of the court or a deed of separation, when the full sum of 26 pounds sterling will be allowed. Persons under 65 years of age, but over 60, are entitled to pensions if they are incapacitated by sickness or injury from earning their own livelihood, but disability due merely to age is not considered as an incapacitating sickness.

The pension system came into force on August 1, 1901, at which date 13,937 pensions were granted, involving a monthly payment of 28,037 pounds sterling, (\$140,185). The pension list gradually increased as persons entitled to claim made good their rights, and on July 1 the number of pensions was 22,252, the monthly pensions bill being 44,362 pounds sterling, (\$221,810).

A GRADUAL DECLINE.

This was the highest point attained, and from that date onward there has been a gradual decline, both in the number of pensioners and the amount payable.

In August, 1904, the number was 20,438, and the monthly payments 40,617 pounds sterling, (\$203,085). This is the lowest point reached since the pension system has been in full

operation. The average annual pension is now about 23 pounds sterling, 16s., and it has varied but little since the pension system came into force.

In Victoria the system is somewhat different. The average week income of a claimant during the six months immediately preceding the grant of a pension must have amounted to 8s. per week (in New South Wales the sum allowed is 1 pound sterling, per week); he must also have made reasonable efforts to provide for himself, which is not necessary in New South Wales, where the pension is granted in consideration of old age, and a citizen may enjoy his pension on attaining the age of sixty-five, whether he is able to work or not, indeed, the law allows him to supplement his income to the extent of 10s. per week in the case of New South Wales; the total income enjoyed by the pensioners may, therefore, in that state amount to 20s. per week.

When a claimant, although he has attained the statutory age of sixty-five years, appears to be physically capable of earning his living, a pension may be refused or fixed at a lower sum than 8s. The statutory maximum of pensions is diminished by 6d. per week for every 10 pounds of sterling, of savings accumulated by the claimant, or by the value of the board and lodging which he may receive, such value being taken at 5s. per week.

Relatives—if the father, mother, brother or sister, or child—are required to assist in the maintenance of the pensioner, where their means are sufficient to allow them to do so; otherwise they will have to prove their inability to aid in the cost of supporting their relatives.

The granting of pensions depends on whether any money is available to pay them, the total amount being fixed by the state government at 150,000 pounds sterling, (\$750,000), per annum. The number of persons at 65 years of age and upward resident in the Commonwealth on the 30th of June, 1904, was estimated at 50,300, but it is believed that the actual figures are somewhat lower.

HUMOR AT SCHOOL.

Much of it Unconscious but of Finest Quality.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CHILD IS TAUGHT ORALLY AND WITHOUT EXPLANATIONS.

Dr. Macnamara, M. P., in his book "Schoolroom Humour," has made a collection of children's mistakes and absurdities which is very amusing. Some of the stories are examples of unconscious satire; such, for instance, is that of the case of the boy who said "the marriage customs of the ancient Greeks were that a man had only one wife, and this was called monotomy." Other stories show us the workings of a child's mind in the way in which it has been taught. For example, a boy who had learned his "Duty Towards God" orally, being asked to write it down, produced the following:—"My duty towards God is to bleed in Him, to fering, and to loaf withold your arts, withold my mine, withold my sold, and with my sernth to wirchp and give thanks ti put my old trash in Him." This example is fifty years old, but the book contains more modern results of bad teaching. Thus, a child wrote down this version of the tenth Commandment:—"Thou shalt not emnt thy neighbor's house, thos shalt not emnt thy neighbor's wiff, mornin' circus, mornin' oss, moenin' ass, not anything that is his."

Many of the answers in the book show that the children had been taught mere isolated items of information, which they supposed to have no object except to provide questions in school. In such cases what is learned is only words.

A child, being asked to name the chief mountains in Scotland, answered:—"Ben Nevis, Ben Lomond and Ben Jonson." Dr. Macnamara thinks that girls are more conscientious than boys, and see sooner what is expected of them.

A boy being asked "Who was Guy

Fawkes?" replied:—"Guy Forks is a man made by another man," whereas a girl said:—"Guy Fox was a man who tried to destroy parliament."

A child was asked to think of a creature that wiggles about in the earth and sometimes comes to the top through a hole. "A worm," replied the child. He was asked to think of another creature with the same habits, an ucried in triumph, "Another worm." Lessons to that boy were a kind of game of question and answer. Some other questions and answers follow:—"What is a celestial pole?" "A heavenly perch." "What is poetry?" "Poetry is when every line begins with a capital letter." A child wrote of an imaginary expedition to the north pole. "At last we reached the north pole. We sailed into the harbor and went to see the town." In an account of the Salvation Army a child wrote of the women:—"They have names on their hats like sailors. They make a deal of noise, the worst two is called captain and lieutenant." Another child defined a nib as "the thing there isn't when you buy a pen," while still another youngster described a fishing net as "a lot of little holes joined together by a bit of string." A teacher after explaining the use of the hyphen asked a boy why there was a hyphen in "bird-cage." The boy answered:—"It is for the bird to perch on, sir." That boy, Dr. Macnamara says, was among the dunces, but it was probably because he was more interested in birds than in hyphens. His answer showed he had a trick of learning things for himself.

princess came into the world "with the very smallest trace of original sin." "From her earliest age Marie's love for her father has been marked," says the lady. "When she was barely able to toddle she would always try to escape from the nurseries to go to him, and whenever she saw him in the garden or park she would call after him. If he heard or saw her he always waited for her, and would carry her a little. When he was ill in his room she sat on the nursery floor listening. If she heard his voice she would stretch out her little arms and call 'Papa, papa.' And her rapture when she was allowed to see him was great."

Hope costs nothing to get, nothing to keep, but when lost you are a pauper.

THAT HALIFAX FATALITY.

Sympathy Expressed for Mr. and Mrs. W. F. Mitchell in Their Great Trial.

Referring to the gunpowder explosion in which Andrew Gordon Mitchell, son of Mr. W. F. Mitchell of the Royal Bank, formerly of this city lost his life, The Halifax Chronicle says:

Persons who were boating on the Arm at the time say that the explosion was a terrific one. A column of smoke and flames shot up, and then followed the agonizing cries of the injured boys. Those were nearest the scene hastened to the assistance of the injured lads, and bore them to Mr. Grant's residence. There everything possible was done to relieve their suffering until the arrival of medical aid.

Young Twining was removed to the hospital as soon as possible. It was also the intention at first to take the Mitchell boy there, but the doctors soon realized that his condition was too serious to permit of his removal.

He was an exceedingly bright boy, and, being the only son, the grief stricken parents will have the deepest sympathy in their bereavement. He was thirteen years of age, and quite a good size for his age. All the injured boys, the two Grants and Twining, will be marked badly. The removal of the powder grains is most difficult, and in some of the boys the quantity is large.

BITS OF NEWS.

Items of Interest Culled from Our Exchanges and Other Sources.

Five hundred persons were killed in the explosion that occurred at the Ivan colliery at Khartsisk, Russia, last week.

A despatch from Ottawa stated that Col. G. R. White, D. O. C., had not been transferred from New Brunswick to Quebec.

Hampton village ratepayers on Saturday voted solidly for school consolidation and Hampton Station appointed a committee to consider it.

Twenty-five persons were killed and a score were injured in a collision on the Western Maryland Railroad near Patapsco, a small station between Westminster and Pinksburg, Saturday night.

A cheese factory, barn and hen-house belonging to William Henderson of Bellisle, King's County, were burned Friday night. The insurance was \$700, and the loss is estimated at several thousand.

Russia and Japan have tentatively decided each to appoint three plenipotentiaries to represent them in the Washington conference. M. Nelidoff, it is understood, has already accepted the chairmanship of the Russian delegation.

George T. Ross, a native of Truro, N. S., and a former employee of the Intercolonial Railway, has been appointed general superintendent of the Iowa division of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railway. Mr. Ross is not yet forty years old.

At an early hour Sunday morning, the wood working factory of Chapelle Bros. & Co., at Sydney, N. S., was completely destroyed by fire. The loss is estimated at \$30,000, with only \$5,000 insurance, \$2,500 each in the Queen and London, and Liverpool Companies.

Rev. W. E. Taylor, Professor of Apologetics at Wycliffe College, Toronto, has accepted the principalship of the Christian College to be built at Hsuhow, China. He sails in October with a party of ten graduates of the United States and British Universities.

Amherst Telegram:—C. T. Hillson has received a letter from Sir Chas. Tupper which contains the disquieting news that he is not enjoying good health. Indeed at the time the letter was written the veritable statesman was confined to his bed with three doctors in attendance.

Col. McDougall, Commander of No. 1 company R. C. R., at London, Ont has been instructed to hold forty men in readiness to leave for Halifax at any moment. This draft on the barracks force, however, will not be seriously felt, as it is probable that about thirty volunteers, who have been in camp, will join the permanent force.

Mary Quinn, who lived alone in a small house in the north end of Montreal, was found lying dead in her doorway at an early hour Sunday morning. The woman's head had been smashed in and half a dozen knife wounds in her face left no doubt but that she had been brutally murdered. A man named Reid, who lives across the street, says that shortly after midnight he heard screams, and going to the door saw the woman talking to two men. A suspect, found with blood on his hands, has been arrested.

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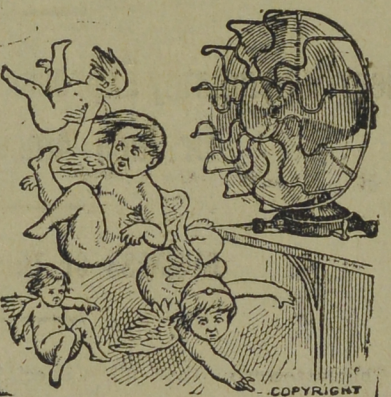
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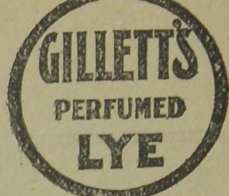
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