

relief. The clerk of the guardians was requested to find persons who could be trusted to conduct the inquiry carefully and tactfully in his union, and to instruct those persons to fill in the cards and to return them to him when they were filled in. We have every reason to believe that the work entrusted to the enumerators was done efficiently and intelligently. The results deducible from the enumerations, which have been tabulated in the General Register Office, are given in Appendix II.; and we shall show in the course of this Report what light they throw on the subject of our investigation.

6. Steps were also taken in *Scotland* with a view to instituting a similar kind of test census in certain typical districts in that country; and the results of that census, which have been tabulated by the Local Government Board for *Scotland*, will be found in Appendix III. It will be seen that the Scottish inquiry embraced a larger number of areas and persons, not only relatively but actually, than the English inquiry.

7. In *Ireland*, the idea of a house to house visitation was abandoned at the instance of the authorities at the Local Government Board for *Ireland*; and we have had to be content with estimates made by the general inspectors of the Board after minute inquiries from clerks of unions, relieving officers, poor rate collectors, and other officials. The results obtained through these inquiries are less detailed and more conjectural than those which have been obtained by the more methodical process adopted in *England* and *Scotland*; but they have the advantage of relating to all the unions in *Ireland*; and they express the personal opinions of men of great experience and knowledge in local administration. They are given in Appendix IV.

II. THE SELECT COMMITTEE'S SCHEME.

8. We now proceed to summarise the scheme which was framed by the Select Committee. The qualifications which they prescribed* as constituting eligibility for pensions, in the case of women as well as men, whether married or unmarried, were seven in number, which may briefly be stated as follows:

- (1.) British nationality.
- (2.) Attainment of the age of 65.
- (3.) Absence of conviction for any serious offence between the ages of 45 and 65.
- (4.) Non-receipt of poor law relief (other than medical relief) during the 20 years preceding the application for a pension, unless under circumstances of a wholly exceptional character.
- (5.) Residence within a given district.
- (6.) Non-possession of an income (from any source) of more than 10s. a week.
- (7.) Proved industry or proved exercise of reasonable providence by some definite mode of thrift.

9. To all those who fulfilled these qualifications to the satisfaction of the pension authority, that authority, composed in part of guardians of the poor, was to award pensions of not less than 5s. a week (*i.e.*, 13l. per annum), or more than 7s. a week (*i.e.*, 18l. per annum), according to the cost of living in the locality; the award being made for not less than three years and renewable thereafter, but liable at any time to be withdrawn. The cost of the pensions was to be borne by the common fund of the union, to which the Exchequer would contribute not more than half the total pension charge; such contribution being allocated, not in proportion to the amount of the awards, but on a basis of population.†

10. We propose to consider successively each of the prescribed qualifications.

* See Paragraph 56 of Report of Select Committee, No. 296 of 1899.

† See Paragraph 77 of Report of Select Committee, No. 296 of 1899; also footnote at p. xxiv. *infra*.