

The Hon. the MINISTER IN CHARGE OF MENTAL HOSPITALS to His Excellency the GOVERNOR.
MY LORD,—

Wellington, 30th September, 1909.

I have the honour to submit to Your Excellency the report of the Inspector-General of Mental Hospitals on the mental hospitals of the Dominion for the year 1908.

I have the honour to be,

Your Lordship's most obedient servant,

GEO. FOWLDS,

Minister in Charge of Mental Hospitals.

The INSPECTOR-GENERAL to the Hon. the MINISTER IN CHARGE OF MENTAL HOSPITALS.

SIR,—

Wellington, 1st July, 1909.

I have the honour to present the statutory report on the mental hospitals of the Dominion for the year ended 31st December, 1908.

The number of patients on the register at the commencement of the year was 3,240 (males, 1,909 ; females, 1,331), and at the end 3,414 (m., 1,997 ; f., 1,417), an increase of 174 (m., 88 ; f., 86). This is the largest increment we have had in any one year, and followed on one of the smallest—namely, 34 (m., 9 ; f., 25). The average annual increments for the three last quinquennials were, during 1893–97, 102 (m., 57 ; f., 45), with an average admission-rate of 547 (m., 315 ; f., 230) ; during 1898–1902, 84 (m., 55 ; f., 29), with an admission-rate of 573 (m., 336 ; f., 237) ; and during 1903–7, 78 (m., 39 ; f., 39), with an admission-rate of 665 (m., 403 ; f., 262).

It will be observed that the residua show a tendency to decrease, notwithstanding the natural advance in the number of the admissions, and this accentuates the unusual position occupied by the figures for the year under review. The unenviable distinction is explained by the large admission-rate, and not, it will be seen, by there having been relatively fewer deaths and discharges.

Distribution.—Counting 103 (m., 75 ; f., 28) absent on leave as still resident in the mental hospital whence they left, the 3,414 patients on the register at the end of the year were distributed as follows :—

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Auckland	452	285	737
Christchurch	324	279	603
Dunedin (Seacliff)	450	313	763
Hokitika	146	59	205
Nelson	91	61	152
Porirua	355	303	658
Wellington	153	96	249
Ashburn Hall (private mental hospital)	26	21	47
	<u>1,997</u>	<u>1,417</u>	<u>3,414</u>

Of these technically on leave, 39 men were resident at the Camp, near Dunedin, and 18 boys at the Home for Feeble-minded at Richmond.

Ratio to Population.—The following calculations show the ratio of the patients on the register at the end of the year to the estimated general population both exclusive and inclusive of the Native race. The differentiation is necessary, because, in proportion to the Native population, the small number of Maoris on the register—namely, 39 (m., 28 ; f., 11)—would make the return unfairly favourable—

The proportion of the total insane to the total population was,—

Exclusive of Maoris	35·13 per 10,000, or 1 in 285
Inclusive of Maoris	33·86 " 1 in 295

The proportion of the male insane to the male population,—

Exclusive of Maoris	38·58 " 1 in 259
Inclusive of Maoris	37·27 " 1 in 268

The proportion of the female insane to the female population,—

Exclusive of Maoris	31·22 " 1 in 320
Inclusive of Maoris	29·99 " 1 in 333

As may have been expected from the large increment to the mental hospital population at the end of the year, the ratio has risen, the advance being 0·33 per 10,000 for males and 1·03 for females.

Admissions.—The number of patients admitted to the mental hospitals during 1908, exclusive of 8 men and 7 women who were merely transferred from one hospital to another, was 744 (m., 426 ; f., 318), a truly phenomenal advance on the previous year when the admissions less transfers numbered 600. Of the 744 admissions, 134 had been previously resident in one of our mental hospitals, all but 14 returning to the hospital whence they were last discharged, and 610 were admitted for the first time.