

on the score of property under the Act as it stood in 1908. The increase of 700 pensioners for the year may therefore be said to be a normal increase—i.e., one bearing a relation in equal proportion to the increase in the population.

The following table shows the percentages from 1906 onwards of the European pensioners to—
(a) The population eligible by age, and (b) the population eligible by age and residence :—

At 31st March.	(a.) European Population eligible by Age.	(b.) European Population eligible by Age and Residence.	European Pensioners.	Percentage to (a).	Percentage to (b).
1906	40,788	37,367	11,915	29	31
1907	42,337	38,611	12,597	29	32
1908	43,371	39,336	12,912	29	32
1909	44,562	40,176	13,705	30	34
1910	44,838	40,238	14,626	32	36
1911	46,586	41,556	15,336	32	36

The increases in the percentages in 1909 and 1910 may both be attributed to the liberalizing provisions of the 1908 Amendment Act.

Of the total number of pensioners, 13,936, or 87 per cent. of the whole, were in receipt of the full pension, leaving only 13 per cent. drawing less than £26 per annum. The percentage drawing the full pension at the end of the previous year was 77 per cent., the marked increase this year being due to the benefits provided by last year's Act. The following table shows the percentages of those drawing full pensions to the total pensioners from the date the pension was increased to 10s. a week :—

At 31st March.	Total Pensioners.	Full Pensions.	Per Cent.
1905	11,770	9,200	78
1906	12,582	10,398	82
1907	13,257	10,653	80
1908	13,569	10,774	79
1909	14,396	11,340	78
1910	15,320	11,827	77
1911	16,020	13,936	87

Table II of the appendix sets out the number payable at each rate of pension at the end of the past year.

Of the 7,487 pensioners who were admitted to the roll in the first three months of the Act, 1,629 now only remain. The figures of the past few years show a decided increase in the number of these who have dropped out during the past year through death, the percentage of deaths in this section of pensioners reaching 14 per cent., whereas in each of the preceding three years it was but 12 per cent. These percentages are high, but they are not surprising when it is remembered that the association of this group with the Department has extended to a period of upwards of twelve years.

The total deaths of pensioners throughout the year number 1,423, and the percentage of these to the total number of pensioners who have passed through the books in the same period is only 8 per cent.

Table III of the appendix shows the percentages still remaining on the roll of the various groups admitted year by year since the scheme came into force.

The pensioners of an advanced age continue to bear a good proportion of the whole, there being at the end of the year no less than 117 of the age of ninety and upwards. Fourteen were ninety-five and over, and there were two centenarians. Table IV of the appendix contains details of all pensioners at the various ages.

The distribution of the pensioners, European and Maori, in the various districts throughout the Dominion, together with the annual amount payable in these districts, is embodied in Table I of the appendix.

Of the total number of pensioners admitted to the roll since the Act came into operation—i.e., 32,433—5,889 were single, 14,957 married, and 11,587 widowed.

There were at the end of the year 1,522 married couples in receipt of the pension.

NEW CLAIMS.

The total number of claims lodged during the year was 2,963, an increase of seventy-one on the number filed during the previous year. These, with the 777 claims awaiting investigation at the seventy-three agencies of the office throughout the Dominion on the 31st March, 1910, made a total of 3,740 dealt with, which were accounted for as follows :—

Granted	2,399
Rejected (including deaths, withdrawals, &c.)	669
Being investigated on 31st March, 1911	672
	3,740

The new pensioners include seventy-nine members of the Native race. Of the remainder, all but 120—i.e., 2,200—are of British extraction, including eighty-five whites born in New Zealand. The