

The Hon. the MINISTER IN CHARGE OF MENTAL HOSPITALS to HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR.

SIR,—

Wellington, 31st July, 1911.

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 1910.

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, 21st July, 1911.

I have the honour to present the statutory report on the mental hospitals of the Dominion for the year ended 31st December, 1910.

The number of patients at the beginning of the year was 3,548 (males, 2,083; females, 1,465), and at the end 3,670 (m., 2,160; f., 1,510), an increase of 122 (m., 77; f., 45). The average increase during the former five years was 102. The total number under care was 4,558 (m., 2,722; f., 1,836), against 4,237 in the previous year, and the average number resident during the year was 3,473 (m., 2,028; f., 1,445), against 3,374 in 1909, or 99 more in the year under review.

Distribution.—Counting 124 (m., 91; f., 33) absent on leave as still resident in the mental hospital whence they left, the 3,670 patients on the register at the end of the year were distributed as follows :—

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Auckland	492	298	790
Christchurch	362	317	679
Dunedin (Seacliff and Orokonui)	542	338	880
Hokitika	135	57	192
Nelson	93	97	190
Porirua	513	384	897
Ashburn Hall (private mental hospital)	23	19	42
	2,160	1,510	3,670

Of those technically on leave, 56 men were resident at the Camp, near Dunedin, and 17 boys at the Home for Feeble-minded at Richmond.

Ratio to Population.—The following calculations show the ratio of patients on the register at the end of the year to the estimated general population, both exclusive and inclusive of the Native race. The number of Maoris on the register was 42 only (m. 28; f., 14).

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

Exclusive of Maoris	36·18 per 10,000, or 1 in 276
Inclusive of Maoris	34·94 " 1 in 286

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

Exclusive of Maoris	40·23 " 1 in 249
Inclusive of Maoris	38·89 " 1 in 257

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

Exclusive of Maoris	31·64 " 1 in 316
Inclusive of Maoris	30·51 " 1 in 328

When quoting last year from an article by Dr. Urquhart which stated that out of 4,082 patients suffering from general diseases, and 873 from nervous diseases, at the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, 55·5 and 69·3 per cent. respectively were discharged as unrecovered, I remarked that ratios of patients to population in the records of mental hospitals " would find their parallel in general hospitals if those patients only were discharged who were apparently restored to the state of bodily health and integrity which preceded the disorder or accident for which they were admitted." While in no way wishing to belittle the meaning of these figures brought home to us by the accumulation of unrecovered patients in mental hospitals, I would point out the sentiment of physical degeneracy which would take hold of the population if each year the general hospitals were enlarged to accommodate those who had not recovered and had not died. Obviously, the sentiment would be unjust, the more so because in many of the diseases the hereditary factor would not enter; but the contemplation should temper the feeling of uneasiness produced by statements of ratio of insane to population when it is remembered that the insane are a sick folk whose span of life is lengthened by being kept in a suitable environment.

Admissions.—Exclusive of 222 patients (m. 165; f., 57) transferred from one institution to another, the admissions numbered 788 (m., 474; f., 314), as against 716 (m., 419; f., 297) in the previous year, an increase of 72 (m., 55; f., 17). Of the 788, those admitted for the first time numbered 660 (m., 409; f., 251), the remainder, 128 (m., 65; f., 63), representing patients who had previously been in one or other of the mental hospitals. Towards the first admissions,