

The liability in regard to these at the end of the year was £412,408, being an average of £24 19s. 7d. per pension.

The decrease above referred to, which is the first recorded since the year 1905, when the pension was increased from £18 to £26 per annum, is due to the fact that of the 613 cancelled pensions some 380 represent conversions into military pensions. Leaving these out of consideration, the figures otherwise would show an increase of 240.

The percentage of pensioners to the population eligible by age and to those eligible by age and residence, which in the previous year had shown a slight upward tendency, has returned to what it was in the two preceding years—namely, 32 per cent. and 36 per cent. respectively—the numerical decrease above referred to being responsible for this.

The following table shows the variation in the percentage from 1906 onwards:—

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 (actual) ..	40,788	37,367	11,915	29	31
1907 (estimated) ..	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 (actual) ..	47,700	41,990	15,336	32	36
1912 (estimated) ..	48,294	42,772	15,984	33	37
1913 „ ..	48,915	43,557	15,830	32	36

Widows' Pensions.—The number of pensioners on the roll at the end of the year, including 16 Maoris, was 1,313, being an increase on the figures of the previous year (which, it may be mentioned, represented the results of three months' working only) of 525, thus:—

	Europeans.	Maoris.	Totals.
New grants	641	16	657
Deduct deaths	3	...	...
Deduct cancellations	129	...	132
Increase	...	...	525

The liability in regard to these was £24,768, being an average of £18 17s. 3d. per pension.

The three deaths referred to represent cases where advantage was not taken of the provision for continuance of the pension to the guardian of the children.

Military Pensions.—The number of pensions in force under this head at the 31st March, being the result of four months' operation of the Act passed in November, 1912, was 568, of which number 6 were payable to Maoris. The total number granted was 577, there being 9 deaths, including 1 Maori, recorded before the close of the year. The liability in regard to these was £19,026, an average of £33 10s. per pension.

Summarized, the total pensions and the liability thereon at the close of the year were as follows:—

	Number of Pensions.	Liability. £
Old-age	16,509	412,408
Widows'	1,313	24,768
Military	568	19,026
Totals	18,390	£456,202

The percentages of pensioners drawing the full pension are as follows: Old-age, 84 per cent.; widows', 95 per cent.; military, 80 per cent. Thirty-two old-age pensioners are drawing the increased pension provided by the Act of 1911 for males at 60 and females at 55 who have two or more children under 14 years of age. The number of these last year was 18.

The distribution of old-age and widows' pensioners in the various districts throughout the Dominion, together with the annual amount payable in these districts, is embodied in Table I of the appendix. The distribution of the military pensions in postal districts is set out in Table II.

Table III shows the number of all classes of pensions payable at each rate.

Table IV shows the number of old-age pensioners remaining on the roll of the various groups admitted year by year since the Act came into operation.

The ages of all pensioners on the 31st March are embodied in Table V, wherein it will be noted that, of the old-age pensioners, there are no less than 119 of the advanced age of 90 and upwards, while 17 are 95 and upwards.

The total deaths during the year were: Old-age, 1,569; widows, 10; military, 9. The percentage of deaths of old-age pensioners to the total number drawing pensions during the year was 8 per cent. Table VI shows the ages at death of the European section of these, a distinction being made between those who were on the roll at the beginning of the year and those who were admitted during the year. Five old-age pensioners of 96 and upwards died during the year.

Included among the old-age pensioners are 1,780 married couples.

The original nationalities and occupations of the old-age and widows' pensioners are set out in Tables VII and VIII.

Particulars relating to the sex and conjugal condition of the old-age pensioners appear in Table IX.