

The cost of old-age pensions per head of the European population for the year was 7s. 7d. The cost for the first complete year of the Act, when the full pension was £18 per annum, was 4s. 1d. per head, and 6s. 10d. for the first complete twelve months after the maximum was increased to £26, thus :—

	Gross Payments. £	European Population.	Cost per Head. s. d.
Year ended 31st March, 1900 ..	157,342	758,617	4 1
„ „ 1907 ..	314,184	913,873	6 10
„ „ 1914 ..	416,776	1,089,825	7 7

The instalments due last year and remaining unpaid on the 31st March totalled £1,462, of which £1,428 represents forfeited instalments on which there is no further claim. The absolutely forfeited instalments during the past five years have amounted to £6,930.

The instalments not collected within the time allowed by law, but subsequently specially authorized and paid during the year, numbered 1,057, as against 881 in the previous year. The amount represented by these payments was £2,021.

The number of pensioners who were inmates of the mental hospitals of the Dominion during the year was 125, the percentage to the total number of pensioners whose names appeared on the roll during the same period—i.e., 19,829—being 0·63 per cent. The amount paid to the Mental Hospitals Department on account of these totalled £1,740, the number still being maintained at the end of the year being 75.

The amount paid by way of old-age pensions to the controlling bodies of the various homes and hospitals during the year totalled £21,536, being £729 less than the sum paid in the previous year. £1,469 of this amount represents the charge made for the medical treatment in hospitals of 65 pensioners. The number residing in the various homes at the close of the year was 757, some 24 less than in the previous year. Details regarding these payments are embodied in Table XIII of the appendix.

A noticeable feature of the annual statistics relating to the work of the various Charitable Aid Boards throughout the Dominion is the decided and gradual drop in the annual cost of outdoor relief since the original Old-age Pensions Act came into operation on the 1st January, 1899. The totals for the financial year ended in March last are not yet available, but the figures for the twelve months ended 31st March, 1913, show a decrease of close on £20,000 on the amount payable fourteen years earlier. The following table will indicate the reduction that has taken place :—

	European Population.	Annual Cost of Outdoor Relief. £	Cost per Head of Population. s. d.
Year ended 31st March, 1899 ..	746,676	50,850	1 4½
„ „ 1904 ..	838,954	42,618	1 0¼
„ „ 1909 ..	968,313	37,537	0 9¼
„ „ 1913 ..	1,061,748	31,092	0 7

Wealth of Pensioners.—The following particulars relate to the amount of accumulated property owned by the 18,050 old-age pensioners who were on the roll at the end of the year, and by the husbands and wives of these who were themselves not old-age pensioners :—

Owned by pensioners—

	£
Homes (including furniture and personal effects)	907,562
Land (not used as a home), stock, &c.	174,873
Cash	128,086

1,210,521

Less mortgages on real property

185,535

Total net property owned by pensioners

£1,024,986

Owned by the husbands or wives of pensioners—

	£
Homes	130,389
Land and other property	30,010
Cash	19,701

180,100

Less mortgages on this property

41,795

Total net property owned by husbands or wives of pensioners
(not themselves pensioners)

138,305

Grand total

£1,163,291

The total income earned by these pensioners, exclusive of the amounts exempted under the Act, was £130,421, and by their husbands or wives (not themselves pensioners), £28,083. The average amount of income earned by each pensioner was £7 4s., and the average amount of property held, after the deduction of mortgages, £56.