

1905.  
NEW ZEALAND.

MENTAL HOSPITALS OF THE COLONY  
(REPORT ON) FOR 1904.

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.*

The INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF MENTAL HOSPITALS to the Hon. the MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS.  
SIR,—

Wellington, 1st July, 1905.

I have the honour to lay before you the report on these special hospitals together with the usual statistical Appendix for the year ending December, 1904. It has been recognised for some time that the tables did not adequately provide data for investigation, but as the Medico-Psychological Association of Great Britain and Ireland had the matter under consideration, it was deemed wiser to postpone alterations until the association had come to a decision. The Statistics Committee has now prepared valuable tables, which, practically as they stand, will become the official tables of the association. We shall be in a position to take advantage of this work in the future reports of the Department.

On the 31st December, 1904, the number of insane persons on the Department's Register was 3,038 (males, 1,801; females, 1,237), being an increase of 79 (males, 30; females, 49) over the returns of the previous year, when the increase was 111 (males, 56; females, 55) over the returns of the year before.

These persons were distributed among the hospitals as follows :—

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Auckland ... ..	363	221	584
Christchurch ... ..	293	244	537
Seacliff ... ..	433	261	694
Hokitika ... ..	133	43	176
Nelson ... ..	83	56	139
Porirua ... ..	330	282	612
Wellington ... ..	147	105	252
Ashburn Hall (licensed hospital) ... ..	19	25	44
	1,801	1,237	3,038

The number of patients admitted into the mental hospitals during the year was 580 (males, 340; females, 240) including 8 males and 4 females transferred from one mental hospital to another. The total admissions for the previous year numbered 691 (males, 454; females, 237), including 99 males and 11 females transferred. The readmissions in 1903 numbered 202 (males, 148; females, 54), and therefore relapses accounted for more than a third of the persons becoming insane during that year. Of this year's admissions 475 (males, 284; females, 191) were received for the first time, and 105 (males, 56; females, 49) were readmissions. Thus more than one-sixth of the admissions have figured in previous statistics.

Subtracting the deaths and discharges from the admissions minus transfers, there are left 67 patients. Some of these will doubtless be discharged, but a considerable residuum will go to swell the population in the hospitals for a number of years. Thus it is year after year, and the numbers remaining on the 31st December rise accordingly.

The percentage of deaths on the average number resident during the year was 6·38 (males, 6·74; females, 5·84) compared with 5·96 for the previous year, and 6·11 for the previous quinquennial period.

The percentage of recoveries on the admissions was 45·34 (males, 46·18; females, 44·17) as compared with 42·17 (males, 40·56; females, 44·69) for the previous year, and 40·25 for the previous quinquennial period.

While the recovery-rate continues to be satisfactory, the number of persons discharged, as not recovered—namely, 36—is distinctly low. This is a very vexed question.

In mental, more than in any other disorder, each case has to be considered on its merits, and no general rule can be laid down. In each unrecovered case apparently fit to be discharged, all that is embraced under the term “environment” has to be considered before judgment can be passed. The same public which is irritated by the exercise of caution blames the alienist for want of caution when