

The European rate compares favourably with that of 1944 (30·12), and, indeed, represents a new low record for infant mortality in the European section of our population.

Still-births.—The rate for Maoris is not available. That for Europeans was 22·84 per 1,000 of total births which again is a record low rate for the Dominion.

Maternal Mortality.—Here again the Maori figures are not available.

For Europeans the maternal mortality rate, including deaths from septic abortion, was 2·24 per 1,000 live births, as compared with 2·71 in 1944. After excluding deaths from septic abortion, the rate was 1·95 (2·14 in 1944).

Summary of Vital Statistics :—

	European.	Maori.	Combined.
Population, mean	1,593,513	98,007	1,691,520
Birth-rate per 1,000 population	23·22	47·38	24·62
Death-rate per 1,000 population	10·07	16·68	10·46
Infant-mortality rate per 1,000 live births	27·99	88·93	34·79
Death-rate, tuberculosis, all forms, per 10,000 population	3·78	37·02	5·77

This table shows at a glance the main differences between the Europeans and the Maoris in respect of vital statistics.

INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES

Scarlet Fever.—Scarlet fever, with 5,081 cases (5,033 European, 48 Maori), shows a considerable decrease from the high incidence of 1944.

Diphtheria.—There were 1,075 cases (996 European, 79 Maori) of diphtheria in 1945, as against 713 cases (693 European, 20 Maori) in 1944. In view of the extreme prevalence of the disease in Europe, and the possibility of virulent strains of the causative organism being brought to New Zealand, the position has been watched closely. Unfortunately, owing to shortage of Medical Officers, the amount of immunization carried out in recent years has been limited, but endeavours are being made to do as much as possible. The policy of having diphtheria immunization done by District Nurses has been given an extensive trial in North Auckland, and has proved very satisfactory. It will be extended to other districts as soon as possible.

Polio-myelitis.—Only a few sporadic cases were notified during the year ended 31st December, but early in 1946 there was a marked increase in the number of cases occurring in Otago. Restrictions were imposed on all gatherings of children and on children travelling from Otago and Southland to the rest of the Dominion. The schools also remained closed until the end of February. After the middle of February the incidence declined sharply, and since then cases have been sporadic, and have occurred throughout the Dominion.

Food Poisoning.—Most of the cases of food poisoning were reported from one outbreak affecting the nursing staff of the Hamilton Public Hospital. The infection was not severe, and most of the nurses returned to duty within a few days.

Beriberi.—The reported cases of beriberi occurred in prisoners of war from Japan, who were treated in hospitals in the Dominion while in transit to their final destinations.

Puerperal Sepsis.—There were 75 notifications of sepsis following childbirth, with 4 deaths, a death-rate of 0·11 per 1,000 live births. Sepsis following abortion was notified in 100 cases, with 12 deaths, a death-rate of 0·29 per 1,000 live births. These figures are for Europeans only, as reliable figures for Maoris are not available.