

VITAL STATISTICS

Population.—The mean population of the Dominion for 1948 was 1,841,531 (Europeans, 1,731,583; Maoris, 109,948), an increase of 38,894 (Europeans, 35,395; Maoris, 3,499) over the figures for 1947.

Births.—Live births registered during the year numbered 49,149 (Europeans, 44,193; Maori, 4,956) and the rates per 1,000 of mean populations were: European, 25.52; Maori, 45.08; combined, 26.69, as compared with the respective rates for 1947 of 26.42, 46.86, and 27.63.

Deaths.—Deaths registered during the year numbered 17,285 (European, 15,812; Maori, 1,473). The respective crude death-rates per 1,000 of mean population were: European, 9.13; Maori, 13.40; and combined, 9.39. These compare favourably with the rates of 9.38, 14.45, and 9.68 respectively for 1947.

Infant Mortality.—Infant deaths totalled 1,349 (European, 969; Maori, 380). The rates per 1,000 live births were: for Europeans, 21.93; for Maoris, 76.67; and for the two races combined, 27.45. The European rate is the lowest ever achieved and the Maori rate is the third lowest recorded, the rates for 1946 and 1947 being 74.62 and 73.18 respectively.

The improvement in the European infant-mortality rate over the past fifty years is shown in the table given below, in which average rates for five-yearly periods are given, with annual rates for the past five years. It may be mentioned here that the Royal Society for the Protection of the Health of Women and Children—popularly known as the Plunket Society—whose activities have been an important factor in the reduction of the infant-mortality rate, particularly in the one-month to twelve-months period, commenced its work in Dunedin in 1907.

It will be noticed that in the first half of the period reviewed there was a very rapid fall in the death-rate of infants between one month and twelve months of age, with very slight reduction in the neo-natal death-rate. Thereafter the neo-natal rate began to improve, and in 1948 reached the low level of 15.78 per 1,000 live births.

Table 1—Infant Mortality in New Zealand, 1899–1948 (per 1,000 Live Births)

(Europeans only)

Year.	Under One Month.	One Month and Under Twelve Months.	Total Under Twelve Months.
1899–03 ..	31.50	49.60	81.10
1904–08 ..	30.17	41.38	71.55
1909–13 ..	29.69	29.43	59.12
1914–18 ..	27.96	21.81	49.77
1919–23 ..	29.27	16.66	45.93
1924–28 ..	25.42	13.57	38.99
1929–33 ..	22.84	9.92	32.76
1934–38 ..	22.74	9.75	32.49
1939–43 ..	20.73	9.46	30.19
1944–48 ..	18.48	7.49	25.97
1944 ..	20.60	9.52	30.12
1945 ..	19.59	8.40	27.99
1946 ..	19.08	7.02	26.10
1947 ..	18.08	6.96	25.04
1948 ..	15.78	6.15	21.93