

of that for the year 1904, an increase of 4·02 per cent. From 1882 until the year 1899 there was a regular fall in the birth-rate. The number of births registered in a year reached 19,846 in 1884, and, after falling to 17,876 in 1892, has risen to 23,682 in 1905, as stated above.

The figures for each year from 1882 are worthy of notice, especially in connection with the subsequent particulars given as to marriages solemnised and the growth of population :—

Year.	Number of Births.	Rate per 1,000 of Population.	Year.	Number of Births.	Rate per 1,000 of Population.
1882	19,009	37·32	1894	18,528	27·28
1883	19,202	36·28	1895	18,546	26·78
1884	19,846	35·91	1896	18,612	26·33
1885	19,693	34·35	1897	18,737	25·96
1886	19,299	33·15	1898	18,955	25·74
1887	19,135	32·09	1899	18,835	25·12
1888	18,902	31·22	1900	19,546	25·60
1889	18,457	30·07	1901	20,491	26·34
1890	18,278	29·44	1902	20,655	25·89
1891	18,273	29·01	1903	21,829	26·61
1892	17,876	27·83	1904	22,766	26·94
1893	18,187	27·50	1905	23,682	27·22

The marriages have increased numerically, and the population of the colony also.

Year.	Number of Marriages.	Mean Population (excluding Maoris).	Year.	Number of Marriages.	Mean Population (excluding Maoris).
1882	3,600	509,309	1894	4,178	679,196
1883	3,612	529,292	1895	4,110	692,417
1884	3,800	552,590	1896	4,843	706,846
1885	3,813	573,362	1897	4,928	721,609
1886	3,488	582,117	1898	5,091	736,260
1887	3,563	596,374	1899	5,461	749,984
1888	3,617	605,371	1900	5,860	763,594
1889	3,632	612,716	1901	6,095	777,968
1890	3,797	620,780	1902	6,394	797,793
1891	3,805	629,783	1903	6,748	820,217
1892	4,002	642,245	1904	6,983	845,022
1893	4,115	661,349	1905	7,200	870,000

The average number of children to a marriage may be ascertained by comparing the number of legitimate births for a series of years with the marriages, but commencing with the marriages in the year preceding that for which the first number of births is taken.

The figures for the twenty-year period 1886–1905 show a decline in the proportion of births to every marriage in the preceding year from 4·90 to 3·24, as below :—

Year.	Marriages.	Legitimate Births.	Proportion of Births to every Marriage solemnised in the Preceding Year.
1885	3,815	...	...
1886	3,489	18,697	4·90
1887	3,565	18,518	5·31
1888	3,617	18,325	5·14
1889	3,632	17,845	4·93
1890	3,797	17,675	4·87
1891	3,805	17,635	4·64
1892	4,002	17,283	4·54
1893	4,115	17,514	4·37
1894	4,178	17,824	4·33
1895	...	17,711	4·24
1895	4,110	...	...
1896	4,843	17,778	4·32
1897	4,928	17,911	3·70
1898	5,091	18,154	3·68
1899	5,461	18,006	3·54
1900	5,860	18,640	3·41
1901	6,095	19,554	3·34
1902	6,394	19,734	3·23
1903	6,748	20,835	3·26
1904	6,983	21,737	3·22
1905	...	22,600	3·24

If the average result be taken out for the ten years 1886–95, it will be found to represent 4·73 births to a marriage. Dealing similarly with the figures for 1896–1905 the result is an average of 3·49, so that regarded annually or decennially there is a decided fall to be observed.

In the Australian States a similar decrease is noticeable.

New Zealand had in 1880 the highest birth-rate (40·78); in 1900 the case was reversed; but in 1905 the New Zealand rate was higher than that of Queensland (1904), New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia.