

Mean Ages at Marriage.

Year.	Mean Age of Bridegrooms.	Mean Age of Brides.	Year.	Mean Age of Bridegrooms.	Mean Age of Brides.
1895	29.90	25.05	1902	29.89	25.63
1896	29.74	25.28	1903	29.89	25.84
1897	29.62	25.21	1904	29.60	25.44
1898	29.95	25.30	1905	29.65	25.75
1899	29.86	25.48	1906	29.76	25.97
1900	29.91	25.29	1907	29.83	26.07
1901	29.72	25.54			

The average age of bridegrooms has remained fairly constant during the period, but there is a gradual increase in the average age of the brides. In England the mean age of those whose ages were stated was (in the year 1906) 28.56 years for men, and 26.41 years for women. Thus the average age at marriage in New Zealand would appear to be higher for men, but lower for women, than in England.

The proportion of bridegrooms under 21 is much greater in England than in New Zealand, and the proportion of brides under 21 somewhat higher.

In England, in 1906, of every 1,000 bridegrooms whose ages were stated, 43 were under 21 years of age, and of every 1,000 brides 146 were under 21 years of age. In New Zealand, in 1907, the proportions were 16 bridegrooms and 158 brides of similar ages in every 1,000 married:—

Year.	Bridegrooms under 21 in every 100.	Brides under 21 in every 100.	Year.	Bridegrooms under 21 in every 100.	Brides under 21 in every 100.
1890	1.89	22.75	1901	1.93	17.16
1892	1.62	20.14	1904	1.73	17.61
1894	1.44	19.53	1905	1.80	16.90
1896	1.96	19.51	1906	1.65	15.86
1898	1.57	18.13	1907	1.60	15.82
1900	1.67	17.34			

DEATHS.

The deaths in 1907 numbered 10,066, being equivalent to a rate of 10.95 in every 1,000 persons living, as against 9.31 in 1906. This is the highest rate experienced since the year 1883, when the deaths were 11.45 per 1,000 of the population.

Comparative Death-rate for the Period 1897 to 1907.

Country.	1897.	1898.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.
New Zealand ...	9.14	9.84	10.24	9.43	9.81	10.0	10.40	9.57	9.27	9.31	10.95
Queensland ...	11.33	12.66	12.07	11.73	11.88	12.8	12.38	10.11	10.47	9.56	...
New South Wales	10.88	12.48	11.82	11.16	11.68	11.95	11.59	10.62	10.13	9.89	10.56
Victoria ...	12.90	15.94	14.28	12.75	13.22	13.40	12.90	11.92	12.10	12.42	11.66
South Australia*	11.24	13.06	12.14	10.64	11.11	11.79	10.71	10.22	10.14	10.34	9.72
Western Australia	16.97	16.05	13.76	12.92	13.36	13.63	12.60	11.91	10.83	11.87	11.09
Tasmania ...	11.53	13.51	12.25	11.05	10.45	10.84	11.92	11.01	10.23	11.13	...
England and Wales	17.4	17.5	18.2	18.2	16.9	16.2	15.4	16.2	15.2	15.4	...
Scotland ...	18.4	18.0	18.1	18.5	17.9	17.2	16.6	16.9	15.9	16.0	...
Ireland ...	18.5	18.2	17.7	19.6	17.8	17.5	17.5	18.1	17.1	17.0	...
Denmark ...	16.6	15.5	17.3	16.8	15.8	14.6	14.7	14.1	15.0	13.5	...
Norway ...	15.3	15.2	16.7	15.8	14.9	13.8	14.8	14.3	14.8	13.7	...
Sweden ...	15.4	15.1	17.7	16.8	16.1	15.4	15.1	15.3	15.6	14.4	...
Austria ...	25.6	24.9	25.6	25.3	24.0	24.7	23.8	23.7	25.0	...	...
Hungary ...	28.5	28.0	27.2	26.9	25.4	27.0	26.1	24.8	27.8	24.8	...
Switzerland ...	17.7	18.3	17.7	19.3	18.0	17.2	17.6	17.8	17.9	...	...
German Empire ...	21.3	20.5	21.5	22.1	20.7	19.4	20.0	19.6	19.8	...	...
Netherlands ...	16.9	17.0	17.1	17.8	17.2	16.3	15.6	15.9	15.3	14.8	...
France ...	19.4	20.9	21.1	21.9	20.1	19.5	19.2	19.4	19.6	19.9	...
Italy ...	21.9	22.9	21.9	23.8	22.0	22.2	22.4	21.1	21.9	20.8	...

* Excluding the Northern Territory.

Considering the range of this statement New Zealand is conspicuous as showing the lowest death-rate. The rates for the principal Australian States are a little higher, but, generally speaking, far below those for the United Kingdom or the European Continental States mentioned in the table.

Perfect accuracy in comparing one country with another can only be attained by the use of what is termed an "index of mortality." The proportions of the living vary in regard to the different age-groups, and the ordinary death-rate—which is calculated on the population as a whole—does not afford a true means of judging of the relative healthiness of the places compared. But by taking a population like that of Sweden, and applying the percentage at each age-group to the death-rates, a standard of health or index of mortality can be arrived at. This has been done for New Zealand, in accordance with a resolution of the Statistical Conference held at Hobart in 1902, and the result is expressed in tabular form.