

The marriage-rate, measured by the total population, does not show the true position when, as in the case of New Zealand, the age-constitution of the people fluctuates considerably. A more satisfactory standard is found in the number of persons of marriageable age, defined as meaning the unmarried and widowed of males aged 20 years and upwards and of females aged 15 years and upwards. The rates are given for four census years :—

Year of Census.	Proportion of Unmarried per 1,000 of Total.		Proportion of Marriages per 1,000 of the			
	Males.	Females.	Marriageable Men.	Marriageable Women.	Marriageable Persons.	Total Population.
1891	246.2	267.8	46.22	48.10	47.14	6.04
1896	264.2	308.3	49.11	47.09	48.08	6.85
1901	278.3	330.6	53.56	49.96	51.69	7.83
1906	295.8	326.9	54.09	55.15	54.62	8.48

The total number of marriages solemnized does not include marriages where both parties are of the aboriginal Native race, such persons being exempted from the necessity of complying with the provisions of the Marriage Act, although at liberty to take advantage thereof. Twenty-five marriages in which both parties were Maoris were contracted in 1909 in terms of the Act: 12 by Registrars, 5 by clergymen of the Church of England, 1 by a Presbyterian minister, 2 by Roman Catholic ministers, and 5 by ministers of the Church of the Latter-day Saints.

Ages of Persons Married.

Of the persons married in 1909, 143 bridegrooms and 1,309 brides were under 21 years of age. Of the bridegrooms, two were between 16 and 18, and six between 18 and 19. Of the brides, nine were between 15 and 16, and thirty-seven were between 16 and 17 years of age. The proportion of men married is greatest at the ages of 25 to 30, and of women at from 21 to 25 years.

DEATHS.

The deaths in 1909 numbered 8,959, a rate of 9.22 in every 1,000 persons living, as against 9.57 in 1908. This is below the average of the previous ten years, 9.90 per 1,000.

The following table shows the number of deaths, and the death-rate per 1,000 of the living population; also a comparison with the average rate for 1882-86 :—

Year.	Total Number of Deaths.	Death-rate.		Year.	Total Number of Deaths.	Death-rate.	
		Per 1,000 of Population.	Compared with Rate in 1882-86 taken as 100.			Per 1,000 of Population.	Compared with rate in 1882-86 taken as 100.
1882-86	5,944	10.84	100	1898	7,244	9.84	91
				1899	7,680	10.24	94
1887	6,137	10.29	95	1900	7,200	9.43	87
1888	5,708	9.43	87	1901	7,634	9.81	90
1889	5,772	9.44	87	1902	8,375	10.50	97
1890	5,994	9.66	89	1903	8,528	10.40	96
1891	6,518	10.35	95	1904	8,087	9.57	88
1892	6,459	10.06	93	1905	8,061	9.27	86
1893	6,767	10.23	94	1906	8,339	9.31	86
1894	6,918	10.19	94	1907	10,066	10.95	101
1895	6,863	9.91	91	1908	9,043	9.57	88
1896	6,432	9.10	84	1909	8,959	9.22	85
1897	6,595	9.14	84				

The death-rates of males and females for the last ten years are shown separately in the next table, and also the number of male deaths to every 100 female deaths :—