

PART II.—PUBLIC HYGIENE.

SECTION I.—VITAL STATISTICS.

POPULATION.

The population of New Zealand at the census of October, 1916, was 1,099,419. This total does not include Maoris, whose numbers were separately determined as 49,776. The estimated mean population (excluding Maoris) for 1920 is given by the Government Statistician as 1,179,619.

BIRTHS.

The births of 29,921 living children were registered in New Zealand during 1920, as against 24,483 in 1919, and a yearly average of 27,223 during the pre-war period 1910–14. The birth-rate for 1920 was thus 25·36 per 1,000 of the total population.

The general course of the birth-rate in the Dominion during the last ten years is shown in the following table :—

Year.					Total Number of Births registered.	Birth-rate per 1,000 of Population.
1911	..	..	..	..	26,354	25·97
1912	..	..	..	..	27,508	26·48
1913	..	..	..	..	27,935	26·14
1914	..	..	..	..	28,338	25·99
1915	..	..	..	..	27,850	25·33
1916	..	..	..	..	28,509	25·94
1917	..	..	..	..	28,239	25·69
1918	..	..	..	..	25,860	23·44
1919	..	..	..	..	24,483	21·54
1920	..	..	..	..	29,921	25·36

The abnormally low level of the figures for 1918 and 1919 and the satisfactory recovery for the year under review are noticeable.

This behaviour of the birth-rate, as was pointed out in last year's report, is the result of the war and the influenza epidemic. In England and Wales, for instance, the experience has been somewhat similar; the birth-rate for the years 1916–19 was much below normal, but showed such a marked improvement in 1920 as to make the figure for that year the highest for a decade. The corresponding rate for England and Wales for 1920 is 25·4.

Still-births, which have been defined by the Births and Deaths Registration Amendment Act of 1915 as “children which have issued from their mother after the expiration of the twenty-eighth week of pregnancy and which were not alive at the time of such issue,” are compulsorily registrable in the Dominion. The next table shows the numbers of such births and their rate per 1,000 live births in individual years for the quinquennium 1916–20 :—

Year.					Total Number of Still-births registered.	Rate of Still-births per 1,000 Live Births.
1916	..	..	..	..	682	23·9
1917	..	..	..	..	694	24·6
1918	..	..	..	..	701	27·1
1919	..	..	..	..	680	27·8
1920	..	..	..	..	840	28·1

Still-births are not included either as births or deaths in the various numbers and rates given elsewhere in this report.

DEATHS.

The number of deaths recorded during 1920 was 12,109, as compared with 10,808 in 1919, and a yearly average of 9,370 in the period 1910–14. The Government Statistician gives the index of mortality for New Zealand for 1920, taking the population of Sweden in 1890 as a standard, as 12·80 per 1,000 of the total population.

The following table gives the number of deaths and the death-rate in the Dominion for the decennium 1911–20 :—

Year.				Total Number of Deaths.	Crude (Actual) Death-rate.	Standardized Death-rate (Index of Mortality).
1911	..	..	..	9,534	9·39	11·83
1912	..	..	..	9,214	8·87	11·27
1913	..	..	..	10,119	9·47	11·92
1914	..	..	..	10,148	9·31	11·85
1915	..	..	..	9,965	9·06	11·38
1916	..	..	..	10,596	9·64	11·88
1917	..	..	..	10,528	9·58	11·66
1918	..	..	..	16,364	14·84	16·80
1919	..	..	..	10,808	9·51	11·75
1920	..	..	..	12,109	10·27	12·80