

It is with great sorrow I have to record the death during the past year of one of our oldest and most valued medical officers, Dr. J. P. Frengley. He had been attached to the Department almost from its formation, in 1900, and he has left his mark in almost every department of our activities. In addition to his wide range of scientific knowledge he possessed that capacity for taking pains which is akin to genius. Those who have worked with him know his painstaking care over even the smallest details. He never spared himself in his efforts towards efficiency in administration, while his quiet sense of humour and his kindly nature won him the friendship of his colleagues. Largely to his efforts do we owe the efficiency of the drainage and plumbing laws, our food and drugs regulations, and the broad lines of our hospital-planning. To him more than any one does Wellington owe its municipal milk-supply, his original sketch of which has in course of time come to be almost completely adopted. With Dr. Frengley's death the State has lost a valuable servant, and his fellow-officers will miss him both as a friend and as a collaborator in the Health Service.

The death of Mrs. Grace Neill removed one of the outstanding personalities of the nursing profession in this country. For many years she was Assistant Inspector of Hospitals and Deputy Registrar of Nurses, and by able administration she was mainly responsible for laying the foundation of our excellent nursing services. I cannot do better than quote the following extract from an article by Dr. Agnes Bennett appearing in the *Journal of International Council of Nurses* on this noble pioneer of the nursing profession in New Zealand, whose name has been fittingly added to the Scroll of Honour of the British College of Nursing: "It was Mrs. Neill's influence that brought into being the Nurses Registration Act of 1901 and the Midwives Act of 1904. She drew up the regulations and syllabus of training, and instituted the first uniform State examination of nurses, thus setting the standard for New Zealand nurses, which has since been followed with natural progress. Those who study statistics will note that the gradual decline in infantile mortality began from those dates. Authorities abroad soon realized the soundness of policy embodied in the Acts. State registration of nurses is now a recognized Empire policy. That New Zealand was in the van of these reforms is due to Mrs. Neill's foresight and broadminded view of the rightful relation of State and nurse."

It is desired to express fullest appreciation for the assistance rendered the Department by the Government Statistician and his officers in the compilation of statistical data, and for expert advice on matters of statistical nature to individual officers of this Department. The special vital-statistic reports issued by the Census and Statistics Office are becoming of increasing value to this Department.

The staff of Medical Officers has been increased by the appointment of Dr. MacLean as assistant to Dr. Crawshaw at Dunedin, and Dr. Turbott, now stationed at Auckland.

I again wish to express my sincere appreciation for the loyal and efficient service rendered by all the officers of the Department.

T. H. A. VALINTINE,  
Director-General of Health.

## PART II.—PUBLIC HYGIENE.

I have the honour to submit my annual report for the year ended 31st March, 1927.

### SECTION 1.—VITAL STATISTICS.

#### POPULATION.

The mean population of the Dominion for 1926 (exclusive of Maoris) was estimated to be 1,352,927. This total represents an increase over the corresponding figure for the previous year of 23,171, or a percentage increase of population of 1.74.

#### BIRTHS.

The births of 28,473 living children were registered in the Dominion during 1926, as against 28,153 in 1925. The birth-rate for 1926 was thus 21.05 per 1,000 of mean population.

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

*Births (Number and Rate) in New Zealand, 1917-26.*

Year.	Total Number of Births registered.	Birth-rate per 1,000 of Mean Population.
1917	28,239	25.69
1918	25,860	23.44
1919	24,483	21.42
1920	29,921	25.09
1921	28,567	23.34
1922	29,006	23.17
1923	27,967	21.94
1924	28,014	21.57
1925	28,153	21.17
1926	28,473	21.05

The birth-rate for 1926 is the lowest ever recorded in the Dominion.