

Still-births.—Still-births, which are defined by the Births and Deaths Registration Act of 1924 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 number of such births and their rate per 1,000 live births in individual years for the quinquennium 1922–26.

Still-births (Number and Rate) in New Zealand, 1922–26.

Year.					Total Number of Still-births registered.	Rate of Still-births per 1,000 Live Births.
1922	..	..	..	..	.. 842	22.1
1923	..	..	..	..	.. 894	32.0
1924	..	..	..	..	.. 855	30.5
1925	..	..	..	..	.. 861	30.6
1926	..	..	..	..	.. 886	31.1

A noticeable feature of the table is the continued high rate of still-births for the year under review.

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

DEATHS.

The total number of deaths (11,819) registered during the year 1926 was nearly 800 in excess of the total for the previous year (11,026), although this disparity is not reflected to the same extent in the death-rate, which still maintains its position on a reasonably low level. The death-rate (8.74 per 1,000 of mean population) was in fact an increase of only 5.43 per cent. over the record low rates for 1925 and 1924 (8.29 in each case). The increase was due principally to the epidemics of whooping-cough and influenza during 1926.

Crude Death-rates.

Year.			Crude Death-rate.	Year.			Crude Death-rate.
1901	..	..	.. 9.81	1923	..	..	.. 9.03
1911	..	..	.. 9.39	1924	..	..	.. 8.29
1921	..	..	.. 8.73	1925	..	..	.. 8.29
1922	..	..	.. 8.77	1926	..	..	.. 8.74

Infant Mortality.—The infant-mortality rate for 1926 was 39.76 per 1,000 births. The achievement of such a phenomenally low infant-death rate stands as a record for New Zealand and also for the world.

Infant Mortality in New Zealand, 1900–26 (per 1,000 Live Births).

Year.	Under One Month.	One Month and under Twelve Months.	Total under Twelve Months.	Year.	Under One Month.	One Month and under Twelve Months.	Total under Twelve Months.
1900 ..	31.1	44.1	75.2	1914 ..	28.9	28.5	51.4
1901 ..	29.8	41.6	71.4	1915 ..	29.2	20.8	50.0
1902 ..	32.2	50.7	82.9	1916 ..	27.0	23.7	50.7
1903 ..	31.7	49.4	81.1	1917 ..	27.9	20.3	48.2
1904 ..	29.4	41.6	71.0	1918 ..	26.7	21.7	48.4
1905 ..	30.1	37.4	67.5	1919 ..	28.4	16.9	45.3
1906 ..	29.6	32.5	62.1	1920 ..	30.8	19.7	50.5
1907 ..	30.4	58.4	88.8	1921 ..	30.7	17.1	47.8
1908 ..	31.2	36.7	67.9	1922 ..	27.2	14.7	41.9
1909 ..	29.9	31.7	61.6	1923 ..	29.1	14.7	43.8
1910 ..	30.2	37.5	67.7	1924 ..	24.0	16.3	40.3
1911 ..	28.5	27.8	56.3	1925 ..	26.4	13.5	39.9
1912 ..	30.1	21.1	51.2	1926 ..	25.46	14.3	39.76
1913 ..	29.7	29.5	59.2				

It will be seen from the above table that hitherto the decline in the infant-death rate has been due almost entirely to a lower mortality in the later months of the first year of life. In recent years more attention is being given to arresting the pre-natal causes of infant deaths, and, although one year's figures can hardly be taken as a true indication of the future trend of the rate, it is nevertheless encouraging to note that the 1926 record low infant-mortality figure has been entirely produced by a reduction in the deaths during the first three months of life. The rate for the following nine months has, in fact, increased in the year under review.