

have shown a tendency to increase. Further improvement in the infant-death rate is largely dependent on an understanding and study of these ante-natal causes which are responsible for still-births and the neo-natal deaths, and it is towards this end that steps are now being taken to obtain information as to cause of death of the foetus and the stage at which delivery occurred. It is hoped, with the assistance of the medical practitioners and the Registrar-General, to institute statistics which will throw light on this aspect of our infant mortality.

*Causes of Death.*—New Zealand has for many years led the world in the completeness and accuracy of the official vital statistics. The accuracy of the statistics is, however, dependent on that of the data from which the statistics are compiled, and in one important respect—viz., certification of cause of death—it has for some time been felt that there is room for improvement. As a result of discussions between the Director-General of Health, the Government Statistician, and the Registrar-General, a scheme has now been put in operation towards this end, any incomplete or doubtfully worded certificates forming the subject of a direct query to the medical practitioner concerned. At the same time a booklet of instructions has been distributed to all medical practitioners on the register, and arrangements have been made with the Dean of the Otago Medical School for the booklet to be distributed each year to students of the Medical School, and for a lecture on certification to be included in the course.

*Dairying Statistics.*—Special statistics relating to the size of dairy herds, in conjunction with such relevant matters as area of holding, area under crop, amount of top-dressing, number of employees, &c., were recently compiled, as part of a scheme to increase the statistical knowledge of the dairying industry. The mechanical equipment of the Office has also been utilized for the compilation, on behalf of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, of statistics relating to milk-yields of dairy cows according to breed, district, age, calving, and lactation period.

In addition to the usual statistical tables covering the operations of butter and cheese factories, the Annual Statistical Report on Factory Production now contains special tables giving the fullest information concerning materials, products, costs, &c., for butter, cheese, and dual-plant factories separately. The value of these tables is enhanced by computations giving ratios, per unit costs, and returns, &c.

*Top-dressing.*—An important innovation made during the year in the annual collection of agricultural and pastoral statistics was the inclusion of information as to top-dressing among the numerous items of statistical inquiry. The class of fertilizer, the total quantity used, and the area top-dressed were obtained, the results being very informative and showing clearly the great extent to which top-dressing is now being resorted to.

*Potatoes.*—Following the institution of a post-harvest verification of the yield of potatoes (many crops of which are not dug at the time of the sub-enumerator's visit), a demand was made for a pre-harvest verification of the area shown in the spring as planted or intended to be planted in potatoes. Such a check was carried out in December, 1927, and the results verified the spring collection to within a few acres.

*Factory Employees.*—With a view to obtaining statistics showing the trend of employment in the various manufacturing industries, a section was inserted in the form of return of factory production providing for information being given as to the number of employees of either sex at the middle of each month of the year. Though not as valuable as statistics collected and tabulated from month to month, these figures will give excellent retrospective information showing seasonal movements in the various industries and indicating their progress.

*Trade Statistics.*—An improvement made in the form of presentation of the detailed statistics of exports and imports will be welcomed by those having occasion to refer to the Annual Statistical Report on Trade and Shipping. By deleting certain detail matter of little value it has been found possible to include figures for individual items by full detail of countries for the last three years instead of for only the current year as hitherto.

*Conferences, &c.*—A conference of the Commonwealth and State Statisticians of Australia was convened for January, 1928, and was held at Hobart. In accordance with the usual policy on such occasions, an invitation for New Zealand to be represented was extended by the Premier of Tasmania, and Mr. Malcolm Fraser, Government Statistician, duly attended on behalf of the Dominion. Mr. Fraser also represented New Zealand at the Hobart Congress of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, at which he read a paper on the subject of still-births and infant mortality.

The Government Statistician has been appointed to the committee set up by the Right Hon. the Prime Minister to investigate transport problems. Mr. Fraser also represented the Department of Internal Affairs at the recent National Industrial Conference.

#### CINEMATOGRAPH-FILM CENSORSHIP.

During the year, 2,333 films, of a total length of 5,813,840 ft., were censored. Of this number sixty-nine were rejected in the first instance, 245 were passed subject to excisions, and forty-four were passed for adult audiences only. There were two appeals against the decisions of the Censor in reference to censored films. In one case the Censor's view was reversed, and in the other case it was upheld.

The total number of British Empire films examined was 585, including features, topicals, &c., and the total length was 716,670 ft. Feature films—viz., those over 4,000 ft. in length—totalled 628, while the remaining 1,705 films comprised topicals, scenics, serials, comedies, cartoons, industrials, &c., seldom exceeding 2,000 ft. each. Of the feature films, thirty-five were produced in the British Empire, 580 in the United States of America, and thirteen originated in Germany, France, Italy, and Sweden.