

Inspection of Massage-parlours.—The inspection of massage-parlours, &c., has been maintained steadily during the year by the district staffs of the Department of Health, and the reports have been received and considered regularly by the Massage Board.

Reciprocity with the Chartered Society of Massage and Medical Gymnastics, England.—Arrangements have been made whereby registered masseurs or masseuses who have trained at the Otago University, on application in England, are granted membership in the Chartered Society without further examination.

Examinations.—The usual examinations were conducted during the year and twenty-three candidates registered.

Post-graduate Course for Masseuses.—Arrangements were made with certain of the Hospital Boards of the Dominion whereby masseuses qualifying in the State examination after training at the Otago Massage School are given positions for twelve months in hospital at a reduced salary to enable them to obtain practical hospital experience before commencing private practice.

STAFF.

It is with deep regret that I have to record the deaths of the following officers who in their particular spheres rendered faithful service to the Department: Dr. H. G. H. Monk, one of our Medical Officers of Health, who had retired from the Service; Mr. J. H. Anderson, who for many years was the Department's consulting engineer; Mr. Charles Eccles, my valued secretary, and Secretary to the Plumbers Registration Board; Mr. W. Keeble, a most promising accountancy officer; Miss J. M. Jarrett, a fine type of district nurse to the Maoris; and two steadfast Inspectors of Health, Mr. R. J. McKenzie and Mr. A. E. Skynner.

I cannot conclude this report without referring to the very excellent and faithful service which was rendered by officers of the Department. I have especially to thank Dr. Watt, my very able colleague, also Mr. Killick for his valuable services as Secretary of the Department.

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

PART II.—PUBLIC HYGIENE.

I have the honour to submit my annual report for the year ended 31st March, 1928.

SECTION I.—VITAL STATISTICS.

POPULATION.

The mean population of the Dominion for 1927 (exclusive of Maoris) was estimated to be 1,374,439. This total represents an increase over the corresponding figure for the previous year of 21,512, or a percentage increase of population of 1·59.

BIRTHS.

The births of 27,881 living children were registered in the Dominion during 1927, as against 28,473 in 1926. The birthrate for 1927 was thus 20·29 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, 1918–27.

Year.					Total Number of Births registered.	Birth-rate per 1,000 of Mean Population.
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
1927	..	..	..	..	27,881	20·29

The birth-rate for 1927 is the lowest ever recorded in the Dominion. This steady decline of the birth-rate in New Zealand has been partially compensated for by a decrease in the death-rate. Nevertheless, as has been pointed out by the Government Statistician, the rate of *natural* increase of population has fallen from 31·19 per 1,000 of mean population in 1870 to 12·31 in 1926.