

CANCER, 1,324.

The following table, taken from the "New Zealand Official Year-book," shows the cancer death-rate in the Dominion for the last ten years :—

Number of Persons who Died from Cancer, the Proportion per 10,000 Persons Living, and the Percentage of all Deaths, 1918–27.

Year.	Deaths from Cancer.	Total Deaths, all Causes.	Deaths from Cancer per 10,000 of Living Persons.	Deaths from Cancer per 100 of all Deaths.
1918	936	16,364	8·49	5·72
1919	1,031	10,808	9·07	9·54
1920	1,029	12,109	8·72	8·50
1921	1,044	10,682	8·53	9·77
1922	1,066	10,977	8·52	9·71
1923	1,115	11,511	8·75	9·69
1924	1,245	10,767	9·59	11·56
1925	1,207	11,026	9·08	10·95
1926	1,341	11,819	9·91	11·35
1927	1,324	11,613	9·63	11·40

We know not the cause of cancer. It is increasing in prevalence at a slow, not rapid, rate. Being a disease of late life, and having in the past often missed detection or registration, its apparent increase is in considerable measure accounted for by our longer span of life and greater skill in diagnosis. The real increase is slight, and can be checked if advice and treatment be sought early in the disease. Recent results show that the proportion of acutal cures from the treatment of early cancer is very high indeed.

It has always been an important cause of death, but results show that nowadays submission to skilled treatment at an early stage is worth while. Particularly after the age of thirty-five we should seek medical examination for any unusual condition which might be cancer.

VIOLENCE, 877.

Regarding the 877 deaths last year from violence, of which 656 were due to accident, 199 to suicide, and 22 to homicide, it is noteworthy that in the last seven years, whereas the death-rates from suicide and homicide have shown little variation, that from accident has increased considerably.

In an interesting analysis of these accidental deaths the Government Statistician has shown in the Official Year-book that this increase is due mainly to motor-vehicle accidents. From and including 1921 to 1923 the annual deaths from this cause averaged about sixty-four, whereas from and including 1925 to 1927 the average was 132.

THE COMMON CHEST-DISEASES, 823.

Disease.	Number of Deaths in 1927.
Pneumonia	313
Broncho-pneumonia	207
Bronchitis	303
	823

Many additional deaths from these three causes are recorded annually as secondary to influenza, whooping-cough, and measles—*e.g.*, in 1927 103 and in 1926 240 additional deaths from these three chest-conditions were registered in association with influenza, measles, and whooping-cough.

There is reason to believe that many of these deaths could be prevented. In some countries the experiment has been tried of making every pneumonia case compulsory notifiable and attempting isolation. Apparently the results achieved have not justified the expense and trouble thereby involved, but the fact remains that probably a large proportion of these illnesses are infectious. All associated with epidemics of influenza, measles, whooping-cough, or diphtheria certainly are. Again, when in the absence of a recognized outbreak of such common infectious diseases groups of pneumonia or broncho-pneumonia cases occur in a community, affecting in considerable measure virile young adults, adolescents, and children of which it can be said the infecting agent is virulent, then measures can be taken which give promise of considerably reducing the death-rate from these lung-ailments. Such measures are complete case isolation to be practised by doctor and nurse, and convalescents to be restrained from close contact with other persons, attendance at indoor public gatherings, &c., until they have completely recovered.

SENILITY, 806.

A death-certificate of senility means that no other cause of death could be assigned. The age-group figures for 1927 are not yet available, but it is of interest to note from the annual report of the Government Statistician that in 1926, of 887 deaths from senility, 10 occurred under the age of sixty-five years, 52 under seventy, 156 under seventy-five, while 24 reached the ripe age of ninety-five years or over.