

PART II.—PUBLIC HYGIENE.

I have the honour to submit my annual report for the year ended 31st March, 1934.

SECTION I.—VITAL STATISTICS.

(Exclusive of Maoris unless otherwise stated.)

POPULATION.

The mean population of the Dominion for 1934 was estimated to be 1,476,988. This total represents an increase over the corresponding figure for the previous year of 10,058, or a percentage increase of population of 0·69.

BIRTHS.

The births of 24,322 living children were registered in the Dominion during 1934, as against 24,334, in 1933. The birth-rate for the year was thus 16·47 per 1,000 of mean population. The general course of the birth-rate during the last five years is shown in the following table :—

Births (Number and Rate) in New Zealand, 1930–34.

Year.					Total Number of Births registered.	Birth-rate per 1,000 of Mean Population.
1930	..	..	..	..	.. 26,797	18·80
1931	..	..	..	..	.. 26,622	18·42
1932	..	..	..	..	.. 24,884	17·09
1933	..	..	..	..	.. 24,334	16·59
1934	..	..	..	..	.. 24,322	16·47

The birth-rate steadily declines. The natural increase (excess of births over deaths) was 11,795 persons, or only 0·80 per cent. of the total population.

Loss during the year in the migration balance accounts for the increase in population being only 0·69 per cent.

DEATHS.

The deaths registered during the year numbered 12,527, an increase of 826 over the figure for 1933 (11,701).

Crude Death-rates.

Year.	Crude Death-rate per 1,000 Mean Population.		Year.	Crude Death-rate per 1,000 Mean Population.	
1929	..	.. 8·75	1932	..	.. 8·02
1930	..	.. 8·56	1933	..	.. 7·98
1931	..	.. 8·34	1934	..	.. 8·48

IMPROVEMENT IN THE DEATH-RATE SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE CENTURY.

In Table A are shown the average yearly death-rates per 10,000 of population by sex and age groups for the seven quinquennial periods from 1899 to 1933. The death-rates have been calculated from the population in each age-group at the time of the census taken in the middle year of each quinquennium, with two exceptions : for the age group “ under 1 year ” the average of the births for the five years has been taken, and, since no census was taken in 1931, the estimated age and sex distribution in that year.

It will be seen that there has been a marked decrease in the death-rate, especially in the lower age-groups. Every age-group, however, shares in the decrease, with the exception of males of eighty years of age and over. One quinquennium, 1914–18, stands out as an exception to the consistent downward trend. The rates for both sexes were affected by the epidemic of influenza which occurred during this period, and in addition the male rates for age-groups between the ages of twenty and forty-five were affected by the absence overseas of many thousands of the healthiest members of the population in these age-groups. Succeeding quinquennia, in the case of males, are also affected by the death, during the war, of approximately seventeen thousand young and healthy males of military age, and possibly by the strain of active service having shortened the lives of many who did return.