

1937.
NEW ZEALAND.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF HEALTH.

Presented in pursuance of Section 100 of the Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act, 1926.

HON. P. FRASER, MINISTER OF HEALTH.

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REPORTS.

THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF HEALTH to the Hon. the MINISTER OF HEALTH, Wellington.
I HAVE the honour to lay before you the annual report of the Department for the year 1936-37.

PART I.—GENERAL SURVEY.

The outstanding epidemiological feature of 1936 was an outbreak of poliomyelitis, which began in December. The year was also notable for a welcome rise in the birth-rate, a substantial decline in the maternal-mortality rate, and a new record low infant-mortality rate. These favourable statistics however, were offset by a rise in the death-rate, and, in particular, a rise in the death-rate from tuberculosis.

VITAL STATISTICS.
(Exclusive of Maori.)

Death-rate.—The death-rate was 8.75 per 1,000 mean population, as compared with the rate of 8.22 in the preceding year.

Infant Mortality.—The infant-mortality rate was 30.96 per 1,000 live births, the lowest rate ever recorded in New Zealand. In 1935 it was 32.26.

Still-births.—The still-birth rate was 29.5 per 1,000 live births, a slight improvement on the 1935 figure of 30.8.

Birth-rate.—The total births were 24,837, representing a rate of 16.64 per 1,000 mean population. These figures compare favourably with those of 1935—total births, 23,965; birth-rate, 16.13. This rise in the rate is the first check to a movement which has been steadily downward since 1920.

Maternal-mortality Rate.—The maternal-mortality rate, including deaths from septic abortions, was 3.70 per 1,000 live births, as compared with 4.21 in 1935. This fall in the rate was mainly due to a reduction in the number of septic abortions from 23 in 1935 to 14 in 1936.

In 1924, when the Department embarked on an active campaign for the promotion of maternal welfare, the maternal-mortality rate was 5.0.