

As the number of births is dependent upon the number of women of child-bearing age in the population, a more correct view of the trend in the birth-rate is obtained by calculating the birth-rate per thousand women between the ages of fifteen and forty-five years. This has been done for quinquennial periods from 1874 to 1938 and is shown in the following table:—

Birth-rate per 1,000 Women between the Ages of fifteen and forty-five years.

Period.	Rate.	Period.	Rate.
1874-78	217	1909-13	110
1879-83	196	1914-18	103
1884-88	164	1919-23	96
1889-93	137	1924-28	88
1894-98	117	1929-33	78
1899-03	110	1934-38	73
1904-08	114		

DEATHS.

The deaths registered during 1938 numbered 14,754, an increase of 1,096 over the figure for 1937 (13,658). Of this increase, 67 per cent. is accounted for by increases in deaths due to chest diseases (259), heart-diseases (220), measles (159), and violence (96).

Deaths (Numbers and Rates) in New Zealand, 1933-38.

Year.	Total Number of Deaths registered.	Crude Death-rate per 100,000 of Mean Population.	Standardized Death-rate per 100,000 of Population.
1933	11,701	799	677
1934	12,527	850	710
1935	12,217	825	675
1936	13,056	875	706
1937	13,658	908	711
1938	14,754	971	763

The crude death-rate reached its lowest point in 1933. Since that year it has shown a definite upward trend, a result which was to be expected with an ageing population. That the whole of the increase in the crude rate cannot be accounted for by the changing age-constitution of the population is shown by the standardized rates given above. The rate for 1938 is to some extent raised by the unusual number of deaths from measles and pneumonia. The standard used above and elsewhere in this report, unless otherwise stated, is the population of England and Wales at the time of the census of that country taken in 1901.

Since this is centennial year it may be of interest to show the improvement which has taken place in the general death-rate since 1874-78. Crude death-rates are of no value for this purpose, as both the age and the sex constitutions of the population have altered markedly during the long period taken. In the table given below the effect of these changes is eliminated by the compilation of standardized rates based on the age and sex constitution of the New Zealand population as disclosed at the census of 1911. Such rates for each year since 1872 have been published from time to time by the Census and Statistics Department, and from these quinquennial average rates have been calculated.

Standardized Death-rates, 1874-1938.

(Quinquennial average rates for the periods shown.)

Period.	Standardized Rate per 1,000 of Population.	Period.	Standardized Rate per 1,000 of Population.
1874-78	14.16	1909-13	9.31
1879-83	13.11	1914-18	10.26
1884-88	12.02	1919-23	8.85
1889-93	11.54	1924-28	7.85
1894-98	11.04	1929-33	7.30
1899-03	10.89	1934-38	7.14
1904-08	10.09		

It will be seen that the average death-rate during the past five years was almost exactly half that for the first five years shown.

The next table (Table A) does not go so far back into the past, but shows, for the sexes separately, and by quinquennial periods, the movement of the death-rate from all causes for each age-group. The rates have been calculated on the basis of the population in each age and sex group at the time of the census taken in the middle year of each quinquennium with two exceptions—for the age-group "under one year" the average of the births of the five years was taken, and since no census was taken in 1931 the estimated age and sex distribution in that year.