

PART II.—VITAL STATISTICS.

147. Twenty-two towns made returns of mortuary statistics for the year 1886, and with the exception of certain figures collected by the Provincial Government with more or less accuracy, these returns are the only means of information respecting the urban rate of mortality in Canada that are available, and they, moreover, comprise the only vital statistics of any nature collected by the Dominion Government, except such as are obtained at the taking of each census, and except those statistics of the French population of Quebec, which, with the assistance of the Government, are taken by the Roman Catholic Church. The large extent of territory, and consequently the great outlay that would be necessary have hitherto prevented the adoption by Government of any comprehensive plan for the collection of this class of statistics, but as their importance is becoming more fully recognized every day, and as the Government have in contemplation the establishment of a Statistical Bureau in connection with the new Department of Trade and Commerce, it is possible that some endeavour will be soon made to secure correct returns of births, deaths and marriages throughout the Dominion, though it will necessarily be some time before they can attain any very high degree of accuracy.

Collection
of vital
statistics.

148. The following table gives the number of deaths in twenty-two cities and towns in Canada, together with the ratio per 1,000 deaths at different ages. The figures are taken from the mortuary statistics, and while fairly correct must be accepted with a certain amount of reserve.

Deaths in
certain
towns in
Canada.