

Prince Edward Island (no report for 1912 was ever issued), and in Nova Scotia the publication of vital statistics dates only from 1909. Because of the *lacunæ*, and even more because of the incomparability of information collected, of methods of collection and of standard of enforcement, Canadian vital statistics remained extremely unsatisfactory and impossible of compilation on a national basis, as was pointed out by the 1912 Commission on Official Statistics, which recommended that "for the Dominion, now engaged in building up its national unity, it is important that uniform data should render possible to statisticians the institution of true interprovincial and international comparisons. By effective co-operation of the provinces with the Dominion, this object should be capable of attainment without sacrificing the liberty of each province to satisfy its own special statistical requirements"

The scheme of co-operation thus outlined was brought into effect as a consequence of the establishment of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics under the Statistics Act of 1918, which specifically provided that the Bureau should publish an annual report on vital statistics. A scheme was first drawn up in the Bureau and submitted to the various provinces; then Dominion-Provincial conferences on vital statistics were held in June and December, 1918, when comprehensive and final discussions took place.

At the conferences of 1918, it was agreed: (1) that the model Vital Statistics Act prepared by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, when accepted by the Legislatures, should form the basis of the vital statistics legislation of the several provinces, thus securing uniformity and comparability; (2) that the provinces should undertake to obtain the returns of births, marriages and deaths on the prescribed forms as approved and adopted at the conference, the Dominion Bureau of Statistics to supply the forms free of charge; (3) that the provinces should forward to the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, at such times as might be agreed upon, either the original returns of births, marriages and deaths, or certified transcriptions of the same; the Bureau of Statistics to undertake the mechanical compilation and tabulation.

Under the scheme outlined above, the vital statistics for all the provinces except Quebec were secured and compiled on a uniform basis for the years 1921 to 1925. The annual reports for these years may be obtained on application to the Dominion Statistician.

Quebec has been included in the registration area as from Jan. 1, 1926, from which date her statistics are on a comparable basis with those of the other provinces. The final reports for 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929 and 1930, including the statistics of all the nine provinces, have appeared and may be procured from the Dominion Statistician.<sup>1</sup>

Two important considerations should be borne in mind by the students who use either these tables or the detailed reports for comparative purposes. First, in spite of the improvements of the past decade, registration generally, and the registration of births in particular, is not universally carried out. The great extent of the country and the isolation of many of its inhabitants partly account for this unsatisfactory situation. Secondly, the differences in the age and sex distribution of the population in different provinces make comparisons of crude birth rates and crude death rates as among the provinces unfair and misleading.

<sup>1</sup> The vital statistics of the Yukon and Northwest Territories are duly collected and analysed, but are not presented with those of the nine provinces because the figures are not regarded as complete, the details are in many cases not available and the small and varying population is not known with sufficient accuracy for each year to enable the rates to be calculated. As these Territories contain only about 1/100 of the population of Canada, their vital statistics are a negligible factor in the total. See page 134 for their figures for 1924-29.