

Age Distribution by Sex.—Table 18 shows the quartile and decile age distributions by sex of the populations for each decennial census 1881-1931. These quartiles and deciles are obtained by arranging the male and female populations according to age and then dividing each array into four or ten equal parts as the case may be. The increasing average age of the population from census to census is clearly shown in the results. In 1881 one-quarter of the male population were 9·27 years of age and under, one half were 20·05 years and under, and three-quarters were 36·48 years and under. In 1931, on the other hand, one-quarter of the male population were of ages up to 12·10 years, one-half up to 25·48, and three-quarters up to 43·54 years. The female population has not shown quite as pronounced an increase in average age but a substantial increase is, nevertheless, strongly in evidence. Only in the Census of 1911, first quartile for females and third quartile for both males and females, and in the Census of 1921, first quartile for both males and females, was the upward trend of average age interrupted.

In the second part of the table the deciles show with more detail the information given by the quartiles. For instance, we see clearly that the greatest increase in average age over the 50-year period has taken place in the seventh decile, *i.e.*, in the "thirties", for both males and females and that the average age of the population in the "forties" and later, while clearly increasing, has done so with diminishing force. The influences which affect the age distribution are the birth rate and immigration. There is evidence to show that the first showed a steady reduction over the country as a whole in the '70's, '80's and '90's of last century and probably also in the early years of the twentieth century. Its effect would be felt in the younger sections first, but would be carried throughout the entire population with the passage of time, and would account for the gradual increase in average age shown in all quartiles and deciles up to 1911. Quite clearly, there is a break in the degree of increase shown in the first and second quartiles for 1911 and 1921. This could be accounted for by a temporary increase in the birth rate beginning early in the present century, which other evidence supports. The fact that such increase in the birth rate was only temporary is supported, too, by the re-establishment of the trend of increasing age in the data for 1931.

Immigration does not directly affect the younger sections of the population except to a very small degree. It immediately affects the middle-aged groups, but its effect is carried to the older groups as time goes by. The very heavy immigration of the early years of the century (1900-1911) would thus immediately affect mainly the age groups in the late "teens" and the early "twenties", and although immigration was later cut down very severely the influence of these earlier accretions to the population would creep through the upper age groups year by year. The seventh decile shows that it has now reached to those of our people in the "forties" and without doubt it will creep into the higher age groups as future censuses come to be taken.