

CHAPTER V.—VITAL STATISTICS*

CONSPECTUS

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A short historical outline of the early collection of vital statistics in Canada is given at pp. 104-105 of the 1940 edition of the Year Book. Co-operation of the provinces in the collection of comparable statistics was finally effected as a consequence of the establishment of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, under the Statistics Act of 1918. From 1921 to 1925 vital statistics were compiled by the Bureau on a comparable basis for all provinces with the exception of Quebec. Quebec has been included in the registration area only as from Jan. 1, 1926, from which date statistics have been on a comparable basis in all provinces.

The main tables of Sections 1-4 that follow cover statistics for all the provinces. Section 5 deals with those of Yukon and the Northwest Territories and reasons for this separation are given at that place.

An important factor should be borne in mind by the student who uses either the tables that follow or the detailed reports issued by the Bureau of Statistics for comparative purposes. The differences in the age and sex distribution of the population in different provinces make comparisons of crude birth rates and crude death rates not strictly accurate. All rates in this Chapter have been calculated on the basis of the estimates of population given at p. 141.

Section 1.—Births

The recent history of birth rates in most countries has been one of decline with varying rapidity, although consequent reductions in the rates of natural increase have been partly offset by synchronous declines in the death rates. Since 1939, however, available statistics would seem to indicate that the rapid and consistent decline in birth rates generally has been arrested.

The crude birth rate for England and Wales, for example, was 25.1 in 1910, and, though it rose to 25.5 in 1920, it fell quite rapidly by almost continuous stages to 14.4 in 1933. The lowest figure so far recorded was 14.2 in 1941. Similarly, in France the crude birth rate moved from 19.6 in 1910 to 21.4 in 1920, 18.0 in 1930 and 13.0 in 1941. In Germany the crude birth rate was 29.8 in 1910, 25.9 in 1920, 17.6 in 1930 and 14.9 in 1942.

* The material in this chapter has been revised by J. T. Marshall, Chief of the Vital Statistics Branch, Dominion Bureau of Statistics. A list of the publications of this Branch will be found in Chapter XXX, Sect. 1, under "Population".