

of vital statistics, which has existed since the inauguration of the national system. Its constitution calls for at least one annual meeting and for more frequent meetings when required.

During recent years, the registration of vital events in the several provinces may be considered virtually complete. This is attributable in large measure, not only to the impetus of rationing requirements during the war years, and the implementation of national family allowances, but in addition to an increasing need for birth certification. It is, however, primarily the direct result of the unrelenting efforts to this end, over the years, of the Provincial Registration Offices.

By 1947, it became apparent that the Model Bill of 1918 no longer fully met present day requirements of an adequate registration system, and that the study of new uniform legislation was essential. Accordingly, at the request of several of the provinces, the Minister of Trade and Commerce called a Conference in 1947 at Ottawa for the specific purpose of studying the technical provisions of a new Model Vital Statistics Act.

This Conference was attended by officials in charge of the Provincial Registration Offices, the Legislative Councils of several provinces, and by representatives of national organizations. A final bill, which will incorporate the technical requirements, as laid down by this Conference, will be framed by the *Conference of Commissioners on Uniformity of Legislation in Canada* and will form the basis of any recommendation which may be made to the several Provincial Governments.

Classification of Vital Statistics.—Until recently, vital statistics were all classified by place of occurrence. In 1944, however, the classification of births and deaths by residence was begun; births being classified by the residence of the mother. A number of special tabulations by residence have been made for a few years before 1944; in Tables 1 to 4 the figures for 1941-46 are given by residence. In all other tables of this Chapter, figures for 1944 to 1946 are given by residence, except in Tables 5, 9, 10, 11 and 22. Headnotes of the tables throughout show the classification used.

For most provincial figures and rates, the change in classification makes comparatively little difference but, for individual localities, the differences may be quite large. In such cases, the figures for the years 1941 and after are not comparable with the five-year averages for the earlier years.

Section 2.—Summary of Vital Statistics

Tables 1 to 5 give a summary of the vital statistics of Canada and the provinces for the years 1926 to 1946.

In comparing the birth, death and marriage rates of the provinces, it is useful to bear in mind that part of the differences observed may be due to differences in the sex and age distribution of their populations. Similarly, changes in these rates may be due partly to changes in this distribution. These remarks also apply to international comparisons of birth, death and marriage rates. For example, in Canada the birth rate of Quebec is approximately the same as that of New Brunswick, and considerably higher than that of Prince Edward Island. Yet the fertility of the female population is highest in New Brunswick and approximately equal in the other two provinces. Over the past 15 years, the death rate in British Columbia has been rising, while in Ontario it has been more or less stable, with the result that, though 15 years ago the death rate in Ontario was considerably higher than in