Fertility Rates.—The sex and age distribution of the population is an important factor in determining birth, death and marriage rates. Since more than 95 p.c. of children are born to women between the ages of 15 and 50, differences in the proportion of women of these ages to the population as a whole will cause differences in the birth rates of different countries or regions, even though the fertility of women at each age may be the same. Measures of fertility which are independent of the sex and age distribution of the population have, therefore, been devised. The best known of these are age-specific fertility rates and reproduction rates.

Further details on this subject may be found at pp. 153-154 of the 1947 edition of the Year Book or from the report "Gross and Net Reproduction Rates, Canada and the Provinces", published by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Ottawa.

Ages of Parents.—The numerical and percentage distribution of legitimate live births by the ages of the parents is given in Table **15**, of illegitimate live births by the age of the mother in Table **16**, and of stillbirths by the age of the mother in Table **17**. The average ages of the parents are also given.

In 1930-32 the average age of fathers was 33·7 years and of mothers 29·3 years The average age of parents is now slightly lower. Besides the fertility rates at each age, two other factors help to determine the average age of parents having children: first, the average age of potential parents, that is, of the population between the ages of 15 and 50 and secondly, the proportions of first and second births to the total. The average age of men between 15 and 50 was 30·9 years in 1931 and 30·7 in 1941; the average age of women was 30·4 in 1931 and again 30·4 in 1941. The changes are thus very small. Other things being equal, a high proportion of first and second births will result in a lower average age of parents. In 1930-32 first and second births were 43 p.c. of the total births. In 1945-48 first and second births together were 57 p.c. of the total. These changes are very great and account for the lower average age of parents.

A number of other facts are shown in Tables **15, 16,** and **17**. In the first place, the average age of fathers of legitimate children is about four years greater than the average age of mothers. Secondly, the average age of mothers of illegitimate children is four to five years less than the average age of mothers of legitimate children; in 1930-32 the difference was six years. The fact that over two-thirds of illegitimate children are born to mothers under 25 years of age accounts for this difference. Thirdly, the average age of mothers of stillborn children is higher than that of live born. Table **17** shows that the rate of stillbirths per 1,000 live births increases with age of the mother. It is more than twice as high among mothers of 40-44 years as it is among mothers of 20-24, and over three times as high among mothers of 45-49.