

CHAPTER V.—VITAL STATISTICS*

CONSPECTUS

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NOTE.—The interpretation of the symbols used in the tables throughout the Year Book will be found facing p. 1 of this volume.

Vital Statistics provide a record of community and national development—a measurement of the pace of population growth, the number and distribution of people coming into the various age groups, the relative importance of each of the various causes of death, and population trends generally. This Chapter, moreover, attempts to provide a comparison of principal Canadian vital statistics rates with those of other countries and to present tables on marriages and deaths as well as detailed life tables for males and females. Births and deaths are classified by place of residence (births according to the residence of the mother) and marriages by place of occurrence.

The continuity of vital statistics provides a constant guide to the planning, operation and evaluation of a variety of national activities, notably in public health, education, community planning, and various types of business enterprise. The data are presented so as to be useful for the general reader as well as for students of demography, public health, sociology and other specialized fields. The population data upon which the rates shown in this Chapter are computed are contained in Chapter III (Population) and in the several DBS reports relating to census and intercensal estimates of population. In making both international and interprovincial comparisons of birth, death and marriage rates, it is important to note that part of the differences observed over a period of years as between different countries, provinces or local areas may be caused by differences in the sex and age distribution of the populations involved. Similarly, changes in the rates may be caused partly by changes in this distribution.

The history of the collection of vital statistics in Canada is covered in the 1948-49 edition of the Year Book, pp. 185-188. In addition to the information provided in *Vital Statistics* (Preliminary Report), *Vital Statistics of Canada* and other regular DBS annual reports, certain unpublished data are also available on request.

Data for the Yukon and Northwest Territories, previously shown separately and not included in the national totals, are now included in all tables unless otherwise specified.

Section 1.—Summary of Vital Statistics

Table 1 gives a summary of the principal vital statistics of the provinces of Canada from 1921 when the system of collection of national statistics was initiated and Table 2 shows certain vital statistics for urban centres having at least 10,000 population at the date of the 1951 Census.

* Revised in the Vital Statistics Section, Health and Welfare Division Dominion Bureau of Statistics.