

# 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 population development—a measure of the pace of growth, marriage and fertility trends, the distribution of people in and entering the various age groups, the relative importance of each of the causes of death, and so on. The continuity of such data gives a constant guide to the planning, operation and evaluation of a variety of national activities, particularly in the fields of public health, education, community planning and various types of business enterprise.

This Chapter gives a fairly detailed coverage of the vital statistics information available, gives life tables for males and females and presents a comparison of the principal Canadian vital statistics rates with those of other countries. In making 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 countries, provinces or local areas may be caused by differences in the sex and age distribution of the populations involved. Similarly, rates for any one area may be affected by changes in such distribution.

The population data upon which the rates shown in this Chapter are computed are given in Chapter III, in DBS census bulletins, and in reports on intercensal estimates of population. Births and deaths are classified by place of residence (births according to the residence of the mother) and marriages by place of occurrence.

The history of the collection of vital statistics in Canada is covered in the 1948-49 Year Book, pp. 185-188. Detailed information is given in *Vital Statistics* (Preliminary Report) (Catalogue No. 84-201), *Vital Statistics of Canada* (Catalogue No. 84-202) and in other regular and special reports; in addition, certain unpublished data are available on request.

### Section 1.—Summary of Vital Statistics

Table 1 gives a summary of the principal vital statistics of the provinces of Canada from 1931 to 1958 and Table 2 shows certain vital statistics for urban centres having at least 10,000 population at the date of the 1956 Census. Corresponding data for 1921—when the collection of national statistics was initiated—to 1930 are shown in previous issues of the Canada Year Book.

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