

CHAPTER V.—VITAL STATISTICS*

CONSPECTUS

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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 vital statistics rates are computed are given in Chapter III of this volume. 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*Vital Statistics of Canada* (Catalogue No. 84-202) and in other regular and special reports; in addition, certain unpublished data are available on request.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 for reference purposes of the principal vital statistics of the provinces of Canada for five-year periods 1941-60 and for single years 1959-61. Table 2 shows similar data for urban centres having at least 10,000 population at the date of the 1961 Census for the year 1961 with averages for 1956-60. Corresponding data for 1921—when the collection of national vital statistics was initiated—to 1940 are shown in previous issues of the Canada Year Book.

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