

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 on p. xvi of this volume.

Vital statistics provide a key to the interpretation of population development—a measure of the pace at which the population is growing, the rate at which women are marrying and reproducing, and the effect this has on the age and sex distribution of the population, as well as the relative importance of the diseases that cause death each year. Vital statistics constitute the record of births, deaths, marriages and divorces registered in the provinces and territories of Canada. The continuity of such data gives a constant guide to the planning, operation and evaluation of many 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No. 84-202), *Causes of Death* (Catalogue No. 84-203) and in other regular and special reports; in addition, certain unpublished data are available on request.

This Chapter includes the most recent data available at the time of going to press; certain tables therefore include 1966 data while others are up-dated to 1965 only.

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