

VITAL STATISTICS.

Vital Statistics.—In Canada the registration of births, marriages and deaths is under provincial control, and at present divergent methods, with, in certain provinces, entire lack of statistics, render impossible the deduction for any series of years of annual birth-, marriage- and death-rates for the Dominion as a whole. In Nova Scotia the publication of annual vital statistics has only recently begun, and for the province of New Brunswick no returns of the kind are yet available.

Table 23 shows however by provinces (New Brunswick excepted) the number of births, marriages and deaths in the year 1911, according to the latest returns of the provincial registrars. Using the census figures of population for 1911, crude birth-, marriage- and death-rates per 1,000 of the population living have been calculated, as well as the excess of births over deaths. Table 24 gives for 1911 the census population, the number of births, marriages and deaths, the excess of births over deaths and the natural increase per 1,000 of the population for the principal cities of Canada, while Table 25 gives by provinces the birth- and death-rates and the natural increase per 1,000 of the population living for the census year ended March 31, 1901, and for the calendar year 1911. In Table 25 the rates are calculated entirely from the census returns for 1901, whereas for 1911 the rates are calculated from the provincial returns of births, marriages and deaths and from the census returns as regards population. The data for the calculation of rates in 1911 entirely from the census returns are not yet complete.

It must be confessed that in certain respects these tables cannot be regarded as furnishing very trustworthy information, and they can only be used with a considerable degree of caution. A comparison between the two periods in Table 25 shows notable differences, partly no doubt but not altogether due to differences in the nature of the data from which the rates have been calculated. The relatively high birth-rates of Quebec and Manitoba are explainable in the former province by the well-known fecundity of the French population and in the latter by the large number of births amongst the foreign population of European origin, especially in Winnipeg and other cities where the registration of births has been perfected. On the other hand, in British Columbia, where the birth-rate is shown to be relatively low, the cause is to be found in the large numbers in the province of Chinese (19,568), Japanese (8,587) and Hindus (2,292), most of whom are single men, whilst it is also notorious that amongst the Indian population, numbering 20,134, the registration of births is not very perfectly effected. The low death-rate recorded for Saskatchewan in 1911, viz., 5.54, suggests imperfect returns, especially when compared with the more normal rates of 11.90 for Saskatchewan and Alberta in 1900-01 and 9.90 for Alberta in 1911. The Census returns for 1911, when complete, should furnish data by which the accuracy of the figures in Table 25 may be tested.