

in considerable detail annually from 1871, the arrangements for the collection of data were unsatisfactory. Only in 1906 was the publication of vital statistics begun in Prince Edward Island (no report for 1912 has ever been issued), and in Nova Scotia the publication of vital statistics dates only from 1909. Because of the *lacunæ*, and even more because of the incomparability of facts collected, of methods of collection and of standard of enforcement, Canadian vital statistics remained extremely unsatisfactory and impossible to be compiled on a national basis, as was pointed out by the 1912 commission on official statistics, which recommended that "for the Dominion, now engaged in building up its national unity, it is important that uniform data should render possible to statisticians the institution of true interprovincial and international comparisons. By effective co-operation of the provinces with the Dominion this object should be capable of attainment without sacrificing the liberty of each province to satisfy its own special statistical requirements."

The scheme of co-operation, thus outlined, has now been brought into effect as a consequence of the establishment of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics under the Statistics Act of 1918, which specifically provided that the Bureau should publish an annual report on vital statistics, and of the Dominion-Provincial conferences on vital statistics. The scheme was in the first instance drawn up in the Bureau and submitted to the various provinces; later a Dominion-Provincial conference on vital statistics was held in June, 1918, when a comprehensive and final discussion took place.

At the conferences of 1918, it was agreed: (1) that the model Vital Statistics Act prepared by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, when accepted by the legislatures, should form the basis of the vital statistics legislation of the several provinces, thus securing uniformity and comparability; (2) that the provinces should undertake to obtain the returns of births, marriages and deaths on the prescribed forms as approved and adopted at the conference, the Dominion Bureau of Statistics to supply the forms free of charge; (3) that the provinces should forward to the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, at such times as might be agreed upon, either the original return of births, marriages and deaths, or certified transcriptions of the same; the Dominion Bureau of Statistics to undertake the mechanical compilation and tabulation of the same.

Under the scheme outlined above, the vital statistics of all the provinces, except Quebec, have been secured and compiled on a uniform basis for the year 1920, and with the commencement of 1921, it became possible to issue complete monthly statements for the eight provinces. The first annual report has been issued, covering the year 1921, and may be obtained on application to the Dominion Statistician.

Statistics showing births, marriages, deaths and natural increase in the nine provinces of Canada in recent years are given under the various headings in the following tables. The statistics for the eight provinces constituting the registration area of Canada are compiled for the provinces in the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, while the figures for Quebec are taken from the provincial returns. The totals for the nine provinces are approximately equivalent to what they would be for the Dominion as a whole, since the Yukon Territory and the Northwest Territories, which are not as yet covered by the new scheme of vital statistics, contain between them less than 1-700th of the population of the Dominion.

Two important considerations should be borne in mind by the students who use either these tables or provincial reports for comparative purposes.