

The following table gives the rates of illegitimacy in Australasia. The rate in 1904 in New Zealand was less than in any of the Australian States except South Australia and Western Australia :—

Proportion of Illegitimate Births in every 100 Births.

| Year. | Queensland. | New South Wales. | Victoria. | South Australia. | Western Australia. | Tasmania. | New Zealand. |
|-------|-------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|--------------------|-----------|--------------|
| 1895 | 4.93 | 6.51 | 5.33 | 3.13 | 4.47 | 4.97 | 4.50 |
| 1896 | 5.22 | 5.71 | 5.63 | 3.45 | 5.61 | 5.91 | 4.48 |
| 1897 | 6.02 | 6.58 | 5.42 | 3.53 | 5.27 | 5.74 | 4.41 |
| 1898 | 6.04 | 6.93 | 5.29 | 3.62 | 4.99 | 5.09 | 4.23 |
| 1899 | 5.97 | 7.15 | 5.49 | 3.95 | 4.91 | 6.08 | 4.40 |
| 1900 | 6.40 | 7.01 | 5.91 | 4.24 | 4.82 | 5.43 | 4.63 |
| 1901 | 5.93 | 7.16 | 5.58 | 3.98 | 3.88 | 5.94 | 4.57 |
| 1902 | 6.04 | 6.60 | 5.51 | 4.36 | 3.96 | 5.36 | 4.46 |
| 1903 | 6.76 | 6.71 | 5.73 | 4.18 | 4.69 | 5.61 | 4.55 |
| 1904 | ... | 7.12 | 5.74 | 4.01 | 4.36 | 5.82 | 4.52 |

These figures show the proportion of illegitimate births to every 100 births for this colony to be very steady for the period 1895-1904; the difference amounts only to 0.02 per cent. on a comparison of the first and last years.

The total number of births registered was 19,299 in 1886 and 22,766 in 1904, while the illegitimate births rose from 602 to 1,029. The causes that led to the fall in the birth-rate certainly did not greatly affect the number of illegitimate children.

The number of spinsters in the colony between 15 and 45 increased during the ten years from 65,035 (census 1891) to 100,310 (census 1901), or at the rate of 55.9 per cent., while the illegitimate births increased from 638 to 927, or at the rate of 46.9 per cent. only.

It would therefore appear that the larger proportion of illegitimate births now obtaining cannot with any certainty be taken as indicative of increased looseness of living on the part of the people.

The following figures, showing the rate of illegitimacy per 100 births in Australasia and in the United Kingdom, are based on statistics for a period of five years:—

| Country. | Illegitimate Births per Cent. | Country. | Illegitimate Births per Cent. |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| New South Wales ... | 6.9 | Tasmania ... | 5.6 |
| Victoria ... | 5.6 | New Zealand ... | 4.4 |
| Queensland ... | 5.9 | England and Wales ... | 4.2 |
| South Australia ... | 3.8 | Ireland ... | 2.6 |
| Western Australia... | 5.0 | Scotland ... | 7.2 |

Of the total number of children born in Australasia during the five years ended 1900, 5.67 per cent. were illegitimate, as compared with 4.42 per cent. in the United Kingdom for the same period.

For England and Wales the proportion of illegitimate births to the total births in 1903 was 3.9 per cent., having gradually diminished from 7 per cent. in 1845. The minimum rate was 2.4 per cent., in Monmouthshire, and the maximum 7.7 per cent., in Montgomeryshire. For London the percentage was 3.6.

The average proportion of illegitimate births in Scotland in five years was 6.3 per cent., but in Ireland the extremely low average of 2.6 per cent. obtained.

Births and Birth-rates in the Four Chief Cities.

The total number of births registered as occurring in the four chief centres and suburbs in 1904 was 5,970, as against 5,812 for the previous year.

There is increase in the births for the four chief cities and suburban boroughs found on comparison with figures for 1903. The birth-rates for 1904 were:—

| | Birth-rates per 1,000 of Mean Population. |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Auckland City ... | 31.08 |
| " and five suburban boroughs ... | 29.80 |
| Wellington City ... | 26.77 |
| " and two suburban boroughs ... | 26.59 |
| Christchurch City ... | 27.53 |
| " and one suburban borough ... | 27.41 |
| Dunedin City ... | 22.40 |
| " and eight suburban boroughs... | 23.81 |