

has occasioned, as in the fact that it is steadily increasing year by year. Time itself would seem to be not less relentless than the steady creeping-up of this ailment to the front rank as a cause of death. Cancer is essentially a disease of the degenerative period of life, and I should be glad to be able to convince myself that some of the increase was due to the greater care which is taken to preserve the less healthy and those of advanced years. That this and better diagnosis plays a part cannot be denied, but I wish I could assure myself that these factors were solely responsible for the snakelike advance of this terrible disease.

Consumption still makes its heavy yearly toll, and, though our death-rate is lower than that of any other country, it still claims 6·21 per cent. of the total deaths. The measures taken by the Hospital Boards in various parts of the colony, the public themselves, and the Department, have done much to lessen the spread of the disease, but there must be no resting on our oars in the face of such an annual exaction of life. Sixty-one per cent. of those who died of phthisis last year were New-Zealand-born. This is a fact which must cause us concern. The census of 1906 showed that the New-Zealand-born formed 68 per cent. of the population, so that we have a death-rate from phthisis of 5·51 per cent. This would seem to indicate that the New-Zealander's power of insistance against this disease was greater than that of the whole population. I have said so much re previous reports with respect to the necessity of offering a never-ceasing warfare against this disease that I fear further repetition may bring that disregard which constant exposure to fierce fire is said to cause amongst soldiers. Great and good work is, however, being done, and I am still hopeful that the day will come when this absolutely preventable disease will be prevented.

BIRTHS.

The number of births registered in the colony during 1906 was 24,252, or 27·08 in every 1,000 persons living. The number of births is 750 in excess of that for the year 1905, an increase of 2·41 per cent. From 1882 until the year 1899 there was a regular fall in the birth-rate. The number of births registered in a year reached 19,846 in 1884, and, after falling to 17,876 in 1892, has risen to 24,252 in 1906, as stated above.

The figures for each year from 1882 are worthy of notice, especially in connection with the subsequent particulars given as to marriages solemnised and the growth of population:—

Year.	Number of Births.	Rate per 1,000 of Population.	Year.	Number of Births.	Rate per 1,000 of Population.
1882	...	19,009	1905	...	37·32

ERRATA.

PAGE X, paragraph headed "Cambridge Sanatorium," line 3, for "Miss Duffins" read "Miss Duffin the position of Matron in March, 1906"; and in line 5, for "Miss Brigeman" read "Miss Bridgman."

On page 76, in second paragraph, line 1, for "114" read "116," and for "155" read "91" line 2, after "were discharged" read "and 10 died"; line 5, for "107" read "43."

The marriages have increased numerically, and the population of the colony also.

Year.	Number of Marriages.	Mean Population (excluding Maoris).	Year.	Number of Marriages.	Mean Population (excluding Maoris).
1882	...	3,600	1895	...	509,309
1883	...	3,612	1896	...	529,292
1884	...	3,800	1897	...	552,590
1885	...	3,813	1898	...	573,362
1886	...	3,488	1899	...	582,117
1887	...	3,563	1900	...	596,374
1888	...	3,617	1901	...	605,371
1889	...	3,632	1902	...	612,716
1890	...	3,797	1903	...	620,780
1891	...	3,805	1904	...	629,783
1892	...	4,002	1905	...	642,245
1893	...	4,115	1906	...	661,349
1894	...	4,178			679,196

The average number of children to a marriage may be ascertained by comparing the number of legitimate births for a series of years with the marriages, but commencing with the marriages in the year preceding that for which the first number of births is taken.