

The average death-rate for England and Wales for the period 1901–5 was 16.

Excluding the deaths of children under one year, the death rates for the corresponding period are:—

	Auckland and Suburban Boroughs.	Average of Four Centres.
1902	11·10	9·56
1903	8·57	9·14
1904	8·11	8·30
1905	7·96	8·02
1906	7·63	8·35

Thus, Auckland centre exhibits for four years a steadily improving condition in the matter of the death-rate of persons over one year.

In the matter of

INFANTILE MORTALITY,

however, the waste of infant life in Auckland, which has been commented upon both by my predecessor and myself as being a lamentable feature in Auckland, still holds sway. The following is the comparative table of deaths of children under one year to every 100 births:—

	Auckland City.	Auckland and Suburban Boroughs.	Average of Four Centres.
1902	15·41	14·07	11·94
1903	12·08	12·15	9·42
1904	6·93	7·01	9·03
1905	10·13	9·15	8·59
1906	9·92	8·58	7·62
	10·89	10·19	9·32

Auckland's position in this respect, in relation to that of the other centres, and to the mean for five years past, is as follows:—

	1906.	Mean for Five Years.	Other Three Centres' Mean for Five Years.
Auckland (City)	9·92	10·89	..
Wellington	7·11	9·79	} 9·24
Christchurch	7·24	10·00	
Dunedin	7·76	7·92	

Thus, Auckland shows an improvement as compared with its mean of five years, but its mean for five years exceeds the mean of the other three centres by 1·65, and its 1906 deaths exceed the mean of those of the other three centres for 1906 (7·37) by 2·55 per 100 births. The births in Auckland were 1,159; so 29·5 deaths of young infants occurred in Auckland in excess of what would have occurred had those births taken place under the conditions prevailing in the other centres of the colony.

A writer in the *Nineteenth Century and After*, for December last, adduces figures to show that, though the birth-rate in England and Wales has declined, yet there is a natural increase of population greater than that which occurred when there was a larger birth-rate, and argues against the race-suicide theory, alleging further that excessive fertility is Nature's effort to overcome adverse conditions, which effort declines as the necessity for its exercise is removed. Are we to take it that the greater fertility observable in Auckland is evidence rather of "last efforts of life devoted" in the slums and dark places of Auckland "to the maintenance of species than to the preservation of the individual," to quote the writer referred to? The lowering of the birth-rate by the inclusion of the suburbs seems to lend colour to the theory; and the further fact that the deaths of children under one year per 100 births were more by 4·08 in Auckland City than in the surrounding boroughs discounts the possible argument against it—that the natural increase in population is greater in Auckland City than in Auckland with its surrounding boroughs. The actual particulars are that in the year 1906 the deaths under one year were 115 out of 1,119 births, or 9·92 per cent. in Auckland City, and in the suburban borough 33 deaths out of 565 births, or 5·84 per cent.

CAUSES OF DEATHS.

Deaths from Zymotic Diseases.

The incidence of deaths from zymotic causes for five years in Auckland, with its surrounding boroughs, and the proportion which these bear to the total of the four centres, is thus shown:—

	Deaths, Auckland Centre.	Total of Four Centres.	Auckland, Proportion per Cent.
1902	165	356	46
1903	86	256	33
1904	52	202	26
1905	45	115	39
1906	42	133	32
Mean for five years	78	212	35