

And another table is given, showing for a period of twenty-five years the numbers of married women at the quinquennial periods of age belonging to the full term 15 to 45 years, with the proportions that those numbers bear to every 100 married women living at 15-45.

These proportions are found to have diminished appreciably at the earlier ages, 15-20 and 20-25; but the numbers of the living are much smaller at those ages than at the higher ones, 25-30 and onwards to 40-45, and the effect of this lesser number of wives at the lower ages in reducing the birth-rate would not be so much as might at first be thought probable.

It is, however, undoubtedly a fact that to have a growing proportion of wives at the earlier productive ages is the best position, but it is not the one which obtains at present in New Zealand.

*Married Women under 45 Years of Age, given according to Age-groups, as at the Censuses of 1881, 1891, 1901, and 1906; with the Proportion in each Group for every 100 of the Whole.*

Age-groups.	Married Women under 45, excluding Chinese.							
	Numbers at Census.				Proportion per Cent.			
	1881.	1891.	1901.	1906.	1881.	1891.	1901.	1906.
15-20 ... ..	1,233	750	777	928	2.14	1.19	0.98	0.95
20-25 ... ..	8,996	8,862	10,053	12,153	15.66	14.03	12.66	12.37
25-30 ... ..	13,133	14,540	17,923	24,030	22.86	23.02	22.57	24.47
30-35 ... ..	12,656	14,576	19,617	23,025	22.03	23.08	24.70	23.44
35-40 ... ..	11,811	12,959	16,854	21,453	20.55	20.51	21.23	21.84
40-45 ... ..	9,629	11,478	14,182	16,622	16.76	18.17	17.86	16.93
Totals ... ..	57,458	63,165	79,406	98,211	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

A table is given in the Sixty-ninth Annual Report of the Registrar-General of England of such importance that it is reproduced here:—

*Legitimate-birth Rates.*

Country— (Arranged in order of rates in 1900-2).	Proportion of Legitimate Births per 1,000 Wives aged 15-45 Years.			Increase (+) or Decrease (-) per Cent. in Fertility during 20 years.
	Approximate Periods.			
	1880-2.	1890-2.	1900-2.	
<i>European Countries—</i>				
The Netherlands .. ..	347.5	338.3	315.3	— 9.3
Norway .. ..	314.5	306.8	302.8	— 3.7
Prussia .. ..	312.6	307.6	290.4	— 7.1
Ireland .. ..	282.9	287.6	289.4	+ 2.3
German Empire .. ..	310.2	300.9	284.2	— 8.4
Austria .. ..	281.4	292.4	283.7	+ 0.8
Scotland .. ..	311.5	296.4	271.8	— 12.7
Italy .. ..	276.2	..	269.4	— 2.5
Sweden .. ..	293.0	280.0	269.0	— 8.2
Switzerland .. ..	284.1	274.0	265.9	— 6.4
Denmark .. ..	287.1	278.1	259.1	— 9.8
Spain .. ..	257.7	263.9	258.7	+ 0.4
Belgium .. ..	312.7	285.1	250.7	— 19.8
England and Wales .. ..	286.0	263.8	235.5	— 17.7
France .. ..	196.2	173.5	157.5	— 19.7
<i>Australian Commonwealth—</i>				
Tasmania .. ..	..	311.0	256.4	..
Queensland .. ..	329.0	320.6	252.8	— 23.2
Western Australia .. ..	323.9	338.8	246.4	— 23.9
South Australia .. ..	326.5	307.5	235.0	— 28.0
New South Wales .. ..	337.8	298.5	234.3	— 30.6
Victoria .. ..	299.2	297.8	226.8	— 24.2
New Zealand .. ..	322.1	277.5	243.2	— 24.5

Here England and Wales for 1900-2 stands as having had the lowest fertility of all the European countries specified, except France. New Zealand shows a little above England, and, in respect of Australia, somewhat higher than South Australia, New South Wales, and Victoria.