

enteritis for the year ending 31st March, and of these, only 4 occurred during the last summer. No doubt the summer, not being so dry as the two previous summers, was not so favourable to a high infantile mortality. Some credit must also be given to the Society for the Promotion of the Health of Women and Children. The work of this society is largely increasing. There are now two fully qualified Plunket Nurses employed in Christchurch, and about 200 infants have been attended by them during the year. In addition to the personal visits paid within the radius of two miles from the Post-office, a large number of cases are dealt with outside this area and in the country districts, by supplying written advice and pamphlets, and by advice given to those who apply at the office of the society. A branch of this society has been recently formed in Timaru.

## CAUSES OF DEATH.

The Registrar-General reports as follows on the causes of death for the year:—

The classification of causes of death in 1908 was made for the first time in New Zealand according to the Bertillon Index of Diseases. This system has been adopted by the Commonwealth of Australia and the principal European and American countries. It is highly desirable for comparative purposes that uniformity of statistical method should obtain when possible.

The new system differs materially from that hitherto in use, and comparisons of certain causes of mortality in 1908 and previous years are impossible owing to changes in the classification of minor diseases. This applies more particularly to diseases of the digestive, nervous, respiratory, and circulatory systems. There are, however, certain principal causes of deaths which are unaffected and retain their comparative value, such as cancer, tubercular diseases, typhoid fever, whooping-cough, measles, influenza, scarlet fever, diabetes, appendicitis, liver and puerperal diseases, suicide, and old age.

Although it is not possible to exhibit a classified comparison with previous years on this occasion, a table is given of some of the principal causes of death during the past five years.

Cause.	Number of Deaths.					Proportion of 10,000 of Mean Population.				
	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.
Typhoid fever .. ..	73	45	48	53	90	0.86	0.52	0.54	0.58	0.95
Measles .. ..	10	8	12	101	19	0.12	0.09	0.13	1.10	0.20
Scarlet fever .. ..	13	10	18	25	60	0.15	0.11	0.20	0.27	0.63
Whooping-cough .. ..	35	3	26	307	42	0.41	0.03	0.29	3.34	0.44
Influenza .. ..	113	70	132	223	64	1.34	0.80	1.47	2.43	0.68
Tuberculosis of the lungs ..	598	496	556	612	607	7.08	5.70	6.21	6.66	6.42
Other forms of tuberculosis	201	182	164	244	232	2.38	2.10	1.83	2.65	2.45
Cancer .. ..	571	566	623	674	657	6.76	6.51	6.96	7.33	6.95
Diabetes .. ..	90	79	104	87	100	1.06	0.91	1.16	0.95	1.06
Simple meningitis .. ..	102	119	138	130	136	1.21	1.37	1.54	1.41	1.44
Convulsions of children under 5 years of age	114	116	106	104	96	1.35	1.33	1.18	1.13	1.02
Apoplexy .. ..	292	299	272	330	341	3.46	3.44	3.04	3.59	3.61
Pneumonia .. ..	406	425	444	572	453	4.80	4.89	4.96	6.22	4.80
Gastritis and enteritis .. ..	383	379	335	518	478	4.53	4.36	3.74	5.64	5.06
Diarrhœal diseases .. ..	193	128	97	314	198	2.28	1.47	1.08	3.42	2.20
Cirrhosis of liver .. ..	53	40	44	42	52	0.63	0.46	0.49	0.46	0.55
Appendicitis .. ..	..	53	69	86	81	..	0.61	0.77	0.93	0.86
Bright's disease and acute nephritis	200	242	241	268	263	2.37	2.79	2.69	2.92	2.78
Violence, suicide .. ..	100	89	83	102	103	1.18	1.02	0.93	1.11	1.09
„ accident .. ..	598	525	575	611	570	7.08	6.03	6.42	6.65	6.03
Other causes .. ..	3,942	4,187	4,252	4,663	4,401	..	..	..	..	..
Totals .. ..	8,087	8,061	8,339	10,066	9,043	95.70	92.66	93.11	109.52	95.69

For purposes of comparison with previous years it is necessary to confine attention to certain special causes of death. These are exhibited for 1908 and the four previous years in numbers, and also in proportion to each 10,000 of the mean population. Diseases of the circulatory system, though numerous, are avoided, owing to the fact that in former years it has been the practice, when the cause of death was certified as heart disease with another possibly fatal complaint the latter has been preferred. Under the new system the reverse is the case. The number of deaths occurring from bronchitis is similarly affected. Hydatids, formerly grouped under the heading "Parasitic," are now assigned to the location of the disease. These and many other changes in the classification might be borne in mind when comparisons with former years are sought.

## TYPHOID FEVER.

Deaths from this cause numbered 90 in 1908, against 53 in the previous year, the average for five years being 62.

## MEASLES.

The outbreak of this complaint in 1907, causing 101 deaths, was not recurrent in 1908 when only 19 deaths were recorded.