

## STILL-BIRTHS.

Still-births, which are defined by the Births and Deaths Registration Act of 1924 as "children which have issued from their mother after the expiration of the twenty-eighth week of pregnancy, and which were not alive at the time of such issue," are compulsorily registrable in the Dominion. The next table shows the number of such births and their rate per 1,000 live births in individual years for the quinquennium 1924-28.

*Still-births (Number and Rate) in New Zealand, 1924-28.*

| Year. | Total Number<br>of Still-births<br>registered. | Rate of Still-births<br>per 1,000<br>Live Births. |
|-------|--|---|
| 1924  | 855  | 30.5  |
| 1925  | 861  | 30.6  |
| 1926  | 886  | 31.1  |
| 1927  | 878  | 31.5  |
| 1928  | 839  | 30.8  |

A noticeable feature of the table is the reduction in the rate of still-births for the year under review, this being the first time during the quinquennium that the proportion of still-births to live births has shown a decline.

(NOTE.—Still-births are not included, either as births or deaths, in the various numbers and rates given elsewhere in this report.)

## THE PRINCIPAL CAUSES OF DEATH.

The following table gives the main causes of deaths last year in their order of magnitude, and the actual number of deaths therefrom:—

## TOTAL DEATHS IN NEW ZEALAND IN 1928, 11,811.

| Causes.  | Actual Deaths. |
|--|----------------|
| Heart-disease (all forms)  | 2,315          |
| Cancer   | 1,374          |
| Chest-diseases—  |                |
| Pneumonia  | 422            |
| Pneumonia secondary to influenza, whooping-cough, and measles            | 147            |
| Broncho-pneumonia  | 230            |
| Bronchitis   | 228            |
|  | 1,027          |
| Violence   | 956            |
| Tuberculosis (all forms)   | 699            |
| Apoplexy or cerebral hæmorrhage  | 643            |
| Senility   | 544            |
| Kidney or Bright's disease   | 455            |
| Disease of the arteries  | 394            |
| Diabetes   | 167            |
| Diseases and accidents of childbirth ( <i>i.e.</i> , maternal mortality) | 134            |
| Diarrhœa and enteritis   | 110            |
| Appendicitis   | 107            |
| Hernia and intestinal obstruction  | 100            |
| Epilepsy   | 60             |

*Common Infectious Diseases.*

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Influenza (all forms, including pneumonic) | 242 |
| Diphtheria                                 | 72  |
| Scarlet fever                              | 55  |
| Whooping-cough                             | 26  |
| Typhoid fever                              | 16  |
| Measles                                    | 12  |

*Infant Mortality.*

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Infant deaths (under one year), all causes | 984 |
|--|-----|

The first six causes in the above list account for 7,014 deaths, or approximately two-thirds of the total. Obviously with some of them—*e.g.*, tuberculosis, the common chest-diseases, some forms of heart-disease, and apoplexy—habits of life and environment are important factors. The correction of faulty habits, where applicable, and the improvement of the environment of an unfortunate or careless minority of the New Zealand public would reduce these deaths, and the numbers are such as to offer a margin of gain worth the effort. It is only by the active co-operation of the public, the local authorities, the medical and nursing professions, and the Department of Health in definite disease-prevention in the home, school, and workplace environment of the people that great reduction in our death-rate will be made.