

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 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, and 1901; 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.	1881.	1891.	1901.
15-20	...	1,233	750	777	2.14	1.19	0.98
20-25	...	8,996	8,862	10,053	15.66	14.03	12.66
25-30	...	13,133	14,540	17,923	22.86	23.02	22.57
30-35	...	12,656	14,576	19,617	22.03	23.08	24.70
35-40	...	11,811	12,959	16,854	20.55	20.51	21.23
40-55	...	9,629	11,478	14,182	16.76	18.17	17.86
Totals	...	57,458	63,165	79,406	100.00	100.0	100.00

Marriage-rates in Australasia per 1,000 of Population for Five Years.

	1900.	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.
Queensland	6.88	6.61	6.31	5.72	...
New South Wales	7.38	7.68	7.53	6.86	7.21
Victoria	6.96	6.99	7.02	6.29	6.80
South Australia	6.50	6.44	6.61	6.25	6.91
Western Australia	10.27	9.65	9.77	9.33	8.83
Tasmania	7.71	7.68	7.47	7.57	7.75
New Zealand	7.67	7.83	8.01	8.23	8.26

In April, 1896, New Zealand had 83,650 children living under the age of five years, and in March, 1901, the number was 86,806, an increase of 3,147, although the population at all ages increased in the quinquennium by 9.86 per cent. Between 1886 and 1891 the children living under five years actually decreased in number by 3,624, the increase of population of all ages (8.33 per cent.) being less than between 1891 and 1896 (12.24 per cent.) or 1896 and 1901 (9.86 per cent.). The number of children under one year to the total population at all ages, according to the results of four censuses, was:—

Census	1886	1891	1896	1901	Children under One Year.	Total Population (all Ages).
Census	1886	...	...	...	18,355	578,482
"	1891	...	...	...	16,443	626,658
"	1896	...	...	...	17,070	703,360
"	1901	...	...	...	18,381	772,719

Thus, in 1886, with a population of 578,482 persons, there were 18,355 children under one year, against 18,381 children of that age in 1901, with a population of 772,719 persons.

The births registered in 1885 were 19,693, against 19,546 in 1900. The birth-rate fell from 34.35 per 1,000 of the population in 1885 to 25.60 in 1900.

Deducting 1,469, the number of deaths of children under one year registered in 1900, from 19,546, the number of births for that year, leaves 18,077, or within 304 of the living children under one year at the time of the last census.

Twin Births.

There were 241 cases of twin births (482 children), and triplets were registered in one instance, in 1904. The number of children born was 22,766; the number of mothers was 22,523; thus, on an average, one mother in every 93 gave birth to twins, against 97 in 1903, and 93 in 1902.

Illegitimacy.

The births of 1,029 children were illegitimate; thus 45 in every 1,000 children born were born out of wedlock, against 46 in 1903.