

MARRIAGES.

The marriages for 1907 show an increase on the number for the previous year. The number was 8,192, or 600 more than in 1906. The marriage-rate rose from 8·48 per 1,000 persons living in 1906 to 8·91 in 1907, the rate for the latter year being the highest obtained since 1875, when it stood at 8·94 per 1,000 persons. The improvement shown during recent years sets New Zealand in a good position relatively to the Australian States.

The rates for a series of seventeen consecutive years were:—

Marriages per 1,000 of the Population.

Year.	Queens- land.	New South Wales.	Victoria.	South Australia (Proper).	Western Australia.	Tasmania.	New Zealand.
1891	7·18	7·39	7·69	7·31	8·00	6·63	6·04
1892	6·67	6·77	6·64	6·51	7·29	6·51	6·23
1893	5·91	6·40	5·99	6·26	6·34	5·51	6·22
1894	5·70	6·20	5·98	6·09	6·24	5·43	6·15
1895	6·23	6·35	6·00	5·88	6·83	5·32	5·94
1896	6·05	6·59	6·48	6·20	8·45	5·88	6·85
1897	6·05	6·72	6·36	5·46	10·73	6·23	6·83
1898	6·03	6·66	6·53	6·18	9·89	6·29	6·91
1899	6·78	6·89	7·01	6·24	9·89	6·37	7·28
1900	6·88	7·38	6·96	6·50	10·27	7·71	7·67
1901	6·61	7·68	6·99	6·44	9·65	7·68	7·83
1902	6·31	7·53	7·02	6·61	9·77	7·47	8·01
1903	5·72	6·86	6·29	6·25	9·33	7·57	8·23
1904	5·93	7·21	6·80	6·91	8·83	7·55	8·26
1905	6·04	7·42	7·24	7·00	8·48	7·61	8·28
1906	6·73	7·63	7·28	7·12	8·70	7·74	8·48
1907	7·84	7·68	7·99	8·02	..	8·91

The improved rate for New Zealand is higher than the rate for the European countries given in the table following.

Marriages in every 1,000 of the Population.

Hungary	1906 ..	8·7	Netherlands	1906 ..	7·5
German Empire	1905 ..	8·1	Denmark	1906 ..	7·5
Belgium	1906 ..	8·1	Spain	1906 ..	7·3
Austria	1905 ..	7·8	Scotland	1906 ..	7·0
England and Wales	1906 ..	7·8	Sweden	1906 ..	6·1
France	1906 ..	7·8	Norway	1906 ..	5·9
Italy	1906 ..	7·8	Ireland	1906 ..	5·2
Switzerland	1905 ..	7·6			

The marriage-rate, measured by the total population, does not show the true position when, as in the case of New Zealand, the age constitution of the people fluctuates considerably. A more satisfactory standard is found in the number of persons of marriageable age, defined as meaning the unmarried and widowed of males aged 20 years and upwards and of females aged 15 years and upwards. The rates are given for four census years:—

Year of Census.	Proportion of Unmarried per 1,000 of Total		Proportion of Marriages per 1,000 of the			
	Males.	Females.	Marriageable Men.	Marriageable Women.	Marriageable Persons.	Total Population.
1891	246·2	267·8	46·22	48·10	47·14	6·04
1896	264·2	308·3	49·11	47·09	48·08	6·85
1901	278·3	330·6	53·56	49·96	51·69	7·83
1906	295·8	326·9	54·09	55·15	54·62	8·48

Of the marriages solemnised in 1907, 7,499 were between bachelors and spinsters, 231 between bachelors and widows, 335 between widowers and spinsters, and 127 between widowers and widows.

Divorced men and women have been classed as bachelors or spinsters: 53 divorced men and 75 divorced women were married during the year.

Included amongst spinsters are three married women, and amongst the bachelors two married men, who elected to go through the form of marriage with other persons under the protection of the provisions of section 204, subsection (5), of "The Criminal Code Act, 1893," which runs, "No one commits bigamy by going through a form of marriage if he or she has been continually absent from his or her wife or husband for seven years then last past, and is not proved to have known that his wife or her husband was alive at any time during those seven years."

The total number of marriages solemnised (8,192) does not include marriages where both parties are of the aboriginal native race, such persons being exempted from the necessity of