

Although 16,679 infants (under one year) were lost to the Dominion by death during the decade, and, including these, 21,363 children under five, the third table shows much more satisfactory results for New Zealand than for New South Wales or Victoria in the matter of the preservation of infant life. Dealing with averages of five years, in New Zealand only 73 infants under one year are found to die out of every 1,000 born, against 91 in New South Wales and 94 in Victoria.

Year.	Proportion of Deaths of Infants under 1 Year of Age to every 1,000 Births.		
	New Zealand.	New South Wales.	Victoria.
1902	82.9	109.7	108.6
1903	81.1	110.4	106.4
1904	71.0	82.4	77.6
1905	67.5	80.6	83.3
1906	62.1	74.5	92.9
Means of five years ...	72.9	91.5	93.8

European countries show still higher average mortality of infants than the principal Australian States: England and Wales, 132 (under one year) to every 1,000 births; France, 136; Italy, 166; Hungary, 205. Sweden (99) and Norway (81) have exceptionally low rates.

The principal causes of mortality in children under one year for New Zealand are given, with the numbers of deaths for five years from such causes. Premature birth stands first in order of importance, marasmus or debility coming next. Here it is seen how much mortality is attributed to these causes according to the medical certificates. As to the conditions which operate, the Registrar-General cannot deal with the question.*

Deaths under One Year.—Principal Causes.

Principal Causes of Deaths of Infants.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.
Miasmatic diseases	191	36	20	43	238
Diarrhoeal diseases	122	152	92	65	235
Premature birth	301	291	360	337	359
Convulsions	103	95	96	90	84
Bronchitis, pneumonia, pleurisy	241	149	208	170	269
Enteritis	167	231	193	167	322
Marasmus, &c.	270	273	258	267	304

* The report of the Royal Commission on the decline of the birth-rate in New South Wales (1904), besides giving statistics of infantile mortality, describes *the conditions that operate in producing such mortality*. Recommendations are also made, and the subject of feeding and care of infants dealt with.

The causes which operate in producing infantile mortality both among legitimates and illegitimates in New South Wales, are enumerated as under:—

1. Premature birth; defective viability consequent upon imperfections in the process of development; disease acquired before birth; injured and impaired viability arising before or in process of birth.
2. Defective care of the new-born by ignorant or careless midwives.
3. Ill health of mothers, and consequent inability to provide the natural nutrition of infants and requisite nursing.
4. A want of knowledge of the proper modes of rearing infants (exemplified under seven heads).
5. Injurious quality of proprietary and other artificial foods, often recklessly advertised.
6. Injurious quality of milk under the conditions in which it is commonly supplied and used.
7. Injurious effects of chemical preservatives in milk, and in preparations of milk used as infant-food.
8. Insufficient public maternity-hospital accommodation for the parturient women among the poorer classes.
9. Insufficient public-hospital accommodation for the treatment of sick infants.
10. The prevalence of epidemic preventable disease in infants.
11. The undue incidence of "summer diarrhoea," or acute gastro-intestinal catarrh.

The causes tending to produce mortality in the illegitimate infants were found to be (in New South Wales):—

12. Maternal indifference, and the social and economic disabilities of the mothers.
13. Defective management of institutions and places where illegitimate infants are received.
14. Secret adoption of children for gain.
15. Separation of infants from their mothers.
16. Infanticide and foeticide of viable infants.