In considering the death-rate of infants of this class it is of the first importance to remember that they are nearly all illegitimate, and that the death-rate of illegitimate children is very much higher than that of children born in wedlock. Comparative statistics of the respective death-rates in New Zealand are not available, but the following extracts from the statistics of New South Wales and Victoria show how the case stands.

Extract from the Official Year-book of New South Wales, 1905–6, *p.* 238.—" The table appended gives, for 1905, and for the five years preceding 1905, the death-rates of illegitimate children under one and under five years of age, as compared with legitimate children of like ages :—

Age.	Legitimate.		Illegitimate.	
	Deaths.	Rate per 1,000 Living.	Deaths.	Rate per 1,000 Living.
Under 1 year,—				
1900–4	15,712	90·04	3,361	258·90
1905	2,648,	72·37	534	183·38
Under 5 years,—				
1900–4	21,473	28·35	3,809	85·40
1905	3,537	22·69	606	62·73

" It will be seen how unfavourable is the position, and how small is the chance of living of the illegitimate child as compared with the legitimate. At each age the death-rate of the illegitimate is nearly three times that of the legitimate. Even in 1905, which was a year of extremely low mortality, one-fifth of the illegitimate children born did not live through the first year."

Extract from the Victorian Year-book, 1907–8, *p.* 399.—" On the average of the past five years, slightly over 1 in every 5 illegitimate infants died within a year, as against 1 in every 13 legitimate children. It is thus seen that the chance of an illegitimate child dying before the age of one year is nearly three times that of the legitimate infant. . . . . To ascertain the chief reasons for the marked disproportion in the mortality-rates between the two classes, the subsequent table has been constructed, showing the deaths from certain causes per 1,000 legitimate and illegitimate births on the average of the years 1903–7 :—

Cause of Death.	Deaths under 1 Year per 1,000 Births.	
	Legitimate.	Illegitimate.
Diarrhœal diseases	21·1	75·2
Prematurity, congenital defects, marasmus, &c.	31·1	58·3
Bronchitis, broncho-pneumonia, pneumonia..	7·5	21·4
Other causes	19·0	62·5
Total, all causes..	78·7	217·4

" The rates for 1903–7 show that of every 1,000 children born out of wedlock, 75·2 died from diarrhœal diseases within a year, as compared with 21·1 deaths per 1,000 legitimate infants from the same cause. Owing to the larger proportion of the former deprived of breast food a higher mortality might be expected among them than legitimate infants from these diseases, but the striking difference in death-rates from this cause and from the chief respiratory diseases would indicate considerable neglect in rearing illegitimate infants."

Statistics do not always give exactly the information that one wants. What is now under consideration is the period of age from birth up to six years, and in statistical volumes the age-periods are divided differently. The foregoing extract shows that in New South Wales the rates for children under *five* years are—legitimate, 2·5 per cent. ; illegitimate, 7·4 per cent. In New Zealand the death-rate of all children, legitimate and illegitimate, under *six* years of age is about 1·8 per cent. It would seem, therefore, that the death of 26 infants out of 1,017 is above the ordinary rate in New Zealand, but below what might be expected to occur amongst those of the particular class dealt with.

ADOPTIONS.

Seeing that the effect of the Act is to bring under supervision any infant for whose adoption a sum of money is paid, the Department has made arrangements to obtain returns of all orders of adoption, and is thus enabled to furnish information upon a subject that has not hitherto been dealt with in statistical form.