

1914.
NEW ZEALAND.

STATISTICS OF NEW ZEALAND

(REPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT STATISTICIAN ON THE).

Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by Leave.

The Hon. the Minister of Internal Affairs.

Registrar-General's Office, Wellington, 25th June, 1914.

As requested, I submit the following report in regard to the statistics of the Dominion, and as to what has been done since the report furnished last year on my return from Australia.

POPULATION AND VITAL STATISTICS.

Migration.

A defect in our present immigration and emigration returns is that while we receive particulars as to birthplace and race of arrivals, similar information is not obtained for departures except as regards Chinese. Consequently we have hitherto been unable to distinguish between race aliens (other than Chinese) who may be just passing through the Dominion and those who become permanent settlers. To remedy this, however, the Customs Department have kindly agreed to collect and furnish with the usual monthly returns sent in by Collectors of Customs particulars as to the departures of all race aliens. For the future, therefore, it will be possible to make reliable estimates as to the growth or otherwise of our alien population. This is a very important matter.

As a step towards making more accurate estimates of the population for integral parts of the Dominion, arrangements were made with the Customs Department for obtaining records of the inter-island migration. From these returns it was ascertained that for 1913 the increase of population by migration amounted in the North Island to 10,234, and in the South Island to 3,985. Although the total gain to the Dominion by immigration of 14,219 was distributed between the North and South Islands as above, this does not mean that the new immigrants were so apportioned, but that these results have been partly effected by the migration of our own population from one Island to the other. It may be interesting here to state that the natural increase in the North Island was 10,839, and in the South 6,970. After next census, therefore, when we start with accurate figures, there should be no difficulty in making reliable and correct estimates of population for each Island.

To further assist in the correct distribution of the increased population within each Island, reports as to the progress in various districts are obtained from Valuation and Postal officers, and these are used as a corrective in the consideration of the other factors by which the estimated population of a district is determined. It is hoped that the accuracy of population estimates for integral parts of New Zealand is thus being improved.

Births.

Prior to 1912 there were no statistics as to births, except numbers and sexes, but information is now obtained as to ages and birthplaces of parents, occupation of father, duration of marriage, and number, ages, and sexes of previous issue. A number of new tables have been compiled covering the year 1913, which it is proposed to extend next year.

Deaths.

The examination, on a scientific basis according to age, of the rates of mortality of its people is a matter of obvious importance to a nation, as it illustrates not only the effect of climate, but also the accumulated effect of all those social, medical, and other forces which affect longevity. Hitherto this important work has never been undertaken by the Department, and, in fact, apart from the crude death-rates produced annually, we are quite without any public knowledge of the

position regarding the mortality of the New Zealand population during the last twenty-two years, as there are no tables in existence covering a later date than 1892. In order to remedy this a mortality investigation is now being undertaken in quinquennial periods from 1891 to 1911, and the results, which I hope will be available shortly, will be brought out in such a form as to show progressively the trend of the mortality from period to period.

Following the example of the English, Scotch, Indian, and other Census Departments, actuarial advice in this important work has been sought, and I wish to acknowledge the valuable assistance given by Mr. A. T. Traversi, A.I.A. (London), Actuary to the Friendly Societies Office, who, though under no obligation in the matter, has gone to considerable trouble to devise processes suitable to the circumstances, and otherwise assist.

Orphanhood.

Statistics of orphanhood have been prepared in New Zealand for over twenty years, and they have at various times been commended by actuaries in different parts of the world. They were used by the actuaries in the preparation of the Right Hon. D. Lloyd George's national-insurance scheme. Hitherto we have simply recorded the number of children left at each age according to the age of deceased, with separate tables showing the age of the youngest child. These have now been extended to show sexes, birthplaces, certain causes of death, number in family under fourteen and under twenty-one. Last year steps were also taken to obtain age of widow (if any), so that for the future statistics will be compiled as to number leaving widows and age of widow. So much attention is now being given to pension and superannuation schemes that it is important to observe and tabulate all facts relative to widows and orphans. It is hoped that with the further particulars now being added these statistics will be found even more valuable in this connection in the future than they have been in the past.

Diseases in Hospitals.

Full particulars as to patients treated are obtained direct from the hospitals by means of cards, from which accurate and reliable statistics of diseases, operations, &c., could be compiled, but so far full use has not been made of the information obtained. It is, however, much too valuable and important to the community to be left unused, and it is proposed to recast these statistics this year with the view to their extension and improvement. I intend conferring with the Hospitals Department in regard to them.

LAW AND CRIME.

Three years ago these statistics were reorganized, and by arrangement with the Justice Department the compilation is now made in this office from individual cards received from the Courts and gaols. By means of these cards it is now possible to compile statistics as to "distinct offenders" as well as to the number of offences, besides giving particulars as to age, &c. Last year, also, provision was made for obtaining the grounds alleged in divorce cases, and these will be tabulated in future.

IMPORTS AND EXPORTS.

In accordance with the recommendation in the report on my return from Australia and your subsequent instructions I conferred with the Comptroller of Customs, and as a result arrangements have been made for placing these statistics on a footing which will, I hope, for the future satisfy the needs of all interested. For 1914 and onwards the "country of origin" as well as the "country of shipment" will be obtained and shown with the principal ports of entry into New Zealand for each commodity. A classification of imports and exports (hitherto shown in alphabetical order) has also been constructed and adopted, giving more details than has ever previously been attempted. The classification follows as far as practicable the lines of that adopted in the Commonwealth of Australia. The close connection existing between, and the similarity of conditions, &c., in, the two countries render it advisable that our statistics should harmonize for comparative purposes as far as possible. This factor is being kept in view whenever any portion of our statistics is being revised.

An important advance in connection with our trade statistics is the proposed publication in a monthly summary of statistics (referred to later) of details of imports and exports, with comparative and cumulative figures, so that within a month of the close of each year the total figures for the year will be available.

PRODUCTION.

Agricultural and Pastoral.

No proper and complete collection of these statistics has been made since that taken in conjunction with the census of 1911. There has been a collection of returns through the post for the principal grain and root crops each year, but the results have not been satisfactory. In accordance with the recommendations made on my return from Australia, and your instructions in connection therewith, I conferred with the Secretary of Agriculture and the Commissioner of Police as to the reorganization of these statistics.

As a consequence recommendations were made for the collection and tabulation of very complete statistics of agricultural and pastoral production, at an estimated cost of £3,000 per annum. The system, which will be practically similar to that adopted with success in Victoria, will involve the utilization of the police in the collection of the statistics. The recommendations made have, as you are aware, recently been approved, and the first collection under the new system will take

place immediately after the next harvest. It is hoped that in addition to the usual statistics as to crops and live-stock the new system will gradually be extended to include the production of orchards and other valuable particulars as to the cultivation and occupation of holdings. Considering the importance of such production to New Zealand it is essential that accurate and reliable statistics should be obtained in regard thereto.

Fisheries.

Attempts have been made at various censuses to obtain statistics relating to fisheries, but the information collected has been so incomplete and unreliable as to render the tabulation undesirable. The industry is of great potential importance to the Dominion, and I hope that one of the results of Professor Prince's visit will be that steps will be taken to obtain reliable data in regard to the industry. I intend, with your approval, conferring with the Secretary for Marine in the matter at an early date.

Forestry.

It is also to be regretted that there are no proper statistics in regard to forestry. I shall endeavour to make arrangements for obtaining particulars as soon as a favourable opportunity offers.

Manufactories.

There is nothing further to add, so far as industrial production is concerned, to what was stated in my report after visiting Australia. Although you approved of my conferring with the Labour Department as recommended there has been no opportunity of doing so yet. As soon, however, as the new system of collecting statistics *re* agricultural and pastoral production is initiated satisfactorily, I will approach the Labour Department for their co-operation in obtaining satisfactory statistics of industrial production. It is the next matter to be taken in hand, and I anticipate doing so shortly.

INDUSTRIAL AND ECONOMIC INQUIRIES.

Since the recommendations made in the report on my return from Australia I have, with your approval, made arrangements for the co-operation of the Labour Department in the collection of price statistics, from which to produce price index numbers on similar lines to those issued by the Commonwealth Statistician in Australia. Some twenty-three towns in the Dominion representative of inland and seaport districts have been selected, and the local Inspector of Factories in each will collect monthly, for despatch direct to this office, returns of the predominant retail prices of certain commodities and weekly rents. Similar monthly returns will also be obtained from the Inspectors in the four chief centres of wholesale prices over a somewhat larger range of commodities. From these returns, which will be carefully examined and tabulated, weighted price index numbers will be produced indicating some variations in the cost of living, &c.

In initiating the new system an inquiry into the course of wholesale and retail prices in the four chief centres has also been instituted, and an endeavour is being made to carry it back to 1891. I am not sanguine, however, of obtaining prices for all the commodities so far back, but I anticipate collecting fairly complete data to 1900, and probably a year or two earlier. Mr. J. R. Fraser, of the Labour Department, was detailed to visit the four centres to interview traders and make arrangements for the returns for back years, and his mission has been on the whole a very successful one. A considerable number of excellent returns have already been received, and I have to express my grateful appreciation of the very kind assistance received from merchants, shopkeepers, agents, and others in the matter. There are still a number of returns to collect, and there is a great deal of work to be done before the results can be presented to the public, but I hope they will be available before the end of the year.

The field of industrial inquiries in New Zealand, particularly so far as it affects cost of living, wages, unemployment, &c., has been practically untouched, and the above is merely a beginning subject to the limitation of our statistical staff, in regard to which I have made some references in my previous report. A collection of household budgets should be undertaken at an early date.

PUBLICATIONS.

Official Year-book.

This book continues to receive attention. More use is being made of diagrams and graphs. Every endeavour is made to cover all the different activities and aspects of the Dominion, and where it fails in this endeavour it is principally because there are no statistics obtainable. When the various statistics are reorganized, however, it is hoped to make the Year-book more useful and complete than it is at present.

Statistical Volume.

Hitherto this has been issued in parts, and then in one complete volume, the parts and the volume being circulated to the same people. In order to save the cost of the printing and circulation of the parts, and also because the growing size of the volume militates against its transmission through the post, it has this year been decided, with your approval, to issue it in four volumes in their final form. Another advantage to be derived from this departure will be the acceleration of its issue to the public. It will be possible to proceed with two volumes simultaneously, and it is hoped, after this year, with the assistance of the Printing Department, to issue the first two

volumes, giving full detailed tables as to population, vital statistics, law and crime, and trade and interchange, within six months of the close of the year.

Municipal Handbook.

This book contains very detailed information in regard to every municipality in New Zealand, and in the 1913 issue particulars concerning twenty-six of the principal harbours of the Dominion are included for the first time. It is a reliable record of municipal activities, and its usefulness and value would be largely increased if it were made an annual instead of a biennial publication. In time also its scope might be enlarged to include particulars in regard to other local districts, so as to make it a Local Authority Year-book.

Parliamentary Record.

In accordance with your instructions, following an order of the Legislative Council on the motion of the Hon. Mr. Jenkinson, the various early records, *Gazettes*, &c., of the Dominion were searched, and the Parliamentary Record compiled and issued.

Monthly Statistical Summary.

Since your approval for the issue of a statistical summary by this office monthly, the compilation of the tables, &c., to be included has been taken in hand, and is now well under way. The first number will probably be issued for July or August. The aim of the summary is to give in a handy form very briefly and without comment a summary of the various statistics of the Dominion, new figures being added each month where available, so that it will always be up to date and contain the very latest statistics ascertained. Similar monthly publications in Australia are greatly valued by merchants and others, and it is hoped the New Zealand one will also be found of practical value.

General.

In conclusion, I may say that the aim of the office is to make the statistics of the Dominion as complete and comprehensive as possible, with particular care as to their accuracy. Every effort is also made to expedite the issue of the statistics to the public at the earliest possible date.

MALCOLM FRASER,
Government Statistician.

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