

in the theoretical and thirty-six in the practical, whilst twenty-five qualified for registration, and their names were duly placed on the register. At the November examination 220 candidates presented themselves for examination, the results being forty-nine candidates passed in the theoretical and seventy-nine in the practical, sixty qualified for registration and had their names duly recorded on the register.

To date the names of 1,519 plumbers have been entered in the register, and thirty-three names removed through death.

During the year 1,210 pocket certificates of registration were issued.

It is with deep regret that I have to record the death of Mr. H. W. Morton, a member of the Board. The late Mr. Morton has been a member of the Board since its inception, and the valuable services rendered by him have been much appreciated. Mr. J. M. Morice, Engineer of the Wellington City Council, has been appointed to the Board in place of the late Mr. H. W. Morton.

#### STAFF.

Staff changes other than noted above include the appointment of Dr. Henry Jellett, until recently Master of the Rotunda Maternity Hospital, Dublin, and Dr. T. E. Paget, who has also the reputation of special knowledge in midwifery. The work of these officers should be of great help to the Department and Dominion generally, especially in the direction of reducing the maternal mortality which we have so much in mind. Miss J. Bicknell succeeded Miss H. Maclean as Director of Division of Nursing, while Dr. Monk, Medical Officer of Health, retired.

It is with much regret, which I am sure will be shared by all, that I have to record the absence through illness of Dr. J. P. Frengley. The help that I have received from this officer during many past years I cannot sufficiently acknowledge, and I am sure one and all look forward to his speedy return to work with his health and energy unimpaired.

In a Department such as ours, where a very high standard of loyalty exists, it is difficult to single out individual members of the staff for special recognition, so I may be pardoned for omitting personal thanks by expressing my very sincere appreciation of the work of these men and women who have so splendidly helped me during the past year.

T. H. A. VALINTINE,  
Director-General of Health.

### PART II.—PUBLIC HYGIENE.

I have the honour to submit my annual report for the year ended 31st March, 1924.

#### SECTION I.—VITAL STATISTICS.

##### POPULATION.

The population of New Zealand at the census of 17th April, 1921, was 1,218,913. This total does not include Maoris, whose numbers were separately determined as 52,751.

The mean population for 1923 (exclusive of Maoris) was estimated to be 1,274,551. This total represents an increase over the corresponding figure for the previous year of 22,656, or a percentage increase of 1·81.

##### BIRTHS.

The births of 27,967 living children were registered in the Dominion during 1923, as against 29,006 in 1922, and a yearly average of 27,223 during the pre-war period, 1910–14. The birth-rate for 1923 was thus 21·94 per 1,000 of mean population.

The general course of the birth-rate during the last ten years is shown in the following table:—

*Births (Number and Rate) in New Zealand, 1914–23.*

Year.					Total Number of Births registered.	Birth-rate per 1,000 of Mean Population.
1914	..	..	..	..	28,338	25·99
1915	..	..	..	..	27,850	25·33
1916	..	..	..	..	28,509	25·94
1917	..	..	..	..	28,239	25·69
1918	..	..	..	..	25,860	23·44
1919	..	..	..	..	24,483	21·54
1920	..	..	..	..	29,921	25·36
1921	..	..	..	..	28,567	23·34
1922	..	..	..	..	29,006	23·17
1923	..	..	..	..	27,967	21·94

It will be seen that the birth-rate for 1923 is exceedingly low. Indeed, with the exception of 1919, when it was only 21·54, such a low rate has never before been experienced.

*Still-births.*—Still-births, which are defined by the Births and Deaths Registration Amendment Act of 1915 as “children which have issued from their mother after the expiration of the twenty-eighth week of pregnancy, and which were not alive at the time of such issue,” are compulsorily registerable in the Dominion. The next table shows the number of such births, and their rate per 1,000 live births, in individual years for the quinquennium, 1919–23.

*Still-births (Number and Rate) in New Zealand, 1919–23.*

Year.					Total Number of Still-births registered.	Rate of Still-births per 1,000 Live Births.
1919	..	..	..	..	680	27·8
1920	..	..	..	..	840	28·1
1921	..	..	..	..	903	31·6
1922	..	..	..	..	842	22·1
1923	..	..	..	..	894	32·0

A noticeable feature of the table is the high rate of still-births for the year under review.

(NOTE.—Still-births are not included, either as births or deaths, in the various numbers and rates given elsewhere in this report.)