

BIRTHS, DEATHS AT RECORD HIGHS

Births and deaths reached record levels in 1956 and there was an increase in marriages over 1955, according to the final detailed annual report on vital statistics released by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. The detailed statistical tables contained in this report bring the demographic trends of the past few decades up to 1956 and provide a breakdown of deaths in accordance with the intermediate tabulation of the international list of causes of death. While the death rate remained at 8.2 per 1,000 population in 1956, as it had been in the two previous years, the marriage rate moved up from 8.2 to 8.3, and the birth rate moved down slightly from 28.2 in 1955 to 28.0 in 1956.

Preliminary estimates for 1957, released last December in the monthly bulletin of vital statistics, indicated a level of 475,000 births, amounting to a rate of 28.6 per 1,000 population. Marriages were expected to reach a new peak of 136,000 with the rate moving down slightly to 8.2 per 1,000 population. It was anticipated that the death rate would move upward to 8.4 with deaths totalling 138,800.

Birth rates were lower in all provinces in 1956 than in 1955 except in Ontario, British Columbia and the Northwest Territories and these increases were not large. Of the 10 provinces, Newfoundland still had the highest birth rate at 35.0 followed by Alberta (31.1), New Brunswick (29.9) and Quebec (29.4). The Territories have consistently had higher rates than the provinces, standing at 40.1 in the Yukon and 41.3 in the Northwest Territories.

Close to 90 per cent of all children are now born in hospital, the proportion varying from 71 per cent in Quebec to 98 per cent in British Columbia. Before World War II less than 40 per cent of all children were born in hospital compared with over 67 per cent at the end of the war and 79 per cent in 1951.

The second highest number of marriages on record was registered in 1956, 132,713 as compared with 137,398 in 1946. Since the end

of World War II the annual number of marriages has, on the whole, been declining gradually, and the 1956 figure represents a sudden upsurge, despite the lower number of "depression" babies born between 1930-37 now reaching marriageable age. The marriage rate (per 1,000 population) increased slightly from 8.2 to 8.3 although there was a decrease in five provinces and the Yukon.

Of the total deaths registered in 1956, 14,399 comprised infants under one year of age, of whom 9,065 died within 4 weeks of their birth. After declining steadily for many years the infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births) rose from a record low of 31 in 1955 to 32, with increases in 5 of the 10 provinces. The neo-natal death rate (per 1,000 live births) increased from 19 in 1955 to 20, with increases also in 6 of the 10 provinces.

The death rate from highway traffic accidents rose over 15 per cent and the number of deaths jumped by 538 from 2,953 in 1955 to 3,491 or more than the total who die each year from tuberculosis, typhoid, scarlet fever, diphtheria, whooping cough, poliomyelitis, measles, influenza and bronchitis combined, and almost three times as many as commit suicide each year.

Of the 131,961 deaths in 1956, 34,576 died of arteriosclerotic and degenerative heart disease, 20,868 from cancer, 14,447 from vascular lesions affecting the central nervous system (cerebral haemorrhages, thrombosis and embolism), 9,271 in accidents, 6,492 from influenza, pneumonia and bronchitis.

Almost half of all deaths were due to diseases of the heart and circulatory system, one-sixth to cancer and about 8 per cent to violence. Continuing the spectacular decline of recent years, the number of deaths from tuberculosis dropped from 1,403 in 1955 to 1,256 in 1956, the rate (per 100,000 population) dropping from 8.9 to 7.8. On the other hand death rates from diabetes, cancer and pneumonia all showed slight increases.

ANNIVERSARY GREETINGS

Prime Minister John G. Diefenbaker has released the text of the following letter to His Excellency David Ben-Gurion:

"I am taking advantage of the visit of the Hon. William Hamilton, Postmaster General, to send this message conveying to you and to the Israel nation as a whole the sincere good wishes of the Government and people of Canada on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the State of Israel.

"The achievements of the Israeli people over the last ten years in the development of their country have won universal acclaim and we earnestly hope that the second decade of Israel's existence will see not only a con-

tinuation of your nation's rapid and fruitful progress, but also the establishment of an enduring peace on a mutually acceptable basis between Israel and its neighbours. You may rest assured that the Canadian Government will continue its support of United Nations efforts to remove causes of tension and to work towards a permanent peace in the area, conscious that peaceful conditions are an essential prerequisite for Israel's prosperity and well-being.

"I should like to take this opportunity to express my confidence that the close and friendly relations which have existed between our two countries ever since the founding of Israel will be still further developed and strengthened in the future."