

The Midwife.

New Low Records - Infant Mortality and Stillbirth.

PROVISIONAL FIGURES PUBLISHED in the Registrar General's Quarterly Return* for the September Quarter, 1951, show that the Infant Mortality (deaths of infants under 1 year of age) and the Stillbirth rate are the lowest ever recorded in this country.

Deaths of children under 1 year of age numbered 3,998, representing a rate of 23.5 per thousand related live births. The previous lowest rate recorded was 24.2 in the same period of last year.

Stillbirths registered during the quarter numbered 3,727, giving a rate of 21.7 per thousand live and still births compared with 3,919 and a rate of 22.5 in the September quarter of 1950. The previous lowest rate was 22.0 in the September quarter of 1949.

LIVE BIRTHS.

There were 168,028 live births registered during the quarter, representing a rate of 15.2 per thousand population. This is the lowest rate for a September quarter since 1941 when it was 14.0 and continues the decline recorded since the post-war peak of 20.0 in 1947. The average number of births registered for the corresponding quarters in each of the years from 1946 to 1950 is 194,945, the rate being 17.8 per thousand population compared with an average rate of 15.3 during 1935 to 1939.

DEATHS.

Deaths from all ages registered during the quarter numbered 100,090, a rate of 9.1 per thousand population. This rate is average for the same quarter over the last five years.

MARRIAGES

There were 111,173 marriages registered in the quarter, giving a rate of 20.1 per thousand population, 0.7 per thousand lower than in the corresponding period of last year.

NATURAL INCREASE.

The births registered in the quarter exceeded the deaths by 67,938. The corresponding increase for the same period of the preceding year was 67,220.

SURVEY OF SICKNESS

10,751 men and 12,696 women were interviewed about their experience of sickness in the separate months of the June quarter of 1951. The average number of people per month who reported that they had suffered illness or injury of some kind during a month represented 63.4 per cent of the men and 72.9 per cent. of the women who were interviewed. The corresponding figures for the June quarter of 1950 were 61.7 and 73.1 per cent. respectively.

The average number of consultations with doctors in a month was 43.4 for every hundred men interviewed and 49.2 for every hundred women.

The average number of days of incapacity in a month due to sickness or injury was 0.92 among the men interviewed and 0.76 among the women.

The proportion of housewives who reported some illness or injury was higher than for other women (75.4 per cent. compared with 67.3 per cent. for other women). Housewives also had slightly more consultations with doctors than other women (49.6 and 48.1 per cent. per month respectively),

but less reported incapacity (0.71 days per month compared with 0.85 days per month for other women).

A 19½ lb. Baby.

A 19½ lb. baby has been born at Luderitz, South-West Africa. The parents were a coloured fisherman, named Brown, aged 50, and his wife Jenny, aged 40. (There have been two previous births in S. Africa of a 22 lb. child). Shortly afterward, a 14½ lb. girl was born on a farm in the region of the Cape town of Paarl, to Mrs. Joyce Coetzee. On the same farm, earlier last year, Mrs. Maxie Mouton gave birth to a 13 lb. boy.

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* The Registrar General's Quarterly Return No. 411, September Quarter, 1951. H.M.S.O. price 2s. 6d. net (or by post from P.O. Box 569, London, S.E.1, price 2s. 7½d.).

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