

The Midwife.

Estimate of Future Births.

323,000 Babies expected in September and December Quarters.

THE QUARTERLY ESTIMATE OF the numbers of live births to be expected in England and Wales as a whole during the six months July to December, 1952, was recently announced by the Registrar General.*

The final estimate for the September quarter is 166,000, and the provisional estimate for the December quarter is 157,000 giving an estimated total of 323,000 babies in the six months.

There were 168,028 live births registered in the September quarter of 1951, and 154,212 in the December quarter of that year—a total of 322,240.

During the week ended July 26th there were 7,310 live births registered in the 160 Great Towns of England and Wales compared with 7,449 in the previous week. This brings the total in those towns from the beginning of the year to 232,667 compared with 242,569 in the same period a year ago.

*The Registrar General's Weekly Return No. 31, 1952. H.M.S.O., price 1s. net (or by post from P.O. Box 569, London, S.E.1, price 1s. 1½d.).

High Marriage Rate in March Quarter.

PROVISIONAL FIGURES FOR England and Wales recently published* by the Registrar General show that in the March quarter, 1952, the birth rate continued to fall, although remaining higher than in the immediate pre-war years. The death rate was low for a March quarter and the death rate of children under one year of age was the lowest ever recorded for a first quarter in this country. The marriage rate was unusually high for that quarter.

Deaths.

Deaths at All Ages.—There were 146,631 deaths registered in the quarter, representing a rate of 13.5 per thousand population compared with 19.1 a year earlier and the record low rate of 12.3 in 1948.

Infant Mortality (deaths of children under one year of age).—5,588 such deaths were registered during the quarter, giving a rate of 33.4 per thousand total live and still births—the lowest rate ever recorded for a March quarter in this country. The previous lowest rate for a March quarter was 38.2 in 1951.

In the whole year 1951, the lowest rate for deaths of children under one year of age in the 23 towns with populations over 200,000 was that of Croydon C.B. with 19.0 deaths per 1,000 related live births. The next lowest was Bristol C.B. with a figure of 20.3. Harrow came next with 22.0. These figures compare with a national average of 29.6, which was the lowest figure ever recorded in this country.

Stillbirths.

There were 4,146 stillbirths registered during the quarter, representing a rate of 23.3 compared with 23.6 in 1951 and 23.0 in 1950.

Births.

The birth rate declined further to 15.9 per thousand population (173,503 births) from 16.3 in the first quarter of 1951 after a gradual fall from the peak figure of 22.8 in the first quarter of 1947.

Marriages.

The number of marriages in the first quarter of this year was exceptionally high (at 106,560) for a March quarter which did not include Easter. There have been signs in recent March quarters of a pre-Budget marriage rush, but never so marked as in this year. The marriage rate for the quarter was 19.6 per thousand population, easily the highest ever recorded for a year when Easter did not fall in the March quarter, and compares with 20.2 in the March quarter last year (which included Easter) and 16.1 in the first quarter of 1950.

Survey of Sickness.

9,580 men and 11,422 women were interviewed about their experience of sickness in the separate months of the December quarter, 1951. The average number of people per month who reported that they had suffered illness or injury of some kind during a month represented 67.6 per cent. of the men and 75.1 per cent. of the women who were interviewed. The corresponding figures for the December quarter of 1950 were 66.6 and 76.2 per cent. respectively.


The average number of consultations with doctors in a month was 41.4 for every hundred men interviewed and 48.1 for every hundred women.

*The Registrar General's Quarterly Return No. 413, 1952. 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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