

4,020 deaths from accidental falls (3,327 in 1953). The number of suicides was 3,822, compared with 3,542 in the same period of 1953.

Marriages.

The number of marriages registered in 1954 was 340,619, representing a rate of 15.4 persons married per thousand population. For 1953, when 344,998 marriages were registered, the rate was 15.6 per thousand. In the December quarter 66,404 marriages were registered, which was 2,247 fewer than that for the fourth quarter of 1953, when 68,651 marriages were registered.

Births and Deaths.

The main figures of births and deaths for the year 1954 and for the December quarter have been previously published in the Registrar General's Weekly Return. The following is a summary:

The total number of *births* registered in the year was 673,212, representing a birth rate of 15.2 per 1,000 population, which was 0.3 lower than that for 1953. During the December quarter 156,892 births were registered, 80,950 males and 75,942 females, giving a proportion of 1,066 males to 1,000 females.

The *stillbirth* rate for the year was 24.0 per 1,000 live and stillbirths, compared with 22.5 for 1953. The 3,839 stillbirths registered in the December quarter represent a rate of 23.8 per 1,000 live and stillbirths; this rate is 0.4 higher than for the fourth quarter of 1953.

The number of *deaths* registered in the year was 501,878, representing a rate of 11.3 per 1,000 population; this was 0.1 lower than that for 1953. Deaths registered in the December quarter numbered 127,417, representing a rate of 11.4 per 1,000 population, compared with 10.7 for the corresponding quarter of 1953, and an average of 11.8 for the fourth quarters of the five years 1948-1952.

The *infant mortality* rate for 1954 was 25.5 per 1,000 related live births, and was the lowest ever recorded in this country, the previous lowest being 26.8 for 1953. In the December quarter deaths of children under one year of age numbered 4,067, compared with 4,305 in 1953 and 4,731 in 1952. The rate for the December quarter was 25.3, compared with rates of 43.0 and 53.6 for the corresponding quarters of 1944 and 1934 respectively.

Medical Advisory Committee.

This Return includes the third Report on the work of the Registrar General's Advisory Committee on Medical Nomenclature and Statistics, under the chairmanship of Sir Ernest Kock Carling. The Report gives a summary of the activities of the committee in the two years to October, 1954, including work on classification of diseases and of surgical operations, on the improvement of the basic records used in mortality and morbidity statistics, on the organisation of cancer registration and other enquiries conducted by the General Register Office for collecting morbidity statistics, and on the appropriate rates and measures for use with morbidity statistics. Much of this work bore fruit at an International Conference held in Paris, under the auspices of the World Health Organisation in February, to bring up to date the International Statistical Classification of Diseases, Injuries and causes of deaths and to consider related subjects.

Deaths from Tuberculosis and Cancer, 1954.

Provisional numbers of deaths and death rates from tuberculosis, cancer, and maternal mortality in England and Wales in 1954 are announced today (Wednesday, April 13th), by the Registrar General.†

Continued Fall in Tuberculosis Deaths.

The total number of deaths from respiratory tuberculosis in 1954 was 7,069 (against 7,913 in the previous year), giving a provisional death rate of 160 per million persons. This is a decrease of 11 per cent. compared with the previous

year, and means that since 1947 the death rate has fallen by more than 65 per cent.

The death rate from other forms of tuberculosis was 19 per million persons, compared with 22 for 1953.

Cancer Deaths.

The provisional death rate for all forms of cancer for men was 2,222 per million population and for women 1,862: the 1953 figures were 2,165 and 1,835 respectively.

The rise in the rate for men includes an increase from 607 to 657 per million population for deaths assigned to cancer of the lung and bronchus, making a total increase since 1947 of 70 per cent. The rate for cancer of the lung and bronchus for women increased from 98 per million in 1953 to 102 in 1954.

Of the male deaths (47,319), 30 per cent. (13,995) were certified as due to cancer of the lung and bronchus. Of the deaths of women (42,780) only 5 per cent. (2,335) were so certified.

Deaths from Maternal Causes.

There were 478 deaths from maternal causes (including abortion) last year: in 1953 the total was 527. The provisional rate for maternal mortality (including abortion) per 1,000 live and stillbirths was 0.69, the lowest ever recorded. The previous lowest was 0.72 in 1952 (0.75 in 1953).

* The Registrar General's Quarterly Return, No. 424, H.M.S.O. price 2s. net (or by post from P.O. Box 569, London, S.E.1, price 2s. 1½d.).

† The Registrar General's Weekly Return No. 13, 1955, H.M.S.O. price 1s. net (or by post from P.O. Box 569, London, S.E.1, price 1s. 1½d.).

Where Laughter Plays a Part.

Give me a heart that's brave and true,
Where laughter plays its part.
One where the will and wish to do
Are bubbling in the heart.
Give me a love for each and all
Whom every day I meet,
Give me brave heart to leap the wall
Should life demand that feat.
Give me the strength that will endure
And last through to the end,
Give me a charity that's pure
And faith from heaven send.
Give me sweet hope to help me through
The dull days and the grey,
Give me a wisdom firm and true
To live the fullest way.
Give me a mind that is alive
To beauty, truth and love.
Give me to know that all will thrive
If power's sought above.
Give me to keep my thinking clean,
My speech both true and pure,
Give me to live with spirit keen,
And in Thy love, secure.

GRACE PURSGLOVE.

Words for the Month.

There is nothing, sir, too little for so little a creature as man. It is by studying that we attain the great art of having as little misery and as much happiness as possible.

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

To a lady who, looking at an engraving of a house, called it an ugly thing, he said, "No, madam, there is nothing ugly; I never saw an ugly thing in my life: for let the form of an object be what it may—light, shade, and perspective will always make it beautiful."

JOHN CONSTABLE.

Quoted in C. R. Leslie's "Life," 1843.

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