

REGISTRAR-GENERAL'S STATISTICAL REVIEW FOR ENGLAND AND WALES.

1942 TABLES; PART I MEDICAL:

Lower Death Rate: Fewer Mothers and Babies Die.

Publication of the Registrar-General's Statistical Review was delayed during the war, but steps are now being taken to bring the series up to date, and Part I for 1942* was published on Friday, October 18. The volumes for 1945 are in preparation, and it is proposed to publish Part I this year and Part II shortly after; the intervening parts will follow as quickly as circumstances permit.

The year 1942 was marked by a general improvement in mortality statistics compared with the earlier war years. The total number of deaths registered was 480,137, against 535,180 in 1941 and 581,537 in 1940; the corresponding civilian death rates per 1,000 population were 12.3, 13.5 and 14.4 respectively.

Infant and Maternal Mortality.

The measures taken to safeguard the health of children and expectant mothers showed themselves in improved infant and maternal mortality figures. After the initial setbacks of the early war years, the infant mortality rate fell to 51 deaths of children under one year of age per 1,000 related live births, a figure equal to the lowest previously recorded and in marked contrast to the figure of 60 for 1941, which was the worst since 1933. The rates for Maternal Mortality (excluding abortion) resumed the steady improvement which had been slightly interrupted in 1941, the rate of 2.02 deaths per 1,000 total births being the lowest ever recorded.

* The Registrar-General's Statistical Review for England and Wales, 1942 Tables, Part I, Medical. H.M. Stationery Office. Price 5s. net, 5s. 4d. Post free.

Epidemic Diseases.

The whooping cough epidemic of 1941 was not repeated; there were only 799 deaths from this disease in 1942, and the measles mortality rates had only been lower in one previous year. The death rate of children under 15 from scarlet fever and diphtheria reached a new low level, the annual deaths from diphtheria falling below 2,000 for the first time, reflecting the early results of the Ministry of Health's immunisation campaign.

Pulmonary Tuberculosis.

The early war years had shown a marked rise in deaths from pulmonary tuberculosis. In 1939 deaths ascribed to this cause numbered 21,523, rising to 23,470 in 1940 and 23,339 in 1941. In 1942, however, the figure of 20,730 was the lowest ever recorded.

Respiratory Diseases.

Mortality from this group of diseases (bronchitis, pneumonia, etc.) rose abruptly from 61,509 deaths in 1939 to 83,815 in 1940. An improvement made itself apparent in 1941 when the deaths fell to 66,677, and by 1942 only 53,188 were recorded.

Cerebro-Spinal Fever.

There had been a very serious increase in cerebro-spinal fever in 1940 and 1941. In 1939 there were 1,414 civilian cases notified, with 503 deaths. In 1940 the figures soared to 11,185 cases with 2,459 deaths, and although declining somewhat in 1941, remained on a very high level with 9,893 cases and 2,065 deaths. During 1942, however, the number of civilian cases notified fell to 5,286, and the deaths to 1,143, little more than half of the previous year, and although these figures were still high, compared with pre-war years, they indicated that the dangerous corner had been turned.

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