

The Midwife.

Central Midwives Board.

At its April meeting the Central Midwives Board re-elected Mr. Arnold Walker, F.R.C.S., F.R.C.O.G., as Chairman, and Mr. J. P. Hedley, F.R.C.P., F.R.C.S., F.R.C.O.G., as Vice-Chairman, for the ensuing year.

More Health Records.

Stillbirths and Infant Mortality Rates Still Going Down.

TWO more health records were set up in England and Wales during the first quarter of 1949, the Registrar-General announced recently.* They were:—

(1) The number of stillbirths registered during the three months was 4,418, giving a rate of 23.1 per 1,000 total live and stillbirths, the lowest rate ever recorded for a March quarter in this country. For the same period a year ago the rate was 24.3, and there has now been a progressive fall in the rate for the first quarter for the past nine years.

(2) The number of deaths of children under one year of age was 7,462, representing a record low rate for the first quarter of 40 per 1,000 related live births. This compares with the previous record of 41 in the corresponding quarter a year ago and 55 in the March quarter of 1947.

There was again a drop in the number of live births registered in England and Wales. For the quarter ended March 31st, 1949, the figure was 186,561, compared with 202,184 in the March quarter, 1948, and 241,530 in the first quarter of 1947. The corresponding rates per 1,000 total population were 17.4, 18.7 and 22.8 respectively.

There were 161,279 deaths registered, representing a death-rate of 15.0 per 1,000 total population, compared with 132,705 deaths and the record low rate of 12.3 in the March quarter, 1948, and 181,736 deaths and a rate of 17.1 in the corresponding quarter of 1947.

Population Estimates for 1948.

THE Registrar General recently issued a new publication† showing his latest estimates of the civilian populations of each local government area in England and Wales, each borough and county district, and of groups of such areas, regions, geographical and administrative counties and aggregates of urban and rural districts in each county, which we think will greatly interest our readers.

This publication is designed to meet a general demand for an early issue of up-to-date figures of local populations, and in particular to assist local councils and other administrative authorities, manufacturers and distributors. It gives the final estimates of local populations as at June 30th, 1948, which will later be published in the Registrar General's Annual Statistical Review as his official estimates for the year 1948, and also the estimates as at December 31st, 1948.

The total population of England and Wales as a whole for 1948 (June 30th) is given as 43,502,000 (21,091,000

* The Registrar-General's Weekly Return of Births, Deaths and Infectious Diseases for the week ended April 16th, 1949: H.M. Stationery Office, price 6d. net (or by post from P.O. Box 569, S.E.1, price 7d.).

† The Registrar General's Estimates of the Population of England and Wales, H.M. Stationery Office, York House, Kingsway, W.C.2 (price 4d.), or by post from P.O. Box 569, London, S.E.1 (price 5d.).

Males, 22,411,000 Females), and the civilian population as 42,750,000 (20,370,000 Males, 22,380,000 Females). The civilian population at that date for Greater London—the City of London and the boroughs and county districts falling entirely within the Metropolitan Police District—roughly an area of 15 miles' radius from Charing Cross—is given as 8,282,217, and for the administrative county of London as 3,339,100. Birmingham is the next largest with 1,096,100.

There are 39 local government areas shown as having populations of fewer than 2,000 persons.

Childbirth Deaths Lowest on Record.

T.B. Rate also Fell in 1948.

THE number of mothers who died in childbirth in England and Wales last year was the lowest ever recorded.

The provisional figures published recently by the Registrar General,* show a rate of 0.86 per 1,000 total live and stillbirths, compared with 1.02 in 1947 and 2.70 in 1938. Excluding abortion, 685 mothers died in childbirth last year. Deaths due to abortion numbered 123, representing a rate of 0.15 per 1,000 total live and stillbirths compared with 0.16 in 1947 and 0.55 in 1938.

Deaths from tuberculosis also fell in 1948, but the cancer death rate remained unchanged. Provisional figures for these two diseases issued by the Registrar General are:—

TUBERCULOSIS.—There were 11,314 deaths among men from respiratory tuberculosis, representing a rate of 555 per million civilian population, compared with 595 in 1947. For women, the rate which rose from 345 in 1946 to 364 in 1947, also declined in 1948 to 335 per million civilian population. The number of deaths among women was 7,487. Deaths from other forms of tuberculosis were 1,473 for men and 1,396 for women, the corresponding rates per million civilian population being 72 and 62 respectively. This was a decrease for both sexes, the previous year's rates being 87 and 73 respectively.

CANCER.—Deaths among women numbered 39,404, and the crude rate increased slightly, being 1,761 per million civilian population, compared with 1,754 in 1947. Male deaths totalled 40,027, giving a rate of 1,965, which was slightly lower than the figure of 1,976 for 1947. The resultant cancer death-rate for all persons was 1,858 per million, the same as in 1947.

*The Registrar General's Weekly Return of Births, Deaths and Infectious Diseases for the week ended April 24th (H.M. Stationery Office, price 6d. net, or post free from P.O. Box 569, S.E.1, price 7d.).

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