

The Midwife.

Central Midwives Board.

AT THE MEETING of the Central Midwives Board held on April 5th, 1951, Mr. Arnold Walker, F.R.C.S., F.R.C.O.G., was re-elected 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.

Vital Statistics, 1950.

Lowest Infant Death Rate : Fewer Births and Marriages : Population Forecast for 1990.

PROVISIONAL FIGURES FOR ENGLAND AND WALES published recently in the Registrar General's Quarterly Return* show that the infant mortality and stillbirth rates for 1950 were the best recorded for any year in this country. The marriage rate dropped again and the birth rate was the lowest since 1942.

Deaths of children under one year of age in the December Quarter of 1950 numbered 4,994 or 30.2 per thousand related live births compared with a rate of 32.3 per thousand in the same period a year earlier. This brought the total for the year to 20,711 or 29.8 per thousand—the first time the rate has been below 30 in this country—compared with 23,882 and a rate of 32.4 in 1949. Comparative rates in other countries were: In 1950, Netherlands 25; U.S.A. 29. In 1949, New Zealand 24; Canada 43; Sweden 23; France 61; Belgium 52 and Italy 74.

There were 16,012 stillbirths registered during 1950, representing a rate of 22.6 per thousand live and still births. This rate compares with 22.7 in the previous year. The rate for the fourth quarter, 1950, was 22.7.

Population Estimates and Projections.

Population estimates, national and regional, are shown in a series of tables distinguishing sex, age and marital condition. A table showing the projected population by sex and age in 5, 10, 15, 20, 30 and 40 years' time is also included. It shows that, on the basis of certain stated assumptions, the population, which in December, 1950, the base line of the projections, was 44,137,000, would increase to a figure of 46,608,000 over the next 40 years. It also shows—on the basis of the said assumptions—that whilst, in December, 1950, the population under 15 years of age was 21.9 per cent. of the whole, it would only be 20.2 per cent. in 40 years' time. Likewise, women aged 15-44, who represented 21.6 per cent. of the population in December, 1950, would be reduced to 19.9 per cent. while men aged 65 and over and women aged 60 and over would increase from 4.5 and 9.1 per cent. to 7.0 and 12.6 per cent. respectively. The main reason for this increase is the abnormal age shape of the present population.

A table published in the September Quarterly Return showed that the estimated expectation of life of a male child born in 1949 is 66.01 years and that of a female child 70.63 years. These figures compare with 48.53 and 52.38 respectively in 1901.

Births.

There were 692,457 live births registered during 1950, representing a rate of 15.8 per thousand population. This was 0.9 below the 1949 rate. Forty-nine out of every thousand live births were illegitimate which is 15 per thousand below the average for the preceding five years.

* The Registrar General's Quarterly Return No. 408. December Quarter, 1950. H.M.S.O., price 1s. net (or by post from P.O. Box 569, London, S.E.1, price 1s. 1d.).

Deaths.

Deaths during 1950 numbered 510,309, or 11.6 per thousand population compared with 11.7 in 1949.

Natural Increase.

The births registered in 1950 exceeded the deaths by 182,148, the corresponding increase for the preceding year was 210,479 and the average for 1944-48 was 290,783.


Marriages.

There were 714,436 persons married during 1950 compared with 750,082 in the previous year. The respective rates were 16.3 and 17.1 per thousand population.

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