

ESTIMATED COST of CONSTRUCTION of RAILWAYS, ROLLING-STOCK, ETC., to 31st March, 1917, as furnished by Public Works Department and by Greymouth and Westport Harbour Boards respectively.

Section.	Cost of Opened Lines.		Cost of Unopened Lines.	
	£	s. d.	£	s. d.
Whangarei	763,410	0 0	180,023	0 0
Kaihu	99,962	0 0	17,244	0 0
Tauranga .. .. .	..	..	309,786	0 0
Gisborne	597,241	0 0	246,557	0 0
North Island Main Lines and Branches	15,421,989	0 0	973,881	0 0
South Island Main Lines and Branches	14,541,345	0 0	155,044	0 0
Westland	2,075,217	0 0	644,771	0 0
Westport	602,317	0 0	95,828	0 0
Nelson	542,406	0 0	36,988	0 0
Pictou	675,857	0 0	18,593	0 0
Lake Wakatipu Steamer Service	43,708	0 0	..	..
In Suspense—				
Surveys, North Island .. .. .	..	..	35,900	0 0
Miscellaneous, North Island .. .. .	..	..	5,169	0 0
Surveys, South Island .. .. .	..	..	5,752	0 0
Miscellaneous, South Island .. .. .	..	..	5,168	0 0
P.W.D. Stock of Permanent-way .. .. .	..	..	77,805	0 0
W.R.D. Stock of A.O.L. Stores	15,212	0 0	..	..
Totals	£35,378,664	0 0	£2,808,509	0 0

Railways Department, 4th February, 1918.

J. MACDONALD,
Chief Accountant, New Zealand Railways.

*Population of the Dominion.**

RETURN of the Estimated Population of the Dominion of New Zealand on the 31st December, 1917.

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Estimated population (exclusive of Maoris and residents of Cook and other Pacific islands), at 31st December, 1916	549,895	550,668	1,100,563
Increase during 1917—			
By excess of births over deaths	8,260	9,394	17,654
By excess of immigration over emigration (including members of Expeditionary Forces)	-20,833†	231	-20,602†
Estimated population (exclusive of Maoris and residents of Cook and other Pacific islands) on 31st December, 1917	537,322	560,293	1,097,615
Maori population, Census, 1916	25,933	23,843	49,776
Population of Cook and other Pacific islands, Census, 1916	6,552	6,245	12,797
Total estimated population of the Dominion on 31st December, 1917	569,807	590,381	1,160,188

* Subject to revision.

† Decrease—Excess of emigration.

BIRTHS, DEATHS, AND MARRIAGES IN 1917.

The number of births registered during 1917 (23,182) was less than that for 1916 (23,509) by 327, and the rate was 25·64 per 1,000, as against 25·94. The birth-rate in 1917 is the third lowest in the history of New Zealand, the lowest rate (25·12) having been recorded in 1899, and the second lowest (25·33) in 1915.

The deaths in 1917 (10,528) were less than the number registered in 1916 (10,596) by 68, and the rate per 1,000 fell from 9·64 to 9·58. The number for 1916 is the highest recorded in any one year in the history of the Dominion, 1917 coming second.

The number of marriages (excluding those contracted between Maoris) solemnized in 1917 is estimated at only 6,300 giving a rate of 5·73 per 1,000 of the mean population, against 8,213 and 7·47, the actual number and rate in 1916, and 10,028 and 9·12 respectively in 1915. The estimate for 1917 is subject to revision, and the final figures cannot be given until all returns come to hand; but the number and rate given are near enough to the mark. The decrease is of course due to the war, and especially to the system of compulsory military service which takes into account only marriages solemnized before May, 1915.

The numbers and rates of births, deaths, and marriages for the last ten years are as under:—

Year.	Numbers.			Rate per 1,000 of the Mean Population.		
	Births.	Marriages.	Deaths.	Births.	Marriages.	Deaths.
1908	25,940	8,339	9,043	27·45	8·82	9·57
1909	26,524	8,094	8,959	27·29	8·33	9·22
1910	25,984	8,236	9,639	26·17	8·30	9·71
1911	26,354	8,325	9,534	25·97	8·70	9·39
1912	27,508	9,149	9,214	26·48	8·81	8·87
1913	27,935	8,813	10,119	26·14	8·25	9·47
1914	28,338	9,280	10,148	25·99	8·51	9·31
1915	27,850	10,028	9,965	25·33	9·12	9·06
1916	28,509	8,213	10,596	25·94	7·47	9·64
1917	23,182	6,300*	10,528	25·64	5·73*	9·58

* Approximate.

Census and Statistics Office,
Wellington, 5th February, 1918.

MALCOLM FRASER,
Government Statistician.