

IX.—VITAL STATISTICS.

(a.)—POPULATION.

The civil population of the Colony, according to the census taken on April 24th, 1921, was 625,166, of whom 83,163 reside in the New Territories and in New Kowloon; at the census taken in 1911 it was 456,739 with 104,287 as the figure for the New Territories and New Kowloon. The estimated total population at the middle of the year under review was 799,550, but this includes the New Territories; and, as the birth and death figures given below do not include those from this area (with the exception of New Kowloon), the population for the purposes of calculating these rates is estimated at 714,550, of whom 16,000 were non-Chinese.

The distribution of population estimated to the middle of 1924 was as follows:—

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|---------|
| | Non-Chinese Civil Community, | 16,000 | |
| Chinese Population. | } | City of Victoria (including Peak), | 420,000 |
| | | Villages of Hongkong, | 29,800 |
| | | Kowloon (including New Kowloon), | 180,000 |
| | | New Territories, | 85,000 |
| | | Population afloat, | 68,750 |
| Total Chinese Population, | | 783,550 | |
| Total Civil Population, | | 799,550 | |

(b.)—PUBLIC HEALTH AND SANITATION.

The activity in building operations, which has been so noticeable a feature since 1912, has not abated, and the demand for housing accommodation by the Chinese continued to be greatly in excess of the supply, as many of those who fled with their families to Hongkong during 1911, 1912, and 1913 elected to remain in the Colony.

The birth-rate for the year was 5.47* per 1,000 among the Chinese community and 18.25 per 1,000 among the non-Chinese community, as compared with 6.97 and 23.03 for 1923.

The death-rate for the year was 21.9 per 1,000 among the Chinese community and 15.86 among the non-Chinese civil community, as compared with 23.27 and 14.83 for 1923.

The deaths from Malaria numbered 707 (674 in 1923). The deaths of Chinese from this cause in the City of Victoria numbered 187 out of a population of 420,000 or a rate of 0.44 per 1,000 per annum.

The deaths from Plague numbered nil as compared with 136 in 1923.

* This figure is wholly misleading as it is impossible to register more than a portion of the births.

Small-pox deaths numbered 795, of which all but seven were Chinese.

There were 4,319 deaths from respiratory diseases other than Pulmonary Tuberculosis as compared with 4,317 in 1923, and 44 of these were among the Non-Chinese community. Pulmonary Tuberculosis claimed 1,718 Chinese and 31 non-Chinese victims whilst other forms of Tuberculosis represent an additional 609 deaths making a total of 2,358 or 15.16 per cent. of the total deaths among the community.

Beri-beri was responsible for 1,502 deaths, as compared with 1,270 during 1923 and 892 in 1922.

A tabular statement of the principal causes of death is appended.

(c.)—CLIMATE.

The climate of Victoria is similar in its broad features to that of Kowloon and the New Territories, but at the higher levels, from 1,400 to 1,800 feet above sea level the temperature is on the average about 3° lower than at the Observatory, Kowloon, in the winter, and 8° lower in the summer. The humidity is usually greater than in Kowloon and approaches saturation for several days at a time during March and April when mist is very prevalent. In summer the city of Victoria, and the rising terraces behind it, derive little or no benefit from the SW monsoon, being sheltered by steep hills from SE to SW. In winter it is exposed to the NE monsoon, which occasionally blows along the harbour through Lyemun Pass with considerable violence. On the other hand the south-west side of the Island is protected from the NE monsoon in winter and enjoys the benefit of the SW monsoon in summer.

For further particulars see Appendix F.

POSTAL AND TELEGRAPH SERVICES.

The total revenue from the postal service in 1924 amounted to \$754,928.26 being \$40,588.23 more than that collected in 1923. The net expenditure amounted to \$269,568.06. The balance of revenue over expenditure amounted to \$485,360.20.

The revenue collected in 1924 from radio-telegrams amounted to \$69,496.41 being \$23,383.17 more than that collected in 1923. Advices of vessels signalled at the lighthouses yielded \$916.40 and semaphore messages \$11.65 making a total of \$70,424.46 for the telegraph service. The expenditure amounted to \$51,561.93. The number of radio-telegrams forwarded during the year was 11,720 consisting of 107,771 words, and 12,628 received consisting of 142,325 words.

CLAUD SEVERN,
Colonial Secretary.

28th July, 1925.