
By Julie E. Backer

I. Statistics of marriages, births and deaths

(a) Official registration

From olden times in Norway, as also in Sweden and Denmark, the church official in each parish has kept the official registers of marriages, births and deaths, and has produced the records which form the basis of Norwegian vital statistics.

The first general order instructing the clergy to keep a parish register of marriages, births and deaths is found in the Church Ritual of 25 July 1685 and in Christian V's Norwegian Law of 15 April 1687. However, neither the ritual of 1685 nor the law of 1687 gave precise instructions as to the manner in which these registers should be kept. Consequently, the books were not uniformly kept in the various parishes, and they were often incomplete.

In order to eliminate these defects a definite schedule for the church registers of Denmark and Norway was laid down in a letter of 1 December 1812, and detailed instructions were given as to the manner of keeping these registers. After the separation of Norway from Denmark in 1814 these instructions were annulled, and new special rules respecting the form of the registers and the method of keeping them in Norway were laid down in 1820. The parochial registers from 1820 contain a record of persons: A, Baptized; B, Confirmed; C, Married; D, Buried; E, Immigrated and emigrated; and F, Vaccinated. The instructions of 1820 were in force until 1877, when they were replaced by the present rules, established by Order in Council of 13 July of that year.

In accordance with this order a church register must be kept in every parish. If the parish includes a town as well as a rural district, separate registers are to be kept. The record must contain: A, Live-births; B, Stillbirths; C, Confirmations; D, Marriages; E, Deaths; F, Immigrants; G, Emigrants; H, Persons having joined the State Church; and I, Persons withdrawn from the State Church. Notices received of births, deaths and marriages among dissenters should also be registered in the parish book.

1 Editorial Note. Demographers are usually faced, in their work, with difficulties caused by changes in the reliability, scope and meaning of vital and census statistics in individual countries as well as by difficulties due to differences in the statistical systems of different countries. The first step in overcoming these difficulties is to see exactly what such changes or differences mean, and it is for this purpose that we hope in time to publish various papers dealing with the development of census and vital statistics in different countries. The present paper, prepared with the permission of Dr Arne Skaug, Director of the Norwegian Central Statistical Office, is the first part of a study of the statistics of Norway. The remaining parts will be published in subsequent issues of Population Studies.
It should be mentioned that marriages, births and deaths among members of organized dissenting congregations are in the first place registered by the priest or the head of the congregation. According to the Dissenter Act of 27 June 1891, that person is instructed to keep records of the members of his congregation in conformity with the parish books. At the end of the year he has to send, through the magistrates to the vicar, a list covering all births, deaths and marriages which have taken place during the year, to be entered in the church register.

Births, deaths and marriages among persons not belonging to organized congregations or of no confession are notified to the magistrates and again to the vicar for registration in the parish book.

By the law of 10 April 1915 a special birth register was introduced, and from then on the section in the church register for live-births has been used only as a record of baptisms. In the register of births—which is exclusively a civil register—all children, live- or stillborn, legitimate or illegitimate, regardless of the parents’ (mother’s) confession, were to be entered as from 1 January 1916.

During the last 30–40 years the question of transferring the registration of marriages, births and deaths to civil registrars, has repeatedly been discussed in Norway—particularly in connexion with the establishment of compulsory civil registration in all the communities of the country. An attempt was even made during the German occupation, when in 1942 the registration of marriages, births and deaths—by order of the Nazis—was taken out of the hands of the clergy and incorporated in the local civil registries. However, it appeared that the civil registrars could not manage the task, with the result that our whole registration of marriages, births and deaths became chaotic, and the records sent to the Central Bureau of Statistics concerning these events were in the main too incomplete to serve as a basis for vital statistics. After the liberation this civil registration was therefore once again transferred to the clergy.

In principle the registration of marriages, births and deaths by local civil registrars is undoubtedly the most rational system. But in the light of our experience during the war, it would seem that the time is not yet ripe for introducing this reform in Norway.

It may be mentioned that a new Registration Act came into operation on 15 November 1946. This Act provided for the appointment of civil registrars in all communities of the country, as from 3 December 1946, under the supervision of the Central Bureau of Statistics. For the time being the local civil registrars will only receive reports concerning emigration to, and immigration from, other communities and changes of residence within the community, and keep the various registers relating to the population of the community.

\(b\) The statistical material

It is not quite clear from which date the use of church registers as a basis for vital statistics was begun. There is a letter, dated 1720, to the bishops, instructing them to send in the compulsory records of births and deaths in due time, which apparently means that an order of earlier, but unknown date must have existed.
These records from the clergy, however, were not given a definite form until 1735. In accordance with a letter of 30 December 1735 to the bishops in Norway and Denmark, they were required to collect, at the end of each year, returns of all births and deaths in the diocese from the vicars in the towns and the rural districts, and to forward a detailed statement of these returns to the ‘Commerce Collegium’ in Copenhagen.

In the letter mentioned above, only records of births and deaths were required, but in lists found in Norwegian archives from this period, the numbers of marriages are also given. In the prememoria of the Commerce Collegium of 8 April 1775 a fixed schedule was decided upon for the annual returns to the Collegium of marriages, births and deaths. This schedule contained the following columns: (i) the name of the deanery, (2) number of married couples, (3) total number of births with specification as to sex, and number of infants born out of wedlock irrespective of sex, (4) deceased men and women specified by age in 10-year groups, and (5) peculiarities concerning births and deaths. As will be seen, no distinction by sex was made for illegitimate children. Neither were records of stillbirths given.

Statistical records of stillbirths were not compulsory until 1797. Stillbirths were defined as infants born without signs of life after the seventh month of pregnancy. Separate returns were to be given for males and females. The records of stillbirths sent in by the clergy were, however, unreliable, and in a circular of 24 December 1802 every midwife was instructed to notify the vicar of each child at whose birth she had been present—either born without life or dying within 24 hours of birth. The same duty was also imposed on medical practitioners assisting at childbirth. In the notification the midwife was to give information as to the month of pregnancy in which the birth took place, if the infant was alive when born and the duration of life. The vicar was to enter these reports in the parish register and include them in his annual returns to the bishops.

In the course of the first part of the nineteenth century the annual returns sent in by the clergy concerning marriages, births and deaths gradually became more comprehensive, and attempts were made from time to time, by means of new instructions to the clergy, to improve the returns and make them more reliable.

In 1832 a separate tabular office—Tabelkontoret—was established under the Ministry of Finance, with the duty of taking charge of official statistics. Before that date there was no separate office for statistics in Norway. In 1837 Tabelkontoret was considerably extended, and it was given a more independent position, under the new Home Office, in the course of the forties. In 1876 Tabelkontoret was made an independent institution, under the title of the Central Bureau of Statistics, with its own director.

Tabelkontoret concerned itself with the improvement of the official vital statistics. Thus in 1839 a new schedule was introduced for the annual returns from the clergy, in which, among other things, the records of marriages were given more consideration. From that year on information was required of the number of marriages as well as of marital condition and age. In the section on births, information was now required as to the number of multiple births, the number of abnormalities and the number of illegitimate stillbirths.
Deaths were still given in decennial age groups for persons aged 10 years and over. For children under 10 years of age, however, the data were henceforth to be given separately for the age groups 0-1, 1-3, 3-5 and 5-10 years, and illegitimate children were to be distinguished. This more detailed classification of the mortality of children under 5 years did not, however, appear in the statistics until 1846. Finally, the number of women dying in childbirth, the number of deaths by accidents, suicide and homicide, and the number of infants overlaid by their parents were to be recorded. The statistical schedule introduced in 1839 remained unchanged until the end of 1865.

Among other regulations of particular importance for the statistics was the alteration in 1839 of the classification of stillbirths. From that year only children born without signs of life were to be recorded as stillborn. Before that time, and since 1802, the statistics of stillborn had also included infants born alive, but who had died within 24 hours of birth.

It appeared very difficult to get the clergy to observe these regulations concerning stillbirths, and far into the present century the returns of stillbirths caused much confusion in Norwegian vital statistics. On the one hand it seemed to be difficult to discriminate between abortions and the more developed foetus; on the other hand it was equally difficult to distinguish between children born without obvious signs of life and those in reality born alive, but who died spontaneously after the birth. As early as 1797 a stillbirth was supposed to be defined as any foetus born without obvious signs of life after 7 months of pregnancy, and this definition was also in force in all the succeeding regulations, though subsequently the period of gestation was fixed more precisely at 28 weeks. In practice, however, this discrimination has not been maintained either by the midwives or by the clergy. The confusion in defining the stillborn and those liveborn who died within 24 hours of birth was partly due to the disadvantage of these two different categories of births being notified by the midwife on the same form.

As a result the numbers of infant deaths recorded in the statistics—particularly for the years prior to 1866—were understated, while the numbers of stillbirths were exaggerated slightly.

Until 1851 there were no instructions as to the definition of illegitimate children. In a circular of that year addressed to the bishops, it was decided that all children of parents unmarried at the time of the birth should be registered as illegitimate, regardless of whether the child, before the registration of the birth, had been legitimated by the subsequent marriage of the parents.

Although the annual summary tables issued by the clergy gradually became more complete in respect of the demographic data, they were not appropriate for statistical use. It was therefore a great improvement when these summaries were replaced in 1866 by nominal returns in the form of extracts from the church registers. This method gave far greater possibilities for the development of vital statistics. Tabelkontoret from then on received the following returns from the clergy:

Marriages: Date of marriage, names of bride and bridegroom, civil condition and occupation, age and birthplace, residence of bridegroom.
Births (baptisms): Date of birth, name of child, legitimate or illegitimate, and, for legitimate children, information about the parents' (for illegitimate children, the mother's) name, occupation and residence.

Deaths: Date of death, full name, civil condition, occupation, age and residence. Further, if the death was due to accident, suicide or homicide; for women, if death was due to childbirth.

Stillbirths: If legitimate or illegitimate; for legitimate the parents', and for illegitimate the mother's, name and occupation.

During the years 1866–72 these extracts from the church registers were given in lists, separately for marriages, births, stillbirths and deaths. However, in 1873 new forms were introduced for each individual marriage, birth and death, this method being more practical for the purposes of statistical analysis at a time when tabulating machines were not yet in use. In 1903 the nominal lists were again adopted, for by that time mechanical tabulation had been introduced in the Central Bureau of Statistics.

In 1867 it was decided that the clergy's returns of deaths and stillbirths should be sent to the Home Office through the medical officer of the district. This reform was introduced because of the statistics of causes of death, which the medical officer was required to prepare for the annual report on his district to the Health Administration. The returns of marriages and livebirths were sent directly to the Home Office. The earlier regulation that the returns of marriages, births and deaths should be sent in through the dean or the bishop was repealed in 1869. After the establishment of the Central Bureau of Statistics in 1876 the records were sent to the Bureau instead of to the Home Office.

Until 1892 the records mentioned above also included dissenters. But when the Dissenter Act of 1891 came into operation—by which the priests or heads of organized dissenter congregations were ordered to keep their own registers—an Order in Council of 19 February 1892 also provided that dissenter priests and heads of organized congregations should send to the Central Statistical Bureau extracts of their registers in the same way as the established clergy. The latter were thus hereafter to be excused from recording marriages, births and deaths among members of organized dissenter congregations. But they were still to register dissenters not belonging to organized congregations or those without a confession.

Looking at the nominal returns from the clergy after 1866, it will be seen that these gradually became more comprehensive and complete as new items were taken up, and as accuracy in the data was insisted upon.

One of the items which was taken up at an early stage was information concerning ages at marriage and at death. In a circular of 1869 the statistical office pointed out the disadvantage due to the fact that the ages given in the church registers were so unreliable, and were entered in various ways. In order to obtain more reliable data the clergy were requested as far as possible to state the year of birth instead of years of age. For children dying during the first year of life, the clergy were asked to state the month of birth. In that same circular the clergy were also requested, when registering births, to give the ages of the parents, for the
purpose of statistical investigations of fertility. A separate heading for this question was introduced in the new church registers, prescribed by the Ministry of Church Affairs in 1877. In these new church registers the year of birth replaced age, and for children dying under 5 years of age the month and date of birth was also required.

In the circular of 1869 the statistical office also asked for voluntary information as to marriage duration for children born in wedlock. It was apparently difficult to secure this information, and in the new church registers of 1877 no separate heading for this question was included. This was not in fact done until a special birth register was established in 1915. At the suggestion of the Central Bureau of Statistics the birth registers demanded, in respect of every legitimate birth, the year of marriage of the parents and the number of children previously born to the mother in the existing or in any previous marriage and, finally, the number of surviving children.

From 1866, when work was first begun on the statistics of occupations, relating to marriages, births and deaths, the clergy were instructed, by a number of circulars, how the occupation should be classified in the church register and in the statistical lists.

Finally, it should be noted that in 1872 the vicars were instructed to state whether the person in question was of Lapp or Finnish origin or of alien citizenship.

When judging the quality of Norwegian vital statistics, the question of the comprehensiveness of the returns from time to time must be considered. As far as the records of marriages are concerned, it should be remembered that up to 1845 a marriage could only be made valid if the ceremony was performed by a vicar. When civil marriage between dissenters before a notary public was introduced by the Dissenter Act of 16 July 1846, it was decided that the notary public should pass the information about the marriage to the vicar in the parish of residence of the married couple. A corresponding duty was also required of the notary public by the law of 22 June 1863, which sanctioned civil marriages when one or both of the contracting parties did not belong to the Christian church. When, under the new Dissenter Act of 27 June 1891, the dissenter priest or head of an organized congregation was authorized to marry persons belonging to his congregation, these marriages were also reported to the Central Bureau of Statistics, as previously mentioned. Finally, the order that the civil authorities must report all civil marriages to the vicar at the new residence of the married couple was repeated in the Marriage Act of 31 May 1918. Thus, as a result of the Acts mentioned, the statistical returns of marriages should have been complete throughout the whole period.

As regards births, however, the position is different. Until 1916 there were no general instructions for ensuring the notification of all births. As previously mentioned, it was the duty of midwives and medical practitioners to notify the vicar of stillbirths and of children who died within 24 hours of birth, this duty dating as far back as 1802. The Dissenter Acts of 1846 and 1891 provided for information of births to members of organized dissenter congregations. By the law of 1891 regulations were also laid down that all births among persons not belonging to the State
Church or to organized congregations should be notified to the magistrates, who were in turn to report them to the clergy. Births among dissenters not belonging to organized congregations were, however, largely not notified, and were consequently not recorded in the statistics.

As regards liveborn children whose parents belonged to the State Church, the vicar was only informed of these births by the registration of baptism. Consequently, before 1916 only the children baptized were registered in the church book and could thus be recorded in the statistical returns.

It may be taken for granted that in the eighteenth and the greater part of the nineteenth century, the majority of parents had their children baptized. But gradually, as it became more usual not to baptize children, a considerable number were consequently omitted from the statistics of births. In 1901 the Central Bureau of Statistics took this matter up with the Home Office and suggested that compulsory notification of births should be introduced. This was only enforced by the law of 10 April 1915. At the same time the clergy were, as previously mentioned, requested to keep a new birth register of all births, legitimate or illegitimate, live-or stillborn.

In accordance with the law of 10 April 1915 and the previously mentioned Dissenter Act of 27 June 1891, the regulations for registering the births are as follows: The responsibility of notifying a legitimate birth falls upon the parents. When the parents are members of the State Church the birth should be notified within 4 weeks to the clerical authority in charge of the church book and of the birth register of the parish in which the child is born. If the parents belong to an organized dissenting congregation, the birth must be notified to the priest or head of the congregation within the same period, and the latter must pass this information through the magistrates to the vicar concerned not later than a month after the notification. Dissenters not belonging to organized congregations are to notify the birth directly to the magistrates. This is also the case for persons not belonging to any confession. The magistrates are immediately to forward all notifications of births to the vicar at the child’s place of birth.

Illegitimate births have to be notified to *bidragsfogden*¹ by the midwife (or medical practitioner) present at the birth. If no midwife or physician was present, the mother must notify the birth to *bidragsfogden* within 4 weeks. *Bidragsfogden* must immediately report such notifications to the registration authorities. The vicar keeping the civil birth register receives notifications through the magistrates of the birth of illegitimate children whose mothers do not belong to the State Church, in accordance with the same regulations as for legitimate children.

The above regulations stipulate that both live- and stillbirths are to be reported. Livebirths are defined as all infants showing signs of life at birth, even if death takes place immediately. Stillbirths are defined as infants showing no signs of life. Births of dead embryos before the 28th week of pregnancy are not to be reported.

¹ *Bidragsfogden*—official collector of the maintenance for illegitimate children. In the rural districts this duty is imposed upon the *lensmann*, the lowest ranking official in the rural districts attending to police and taxation matters.
to the vicar for entry in the birth register. As from 1 January 1916, the earlier regulations as to the registration of stillbirths was repealed.

The new Act, which came into operation as from 1 January 1916, led to a great improvement in birth statistics. It is possible that a certain number of children—especially infants dying immediately after birth—are even now not notified and are thus not included in the records of the Central Bureau of Statistics. But on the whole there is reason to believe that the material upon which the Norwegian birth statistics are now based is complete.

The registration of deaths in the church book has presumably always been fairly reliable, as the vicars generally received information about all burials in Norway. Under an Act of 1682, and in accordance with the church ritual of 1685, there is a regulation according to which it is the legal duty of the deceased's relatives or of the local authorities to provide for Christian burial of the corpse. And a number of circulars issued during the eighteenth century firmly laid down the rule that deceased persons must not be buried without notification to the vicar, so that the latter might undertake the prescribed interment and register the death in the church book. A comparable regulation still exists.

In accordance with the law of 3 August 1897, concerning churches and cemeteries, and with the Dissenter Act of 27 June 1891, no burial can take place without the obligatory death certificate from Skifteretten\(^1\) (lensmannen) having been signed by the vicar, or the priest or head of an organized dissenter congregation, or a civil authority.

It is to be presumed that all deaths among members of the State Church or of organized dissenter congregations have been reported to the Central Bureau of Statistics. But this is far more doubtful as regards persons not belonging to the State Church or to organized dissenter congregations. Burial of these persons has been possible without the assistance of a priest as long as the death certificate has been issued by the magistrates. It has been beyond the duty of the magistrates to keep a register of these deaths, and it may well be that they have not been registered and consequently not recorded in the death statistics. But this can hardly have influenced the statistical results.

As for persons who have disappeared, and others who might reliably be considered to have perished, the rule has been that these should be entered in the church register when the vicar was notified, even if their bodies had not been found. They should also be included in the records of deaths sent to the Home Office (Central Bureau of Statistics). This was laid down in the instructions on the statistical schedule which the clergy received from the Ministry of Finance as from 1839, and was repeated in the order of 1877, concerning the keeping of the church books.

Deaths of Norwegian citizens abroad must be reported to the Norwegian representative on the spot. The first order to this effect was given in an instruction of 1858 and was repeated in later instructions relating to the diplomatic service. The

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\(^1\) Skifteretten—court of first instance, for settling the partition of inheritance. In rural districts the lensman issues death certificates on behalf of this court.
department concerned receiving such reports has to forward the information to the Central Bureau of Statistics, so that all deceased formerly domiciled in Norway might be included in the statistics of deaths among the resident population of the country.

The various regulations laid down concerning the reporting and registration of deaths have aimed at making the church book a complete death register. But the existing system, in which there are several reporting and registering authorities functioning independently, according to the deceased’s confession, can never be totally effective, no matter how carefully the regulations have been framed. It is difficult to say to what extent these defects have so far affected the quality of the statistics. Since, however, there are relatively few people outside the State Church or the organized dissenter congregations, it may be reasonably believed that the basis of Norwegian mortality statistics has, on the whole, been satisfactory.

(c) The published statistical returns

In connexion with the above analysis of the type and volume of the statistics available at various times, the following section will survey the data on marriages, births and deaths published in the official statistics.

The official statistics of marriages, births and deaths did not begin until 1801. For the period 1735–84, however, a number of statistical tables concerning the movement of the population of Norway may be found in the publication Materialien zur Statistik der Dänischen Staaten, published in Flensburg and Leipzig in 1784. This contains a summary statement of births and deaths for each diocese and for the kingdom for each of the years 1735 until 1784, and of marriages for the years 1770–83. There are also some tables of births and deaths for the years 1770–84, classified by sex, and two tables covering the deaths during the years 1781 and 1783, classified by 10-yearly age groups, separately for males and females. For the period 1785–99 summaries of the numbers of births and deaths in Norway are given in Tableau des Etats Danois par Catteau (Paris, 1802). The numbers of marriages in the kingdom are also known for the period 1795–9. No printed returns exist for the year 1800. The figures recorded in the above-mentioned publications concerning the years 1736–99 are—as far as the aggregate figures for the country are concerned—reprinted in Statistiske Oversikter, 1926, published by the Central Bureau of Statistics.

The official statistical returns of marriages, births and deaths have been published as from the year 1801. They were prepared by the statistical office, Tabellkontoret, under the Ministry of Finance. The first publication appeared in 1839, Statistiske Tabeller for Kongeriget Norge, 4. Række. This publication contains tables of marriages, live- and stillbirths and deaths in each year, corresponding to the form used at that time by the clergy for their annual reports. For the years 1826–35 there is a table relating to multiple births, and to deaths due to accidents, suicide or homicide. The annual returns are given separately for each of the five dioceses of the country.

The next publication concerning the movement of the population was issued by the Home Office in 1847 (Statistiske Tabeller for Kongeriget Norge, 8. Række). This
publication covers the period 1836–45 and contains, in addition to the annual
returns, the results of the population census of 1845. There is a summary table
corresponding to that given for the period 1801–35, and also a tabular statement
giving aggregate figures for the country as a whole of marriages by months for each
of the years 1837–45, and records as to the age and civil condition of persons
marrying, specified by diocese, for each of the years 1839–45. There is also a table
showing the number of deaths in each month for the period 1837–45, the number of
deaths of illegitimate children, of women dying in childbirth (classified by age), and
the number of children overlaid by their parents. Finally, the publication contains
a table stating the deaths due to accident, homicide, or suicide during the years
1836–45, classified by manner of death. All these returns are given separately for
each diocese.

A corresponding survey for the period 1846–55 was published in 1857 in con-
nexion with the results of the 1855 census. The returns in this publication are the
same as those given for 1836–45. But the geographical distribution in the latter
volume is given in greater detail, the returns being stated for each deanery. From
1846 the deaths under 5 years of age are given in three groups: 0–1, 1–3 and 3–5 years.

For the decade 1856–65 the statistics of the movement of the population were
issued in 1869 by the Home Office in a separate publication entitled: \textit{Tabeller
vedrørende Folkemængdens Bevegelse i aarene} 1856–65, N.O.S., C, nr. 1. In this
decennial survey the returns are much more detailed and give more combinations
of the statistical data than before. This marked the first step towards the modern
treatment of the statistics, and became a standard for later investigations in this
field. The publication was prepared under the direction of the then chief clerk
in the Home Office, subsequently director of the Central Bureau of Statistics,
A. N. Kiaer, who, in a comprehensive introduction to the tables, for the first
time gave a scientific analysis of the results.

Among the returns in this publication may be mentioned a tabular survey of the
increase and decrease of the population and an estimate of the migration to and
from the different districts. There are also tables comparing the population
enumerated at the various censuses and the intercensal movements as far back as
1801. Estimates of marriages and births are given to illustrate, \textit{inter alia}, marriage
frequency and fertility. Finally, we should mention the life-table for Norway for
the period 1856–65, the first of its kind ever published in the official Norwegian
statistics. This table contains a calculation of the probability of death of men and
women at individual ages, the average actual duration of life and the expectation of
life for the kingdom and the towns. The results are compared with previous estimates
of the mortality and the actual duration of life at individual ages during the period
1821–50, calculated by the social scientist, Eilert Sundt, in \textit{Dødeligheten i Norge}
(Christiania, 1855). There are also comparable estimates of the mortality in
Norway during the years 1846–55, calculated by the Swedish statistician Rosen-
kranz-Balchen.

As already mentioned, the year 1866 was a turning-point in the development
of Norwegian vital statistics, the system of compiling nominal records of each
individual marriage, birth and death being then introduced, instead of the previous summary lists. Hitherto the categories provided in the existing schedules used by the clergy for their annual reports had limited the statistics which might be derived from the basic material. From now on, however, the Bureau had much more liberty of action and was able to deal with problems which arose on the basis of the original individual data. The statistical publications of the seventies and eighties show that new sociological problems were constantly being taken up and subjected to statistical analysis. At the same time great efforts were made to arrive at statistically correct methods in the various investigations.

Among the new material published in the years after 1866 may be mentioned tables classifying married men, fathers of newborn children and deceased males by occupation. Attention should also be drawn to the statistics of births, analysed by months, and to a more detailed age analysis of the deaths among children under 5 years, with separate classification of the deaths within the first 2 years of life by days and months.

From 1870 information is available as regards the ages of parents of legitimate children and the ages of mothers of infants born out of wedlock. This information made it possible to investigate the fertility of married and unmarried women of different ages.

Since 1866 the Home Office and, later, the Central Statistical Bureau, have issued annual surveys of the movement of the population. For the years 1866–1920, 5-yearly abstracts of the statistical data have also been published, these abstracts giving to some extent more detail than the surveys for the single years. Apart from the first volumes for 1860–70, both the annual and the quinquennial publications up to 1933 contain as a rule only the absolute figures without further comments. But in the so-called general surveys, published at intervals of 10–20 years, the statistical data on marriages, births and deaths were related to the different groups in the population, enumerated only at the periodical censuses.

The first of these general surveys concerns the period 1866–85 and was published in 1890 under the title: Oversigt over de vigtigste Resultater av statistiske Tabeller vedkommende Folkemengdens Bevægelse, 1866–85. This publication contains a survey of the population of Norway in olden times and an analysis of the increase in the population of the towns and rural districts, distributed between the different geographical areas. On the basis of the marriage returns for the period 1871–80, the marriage rates for men and women in the various groups by age and civil condition were calculated per 100 living persons in the corresponding groups, and the results for 1871–80 are compared with the preceding decennia back to 1841. There is also a table showing the fertility of married women of different ages, based upon the number of livebirths recorded in 1875–6 and the number of married women, specified by age, recorded at the 1875 census.

We should also mention the calculations of the average death-rates by sex and age for the decennium 1871–80, compared with the preceding decennia back to 1841, and a special calculation of the chances of death for legitimate and illegitimate children for every 3 months within the first 2 years of life.
The next general survey of the movement of the population (N.O.S. V, nr. 25) covers the period 1886–1900. In this publication the fertility rates of married women at individual ages are estimated on the basis of the birth statistics for the years 1889–90 and 1899–1900 and the figures recorded at the censuses of 1890 and 1900 in respect to the distribution of married women by age. For the rest, this volume mainly contains returns comparable to those recorded in the survey for 1866–85. This is also the case as far as the surveys for 1901–10 and 1911–20 (N.O.S. VI, nr. 55 and N.O.S. VIII, nr. 6) are concerned. The last-mentioned publication contains, in addition to the usual estimates of marriage frequency by age and marital condition, an investigation into marriage frequency by occupation and geographic area, and an analysis of the correlation between the ages of husbands and wives.

During the 1920's the publication of vital statistics was greatly reduced owing to lack of appropriations. However, all the most important data for this decade are given in Folkemengdens bevegelse, 1921–32 (N.O.S. IX, nr. 70). This survey incorporates several new items relating to fertility and mortality experience. For example, there is a calculation of the number of births per 100 married women by age of mother and duration of marriage. Further, the fertility experience in the different counties and towns is illustrated in terms of estimated standard rates, and there is a table of legitimate births by parity. This volume also contains the results of a special inquiry into mortality in the various districts of the country, analysed by sex and age. The inquiry was carried out for 4-yearly periods adjacent to the censuses in 1890, 1900, 1920 and 1930. For the last of these periods, 1929–32, separate figures are given for mortality by sex and age from tuberculosis, other diseases, and violent deaths in the different counties.

As regards the inherent growth of the population, estimated gross and net reproduction rates for Norway from 1890 until 1930 were calculated, based upon the existing calculations of the numbers of births per 1000 women of different ages and the number of women surviving to the same ages according to the life tables for the relevant years.

As previously mentioned, tables have been published as far back as 1866 giving the numbers of marriages and deaths, classified by occupation. Very little use, however, has been made of this material. The Central Bureau of Statistics attempted, in connexion with the 1920 census, to estimate occupational mortality within various age groups, but the results were not satisfactory. Because of the very detailed subdivision of the statistics necessary for this investigation, the final figures were too small for the calculation of reliable rates, and the resultant rates did not, therefore, give a correct picture of the mortality experience within the various occupations. In later years the occupational data in the clerical lists have not been analysed statistically.

As from 1933, Folkemengdens bevegelse has again been published every year. The greater part of the returns taken up in the survey for 1921–32 has been carried on, and has gradually been amplified by the inclusion of new items, as for instance a more detailed study of infant mortality. The volumes for 1935 and 1940 contain
summaries of the data for the periods 1921–5 and 1936–40, and on the basis of these data a series of calculations is given in the introduction, these estimates being reliable only for quinquennial periods, because of the small number of cases covered.

In addition to the information on mortality in Norway, given in the surveys of the movement of population, the Statistical Bureau has published a series of life-tables for every decennium from 1870 until 1930. The first of these series appeared in 1888 under the title Livs- og dødstabeller for det norske folk etter erfaringene fra 10-aret 1871/72–1880/81 (N.O.S. Række, nr. 68). This publication contains figures for the country as a whole regarding the probability of death at individual ages, separately for males and females, for the period 1871/2–1880/1, the mean duration and the mean expectation of life at individual ages and also a detailed life-table for the first 2 years of life, based on the experience of the years 1876–78. The number of survivors per 100,000 liveborn males and females is estimated for each 24-hour period for the first 2 weeks, for each month for the first year of life and by quarters for the second year of life. The method used is explained in detail in the text, which also contains comments on the statistics.

The later life-tables have largely been prepared in the same way as the tables for 1871/2–1880/1. In the life-tables for 1881/2–1890/1, separate mortality tables for the rural districts and the towns are also given, and in the life-tables for 1891/2–1900/1 rates of mortality and a table of survivors by marital status are included. In addition, the Central Bureau of Statistics has prepared, for each decennium since 1900, standardized tables of death-rates and tables for Norwegian life insurance purposes, and these are printed as an appendix to the ordinary life-tables.

Finally, since 1880 statistics of the resident population of the country, specified by sex and age, for each year of the intercensal periods have been given as an annex to the life-tables.

The last published life-tables for Norway relates to the period 1921/2–1930/1. The table for the decennium 1931/2–1940/1 should have been published long ago, but because of the events which prevented Norway from taking a new census in 1940, it has not been possible to prepare these tables, the necessary information regarding the age and sex composition of the population at the end of the decennial period not being available.

2. The statistics of emigration and immigration

(a) Statistics of emigration

Norwegian statistics of emigration cover only emigration to transatlantic countries. There are no statistics concerning emigration to Sweden, Denmark or other European countries because hitherto there has been no compulsory registration of emigration to those countries.

Information concerning transatlantic emigration was at first collected through lensommenene in the rural districts, and through the chiefs of police in the seaports at which the emigrants embarked. These reports were sent in each year to the prefect

1 See note on p. 218.
of the county concerned. The prefect also received reports on emigrants through
the vicar of the parish in which the emigrants had been domiciled. In addition to
these records, annual reports were in later years sent in from the Norwegian-
Swedish consuls in Quebec and New York.

All these records, however, were not very reliable or adequate. This was to
a great extent due to the fact that there was no official control in respect of the
transportation of emigrants. Such control was first introduced under the Emigration
Act of 22 May 1869. By that act, which is still in force, all emigration agencies have
to make a written contract with every emigrant, and this contract must be presented
to the police. The police are obliged to keep a register of the emigrants.

With these regulations in force, practically all the transatlantic emigration from
Norway came under the control of the police, and the emigrant registers provided
satisfactory material for official statistics. In accordance with a letter from the
Home Office to the chiefs of police in 1868, the latter were required to enter the
following items in the emigrant registers: name, year of birth, place of birth, residence, civil condition and occupation of emigrants over 15 years of age. Later
on they were also required to collect information concerning the destination,
whether a ticket or passage money had been sent to the emigrant from abroad, and
the cause of the emigration, especially if the reason was difficulty in getting profit-
able work in Norway or in obtaining land.

The chiefs of police were ordered to send the prefects a copy of the emigrant
registers on a prescribed form every year, and these records were again forwarded
to the Home Office. Later the records were sent directly from the chiefs of police
to the Central Bureau of Statistics. Since 1923 the nominal lists of emigrants have
been sent in at the end of each quarter. From 1876 onwards the Central Bureau of
Statistics also compiled monthly summaries of emigration from the principal ports.

The first official statistics of emigration were published in the quinquennial
reports from the prefects (Amtmaendenes 5-Ars Beretninger) for the period 1841–5.
These data, however, were too sporadic and unreliable to be adapted to a general
survey for the whole country. In the reports for the two succeeding quinquennia,
the information was more complete, and a summary table was drawn up, covering
emigration from the various counties for each of the years 1846–50. Corresponding
tables for the succeeding 10 years are given in the 5-yearly reports for 1851–5 and
1856–60.

From 1856 the statistics of emigration were incorporated in the official vital
statistics. The survey of the movement of the population during the period 1856–65
contains a table showing the emigration from the various counties from 1836 to
1865. The returns, however, are not very reliable, owing to the very defective basic
data available for those years.

From 1866 the records of transatlantic emigration were published in the annual
reports on the movement of the population, as well as in the quinquennial abstracts
and the periodic general surveys. Finally, all data concerning overseas emigration
from 1825 to 1918 are collected and analysed in a special publication, Utvandrings-
statistikk (N.O.S. VII, nr. 25), issued by the Ministry of Social Affairs in 1921.
Complete returns of the emigrants by age and sex exist from 1866, but the distribution by civil condition was not analysed until 1888. From 1868 the male emigrants over 15 years of age are classified by occupation. Corresponding data for the female emigrants, however, were not available until 1903. The distribution of emigration by calendar months goes back to 1876. From that year information has also been available in respect to the emigration from the various Norwegian ports. From 1905 statistical returns concerning the causes of emigration have been compiled, based upon declarations from the emigrants.

(b) Statistics of immigration

The administrative mechanism necessary as a basis for statistics of immigration into Norway did not exist until 1916. On 24 June 1915 an act was passed, making it obligatory to report on all persons, not residing in Norway, but arriving in the country from abroad. Previously, estimates of immigration were based on the material provided at the population censuses, the Swedish vital statistics and reports from the shipping registrars of deserters and returned sailors. By the act of 1915 all immigration was to be placed under the control of the police, and from the alien registers of the police it should be possible to obtain the data required to work out reliable statistics on immigration.

From 1916 until the end of 1931 the Central Bureau of Statistics received extracts from the alien registers of the police in the form of nominal lists of the immigrants reported. Based on these data, detailed tables were prepared, giving information on immigrants wishing to settle permanently in Norway or intending to take up work here, and a summary table of the persons visiting the country temporarily on business, for the purpose of recreation, etc. These tables were published, for the years 1916–26, in the annual surveys of the movement of the population.

But these data gave a very incomplete picture of the actual extent of immigration. The Aliens Act of 1915 introduced—as mentioned above—compulsory registration for all persons not residing in the country. But it seems that these regulations were largely disobeyed by returning Norwegian-Americans, who comprised the bulk of the immigrants. By an amendment of 27 April 1927 in the Aliens Act compulsory registration was limited to alien citizens only. The greater number of returning Norwegian-Americans was thus exempt from any obligation to report to the police. A weakness of the immigration statistics was that they evidently included a great number of persons who did not settle in the country, but very soon left the country again without notifying their departure to the authorities.

From the point of view of vital statistics, the real question of interest is to ascertain the number of immigrants actually settling in the country each year. But this information cannot be obtained without official control of all persons leaving again. When it became evident that the immigration statistics were misleading, the Statistical Bureau ceased to collect, from 1931, the above-mentioned reports from the police. The actual amount of immigration to Norway since 1930 will only be ascertained when the results of the census of 3 December 1946 are available.