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*Colonial Secretary's Office, Perth,
October 5, 1843.*

His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to direct the Second Annual Report of the Registrar of Births, Marriages, and Deaths, to be published for general information.

*By His Excellency's command,
PETER BROWN.*

**SECOND
ANNUAL REPORT OF BIRTHS,
MARRIAGES & DEATHS.**
No. 224.]

*General Register Office, Perth,
September 30, 1843.*

SIR,—I have the honor to forward, for the information of His Excellency the Governor, the Second Annual Report of Births, Marriages, and Deaths, in Western Australia, pursuant to the provisions of the general Registration Act.

I feel extreme satisfaction in reporting the signal success which has attended the registration throughout the Colony during its second year, and that many of the difficulties consequent on the establishment of an entirely new system, are speedily giving place to an efficient working of the general registration.

The deficiency in the registration of births during the first year, was undoubtedly considerable; but not greater than was to be anticipated on a first trial, especially when the system was counteracted by novelty and misapprehension: and it could hardly have been expected, that any scheme, however advantageous, and however well organised, should have at once attained popularity, when the colonists, for whose cooperation it called, may have been for the most part ignorant as to its advantages, and therefore careless as to its results. I am happy to state, however, that the progressive improvement in the registration, and the great increase in the number of births registered during the second year, may warrant a belief, that the intentions of the Government and the Legislature in proposing and passing the Registration and Marriage Acts, are on the eve of being fully understood, and very generally appreciated.

It has been found expedient, in one or two instances only, to adopt the suggestion made in the last report with reference to an enforcement of the penalty of twenty shillings, incurred by neglecting to register a birth or death within one calendar month from the date thereof, with a view of keeping the colonists alive to the consequences of omitting or forgetting to record these occurrences in due time, and with the proper officer. And I have pleasure in stating, the result has been highly satisfactory in the district in which that suggestion has been pursued. And there is no doubt, that, as the objects of the system become gradually developed, the public will perceive, that it is not alone their duty, but their interest to facilitate the registration; for it is a well-known fact (especially to the legal profession), that many a man has had undoubted right to property, of which he could not take advantage, from the want of legal proof of relationship, arising from ill-kept registers and defective registration, or from not possessing sufficient funds to defray the heavy expenses attending searches in a multiplicity of parishes. Such are the ramifications of society, such the reverses of fortune, that no person, however indigent or wealthy he may be, should be indifferent to a legal general registration of births, marriages, and deaths.

It has been represented, since the period of the last report, that much inconvenience

might arise to the inhabitants of the town of Fremantle, if that place continued in the district of Perth; it was consequently considered advisable, with His Excellency's concurrence, to separate that town into a distinct district, for which a Sub-Registrar has been appointed.

I have now to solicit His Excellency's attention to the four subjoined statements (A B C & D), which will give the total number of births, marriages, and deaths, that have been registered throughout the Colony during the year that has elapsed; and however circumscribed the result may be, in consequence of the present limited population of the Colony, I am led to trust, nevertheless, that information may be obtained therefrom, and relied on, by the inquirer into the statistics of Western Australia.

The births, marriages, and deaths, are blended in the same statement (A) with a view of presenting, as nearly as may be, at one glance, many of the circumstances which appear to afford opportunity for remark.

The significant increase in the number of births over the former year, which is shown in table B, may be accounted for in the more matured working of the registration during the year that has elapsed, and in a slight measure, perhaps, by the recent increased immigration to our shores.

It will be observed that female births have preponderated this year; but as it has been long known there are more males born into the world than females, that fact alone should not be taken as indicative of an increasing population. It is confidently stated by writers on the population of countries, where duly regulated registers have existed several years, that the excess of male above female births generally averages about six per cent.; and in some parts of Prussia, particularly among the Jews who reside there, and elsewhere, it is still higher; in consequence, however, of the greater mortality among male children, it is diminished at the end of their first year to about one per cent. And as far as I have been able to obtain information from Parliamentary and other returns, it appears that the mortality continues less among females until about the age of twenty (the average period of marriage), when the various consequences of child-birth, and the concomitant causes, appear to effect a very perceptible alteration. Existing statistics perhaps afford room for a doubt, whether a preponderant mortality among male infants may not ultimately contribute to sustain an average increasing population.

The excess of births above deaths, which is shown in table A, may be considered as so many in addition to the annual population of the Colony; but in order to arrive at correct and useful conclusions in this and other respects, it will be preferable to possess an average or mean of several years. The population of the Colony; the ratio of births, marriages, and deaths, respectively, of the population; of births to marriages; and of births to deaths, appear in table B; and on comparison with similar proportions in other countries, they seem very favorable to Western Australia. And here I cannot refrain from contemplating, in connection with the births, marriages, and deaths, the very encouraging augmentation of our numbers during the last four or five years, which has occurred at timely intervals, without any sudden demands having been made upon the resources of the Colony, except such as it was well prepared to supply. In 1839 the population was 2,154, and in 1842 it had progressively increased to 3,475;

and we may reasonably calculate on this year's census approximating, if not exceeding 4,000, exclusive of the military. The annual excess of births above deaths alone, must have contributed very materially to this progressive increase; and it is satisfactory to observe, that the low mortality among our children, which is shown by the tables, will allow a comparatively much larger portion of that excess to replace by their own profitable exertions, the charges imposed upon the community in providing sustenance during the unproductive portion of their lives; and also to become of considerable value in the aggregate productive industry of the Colony.

The following statement, being the proportions in England and several of her Colonies, of births to the population, taken from Parliamentary returns (United Kingdom Part VI 1836, and Supplement to Part VII Colonies 1836), and placed in comparison with Western Australia, may not be uninteresting, as exhibiting the difference that appears to prevail in favor of this Colony:—

Comparative Statement.

Western Australia	1 to 24	83-158
England	1	28
Cape of Good Hope	1	28 155-2675
Van Diemen's Land	1	43 142-333
Mauritius	1	44½
New South Wales	1	47 145-407
South Australia (no returns)		

By statement C it appears that the number of marriages in Western Australia has increased simultaneously with the population. There were 23 performed according to the rites of the Established Church; and 21 solemnized not according to the rites of the Established Church; making the total number of marriages which have taken place during the past year to be 44. Out of this number, there were 2 males married under the age of 21 years, and 13 females married below the age of 18 years. The proportion of marriages to the population, and of births to marriages, appear in table B.

The marriage register contains a curious test of the state of education among our adult population, with respect to writing; and as it may throw some light on the condition of the colonists, it may not be out of place to notice it. However simple in appearance, it is a test which must not be disregarded, but may be found a safe criterion of the comparative state of education, especially when similar tests have been obtained for a series of years; and, although some objections may be made, that it indicates unwillingness to write, not inability, it is still a test of proficiency; for it is to be presumed, that very few, if any, who did not experience much difficulty in writing, or were afraid of exposing their deficiency, would be unwilling to write their names. It appears, then, by the register, which has been analysed during the last two years, that 15 per cent. of the men, and 34 per cent. of the women (giving a mean of 24 per cent.), who were required to sign the register, either could not write, or wrote so imperfectly as to have attested it with marks; and the Registrar-General of England has stated, in one of his valuable reports, that the proportions in England were 33 per cent. of the men, and 49 per cent. of the women (giving a mean of 41 per cent.), who signed the marriage register with marks. It may, therefore, be worth while to inquire into the cause of such different results, and to account for the remarkable fact, that 85 in 100 men, and 66 in 100 women, could write their names in the marriage register of Wes-

tern Australia, and only 67 in 100 men, and 51 in 100 women, could write their names in the English marriage registers. I may add, that the probable relative education of both sexes is strikingly illustrated in the above proportions.

Table D shows a very significant increase in the aggregate amount of mortality; and this difference must at once excite attention, as the accidental deaths from drowning, &c., which so largely enhanced the number last year, are set down this year at nil; but this increase may not be attributed to any fatal epidemic, endemial, or contagious disease, from all which we appear to have been happily free since the establishment of the Colony; or to the more efficient working of the registration, for the number of deaths set down last year was very nearly, if not quite correct; nor may it be ascribed to the increase of population; and the present infant state of the registration, does not afford sufficient information to ground conjectures on the cause of this preponderant sickness—whether it has arisen from an unusually unhealthy season, or from what other source,—it must, therefore, be left to others to account for the increase of deaths during the past year.

It is proposed, as the registration becomes more matured in years, to arrange the tables in such a manner as to render it easy to compare the various forms of fatal diseases; and to show the diseases in town and country, and in the Western, Eastern, and Southern districts, together with the influence of climate and seasons in each district; but any attempt to embrace these important desiderata in the present state of the registration, would lead to deceptive conclusions, and present an air of minuteness, which has not been, and could not have been obtained. The nomenclature of diseases, aptly said to be of as much importance as weights and measures in the physical sciences, is also attended with difficulty at present; and it is next to impossible, without the assistance of the medical gentlemen in the several districts, to enter the causes of death uniformly in the same names—local terms of equivocal meaning having been frequently sent to this office; much must, therefore, be left to future improvement, to attain anything like perfection in this and other respects. And here I may take an opportunity of stating, that much of the practical and scientific benefits expected to arise from the vital statistics obtained through the medium of the general registration, must depend not only on the vigilance of the Sub-Registrars, but also the concurrence of the medical profession in the Colony. It is obvious, that the coöperation of the medical gentlemen practising throughout the Colony is absolutely essential to ensure a faithful statement of the cause of death; and I would earnestly recommend, that every practising member of the profession, who may have been present at the death, or in attendance during the last illness of any person, shall after such death place in the hands of the occupier of the house, who is required to give information, a written statement of the remote and immediate cause of death, which any such occupier may show at the time of registration; and I trust, the usual liberality of the profession will cheerfully respond to this important call; and so, as years roll by and augment the numerical statement of the causes of death, we may hope, with their assistance, and notwithstanding the comparative smallness of our numbers, to reap many interesting, useful, and scientific results, in medical or vital statistics.

Having promised in the first annual report to place other Colonies in juxtaposition with ours, in order to exhibit whatever difference may prevail in reference to sickness and mortality; and to arrive, by this means, at a knowledge of the comparative health of the people in either colony; I have obtained from the Parliamentary reports of 1836, the following data; and, although the comparison is not of so comprehensive a nature as I had contemplated, owing to a paucity of information, it may,

nevertheless, induce a strong inference, that our adopted country is eminently blessed with a most salubrious and healthy climate:—

Comparative statement of the Deaths to the population.

Western Australia.	1 to 94	21-41
Van Diemen's Land.	1	65 161-220
Cape of Good Hope.	1	60½
England (Kingdom of).	1	46 3-5
Mauritius.	1	44 2-5
New South Wales.	1	36 97-265
South Australia (no returns).		

In the next annual report, I purpose making a comparative statement of the mortality in all the British Colonies; and, without any invidious distinction, to arrive by this means at a knowledge of the probable health of the inhabitants in each Colony.

In compliance with His Excellency's wishes, I have endeavored to ascertain the deaths caused by excessive drinking. The startling number compared with the aggregate mortality, being about an eighth, will doubtless be a fearful warning to the habitual drunkards; who to appease an acquired morbid thirst, and probably to effect from time to time an oblivion of former imprudences, are fearlessly, though surely, rushing into eternity, by a revolting indulgence in intemperate habits.

The number of children born dead and dying in the first year of their existence, will always be considerable; but it may be satisfactory to know that the number in this Colony is small, and will be found very insignificant compared with the mortality among children in older and more thickly peopled countries, where a numerous class of epidemical diseases prevail, and where the circumstances of the people do not admit of either mothers or children obtaining those comforts and indulgences which they require, and which are at the command, and within the means of all in Western Australia. The difference in the deaths of male and female children cannot fail to be remarked, and somewhat supports the statements made in a former part of this letter, to the effect, that there was a greater mortality among male infants, although male births usually preponderated; which may cause and maintain a preponderance in the female portion of a community, and probably help to induce an increasing population. The very remarkable and wide difference between the male and female deaths, may be accounted for in the more temperate, quiet, and regular habits, of the female portion of our community.

It will be observed that the deaths arising from diseases of the respiratory organs are somewhat numerous, being about one-seventh of the total number of deaths; and it is but just to our climate to state there is reason to believe, that all the individuals who have died from pulmonary consumption, arrived in Western Australia in a state bordering on a serious disorganization of their lungs. And medical men inform me, that many instances are known, of persons having left England some years since for this Colony, in a very precarious and dying state with affections of their lungs, who have been restored to comparative health by a residence here; but that a more certain cure might have been effected, if such people had been persuaded to leave England in the incipient stage of the complaint.

Sporadic diseases of the nervous system appear low; and if the disease, chiefly but not exclusively incidental to young children is deducted, the rate would be very low compared with that in other countries.

In diseases of the digestive organs the rate of mortality was 1:5 out of about 1000 living; but if the deaths from thrush and dysentery be added to the diseases of the digestive organs, the mortality of this class would be raised to about 2-25. The deaths from this description of disease were at exactly the same rate in England, as shown in the first annual report of the Registrar-General.

Among the enumerated causes of morta-

lity, there appears only one death arising from dysentery, and that was a child. As this complaint has been said to be one of the most formidable prevailing diseases in the Colony, there is reason to conclude, that the importance of paying early attention to the disease, so strongly inculcated by the medical profession, has had its due weight with the public.

I cannot close my observations on the the deaths, without noticing the disparity in the comparative mortality of Perth and the outstations; which arises probably from the excesses and sedentary occupations of many of the inhabitants of Perth, and the more active and vigorous employments of the residents in the country. On comparing the deaths by taking the proportions of the populations respectively in town and country, it will be seen, that the deaths in Perth and its vicinity are 1 in 65-79 living, whilst in the country they are only 1 in 119-32 living. In order to arrive at these proportions I have estimated the population of Perth at 1,250 and the population of the country at 2,625; but the census being taken this day may be much above these numbers.

The foregoing remarks, necessarily limited in the infant state of the registration, may not be considered altogether devoid of interest to the colonists, viewing them in connexion with the present state and future prospects of Western Australia. But as advancing years will embrace triennial, quinquennial, septennial, and decennial, periods of registration, to the statistical inquirer the reports of those years will be of more value, and will be looked forward to with greater interest.

The following interesting letter from W. P. Dinely, Esq., Surgeon, and Sub-Registrar of Fremantle, which accompanied the annual return of that gentleman to the General Register Office, may be satisfactory, as an additional proof of the salubrity of this climate:—

To the Registrar of Births, &c., Perth.

SIR.—“Knowing that you are about to make your annual report on the mortality of Western Australia, I take the liberty (holding the office of Sub-Registrar for the District of Fremantle) of forwarding you a few remarks on the diseases most prevalent, and of the state of the climate, as regards the health of the inhabitants of this Colony.

“We have no particular extremes of heat or cold; though the days in summer are hot, the nights invariably are cool, enabling us to rise in the morning in cheerfulness and health, entirely exempt from that lassitude and debility, which warm climates generally occasion.

“Measles, small pox, typhoid, or puerperal fevers, or any of those dire diseases to which the Mother Country is subject, are here unknown. Among the diseases most prevalent, I may mention ophthalmia, and a mild form of dysentery, both of which prove but trifling, if common care be taken, and proper remedies applied; but too frequently, which is the case in most Colonies, the generality of invalids think it needless to make application to the profession, until a certain routine, varying according to the patients own ideas of the matter, has been had recourse to, which invariably proves beneficial to the practitioner, and highly prejudicial to the individual; and by which means they often lay the foundation of chronic disease, growing not unfrequently fatal, and at the best, a source of great annoyance. In fact, was it not for their unconscious consideration, together with the common accidents which all occasionally are subject to—not forgetting the free patronage given to the *Alcohol*—the profession would do well to close the scene, and retire into the bush, to plough, to toil, and to reap, and after a season, by the bye! not a very unpleasant task, to ruminate in the orange groves and vineyards, under almost a cloudless sky, a clear dry atmosphere, and in a climate unsurpassed by any in the world. In conclusion, I will only add, that I think above all others that it is peculiarly adapted to those persons who unfortunately suffer from affections of

the chest. One case of pulmonary consumption which came under my own personal knowledge I can mention in particular, as the life was not considered worth a day's purchase at home—the patient lived here upwards of three years.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
W. P. DINELY,
Surgeon, and Medical Attendant
at Fremantle Gaol.

Sept. 26, 1843."

Having briefly alluded to such particulars in the tables as appear worthy of notice, it only remains for me, before concluding this letter, to advert to a few of the duties connected with the registration.

The several annual returns that have been received from the Sub-Registrars throughout the territory, are for the most part satisfactory, and evidence the increasing attention bestowed by those gentlemen on the registration. But the number of births returned as having been entered in one or two Districts, particularly Bunbury and Australind, may appear to fall short of the actual number of births that have taken place.

With regard to the duties performed more immediately in my office I have only to report, that every duplicate received has been duly transcribed into the General Registers—that each entry has been carefully examined with its corresponding duplicate,

and that the duplicates requiring explanation, will receive early attention and correction. The duplicates and letters referring to the registry, have been orderly arranged for preservation, and the indexes are perfected.

Two hundred and thirty seven entries have been made during the year; which together with those of the first year, comprise four hundred and five legal registers recorded since the establishment of the general registration.

In concluding this report I would assure His Excellency, that I shall not relax my endeavors, in conjunction with the gentlemen connected with the registration, to impress upon the public, the necessity and propriety of their continuing to afford every facility in their power to the local officers in the important work of the registration; and I cannot avoid adding a confident expectation, that at the close of the next year, I shall be able to repeat, that I am not aware of any person having, on application, refused to comply with the inexpensive provisions of a law, which has in view, not only individual and family welfare, but also objects of colonial benefit and importance.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your very obedient servant,
GEO. FRED. STONE,
Registrar of Births, &c.
The Honorable the }
Colonial Secretary. }

SUBJOINED STATEMENTS.

(A)

Statement of the number of Births, Marriages, and Deaths; showing the male and female births and deaths, &c., &c.

DISTRICTS.	BIRTHS.			MARRIAGES.	DEATHS.			Excess of births over deaths... 117 " female over male births 12
	Male.	Female	Total.		Male.	Female	Total.	
Perth	22	29	51	20	15	4	19	
Fremantle	13	13	26	4	6	1	7	
Guildford	10	14	24	7				
York	8	8	16	1	1		1	
Toodyay	1	2	3	1	3		3	
Albany	3	4	7	2	1		2	
Vasse	6	3	9	1	2		2	
Bunbury	5	9	14	6	6		7	
Pinjarra	5	3	8	2				
Total	73	85			32	9		
Total births... 158			Total marriages } 44		tot. deaths 41			

(B)

Statement of the Population of the Colony—proportion of births, marriages, and deaths, to the population, &c.; and the yearly increase, &c., &c.

Population of Western Australia 30th Sept., 1842..... 3,475
Probable increase since, including births..... 400

3,875

Proportion of births to the population, as 1 is to 24.5253
" marriages " as 1 is to 88.068
" deaths " as 1 is to 94.51
" births to marriages, 3.59 or about as 3½ is to 1
" births to deaths, 3.85 or nearly as 4 is to 1

Births during 1841-2	72	during 1842-3	158	increase	86
Marriages " "	38	" "	44	"	6
Deaths " "	29	" "	41	"	12

(C)

Marriages during the years 1841-2 and 1842-3

According to the rites of the Established Church—	1841-2	1842-3
By Sub-Registrars' Licenses.....	19	21
" Certificates	3	2
Totals	22	23
Not according to the rites of the Established Church—		
In the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel... 3	3	5
" Sub-Registrars' Offices	13	16
Totals	16	21
Total Marriages in each year.....	38	44

(D)

Statement of the number of Deaths, distinguishing the sexes, and the nature of the diseases, &c., to which each death was attributed: together with the ages: Recapitulation, &c., &c.

Description of Diseases, &c.	DEATHS,		
	Male.	Female	Totals.
Abscess on the liver.....	1		1
Age and consequent debility	1	1	2
Apoplexy.....	1		1
Convulsions.....		1	1
Consumption, pulmonary.	3	1	4
Diarrhoea.....	1		1
Dysentery.....	1		1
Epilepsy.....	1		1
Fever.....	1		1
Heart diseased.....		1	1
Inflammation of the brain	1		1
Ditto bowels, caused by } drinking cold water.. }	1		1
Ditto of the lungs.....	2		2
Liver diseased.....	1		1
Mesenteric disease.....	1		1
Spleen, enlargement of... 1			1
Thrush.....	1	1	2
Ulcers on the spinal column, soon after child- } birth..... }		1	1
Unknown cause.....	1		1
Casualties (see below)....	8	1	9
Still and premature births	5	2	7
Total deaths.....			41
Casualties.			
Excessive drinking.....	5		5
Accidentally shot.....	1		1
A bean by accident got } into the windpipe... }		1	1
Poison'd by eating tod stools	1		1
Temporary insanity.....	1		1
By accidental drowning..	nil	nil	nil
Total casualties.....			9

Ages, &c.

Males under 2 years..... 11
Females do..... 6
Two and under five..... 1
Five " ten..... 0
Ten " twenty..... 1
Twenty " thirty..... 2
Thirty " forty..... 9
Forty " fifty..... 5
Fifty " sixty..... 3
Sixty and upwards..... 3

Total..... 41

RECAPITULATION.

Sporadic Diseases.

Of the nervous system..... 4
" respiratory organs... 6
" organs of circulation. 1
" digestive organs..... 6
" Integumentary system 1
Uncertain seat..... 1
Age..... 2
Not above specified..... 17

38

Not including three deaths arising from Thrush and Dysentery; which, it is said, are not sporadic.

Commissariat Office, Perth,
September 28, 1843.

Tenders in triplicate will be received at this Office on Thursday, the 19th October next, for Five hundred weight of Candles required for Her Majesty's service.

For further particulars application to be made at this Office.

W. H. DRAKE,
Dep.-Asst.-Com.-General.

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