

# CENSUS OF POPULATION, 1946.

## VOLUME IX.—FERTILITY OF MARRIAGE

### EXPLANATORY NOTES

CENSUS DATE—12 MAY, 1946

Amongst the special inquiries which were included in the 1946 Census was one relating to Fertility of Marriage. The inquiry was framed as follows :

#### *Particulars of present marriage*

If person is married woman :

- (1) State month and year of *present* marriage ;
- (2) State the number of children *born alive* to the *present* marriage. If none write "none."

Thus the fertility inquiry related to all married women in the country whether or not their husbands were residing with them at the date of the Census ; widows and single women were excluded. The information was collected in respect of existing marriages only and the question on the number of children born alive was designed to exclude children of previous marriages, step-children and illegitimate children. There were 451,331 married women in the State on the Census date in 1946, and particulars relating to 443,636 of these women were included in the fertility tables. The remainder, amounting to 1.7 per cent of the total, were omitted on account of incomplete or markedly inaccurate information having been furnished by them on the Census schedule. In the case of 398,210 of the 443,636 families included in these fertility statistics the husband and wife were enumerated on the same schedule.

The particulars as to date of present marriage together with the date of birth of each married woman, which was also furnished on the Census schedule, taken in conjunction with the date of the Census, made it possible to determine (a) the duration of the marriage in completed years and (b) the age last birthday of the wife at the time of the marriage. In similar fashion in the cases in which the husband was enumerated on the same schedule as the wife, since particulars of the date of birth of the husband were available, it was possible to determine the age last birthday of the husband at the time of the marriage. Families of different sizes are classified by duration of marriage, age of wife at marriage and age of husband at marriage for the whole country in Table 7. Classification by all three of these factors is also made in Table 7A which shows the average number of children born, and in Table 7D which gives the percentage of childless marriages. The only other tables, apart from those relating to marriages of under one year's duration, in which classifications by both age of husband and by age of wife at marriage are employed are the summary tables 5 and 5A. The other two factors, i.e., duration of marriage and age of wife at marriage, are more potent determinants of fertility than the age of husband at marriage and classification by these factors is given in most of the fertility tables in this volume.

In this report the fertility data are also classified on other bases. These are (a) Area of residence, (b) Religion of the married woman, (c) Social Group, (d) Occupational Group, (e) Industrial Status and (f) Rateable Valuation. The classifications of families in the case of (c), (d) and (e) were determined by the Occupation and Industrial Status of the husband, if enumerated on the same schedule as the wife. If the husband was absent, Occupation and Industrial Status were not coded but Social Group was determined by the occupation of the wife if she was gainfully occupied and in other cases by the occupation of the principal breadwinner in the household. In cases in which the husband was not gainfully occupied and another relative was enumerated on the schedule who was gainfully occupied and who might be considered the principal breadwinner, the Occupation of this person determined the classification of the family in respect of social group. In the classification by social group farmers' relatives assisting on home farm are included with farmers and farm managers. Classification in respect of Rateable Valuation was made from particulars of the total valuation of all agricultural holdings in the State of which persons normally resident in the household, in which each married woman was enumerated, were the rated occupiers.

In the tables in which the data are classified by Social Group, Occupational Group or Industrial Status, it was decided, in order to reduce the amount of machine sorting on the punched cards, to confine the investigation to five selected duration of marriage groups, viz. 5-9 years, 20-24 years, 35-39 years, 40-44 years and 45 years and over. A further restriction within these groups to families for which the wife's age at marriage was 20-34 years was also made with the same end in view.

Since it is not possible from the particulars available on the registration of marriages to compile accurate statistics of the ages of the parties to a marriage, their normal place of residence, religion, social group, occupation or industrial status, it was decided to analyse fully the data for marriages of under one year's duration in cases where both husband and wife were enumerated on the same Census schedule. The results of this analysis is given in Tables 20-40 of this report. Particulars relating to 14,338 such marriages are included in these tables while the number of marriages registered in the country in the twelve months ended 30 April, 1946, was 17,933.

The latest available statistical information as to fertility of marriage prior to 1946 is that obtained at the Census of 1911, and accordingly the statistics herein are of exceptional interest. The results of the 1911 inquiry relate only to married women whose husbands appeared on the same Census schedule with them and the published particulars are confined to those of marriages of under 35 years' duration in which the age of wife at marriage was under 50 years. At the Census of 1911 the total number of married women returned was 601,281 and statistics in respect of 471,950 of these were included in the tables relating to fertility of marriage. Separate series of tables were prepared for the whole of Ireland, for the Six County Boroughs, for the Dublin Registration Area, and for the County Borough of Belfast. These tables gave particulars, for different durations of marriage, classified by age of wife and age of husband at marriage, of the number of families of each size, the number of children born alive and the number of these children who had died before the date of the Census. It is not possible to derive from the available material fertility statistics for 1911 relating to the present area of the State. In view of this fact and of the differences mentioned above only limited comparisons between the data for the two Censuses can be made.