

MC:APR/2/68(HEALTH)

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENTBIGGEST DROP IN BIRTH FIGURES IN ANY ONE YEAR
REGISTERED IN 1967

The latest issue of the Monthly Digest of Statistics, (March 1968) prepared by the Chief Statistician, Singapore, and published by the Government Printer, revealed that the total live-births in Singapore for 1967 was 50,442. This shows a fall of 4,238 births or nearly 8% as compared with that of the previous year 1966 at 54,680 and is the biggest ever drop in any one year.

10-year statistics

2. The annual figures of live-births and crude birth rate for the last 10 years from 1958 to 1967 reveal a welcome falling trend in births which can reasonably be attributed to :-

- (a) rising standard of living of the general population, through various factors - higher earning power, better housing and higher literacy through more education; and
- (b) more and more women getting wise to the benefits of Family Planning and opting for it.

	<u>Total live births</u>	<u>Increase (up) or decrease (down) in births over previous year</u>	<u>Crude birth rate per 1,000 population</u>
1958	62,495	up 738	41.3
1959	62,464	down 31	39.5
1960	61,775	" 689	37.8
1961	59,930	" 1,845	35.5
1962	58,977	" 953	34.0
1963	59,530	up 553	33.5
1964	58,217	down 1,313	32.0
1965	55,725	" 2,492	29.9
1966	54,680	" 1,045	28.6
1967	50,442	" 4,238	25.8

Sources:

- (1) Annual Report of Births & Deaths 1965.
- (2) Demographic Bulletin, December 1967.
- (3) Digest of Statistics, March 1968.

It will be noted from above that Singapore's crude birth rate has fallen from 41.3 per thousand in 1958 to 25.8 per thousand for 1967 or a drop of 15.5 per thousand over the last 10 years.

Impact of Government's 5-Year Mass F.P. programme being felt

3. It is clear that the impact of Government's 5-Year Mass Family Planning programme which started in 1966 under the auspices of the Singapore Family Planning & Population Board (FFPB) is already being reflected in the accelerated downward dip of our birth figures. As can be seen, the crude birth rate has been brought down 4.1 points, within only 2 years of operation (29.9 less 25.8).

Over 70,000 women taking to F.P. in 27 months

4. For the first 3 months of this year, January/March 1968, a total of 9,007 new cases have sought Family Planning assistance from FFPB. This brings the grand total of women registered for Family Planning with FFPB to-date, at 70,352, made up as follows:-

1966	30,410
1967	30,935
Jan./March 1968 (3 months)	9,007
Total (to-date) for 27 months	<u>70,352</u> =====

The logical conclusion arrived at is that the more women take to Family Planning the fewer babies will be born and there will be more smaller families and happier homes in Singapore.

Planning authorities will have to revise projections

5. In a talk given by Mr. Tye Cho Yook, Senior Lecturer of the Department of Social Medicine and Public Health, University of Singapore, to the Rotary Club of Singapore West in September 1966 on the subject of "Population trends in Singapore" the following projections were made:-

<u>Assumption</u>	<u>Estimated population in year 2,000</u>
At 1965 levels of fertility (29.9 per thousand) and mortality (5.5 per thousand)	5.0 million
If births contained at around 60,000 a year	3.8 million
If births contained at around 50,000 a year	3.0 million

If the above assessment is correct and there are reasonable grounds for optimism that birth figures this year may well fall below the 50,000 mark and the full repercussions of the Government's 5.-Year Mass F.P. programme can only be known after 1970, evidently our Planning authorities will have to drastically revise their projection figures of our future economic and social needs, in view of the fact that we have already reached the Rapid Fertility decline stage in 1967.