Perhaps the most impressive testimony regarding this decline in the death rate is furnished by the mortality statistics of Sweden, where vital statistics have been kept with great accuracy for the whole nation ever since 1750. There, the crude death rate declined from an average of 27·4 per 1,000 in the decade 1751-60 to 14·3 in the decade 1911-20 and to 11·8 in 1938.

Similarly, in England and Wales, the crude death rate, which was 22·5 per 1,000 in the 60's, 21·4 in the 70's and 18·2 in the 90's of the past century, declined to 15·4 in the first decade of the present century and 12·1 in the third; it was 12·4 in 1937. In Scotland, again, the average rate was 22·1 in the '60's, 21·8 in the '70's, 18·6 in the '90's, 13·9 in 1921-25, 13·6 in 1926-30, and 13·9 in 1937.

There will always be years of specially high mortality, for instance 1918, when the death rate in Ontario, the most populous of the provinces of Canada, was 15·3 per 1,000, owing to the influenza-pneumonia epidemic, as against 12·0 in 1917 and 11·9 in 1919. Over a period, however, these abnormalities are reduced to negligibility, and it remains generally true that from decade to decade there is a decline in the crude death rates of the countries of the white man's world.

As for Canada, while the period elapsed since the introduction of complete and comprehensive vital statistics in 1920 has been too short to establish a definite downward trend, the rate of 12·4 per 1,000 for that year, in the eight provinces then included in the registration area, was substantially higher than in any subsequent year. A decided improvement is shown in the deaths and death rate of Quebec for the years 1933-36, although for 1937 the rate increased to 11·3; for 1938 it has dropped to 10·3. On the whole, however, improvement has been in evidence since 1926, and latterly Quebec has shown a lower rate than any of the provinces farther east.

Subsection 1.—General Mortality.

As shown in Table **32**, p. 141, the absolute number of deaths and the death rates for Canada were lower for 1938 than for either of the two previous years. The death rate was 9·5 for 1938 which was a very definite improvement over the 10·2 of the previous year. Decreased rates for 1938 were common to all provinces, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick showing the greatest improvement.

Age Distribution of Decedents.—The numbers and percentages of males and females dying in the nine provinces in 1937 and 1938 are given by single years of age up to 5 and by quinquennial age groups thereafter in Table **16**.

The quartile and decile ages of decedents for the years 1926, 1936, and 1937 are given for the two sexes combined and for each sex in Table **17**. The fifth decile and second quartile (or the median) both mark the middle points of the arrays, and the deciles, dividing each half into five groups, give a more detailed picture of the age distribution in each half than do the quartiles. It is shown very definitely that the average ages of decedents have been increasing steadily. The method of construction and interpretation of this table is given on p. 111 in connection with a similar one showing quartile and decile ages of married fathers and mothers.

Standardized Death Rates.—While the crude death rate gives the actual mortality per 1,000 of population, the differing age constitution of the population in different communities and the high mortality among infants and elderly people make the crude death rate no true test of the relative expectation of life in such