

Subsection 2.—Infantile Mortality

In recent years a great part of the energy devoted by the medical profession and sanitarians to effect a decline in the death rate has gone to reduce infantile mortality, and in this field a large measure of success has been attained. In Canada, the Dominion, Provincial, and municipal health authorities have all taken part in the struggle to reduce infantile mortality, and usually, in the absence of epidemics, statistics show an improvement each year. For the years for which figures are available there is evident a very considerable decline in infantile mortality. Figures for 1939 show the lowest rate since the system was established, viz., 61 per thousand live births. In 1921 the infant death rate for Canada (using figures from provincial sources for Quebec) was 102 per 1,000 live births. Table 23 gives figures for the whole of Canada for the years 1932 to 1939 and averages for the five-year periods 1921-25, 1926-30, and 1931-35. For 1939 Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick with rates of 79 are the two highest, Quebec is next in order with a rate of 78. A study of the Quebec rates shows that steady improvement has been made in the twelve-year period during which the Province has been included in the registration area and 1938 figures show a decrease of over 1,000 as compared with 1937, and 1939 another decrease of 276 as compared with 1938. In Canada as a whole over 9,000 infant lives were preserved in 1939 which, under conditions prevailing in 1926, would probably have been lost.

23.—Infantile Mortality and Rates per 1,000 Live Births, by Provinces, 1932-39, with Averages, 1921-25, 1926-30, and 1931-35

Year	P.E.I.	N.S.	N.B.	Que.	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.	Canada ¹
INFANT DEATHS										
Averages, 1921-25.....	151	1,139	1,165	2	5,916	1,394	1,789	1,327	621	2
Averages, 1926-30.....	122	934	1,039	10,518	5,091	1,031	1,559	1,195	571	22,060
Averages, 1931-35.....	131	840	857	7,756	3,962	835	1,261	998	464	17,104
1932.....	132	849	774	7,744	4,133	836	1,321	997	477	17,263
1933.....	118	791	821	7,270	3,804	844	1,231	966	439	16,284
1934.....	130	807	878	7,388	3,523	734	1,093	891	426	15,870
1935.....	145	838	866	6,939	3,515	837	1,194	936	460	15,730
1936.....	137	781	806	6,220	3,416	779	1,030	940	465	14,574
1937.....	152	812	1,072	7,580	3,382	826	1,245	994	630	16,693
1938.....	114	754	859	6,486	3,245	750	941	812	556	14,517
1939.....	168	761	893	6,210	2,979	752	930	763	483	13,939
INFANT DEATH RATES PER 1,000 LIVE BIRTHS										
Averages, 1921-25.....	77	94	105	2	83	84	83	86	61	2
Averages, 1926-30.....	71	85	101	127	74	72	73	75	55	93
Averages, 1931-35.....	67	73	82	98	61	61	62	60	46	75
1932.....	65	73	72	94	62	59	63	59	47	73
1933.....	61	71	82	95	60	63	61	60	46	73
1934.....	67	71	86	97	57	55	55	55	43	72
1935.....	72	72	83	92	56	63	61	58	46	71
1936.....	69	66	77	83	55	61	54	60	44	66
1937.....	73	70	101	100	55	64	67	63	56	76
1938.....	58	62	75	83	49	56	52	51	45	63
1939.....	79	64	79	78	46	55	51	46	39	61

¹ Exclusive of the Territories.

² Quebec was not included in the registration area prior to 1926.

Infantile Mortality by Causes of Death.—Twenty-one principal causes of death accounted in the years 1926 to 1939 for between 90 and 92 p.c. of the infantile mortality experienced in the Dominion, as is shown in Table 24. It is noteworthy that four causes present at birth, viz., premature birth, injury at birth, congenital debility, and congenital malformations, accounted for over 45 p.c. of the infant deaths of 1939. In 1926 the percentage was 41.4 and in 1930, 42.3, and, since the