

Subsection 2.—Infant Mortality

International Comparisons.—New Zealand for many years has had the lowest rate of infant mortality. In 1947 the rate was 25 per 1,000 live births, compared with 68 in 1905, 51 in 1920 and 34 in 1930. Sweden, Iceland and Australia also have very low rates. In England and Wales the rate has been reduced from 128 per 1,000 in 1905 to 60 in 1930 and 42 in 1947. In the United States the rate has been reduced from 162 in 1900 to 47 in 1940 and 32 in 1947. The energy devoted in recent years to reducing infant mortality has resulted in definite improvement in many other countries.

25.—Infant Mortality per 1,000 Live Births in various Countries of the World compared with Canada and the Provinces for recent years

(Sources: Monthly Bulletin of Statistics of the United Nations and other official publications. In certain cases final figures are not available and provisional data are used.)

Country or Province	Year	Infant Mortality Rate	Country	Year	Infant Mortality Rate
New Zealand (excluding Maoris) . . .	1947	25	Quebec	1947	57
Sweden	1947	25	New Brunswick	1947	59
Australia	1947	29	Panama	1947	52
United States	1947	32	Northern Ireland	1947	53
Netherlands	1947	34	Scotland	1947	56
Union of South Africa (Whites) . . .	1947	35	France	1947	66
Norway	1946	37	Ireland	1947	67
Iceland	1944	38	Belgium	1947	69
Switzerland	1947	39	Newfoundland and Labrador . . .	1946	74
Denmark	1947	40	Palestine	1946	76
England and Wales	1947	42	Spain	1947	76
Canada	1947	45	Austria	1947	78
British Columbia	1947	36	Italy	1947	82
Ontario	1947	36	El Salvador	1947	96
Alberta	1947	37	Ceylon	1947	101
Nova Scotia	1947	44	Hungary	1947	111
Saskatchewan	1947	44	Bulgaria	1947	130
Prince Edward Island	1947	45	Chile	1947	161
Manitoba	1947	46	Roumania	1947	199

Canadian Infant Mortality.—In Canada, the Federal, provincial and municipal health authorities, together with private welfare agencies, have all taken part in the effort, with the result that the figures 1926-47 show a striking improvement. Of the children born in 1942-46, approximately 60,000 lived to their first birthday who would have died at the rate prevailing in the period 1926-30.

Infant mortality of males is 25 to 30 p.c. higher than that of females. It was pointed out earlier that there were between 1,051 and 1,067 males born to every 1,000 females. Because male infant mortality is higher, the excess of males is much less at the end of the first year. For example, in 1940-42, 397,038 male children were born, compared with 374,908 female children, an excess of 22,130 or 5.9 p.c.; 25,024 male children died during their first year compared with 18,646 female children, that is 6,378 more. The excess of males at one year of age is thus 15,752, or 4.4 p.c. By the age of 52, according to the life table, p. 201, the numbers of males and females will have become equal.

Infant mortality figures and rates per 1,000 live births by sex are given for Canada and the provinces in Table 26. The rates vary considerably between the provinces. One of the principal causes of these variations appears to be the different proportions of births which take place in hospitals or under proper medical care. Examples of these differences have been given earlier, see p. 202. Along with increased hospitalization has come better and more wide-spread pre-natal and post-natal care. Other factors, particularly the supervision of water supplies, improved sanitation and the pasteurization of milk also have been important.