

### Subsection 3.—Maternal Mortality

The number of mothers who die in pregnancy and childbirth has been greatly reduced in recent years. Maternal mortality in Canada and the provinces is shown in Table 5, p. 184. Although the number of births has been much greater in recent years, the number of maternal deaths has declined steadily since about 1930 (when there were 1,405 deaths and a rate of almost six deaths for every 1,000 live births) to 420 in 1950. Since 1945 the rate of maternal mortality has dropped below two per 1,000 live births and was just over one per 1,000 live births in 1950. Mortality among unmarried mothers is higher than among married mothers.

**Age at Death.**—Table 29 shows the distribution of maternal deaths by age, together with the average age at death. The latter is slightly more than two years higher than the average age of all mothers at the time of childbirth. The rates per 1,000 live births by age groups show that age is a most important factor in maternal mortality. Though all the rates are much lower than they used to be, the inequalities between the age groups remain. The rate at 30-34 years is over twice as high as the rate at 20-24 years, and at 40-44 years it is over six times as high. The higher rate in the first age group shown in the table, compared with the second, is due to the high proportion of illegitimate children born to young mothers.

#### 29.—Maternal Mortality and Rates per 1,000 Live Births, by Age Groups, 1947-50

(Exclusive of the Territories)

Age Group	Maternal Deaths								Rates per 1,000 Live Births			
	1947 <sup>1</sup>		1948 <sup>1</sup>		1949		1950		1947 <sup>1</sup>	1948 <sup>1</sup>	1949	1950
	No.	p.c.	No.	p.c.	No.	p.c.	No.	p.c.				
Under 20 years.....	24	4.3	24	4.7	25	4.9	18	4.5	1.07	1.06	1.06	0.76
20 - 24 ".....	96	17.3	83	16.3	77	15.0	42	10.5	0.92	0.84	0.78	0.43
25 29 ".....	107	19.3	106	20.8	116	22.7	95	23.8	1.00	1.02	1.07	0.86
30 34 ".....	144	26.0	107	21.0	121	23.6	85	21.3	2.00	1.56	1.75	1.19
35 39 ".....	120	21.7	115	22.5	101	19.7	99	24.8	3.06	2.97	2.52	2.42
40 44 ".....	55	9.9	66	12.9	64	12.5	51	12.8	4.43	5.42	5.25	4.16
45 49 ".....	8	1.4	9	1.8	8	1.6	6	1.5	7.65	8.38	7.54	6.03
50 years or over.....	—	...	—	...	—	...	3	0.8	...	...	...	...
<b>Totals, All Ages at Death.....</b>	<b>554</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1.54</b>	<b>1.47</b>	<b>1.45</b>	<b>1.11</b>
Average Ages at Death.	31.5		31.9		31.7		32.5		...	...	...	...

<sup>1</sup> Exclusive of Newfoundland.

**Causes of Maternal Deaths.**—Table 30 shows, by causes, the numbers and rates of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. Until a decade ago, puerperal sepsis and toxæmias of pregnancy were by far the most important causes. Since 1936 the rate for puerperal sepsis has been reduced by almost 95 p.c. due in large measure to the use of sulpha and other antibiotics. Although there has been a reduction of over 70 p.c. since 1936 in the maternal death rate from toxæmias of pregnancy, this still remains the second major cause of maternal deaths, after complications of delivery.