

### Subsection 3.—Maternal Mortality

As indicated in Table 1, pp. 176-178, the number of mothers who die in pregnancy and childbirth has been greatly reduced in recent years. 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 1,215 deaths and a rate of almost five deaths for every 1,000 live births) to 380 in 1951. 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 1951. Mortality among unmarried mothers is higher than among married mothers.

**Age at Death.**—Table 23 shows the distribution of maternal deaths by age groups and 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 almost twice as high as the rate at 20-24 years, and at 40-44 years it is about five times as high. The higher rate for the "under 20" age group, compared with the age group 20-24, is due to the high proportion of illegitimate children born to young mothers.

#### 23.—Maternal Mortality and Rates per 1,000 Live Births, by Age Group, 1931, 1941 and 1951

(Exclusive of Newfoundland and the Territories)

Age Group	Maternal Deaths						Rates per 1,000 Live Births		
	1931		1941		1951		1931	1941	1951
	No.	p.c.	No.	p.c.	No.	p.c.			
Under 20 years .....	70	5.8	47	5.2	18	4.7	4.58	2.77	0.74
20 - 24 " .....	193	15.9	160	17.8	68	17.9	3.17	2.26	0.67
25 - 29 " .....	254	20.9	217	24.1	81	21.3	3.88	2.85	0.72
30 - 34 " .....	270	22.2	203	22.5	78	20.5	5.50	4.05	1.05
35 - 39 " .....	265	21.8	184	20.4	83	21.8	7.87	6.37	1.99
40 - 44 " .....	142	11.7	82	9.1	42	11.1	10.92	7.97	3.30
45 - 49 " .....	21	1.7	7	0.8	7	1.8	15.26	6.57	6.80
50 years or over .....	—	—	1	0.1	3	0.8	—	—	—
<b>Totals, All Ages.....</b>	<b>1,215</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>901</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>5.05</b>	<b>3.53</b>	<b>1.03</b>
Average Age at Death....	31.6		30.9		31.6		...	...	...

**Causes of Maternal Deaths.**—Table 24 shows, by cause, 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. owing 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.