

Section 3.—Deaths*

Since 1931 the Canadian death rate has fluctuated between 10.3 and 8.2 per 1,000 of the population, declining in recent years to a record low of 8.2 in 1954 through 1956. Table 1, pp. 196-198, shows that this decline has been apparent in varying degrees in all provinces. The generally low rates in the Prairie Provinces are partly the result of their younger average population; the uniformly higher rate in British Columbia is the result of the high proportion of people in the older age groups.

Subsection 1.—General Mortality

Sex and Age Distribution of Deaths.—Despite reductions in infant mortality over the past 25 or 30 years, more deaths still occur in the first year of life than in any other single year. Of the 107,000 deaths occurring in 1926, 31,000 or almost 30 p.c. were of children under five years of age and three-quarters of those were of children under one year of age. Of approximately 132,000 deaths in 1956, close to 17,000 or nearly 13 p.c. were of children under five years of age and over 85 p.c. of those were under one year. Most of the reduction took place among children over the age of one month but there was a notable decrease in all childhood ages up to five years.

Tremendous reductions have taken place in the mortality pattern since the early 1920's, with the most important reductions in the childhood and early adult ages. In 1931 over 19 p.c. of all male deaths were of persons five to 45 years of age; in 1956 these accounted for less than 11 p.c. of total deaths. The reduction in mortality among females in this age group is equally remarkable, the proportion dropping from almost 22 p.c. to approximately 8 p.c. Death rates for males up to age 45 have been roughly halved during the past 25 years; those for females in the same ages have been reduced as much as three to four times.

These reductions in the mortality rates in early and middle years of life have had the effect of increasing the number of people in the older age groups and of raising the average age of the population as a whole. As a consequence much larger proportions of deaths are now occurring at the older ages and have raised the average age at death. In 1921 the average age at death of males was 39.0 years and of females 41.1 years; by 1956 this had advanced to 58.0 and 60.6 respectively. These trends are indicated clearly in Table 13.

* For international comparisons, see Section 7, pp. 230-231.

13.—Distribution of Deaths by Age and Sex 1921, 1931, 1941, 1955 and 1956

Age Group	1921 ¹		1931 ²		1941 ²		1955		1956	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
	NUMBERS									
Under 5 years.....	10,827	8,303	14,511	11,226	10,666	8,014	9,266	6,899	9,393	7,351
5 — 9 “.....	1,166	979	1,241	963	888	670	666	435	697	416
10 — 14 “.....	674	611	821	806	787	536	474	283	452	264
15 — 19 “.....	866	741	1,311	1,132	1,118	823	724	314	733	294
20 — 24 “.....	947	946	1,502	1,453	1,332	1,039	949	352	969	340
25 — 29 “.....	1,046	1,035	1,388	1,414	1,317	1,173	947	484	999	491
30 — 34 “.....	1,002	1,051	1,301	1,432	1,211	1,148	1,058	681	1,109	592
35 — 39 “.....	1,263	1,223	1,512	1,574	1,497	1,242	1,181	840	1,301	843
40 — 44 “.....	1,254	1,073	1,888	1,493	1,744	1,464	1,776	1,149	1,752	1,188
45 — 49 “.....	1,345	1,066	2,314	1,738	2,416	1,817	2,517	1,525	2,661	1,571
50 — 54 “.....	1,492	1,288	2,855	1,993	3,355	2,227	3,659	1,941	3,649	2,013
55 — 59 “.....	1,727	1,337	3,057	2,246	4,394	2,851	4,775	2,738	5,002	2,712
60 — 64 “.....	2,121	1,652	3,583	2,855	5,288	3,483	6,335	3,650	6,383	3,826
65 — 69 “.....	2,277	1,976	4,249	3,348	6,057	4,412	8,463	5,025	8,482	5,047
70 — 74 “.....	2,550	2,184	4,867	4,073	6,495	4,981	9,744	6,618	10,013	6,786
75 — 79 “.....	2,378	2,135	4,368	4,029	5,461	5,461	9,359	7,258	9,404	7,607
80 — 84 “.....	1,833	1,799	3,206	3,215	5,020	4,906	7,097	6,368	7,385	6,787
85 years or over.....	1,643	1,912	2,555	2,998	3,946	4,540	5,893	7,033	6,192	7,257
Totals, All Ages.....	36,411	31,311	56,529	47,988	63,852	50,787	74,883	53,593	76,576	55,385

For footnotes, see end of table, p. 210.