

**Causes of Maternal Deaths.**—Table 17 shows the main causes of maternal deaths during the years 1955-57. Until a decade or so ago, sepsis and toxæmia were by far the most important causes of death of mothers at childbirth. The danger of death from sepsis and other infection has been drastically reduced over the past 15 to 20 years through the use of antibiotics and probably also through increased use of medical services. Toxæmia however, is still the major fatal complication of pregnancy and is second only to complications arising during delivery. Hæmorrhage during pregnancy or delivery, which has been another important cause of mortality among mothers, has also shown some reduction in recent years.

**17.—Maternal Mortality and Rates per 100,000 Live Births, by Cause, 1955-57**

Inter-national List No.	Cause of Death	Numbers of Deaths			Rates per 100,000 Live Births		
		1955 <sup>1</sup>	1956	1957	1955 <sup>1</sup>	1956	1957
	<b>Complications of Pregnancy</b> .....	<b>139</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>15</b>
640, 641	Infections of the genito-urinary tract during pregnancy.....	—	1	1	—	2	2
642	Toxæmias of pregnancy.....	93	53	42	21	12	9
643	Placenta prævia noted before delivery.....	4	—	1	1	—	2
644	Other hæmorrhage of pregnancy.....	8	4	1	2	1	2
645	Ectopic pregnancy.....	11	10	13	2	2	3
646-649	Other complications of pregnancy.....	23	12	13	5	3	3
	<b>Abortion</b> .....	<b>28</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>
650, 652	Abortion without mention of sepsis.....	13	11	19	3	2	4
651	Abortion with sepsis.....	15	14	20	3	3	4
	<b>Complications of Delivery</b> .....	<b>111</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>23</b>
660	Delivery (without complication).....	4	7	—	1	2	—
670	Delivery complicated by placenta prævia or antepartum hæmorrhage.....	20	26	30	5	6	6
671	Delivery complicated by retained placenta.....	8	8	5	2	2	1
672	Delivery complicated by other postpartum hæmorrhage.....	32	29	16	7	6	3
673, 674	Delivery complicated by abnormality of bony pelvis or malposition of foetus.....	7	9	7	2	2	1
675	Delivery complicated by prolonged labour of other origin.....	5	11	9	1	2	2
676, 677	Delivery with laceration or other trauma.....	15	21	13	3	5	3
678	Delivery with other complications of childbirth.....	20	21	29	5	5	6
	<b>Complications of the Puerperium</b> .....	<b>57</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>
681	Sepsis of childbirth and the puerperium.....	8	9	8	2	2	2
682-684	Puerperal phlebitis, thrombosis, pyrexia, pulmonary embolism.....	29	19	12	7	4	3
685, 686	Puerperal eclampsia and toxæmia.....	8	5	10	2	1	2
687-689	Other.....	12	8	6	3	2	1
	<b>Totals, All Puerperal Causes</b> .....	<b>335</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>54</b>

<sup>1</sup> Excludes the Yukon and Northwest Territories.

<sup>2</sup> Less than one per 100,000 live births.

### Section 4.—Natural Increase\*

The rate of natural increase in Canada (excess of births over deaths) prior to 1930 was 13 or more per 1,000 population. Partly as a result of the depression, the birth rate declined more than the death rate and the rate of natural increase fell to 9.7 in 1937. Higher birth rates during and after World War II and a gradually declining death rate caused the natural increase rate to rise steadily from 10.9 in 1939 to a record 20.3 in 1954. It dropped slightly in 1955 and 1956 to 19.8 but, with an increase in the birth rate and a stationary death rate, it rose to 20.1 in 1957.

\* For international comparisons, see Section 7, pp. 223-229.