

As is typical of pioneer populations, Canada had a high death rate in the mid-1850's when the country was still in the throes of pioneer settlement. The crude death rate during that period is estimated as between 22 and 25. Although no data are available, it is assumed that, while mortality at all ages was high, the rate among infants, children and young adults must have been particularly so since even in the 1920's mortality in these ages was still quite high. With the gradual increase in population density and in urbanization and improved sanitation and medical services, the crude rate was gradually halved during the 80 years between 1851 and 1930, dropping from about 22 to 11. It declined steadily to slightly over 8 in the late 1950's and dropped to a low of 7.7 in 1961 and 1962. This is one of the lowest crude rates in the world.

Table 1, pp. 226-227, shows the trends since 1941 in the provinces and territories. 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 mainly attributable to a high proportion of people in the older age groups.

Subsection 1.—General Mortality

Age and Sex Distribution of Deaths.—During the period of national vital statistics (1921 to date), the mortality pattern at all ages has been steeply downward. Of major significance in lowering the over-all death rate were the reductions in infant mortality, in childhood death rates and in those of young adults. In 1931, over 19 p.c. of all male deaths occurred among persons of five to 45 years of age; in 1962 only a little over 10 p.c. took place in this age group. Among females in the same age group the proportion dropped from just under 22 p.c. to 7.5 p.c. While death rates for males up to age 45 were roughly halved during the past 25 years, those for females under 45 were reduced as much as three to four times. In other words, the death rates for females at every age declined more than those for males; the male rates have almost always been consistently higher than those for females and the differences are widening. The crude male death rate stood at 8.9 per 1,000 total male population in 1962 as compared with only 6.5 for females.

15.—Trends in Age-Specific Death Rates per 1,000 Population for Males and Females, Average 1926-30 to 1962

Age Group	Males			Females		
	Av. 1926-30	1962	P.C. Decline	Av. 1926-30	1962	P.C. Decline
0 — 1 year.....	103.2	30.6	70.3	82.8	24.3	70.6
1 — 4 years.....	8.5	1.2	85.7	7.5	1.0	86.3
5 — 9 ".....	2.6	0.6	76.1	2.3	0.4	81.9
10 — 14 ".....	2.0	0.5	72.8	1.9	0.3	85.4
15 — 19 ".....	2.9	1.1	62.9	2.8	0.5	81.9
20 — 29 ".....	3.7	1.6	56.2	4.0	0.6	83.8
30 — 39 ".....	4.3	2.0	53.9	4.9	1.1	76.6
40 — 49 ".....	6.8	4.5	33.7	6.6	2.7	58.8
50 — 59 ".....	12.9	12.1	6.3	11.4	6.5	43.4
60 — 69 ".....	30.3	29.0	4.3	26.5	16.5	37.8
70 +	96.0	86.7	9.7	92.3	68.1	26.2

Despite the very considerable reduction that has taken place in infant mortality, more deaths still occur in the first year of life than in any other single year. Of the total deaths occurring in 1931, almost one quarter were of children under five years of age and more than three quarters of those were of children under one year of age; of the deaths occurring in 1962, about 10 p.c. were of children under five years and of those about 86 p.c. were under one year. Most of the reduction took place among children over the age of one month but there was also a notable decrease in all childhood ages up to five years.

The 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 raising the average age at death. In 1931 the average age at death of males was 43.1 years and of females 44.8