



Subsection 2.—Infant Mortality

Table 1, pp. 243-244, and Table 20 show the striking improvement that has taken place in the rate of infant mortality during the past twenty years. Although 64,823 of the 2,368,986 children born in the five years 1959-63 died before reaching their first birthday, 157,862 others lived who *would have died* at the infant mortality rate prevailing in the period 1926-30. This improvement is attributable to many factors—the higher proportion of births taking place in hospital or under proper prenatal and postnatal care, better supervision of water supplies, improved sanitation, pasteurization of milk, the use of antibiotics, improved home environment as a result of higher living standards and, in recent years, the generally lower age of mothers.

The variations that exist in infant mortality rates from province to province and from one locality to another may be explained by differences in the extent to which these factors apply provincially or locally. Among the provinces, the 1963 male infant mortality rates ranged from a low of 26 to a high of 47, compared with the national average of 30—the latter including the very high rate among the Northwest Territories aboriginal population. Female rates ranged from 12 to 29, compared with the national rate of 23. While the national and provincial rates for both sexes have been declining steadily for some years, for some unknown reason there were a number of reversals in provincial rates recently.