

educational campaigns.

Maternal death risks vary greatly with age of mother and order of birth of child, with death rates lowest for mothers between 20 and 30 years of age. In recent years, the proportion of births to mothers of these ages has been increasing, and so has tended to lower the total death rate. The fall in the death rate among mothers 20-24 years of age from 1936 to 1942 was greater than in the total death rate. It fell by 56.6% during these years. The fall was also great among mothers 25-34 years of age, but less among very young and older mothers. Death rates by age for other than census years are subject to a considerable margin of error, due to possible errors in estimates of the population by age, but it seems clear that a more favourable age distribution of mothers can have played only a very minor role in the recent fall.

Statistics for maternal death rates by order of birth are not collected in Canada, but they probably vary in the same way as elsewhere. According to New South Wales experience, maternal death rates for first births were about twice those for second or succeeding births. For mothers of all ages, the death rate dropped sharply from the first to the second birth, then rose gradually. The level of the first birth death rate was not reached again until after the tenth birth. Among older women in Canada, there has been a rise in the proportion of first births (where there is a higher death rate), but there has also been a reduction in the number of large families (where there is also a higher death rate) and the rise in the one has compensated for the fall in the other. Therefore changes in the order of births have not had much effect on the maternal death rate.

But in the age group 20-24 years, the proportion of first births to all births increased from 1936 to 1942, the proportion of second and third births decreased, while the numbers of fourth and later births were too small for changes to be significant. If then, mortality by order of birth follows the same course in Canada as elsewhere, maternal mortality among younger mothers fell in recent years in spite of an increasing risk of death associated with greater numbers of first confinements.

STILLBIRTHS

The stillbirth rate has also been on the decline since 1929. Following is a table showing the stillbirth rate per 1,000 live births in Canada from 1926 to 1943.

TABLE I

Rate per 1,000 live births, Canada

Average	1926-30.....	31.5
	1931-35.....	30.3
	1936-40.....	28.0
	1941.....	27.0
	1942.....	26.2
	1943.....	24.0

Unlike maternal mortality, the stillbirth rate is low for first births. Hence, since there is an increasing proportion of first and second births, with a continuing diminution in large families, the current situation is in all ways favourable to a decline in the number of stillbirths.

Mortality from 10 Leading Causes of Death

The following table shows the 10 leading causes of death with the rating