

For this reason birth rates are frequently based on the number of births per thousand women within suitably chosen age-groups. Such rates are commonly known as fertility rates or nuptial birth rates.

Table 5 gives fertility rates of married women of child-bearing ages in five-year age-groups, by provinces, for the years 1921, 1922, 1930, 1931 and 1932. It is thought safer to confine such rates to census years and those adjacent to the census years, owing to the possible changes in the sex and age distribution of the population over a longer period. For the province of Quebec and for the total of the nine provinces it was necessary to limit the rates to the three years 1930-32, as the necessary data for 1921 and 1922 are not available.

The great disparity between the fertility at the different ages is strongly brought out in the table. Thus, to take the figures for Canada in 1931, the fertility rate at ages 20-24 years was nearly 40 p.c. greater than at 25-29 years, about double the rate at 30-34 years, three times the rate at 35-39 years, nearly seven times the rate at 40-44 years and more than 50 times the rate at 45-49 years. The table shows distinctly higher fertility for the age-group 15-19 years than at 20-24 years but the interpretation of the rate for the younger age-group is doubtful since the statistics of certain countries which tabulate first births by duration of marriage indicate that this group contains a considerably higher percentage of cases where conception took place before marriage than the group 20-24 years.

There was a general lowering of these specific fertility rates over the ten-year period 1921-31. Thus, in the eight provinces comprising the registration area as of 1921 the rate for married women between the 20th and 25th birthdays fell from 363 per thousand in 1921 to 330 per thousand in 1931, for those between the 25th and 30th birthdays the fall was from 261 to 225, for those between the 30th and 35th birthdays from 190 to 153 and for the next three age-groups from 131 to 100, from 56 to 41 and from 8.0 to 4.8 respectively. The fall was proportionately greater in the higher than the lower age-groups. The age-group 15 to 19 shows an upward rather than a downward trend, but the number of married women in this age-group is comparatively small, and the remarks made above regarding their high fertility should be borne in mind.

While the marked decline in the number of marriages during the depression years from the peak of 1929 contributed to the fall of the Canadian birth rate from 23.9 in 1930 to 23.2 in 1931 and 22.5 in 1932, the fertility rates for Canada for these three years indicate that there was also a decline in the fertility within marriage.

5.—Specific Fertility Rates of Married Women 15-49 Years of Age, by Provinces, 1921, 1922, 1930, 1931 and 1932.

Province and Year.	Fertility Rates per 1,000 Women of Ages Specified.						
	15-19.	20-24.	25-29.	30-34.	35-39.	40-44.	45-49.
Prince Edward Island							
1921	487.5	425.5	316.2	256.7	179.9	84.9	11.7
1922	487.5	420.9	318.9	248.3	184.5	90.0	7.6
1930	401.0	330.3	276.9	209.0	150.7	62.6	5.3
1931	460.4	392.6	278.2	213.9	158.0	59.3	4.7
1932	529.7	406.1	303.0	249.2	150.7	73.8	7.0
Nova Scotia.....							
1921	497.3	381.3	281.3	207.9	143.6	65.2	6.5
1922	491.2	364.6	264.4	204.4	146.2	67.2	7.9
1930	510.4	356.6	251.3	186.4	129.0	57.8	6.5
1931	545.2	379.4	258.9	179.3	127.4	57.4	7.1
1932	591.6	374.7	249.1	175.1	126.4	57.5	7.1