

V.—NUPTIALITY RATES, CANADA AND PROVINCES, 1930-32

SOURCE: "The Nuptiality Problem with Special Reference to Canadian Marriage Statistics". Enid Charles, *Can. Journ. Econ. and Pol. Science*, Vol. 7, No. 3, August, 1941.

Province	Nuptiality Rates	
	Gross	Net
Canada.....	0.84	0.82
Alberta.....	0.94	0.92
Saskatchewan.....	0.91	0.89
British Columbia.....	0.89	0.86
Manitoba.....	0.87	0.85
Ontario.....	0.86	0.84
Nova Scotia.....	0.85	0.82
New Brunswick.....	0.84	0.81
Prince Edward Island.....	0.84	0.81
Quebec.....	0.77	0.73

The most striking features of this table are, first, the very high nuptiality rates for Alberta and Saskatchewan, and secondly, the very low rate for Quebec. High as is the nuptiality in the two Prairie Provinces, it exhibits a fall from a still higher level in previous years. For the 1931 Census, the percentage of women who were or had been married was over 95 p.c. in every age group from 40-44 upwards. Generally speaking, the west of Canada has higher marriage rates than the east. This is consistent with the more recent settlement of the west, its lower level of industrialization, higher ratio of males to females, and higher proportion of immigrants. All these circumstances contribute to a high marriage rate. Their effects have been exhaustively discussed in a census monograph by Professor W. B. Hurd,* who also pointed out that by 1931 the depression had already begun to counteract the effect of those conditions in the West favourable to high nuptiality.

No obvious explanation can account for the very low marriage rate of Quebec. Although there is no excess of males, as in the West, the numbers of males and females in 1931 were very nearly equal in the critical age groups 20-24 and 25-29. The fall appears to have been sudden as well as rapid. In both the 1921 and 1931 Censuses, women who were or had been married formed about 87 or 88 p.c. of the total in the older age groups. If the marriage rate began to fall before 1930-32, as seems probable, this would help to account for the very steep fall in the gross reproduction rate in Quebec during this period. Kuczynski gives a gross reproduction rate of 2.25 for 1926-27, while the census monograph on *Fertility* gives a rate of 1.93 for 1930-32. This is a steeper rate of fall than that which occurred in the Prairie Provinces at the same time. Dr. Horace Miner, in his study of the French-Canadian family, † considers that the high fertility of French Canada in the past has depended on the availability of ample unoccupied land, and points out that the lack of opportunities for the establishment of new families results in many unmarried men and women. The nuptiality rate found for Quebec confirms the view that postponement of marriage, either for some years or altogether, is one of the earliest effects of the cessation of openings for expansion.

Table V can be compared with Table VI, which shows for Canada and each province, the actual percentages who were or had been married in 1931, and the same percentages as corrected for age distribution. These figures include marriages over a period of about fifty years, while the rates of Table V refer to 1930-32 only. The relative positions of Eastern Canada and Western Canada remain the same for the latter years, but there is a marked change in the position of Quebec as compared with the rest of Canada.

* Racial Origins and Nativity of the Canadian People (Census Monograph No. 4).

† "The French-Canadian Family Cycle" (*American Sociological Review*, Vol. III, Oct., 1938).