

CHAPTER IV.—POPULATION*

CONSPECTUS

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The records accumulated at the decennial censuses of Canada, since the creation of the Dominion in 1867 to the latest census to date, 1941, make a valuable contribution to the demographic history of the nation. Each successive decade has added to the vast scope of the material; the detailed statistical analyses and the numerous monographs and studies available under the several aspects of demography and agriculture have made the census the most important statistical milestone of accomplishment and progress.

The salient aspects of population growth under each main heading shown in the conspectus above are covered but not necessarily in any one edition. The policy adopted is to maintain the skeleton of the chapter and the historical tables as a permanent feature and build up each section as statistics are available following each census. Therefore, much material for the 1941 Census is given in the following pages and data not yet available will be published in subsequent editions. The Canada Year Book can do no more than summarize the broad results of the Census. More detailed information may be obtained from the Census publications.*

The main legal reason for a periodic census under the Constitution of Canada is to determine representation in the House of Commons: this, according to the British North America Act, is based on population (see p. 55). The payment of provincial subsidies on a per capita basis is adjusted annually on population estimated from the census data. In view of this the *de jure* principle of enumeration is used, i.e., each person is counted as belonging to the locality of his regular domicile, rather than to the place he may be at the date of enumeration, a method followed in some other countries.

Yet the modern Dominion-wide census, however important this redistribution purpose, has a much wider sphere of usefulness. It constitutes, through the data collected directly from the people, a true measure of the social and economic progress of the country and can therefore be used in the regulation of general administration and public affairs, social security and post-war rehabilitation programs, etc. For instance, achievement can be measured from the census records by examination of how progressively modern machinery and household equipment, radios and motor-cars have been introduced into industry and into home life over a series of decades.

* This chapter, as recast, has been checked by O. A. Lemieux, M.S.A., Ph.D., Chief, Demography Branch, Dominion Bureau of Statistics. A list of the publications of this Branch will be found in Chapter XXX, Section 1, under "Population"