

Section 11.—Languages and Mother Tongues

Official languages are not to be confused with mother tongues. Mother tongue, being used in the home, is natural to a person even if he is unable to speak it on account of youth, infirmity or for some other reason, whereas the official language or languages are those recognized by statute for general use. Thus the immigrants to a new country bring with them their mother tongues and continue to use them in their homes, but these have no relation to the official languages in the country of their adoption.

Canada is officially bilingual, the two languages being English and French. In the Census of 1941, 1,474,009 persons were reported as speaking both the official languages, 7,735,486 speaking English only of the two official languages, 2,181,746 speaking French only of the two official languages and 115,414 as unable to speak either English or French.

Table 31 shows the extent to which the people of foreign origin have related themselves to the languages spoken by those of British and French origins in Canada. The public school system is responsible for most of the progress. It is true that many of the adult immigrants, especially in urban parts, do acquire a working knowledge of one or other of the official languages, provided they are not too old to do so and they have an adequate economic or other incentive.*

All children in Canada are required by law to attend school to at least 14 years of age and teaching in the schools is carried on in either English or French. Consequently, in an origin group with high fertility the percentage unable to speak either of the basic languages of the country may be expected to decline with a fair degree of rapidity provided current immigration is not heavy.

Persons of Scandinavian origin speak either English or French in the largest proportions. Most of them speak English; comparatively few speak French. The Germans follow the Danes, Norwegians and Swedes, with only a slightly larger percentage unable to speak either of the basic languages.

* Were the data tabulated by five-year age groups, one would find ample statistical support for this statement.

31.—Population Speaking One, Both or Neither of the Official Languages of Canada, by Racial Origin, 1941

NOTE.—Children under 5 years of age have been classed as speaking the language of the home.

Racial Origin	Language Spoken				Total Population
	English	French	English and French	Neither English nor French	
	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
British Isles Races.....	5,479,862	18,357	216,385	1,300	5,715,904
English.....	2,854,790	7,011	105,982	619	2,968,402
Irish.....	1,194,746	6,411	66,246	299	1,267,702
Scottish.....	1,356,363	4,906	42,346	359	1,403,974
Other.....	73,963	29	1,811	23	75,826
Other European Races.....	2,069,029	2,153,898	1,240,571	58,466	5,526,964
French.....	181,778	2,147,182	1,152,713	1,365	3,483,038
Austrian, n.o.s.....	36,023	53	985	654	37,715
Belgian.....	16,833	1,861	10,870	147	29,711
Czech and Slovak.....	39,625	42	1,146	2,099	42,912
Finnish.....	39,112	81	416	2,074	41,683
German.....	451,207	1,257	7,712	4,506	464,682
Hungarian.....	52,016	40	944	1,598	54,598
Italian.....	32,825	6,364	21,240	2,196	112,625
Jewish.....	145,215	225	22,519	2,282	170,241
Netherlands.....	203,961	99	2,634	6,169	212,863
Polish.....	156,208	411	4,734	6,132	167,455