

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 a most important statistical measure of accomplishment and progress.

The salient aspects of population growth under each main heading shown in the conspectus are covered but not necessarily in any one edition. The Canada Year Book can do no more than summarize the broad results of the census. More detailed information can 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. 63). 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 census 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.

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 rehabilitation programs, etc.

History of the Census in Canada.—In 1666, Talon, the Intendant of New France, took an official census of the Colony for the purpose of measuring the increase in population that had taken place since the founding of Quebec by Champlain in 1608. These figures are, however, of historical interest rather than accurate census data. (For further details, see Census of Canada, 1931, Vol. I, pp. 133-153.)

* This Chapter has been checked by O. A. Lemieux, Director, Census (Demography), Dominion Bureau of Statistics.