

The present trends of growth as applied to the future are reviewed in a short analysis in the 1946 Year Book at pp. 127-128. Further details on this subject may be found in Bulletin F-4 "The Future Population of Canada", published by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics.

PART II.—CENSUS ANALYSES OF GENERAL POPULATION

Section 1.—Rural and Urban Population

The population residing in cities, towns and incorporated villages has been defined for census purposes as 'urban' and that outside of such localities as 'rural'. The distinction between rural and urban populations in Canada, therefore, is a distinction of provincial legal status rather than of size of aggregation of population within a limited area. Since the laws of the various provinces differ in regard to the population necessary before a municipality may be incorporated as urban,* the line of demarcation between rural and urban population is not uniformly drawn throughout the Dominion.

This basis of comparing rural and urban populations adhered to throughout the census analyses is adopted for Canada because the necessary comparable data over a long period of years required for comparison by degree of urbanization does not exist. Obviously, the populations of villages of less than 1,000 cannot be regarded as truly urban, although there is reason, for certain purposes, to distinguish them from the surrounding rural populations, in that they enjoy definite cultural advantages not possessed by the strictly rural municipalities.

Table 1 has been prepared to overcome some of the difficulties involved, and to provide a basis for comparison of urban centres by size with those of other countries. These data enable places outside any required size limits to be readily excluded. Similar data, by provinces, will be found in Vol. II of the Census of 1941.

During the latest four decades there has been a radical shifting in the distribution of the Canadian population from rural to urban district. The change has been continuous throughout the period. In the decade ended 1941 the proportion of urban population increased from 53.7 p.c. to 54.3 p.c. Urban communities absorbed nearly 60.2 p.c. of the total increase in population during that decade and the urban population of Canada in 1941 exceeded the rural by 998,177. Out of every 1,000 persons in the country, 457 were resident in rural and 543 in urban communities on June 2, 1941, as compared with 463 in rural and 537 in urban communities on June 1, 1931; 505 in rural and 495 in urban on June 1, 1921; and 546 in rural and 454 in urban on June 1, 1911. In this trend to urbanization of population, Canada is by no means unique. The same change has characterized virtually all western nations to a greater or lesser degree during the past century.

Table 1 gives the distribution of urban population in Canada by size of urban centres; the rural-urban trend is very strongly indicated by the increased size of the larger cities and towns at a time when immigration, which in former decades (especially that of British origin) tended to concentrate in urban centres, was negligible.

* In Saskatchewan the original legislation of 1908 provided that a community of 50 persons on an area not greater than 640 acres might be incorporated. Several amendments have since been made and, as the Act now stands, 100 people resident on an area not greater than 240 acres may be incorporated. The Ontario law, on the other hand, requires that a village before it can be incorporated must have a population of 750 on an area not exceeding 500 acres.