

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 less degree during the past century.

1.—Rural and Urban Populations, by Provinces and Territories, Census Years 1911-41

Province or Territory	1911		1921		1931		1941	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
P. E. Island.....	78,758	14,970	69,522	19,093	67,653	20,385	70,707	24,340
Nova Scotia.....	306,210	186,128	296,799	227,038	281,192	231,654	310,422	267,540
New Brunswick...	252,342	99,547	263,432	124,444	279,279	128,940	313,978	143,423
Quebec.....	1,038,934	966,842	1,037,941	1,322,569	1,061,056	1,813,606	1,222,198	2,109,684
Ontario.....	1,198,803	1,328,489	1,227,030	1,706,632	1,335,691	2,095,992	1,449,022	2,338,633
Manitoba.....	261,029	200,365	348,502	261,616	384,170	315,969	407,871	321,873
Saskatchewan.....	361,037	131,395	538,552	218,958	630,880	290,905	600,846	295,146
Alberta.....	236,633	137,662	365,550	222,904	453,097	278,508	489,583	306,586
British Columbia..	188,796	203,684	277,020	247,562	299,524	394,739	374,467	443,394
Yukon.....	4,647	3,865	2,851	1,306	2,870	1,360	3,117	1,797
N.W.T.....	6,507	Nil	8,143	Nil	9,316	Nil	12,028	Nil
Canada.....	3,933,696	3,272,947	4,435,827	4,352,122	4,804,728	5,572,058	5,254,239	6,252,416

¹ Royal Canadian Navy (485) included in rural total.

Table 2 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.

2.—Urban Populations, by Size-of-Municipality Groups, Census Years 1921-41

Urban Centres of—	1921			1931			1941		
	Number of Places	Population	P.C. of Total Pop.	Number of Places	Population	P.C. of Total Pop.	Number of Places	Population	P.C. of Total Pop.
Over 500,000.....	2	1,140,399	12.98	2	1,449,784	13.97	2	1,570,464	13.65
Between—									
400,000 and 500,000	Nil	-	-	Nil	-	-	Nil	-	-
300,000 and 400,000	"	-	-	"	-	-	"	-	-
200,000 and 300,000	"	-	-	"	-	-	"	-	-
100,000 and 200,000	4	518,298	5.90	3	413,013	3.98	4	577,356	5.02
50,000 and 100,000	5	336,650	3.83	7	470,443	4.53	7	508,808	4.42
25,000 and 50,000	7	239,096	2.72	10	339,521	3.27	19	605,805	5.26
15,000 and 25,000	19	370,990	4.22	23	457,292	4.41	20	377,505	3.28
10,000 and 15,000	18	224,033	2.55	23	275,944	2.66	24	296,195	2.57
5,000 and 10,000	54	382,762	4.36	68	458,784	4.42	74	510,429	4.44
3,000 and 5,000	72	272,720	3.10	71	273,276	2.63	91	348,709	3.03
1,000 and 3,000	293	492,116	5.60	324	557,466	5.37	337	561,019	4.88
500 and 1,000	290	215,648	2.45	322	231,375	2.23	310	219,571	1.91
Under 500.....	679	159,410	1.81	750	179,782	1.73	750	179,242	1.56
Totals.....	1,443	4,352,122	49.52	1,605	5,572,058	53.70	1,640	6,252,416	54.34