

CHAPTER IV.—POPULATION*

CONSPECTUS

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NOTE.—The interpretation of the symbols used in the tables throughout the Year Book will be found facing page 1 of this volume.

The records accumulated at the decennial censuses of Canada since Confederation 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. 65). The payment of provincial subsidies on a per capita basis is adjusted annually on population estimated from census data. In view of this each person is counted as belonging to the locality of his regular domicile, rather than to the place where he may be at the date of enumeration.

The modern nation-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 and general administration of public affairs, social security and rehabilitation programs, etc.

History of the Census.—An outline of the history of the Census is given at pp. 96-97 of the 1947 edition of the Year Book.

Growth of Population.—A brief résumé of the population history of Canada from the first census in 1666, when 3,215 persons were enumerated, to the Census of 1941, when the figure was 11,506,655, places Canada among the leading countries of the Commonwealth in the rate of population growth. The inflow of capital

* This Chapter has been revised in the Census (Demography) Division, Dominion Bureau of Statistics.