

CHAPTER III.—POPULATION*

CONSPECTUS

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

The records accumulated at the decennial censuses of Canada since Confederation in 1867 to the latest census, 1951, 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. An outline of the history of the census is given in the Year Book 1947, pp. 96-97.

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* pp. 51-52). 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.

At the time of the preparation of this Chapter (July 1952), only the basic figures from the 1951 Census were available and these have been summarized under the respective headings so far as possible. More detailed information and extended analyses will be published from time to time and can be obtained from census publications.

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