

Subsection 3.—Convictions for Non-indictable Offences

Non-indictable offences—those not expressly made indictable—include all offences against provincial statutes and municipal by-laws. Non-indictable offences are triable by magistrate or justice of the peace under Part XV of the Criminal Code or under the Provincial Summary Conviction Acts as the case may be.

It is debatable how far summary convictions are of a criminal nature and how much their increase indicates an increase in crime. Many are breaches of municipal by-laws and contrary to public safety, health and comfort, but they do not involve violence, cruelty or serious dishonesty as, for example, parking violations or exercising callings without licence. On the other hand, offences as serious as cruelty to animals and contributing to juvenile delinquency are included under this classification and such indictable offences as common assault and driving with ability impaired may be tried on summary conviction.

Summary convictions increased by 20.8 p.c. to 1,183,991 in 1950 from 980,489 in 1949. Increases were general in all provinces except Prince Edward Island, while Ontario and Quebec showed the largest numerical increases.

15.—Convictions for Non-indictable Offences, by Provinces, Years Ended Sept. 30, 1941-50

(Exclusive of Newfoundland)

NOTE.—Figures for 1900-40 are given in the corresponding tables of previous Year Books beginning with the 1933 edition.

Year	P.E.I.	N.S.	N.B.	Que.	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.	Yukon	N.W.T.	Canada
	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
1941.....	1,664	10,254	7,703	152,330	288,874	32,481	10,499	15,434	28,096	80	141	547,556
1942.....	1,521	10,386	8,170	195,672	285,240	32,209	8,541	14,543	24,905	86	91	581,364
1943.....	1,033	8,857	7,619	181,425	204,227	21,986	7,810	11,958	20,510	145	105	465,315
1944.....	1,287	8,760	9,533	146,593	199,938	22,602	7,788	11,950	21,866	336	74	430,727
1945.....	1,394	9,786	9,818	158,580	209,713	22,820	8,996	11,676	22,887	312	36	455,918
1946.....	2,715	12,915	13,925	176,996	354,154	36,014	13,985	16,289	32,203	234	212	659,672
1947.....	2,806	12,019	14,097	188,835	407,334	47,170	15,263	18,696	45,585	328	325	752,458
1948.....	2,696	13,699	12,189	228,502	445,911	52,783	15,488	19,748	85,006	385	238	876,645
1949.....	3,118	12,617	13,131	232,132	510,837	72,023	16,465	25,551	94,326	232	57	980,489
1950.....	2,095	13,137	21,732	280,868	617,565	79,079	22,717	28,344	117,729	553	172	1,183,991

It should be remembered that, while the Criminal Code undergoes little change over a period of time, the figures for summary convictions are greatly influenced by the customs of the people and by the application and degree of enforcement of municipal regulations. These differ from place to place and from year to year and affect non-indictable offences more than they do indictable crimes.

In 1950, decreases in certain types of offences, such as common assaults, disturbing the peace, gambling, frequenting bawdy houses and operating a radio without a licence, were offset by decided increases in convictions for breaches of traffic regulations, which reached an all time peak, breaches of the Lord's Day Act, which doubled in number, and exercising callings without licence, which were 89.8 p.c. more numerous than in 1949. There were 1,399 convictions for taking a car without the owner's consent in 1950 as against 774 in 1949 and 1,823 convictions for offences against the Unemployment Insurance Act compared to 924 in 1949.