

Non-indictable offences include cases usually dealt with summarily by police magistrates and justices of the peace under Part XV of the Criminal Code or under the provincial summary convictions Acts, as the case may be, and comprise breaches of municipal regulations and other minor offences.

The statistics presented in this Chapter are collected directly from the criminal courts in the different judicial districts throughout Canada. There are 157 such districts divided by provinces as follows: Newfoundland 7, Prince Edward Island 3, Nova Scotia 7, New Brunswick 15, Quebec 28, Ontario 48, Manitoba 6, Saskatchewan 21, Alberta 12, British Columbia 8, Yukon Territory 1 and the Northwest Territories 1.

Section 2.—Adult Offenders and Convictions

Subsection 1.—Adults Convicted of Indictable Offences

The main interest in criminal statistics is concerned with those persons guilty of the more serious crimes. Such offenders are fewer than those who commit non-indictable offences but, from the standpoint of the protection of society, they are more important.

In 1949, the basis of the statistics of indictable crimes was changed from convictions to persons; therefore, the tables in this Subsection can be compared only with those of the 1952-53 Year Book. Another significant difference from the previous tabulations is the change of the reporting year in 1951 from the 12 months ending Sept. 30 to the calendar year.

Where any person is prosecuted at the same hearing for several offences, one offence has to be selected for tabulation. The rule followed is to select that for which the proceedings were carried to the furthest stage—to conviction and sentence if the prisoner was tried on several charges; if there were several convictions, the offence selected is that for which the heaviest punishment was awarded; if the final result of proceedings on two or more charges was the same, the most serious offence (as measured by the maximum penalty allowed by the law) appears in the tables. Where a person was prosecuted for one offence and convicted of another (e.g., charged with murder and convicted of manslaughter), the case appears only under the offence for which he was convicted.

In the case of non-indictable offences, the figures given in Subsection 3 continue to be based on convictions and are comparable with those previously published.

Statistics include only cases finally determined within the year. Cases not entirely disposed of within the year (e.g., tried but sentence postponed) are held over for the next year's report.

Criminal statistics for Newfoundland are included for the first time in 1951.

During the year Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 1951, the courts of Canada dealt with 34,181 adults charged with 48,225 indictable crimes, of whom 28,980 were found guilty of 39,309 offences. This was a decrease of 7.7 p.c. as compared with the year ended