

On the basis of the Census of Canada data, the balance of migration is summarized in the following statement.

POPULATION BALANCE SHEET, 1851-1956

Period	Births	Deaths	Immigration	Emigration (Residual)	Net Immigration	Population at End of Decade
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
1851.....	2,436
1851-1861.....	1,281	611	209	85	+124	3,230
1861-1871.....	1,369	718	187	379	-192	3,689
1871-1881.....	1,477	754	353	440	-87	4,325
1881-1891.....	1,538	824	903	1,109	-206	4,833
1891-1901.....	1,546	828	326	506	-180	5,371
1901-1911.....	1,931	811	1,759	1,043	+716	7,207
1911-1921.....	2,338	988 ¹	1,612	1,381	+231	8,788
1921-1931.....	2,415	1,055	1,203	974	+229	10,377
1931-1941.....	2,294	1,072	150	242	-92	11,507
1941-1951.....	3,186	1,214	548	379	+169	13,648 ²
1951-1956 ³	2,106	633	783	184	+599	16,081

¹ Excludes extra mortality associated with World War I, estimated at 120,000, which became a province of Canada in 1949 and had a population of 361,416 in 1951.

² Excludes Newfoundland
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This apparently unfavourable balance of migration has given rise to a number of interpretations. Some students have thought that both immigrants and the Canadian-born migrants represented an 'overflow' and conversely that the numbers Canada has retained comprise its 'absorptive capacity', an idea which, superficially at least, verges on the tautological. Distinctions have been made between the movement of immigrants and Canadian-born, suggesting that the former displaced the latter and that, if there had been no emigration of the Canadian-born, natural increase without immigration would have been sufficient to give Canada the population it now has. Others have held that, given the opportunity to emigrate, the Canadian population would have been even smaller if it had not been for immigration.

The value of such studies is limited at least partly by certain unstated assumptions, by the scarcity of data, and because they involve the difficult theory that Canada's absorptive capacity is basically independent of that of the United States. It is suggested rather that the long processes of the settlement and economic development of the North American Continent must be considered as a whole and that political boundaries more often than not have had only secondary influence. Population movements into and within the areas of North America then are integral and not separate aspects of the distribution and re-distribution of people geographically and occupationally, in accord with the 'push' and 'pull' factors operating at any time in the whole or in its parts.*

In the aggregate, emigration and re-emigration from Canada have involved the movement of several million people, spread unevenly over a hundred years and more. The size of these movements and the fact that they have continued, might alone raise doubts that they could ever be explained by sole reference to conditions existing in Canada. It has been maintained† that "since 1851 Canada brought in several millions of immigrants

* Brinley Thomas, *Migration and Economic Growth* (Cambridge University Press, 1954), pp. 134-138. For an early formulation of such a thesis see *Annex to the Report of the Minister of Agriculture for 1889*, Apr. 14, 1890, in *State Papers, Emigration to Canada*.

† Herbert Marshall, testifying before the Standing Committee on Immigration and Labour, *Proceedings of the Standing Committee on Immigration and Labour*, May 14, 1947, p. 217. The Senate of Canada.