

## 5.4 Households and families

This Section relates to some of the basic statistics on households and families collected in the 1971 Census. More detailed information may be found in the 1971 Census reports. Of particular interest will be the reports pertaining to households and families to be published in a series of profile studies of Canada's human resources as part of Volume V of the 1971 Census.

### 5.4.1 Household size and types

A household, as defined in the census, consists of a person or a group of persons occupying one dwelling. It usually consists of a family with or without lodgers, employees, etc. However, it may consist of a group of unrelated persons, of two or more families sharing a dwelling, or of one person living alone. Every person is a member of some household and the number of households equals the number of occupied dwellings. The statistics presented in this Section pertain to private households only. Collective households such as hotels, motels, institutions of various types (usually considered to contain ten or more unrelated persons) have been excluded because their significant dissimilarities from private households could distort the household picture with respect to size and composition.

The number of private households in Canada increased to 6 million in 1971 from 4.5 million a decade earlier, a gain of almost one third. The corresponding population rate of increase was considerably lower at 18%. This difference in growth rates reflects the marked rise in recent years in the number of households consisting of only one or two persons. Generally speaking, the distribution of households by province in 1971 closely paralleled the population distribution: Ontario had the greatest number of households at 2.2 million, followed by Quebec and British Columbia which had 1.6 million and 668,000 households, respectively.

**Households by size.** Table 5.23 shows the total number and the average size of households by province for the census years 1961, 1966 and 1971. In the 1971 Census, the average size of Canadian households was 3.5 persons as compared to 3.7 persons in 1966 and 3.9 persons in 1961. In all these censuses, the average number of persons per household was highest in Newfoundland. While the decline in the average size of households during the period 1961-66 was attributable to mainly two provinces, New Brunswick and Quebec, a further drop in the average size during the period 1966-71 was realized in all provinces.

**Households containing families.** All private-type households are divided for census purposes into two basic categories: family households and non-family households, depending upon whether or not there is a family (or families) present in the household. Table 5.24 shows the distribution of households on this basis for census years 1961, 1966 and 1971.

Family households, although they increased in number from 3.9 million in 1961 to almost 4.4 million in 1966 and to 4.9 million in 1971, proportionately dropped from 86.7% in 1961 to 84.5% in 1966 and to 81.7% in 1971. The proportion of households consisting of two or more families dropped from 3.7% in 1961 to 2.0% in 1971, which is usually an indication of a decrease in the incidence of over-crowding in households. On the other hand, non-family households increased both in number as well as in proportion to the total number of households. This increase is solely attributable to the increase in the proportion of one-person households from 9.3% in 1961 to 11.4% in 1966 and 13.4% in 1971. Thus, new family formation alone was not responsible for the over-all increase in the number of households; some family persons and families who previously shared accommodation with other families now maintained their own households.

**Households by age and sex of head.** The distribution of household heads by age and sex for the census years 1961, 1966 and 1971 is given in Table 5.25. Of particular interest is the upward trend in households headed by young males of under 25 years of age. Although total households increased by 16.6% between 1966 and 1971, the number of households with heads under 25 years of age grew by 54.0%, reaching 414,470 in 1971 from 269,065 in 1966. By province, this group increased by as much as 72.6% in Manitoba and 63.0% in Newfoundland. Quebec registered the largest growth in the number of households with heads 70 years of age or over, increasing 17.5% to 125,095 in 1971 compared to 106,459 in 1966. Nationally, however, the proportion of households with heads 70 and over declined slightly to 10.3% of all households from 10.7%.