

In 1966, for the first time, expectancies were calculated for all ten provinces. Male expectancies at birth ranged from 70.5 for Saskatchewan to 67.9 for Quebec, a difference of 2.6 years; Saskatchewan also had the highest expectancies for females at 76.5 years and Quebec the lowest at 73.9 years. In general terms, it may be stated that 1966 expectancies for all four western provinces, at all the selected ages, were moderately above the national average, with the Saskatchewan rates being the highest in all cases. Ontario rates were fairly close to the Canadian average, except those for older men which were slightly below it. Quebec rates were still the lowest in the country, rather less than a year below the national average for males from birth to age 40 and somewhat more than a year below the national average for the corresponding range for females. For the Atlantic Provinces, expectancies at birth and at one year of age clustered fairly closely around the Canadian average, although the Newfoundland female expectancy at birth was a little lower. This statement also applies to expectancies at age 20, with Newfoundland males slightly above the national level. For older males, most Atlantic region expectancies were a little above average and for older females they fluctuated around the national figure.

5.8 Nuptiality

This Section includes not only recent statistics on marriages and marriage rates, but also on dissolutions of marriages. There is expanded coverage of the latter subject in this edition because of the dramatic increases in the number of divorces resulting from recent changes in Canada's divorce laws.

5.8.1 Marriages

In 1971 a record 191,324 marriages were solemnized in Canada, mainly because of the relative increase in the numbers of men and women in the prime marrying ages — the late teens and the early 20s. This growing proportion of young men and women has advanced the crude marriage rate from a low of 6.9 per 1,000 population in 1963 to 8.9 in 1971. Table 5.52 gives the number of marriages and the marriage rates for Canada and the provinces for the four census years 1951, 1961, 1966 and 1971, with percentages of brides and bridegrooms according to place of birth.

For the country as a whole, 81% of the bridegrooms of 1971 were born in Canada, 67% in the province in which they were married; 86% of the brides were born in Canada, 73% in the province in which they were married. There are wide variations in the pattern of intermarriage of foreign-born and native-born persons among the provinces; in the older Atlantic Provinces and in Quebec and Saskatchewan, there is a greater tendency than in the other provinces to marry native Canadians and in these areas both partners are often born in the same province. In Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia there are higher proportions than elsewhere of intermarriage with persons born in other provinces or outside Canada.

Age and marital status. Table 5.53 shows that 169,072 or over 88% of the 191,324 brides who married in 1971, and 88% of the grooms, had never previously married. The proportion of divorced brides remarrying in 1969 rose sharply for the first time to 6.4% from 4.4% in the previous year and the proportion of divorced grooms from 4.7% to 6.9%. By 1971 these proportions had risen to 7.5 and 8.1, respectively, resulting from the increased number of divorces granted under the new federal divorce legislation enacted in 1968.

In 1971, the median age at marriage — the age above and below which half of the marriages occurred — was 23.5 for bachelors and 21.3 for spinsters. After having remained constant since 1960 at 21.1 and 21.2, the 1971 median ages represent a slight trend toward later marriage, particularly for bachelors.

Religious denomination. The distribution of brides and bridegrooms by religious denomination is roughly the same as that for the population as a whole. Table 5.54 shows the relatively strong influence that religion has on marriage. About 63% of all marriages are between persons of the same religious denomination; in 1971 among those of Jewish faith it was about 90%; among Roman Catholics about 80%; Eastern Orthodox about 64%; and United Church about 50%. Except for those of the Jewish faith, the proportions of persons of the same faith marrying appears to be declining slightly in recent years.

5.8.2 Divorces

Since 1921, the number of divorces granted each year in Canada has been rising steadily. From only about 500 during the 1921-25 period, the annual number of divorces rose to more