

proportion increases with the number of children, reaching 75% in families of seven children or more.

The mother is granted custody of all the children in almost 75% of all cases and fathers in about 13%. In virtually all the remaining cases, custody is either divided or not awarded.

These proportions vary with the petitioner. As shown in Table 5.56, when the mother is the petitioner she is granted custody in almost 90% of the cases while the father gains custody in only 2% to 3%. In the remaining cases, custody is divided or not awarded.

On the other hand, the proportion of cases in which the father gains custody when he is the petitioner has dropped from 43% in 1968 to 38% in 1971. The proportions are 34% and 38%, respectively, for custody awarded to the mother. The custody of the children is divided in 5% of the cases, and in approximately 20% of the cases no award as to custody is made.

The high proportion of cases where no custody award is made when the father petitions for the divorce is probably related to the higher average age of fathers at the time of divorce. The higher the average age at the time of divorce, the lower the probability of there being minor children for whom an award is required. However, there may be cases in which there are minor children but the question is not raised before the court because of a tacit agreement between the parents regarding custody of the children.

Marital status and age at marriage. Just over 92% of persons divorced in 1971 had not been married before as against 2% of widowed persons and 6% of persons previously divorced. This low percentage of persons previously divorced, as shown by the figures in Table 5.57, is explained by the relatively low proportion of remarried persons in the total population. These proportions should change in the future since there should be a decrease in the proportion of newly divorced persons and a corresponding increase in formerly divorced persons, because of the expected increase in the remarried proportion of the total population in the future.

Previous marital status, and even more important, age at the time of marriage, have always been cited as determining factors in the frequency of divorce. The new statistics confirm for Canada what has already been proved in other countries. Early marriage and remarriage considerably increase the risks of divorce. For each marriage duration, the probability of divorce increases in direct proportion to the precocity of marriage or with remarriage.

Table 5.58 gives the probability of marriages terminating in divorce for every 100 marriages, by age and marital status of the woman at the time of marriage and by the duration of marriage. This rate is what would be observed if a cohort of women were constantly exposed to the conditions existing in 1971.

These rates are probably too high to adequately reflect the underlying trend. As already mentioned, the 1971 divorce rates are still affected by conditions existing prior to enactment of the new legislation in 1968. However, it is unlikely that the rates by age at marriage or by marital status would be affected differently by this implicit distortion. In other words, while it may not be true that 30% of women who marry below the age of 20 and who were single at the time of marriage will be divorced after 30 years of marriage, nor that 15% of women marrying between 20 and 24 years of age will be divorced after 30 years of marriage, it is at least valid to state that women marrying below 20 years of age are divorced twice as often as those marrying between 20 and 24 years of age and three times as often as women who marry between 25 and 29 years of age.

Divorce is more frequent among women who were widows at the time of marriage and still more frequent among those previously divorced. Given the same age at marriage, widows are divorced twice as often as single women and divorcees three times as often.

5.9 Migration

Sections 5.5 to 5.8 of this Chapter were concerned with the vital components of population change (fertility, mortality, nuptiality). There remain the flows of population across national borders (immigration and emigration) which also affect the country's growth and demographic structure. The relative influence of net migration (the excess of immigrants over emigrants) compared to natural increase factors (the excess of births over deaths) in past growth rates of Canada over the period 1851-1971 are shown in Table 5.2. This Section provides recent data on the numbers and characteristics of immigrants entering Canada (Tables 5.59 to 5.66), as well as estimates of the numbers of emigrants leaving (Table 5.67). The