Population projections[1] for Canada, 1973-2001

1. See footnotes to Table 4.3 for summary of main assumptions underlying each of the three different projections A, B and C.

of 1.80 by 1985, and a net migration gain of 60,000 a year. As shown in Table 4.3, this projection yields a total population of 25.4 million by 1986 and 28.4 million by 2001.

These projections indicate that after a short phase of increase in the population growth rate (i.e. between 1976 and 1986), the rate will gradually decline toward the end of the century to about 1.3% per annum according to Projection A, and to 0.5% under Projection C. The slowdown in population growth and fertility rates will cause some aging of Canada's population. As a result of an upward shift in the age structure, there will be a steady decline in the child-dependency ratio and an increase in the old age dependency ratio.

4.2 Population distribution

Decennial and quinquennial censuses of Canada make possible periodic assessments of the size and location of the nation's human resources. They provide data on the distribution of population for many types of geographical, political, and statistical entities. Used as benchmarks, the census counts enable annual estimates to be made for some of the larger areas (e.g. provinces, counties, metropolitan areas). A small selection of these data is presented in this Section, embodying results of the 1971 Census and later estimates to 1974 where applicable.

4.2.1 Provincial and sub-provincial areas

Heading the list of population distributions are those relating to federal electoral districts. The basic legal reason for decennial censuses is to enable a redistribution of seats in the House of Commons. Under the terms of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act, the census must provide population counts by electoral districts for this purpose. Those from the most recent (1971) census are shown in Chapter 3, Table 3.4, according to the electoral district boundaries established by the 1966 Representation Order (i.e. the redistribution following the 1961 Census).