

Provincial trends, 1951-71. The growth of Canada's population has not been uniformly distributed among the provinces. The distributions for the 1951-71 period are presented in Table 4.4 and they show substantial variations in rates of growth. This is evident from the number of provinces with higher or lower growth rates compared with the national average. Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta and the Northwest Territories had growth rates higher than national figures in all five-year periods between 1951 and 1971. However, a decline in the rate of growth over the past 20 years occurred in all provinces as birth rates began to fall in the mid-1950s. The most spectacular change took place in Quebec where the rate of growth declined by about 70% between 1951-56 and 1966-71 (i.e. from 14.1% to 4.3%). The growth rate in Quebec in 1966-71 was less than half of the rate during the preceding five-year period.

The slow population growth of 1966-71 was not shared equally among the provinces. The lowest rates occurred in the Atlantic provinces, Quebec, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan registered an actual decline in population during this period. British Columbia had the highest growth rate (16.6%) in 1966-71, followed by Alberta and Ontario. The uneven rates of increase among the provinces in 1966-71 imply that during this period net migration reinforced the natural growth of population in Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia and depressed it in all others (see Table 4.5).

Provincial estimates, 1974. In addition to the five-year census counts, estimates are constructed for the total population of Canada and for each province on both an annual and quarterly basis. The estimates of population begin with the preceding census counts, to which are added the births of each year and from which the deaths are subtracted; immigrants are added and an estimate of emigrants subtracted. Family allowance statistics showing the number of migrant families by province are used in estimating interprovincial shifts in population. Finally, the next succeeding census serves as a basis for revision of all annual estimates of each intercensal period.

Table 4.6 shows the revised annual population estimates by province for the years 1967 to 1970, and the provisional estimates for 1972, 1973 and 1974. Included in the Table are the actual enumerated counts for the two "benchmark" census years of 1966 and 1971. The estimate for Canada of 22,446,000 population at June 1, 1974 is the result of adding 346,000 births and 214,000 immigrants to the previous 1973 estimate of 22,095,000 and then subtracting 166,000 deaths and a residual of 43,000 representing mainly emigrants.

Cities, towns and villages. As at June 1, 1971, some 65.4% of Canada's population lived in 2,120 centres classified as incorporated cities, towns and villages. These are grouped into 13 broad size categories in Table 4.7. There were only two cities within whose incorporated boundaries the population was over 500,000 (Montreal and Toronto), representing a combined 8.9% of the total population. At the other end of the scale, 1,093 or one half of all incorporated cities, towns and villages had less than 1,000 population, but together they accounted for only 2.1% of Canada's population.

Canadian cities and towns having a population of over 50,000 in 1971 are listed in Table 4.8 together with figures for 1961 and 1966. The date of incorporation to their present status of a city or town is indicated also. Since the population counts for the three census periods relate to the incorporated limits of the city or town at each of these dates, the growth figures are not strictly comparable in those instances where boundary changes due to annexations, etc., have taken place. Asterisks in the table indicate all cases where such changes have occurred.

Metropolitan areas. For census purposes a metropolitan area represents the main labour market of a continuous built-up area having a population of 100,000 or more. The growth of each of the 22 census metropolitan areas can be observed over the period 1951-71 in Table 4.9 where the populations of these areas in earlier censuses have been adjusted to conform to the boundaries delineated for the 1971 Census. For many purposes these figures, which essentially measure the size of Canada's major urban agglomerations, are more meaningful than the data relating only to the incorporated limits of the central cities shown in Table 4.8.

The proportion of Canada's population living in the major metropolitan centres has been steadily increasing in recent years to the point where over one half (55.1%) now reside within the boundaries of the 22 metropolitan areas as defined for the 1971 Census. Calgary showed the highest rate of growth in the most recent period (1966-71) at 22.1%, followed by Edmonton at 16.5%. However, the greatest actual gains were registered by Toronto which