

languages of Canada since some persons, particularly immigrants, do not use either of the two official languages as the one they speak most often in their homes. Conversely, many others with a non-English mother tongue may no longer employ their mother tongue for this purpose. Final results of the 1971 Census in Table 4.16 indicate that 67.0% of the population spoke English most often in their homes, whereas only 60.2% reported English as their mother tongue.

4.3.3 Ethnicity, religion, birthplace

A population made up of diverse ethnic groups, religious affiliations and countries of birth gives rise to political, social and economic problems quite different in nature from a country with a more homogeneous composition. It is equally true that different backgrounds lend variety and diversity to the national life. Because of the varied nature of Canada's population, the measurements provided by decennial censuses on such subjects as ethnic and religious composition are of widespread interest and in continuous demand. Tables 4.19 to 4.21 show summary figures on these subjects from the 1971 Census, with comparative data for earlier years.

Ethnic groups. The ethnic composition of the population of Canada has changed considerably over the years because of many factors, including differences in the flow and source of immigrants. Trends in recent years have been characterized by a gradual decline in the proportions of British Isles groups and a corresponding increase in European ethnic groups other than French. For example, the former groups had dropped from 57.0% of the total population in 1901 to 44.6% by 1971, whereas other European groups rose from 8.5% to 23.0%. The French ethnic group remained relatively stable, starting at 30.7% in 1901, and moving irregularly lower to 28.7% by 1971. Table 4.19 provides 1971 figures for the larger ethnic groups in Canada, together with earlier data from the two previous decennial censuses in 1951 and 1961.

Religious denominations. Census figures on religious denominations do not measure church membership or the degree of affiliation with a particular religious body. Respondents were requested to answer the question "What is your religion?" and to enter if possible a specific religious denomination, sect or community. Thus, the census data on this subject relate to the religious denominations to which persons state they belong, adhere or favour, with the opportunity to report "no religion" if so desired. As shown in the 1971 figures in Table 4.20, three out of every four persons in Canada in 1971 reported one of the three numerically largest denominations — Roman Catholic, United Church or Anglican. Largest relative gains since 1961 occurred in such groups as Jehovah's Witnesses and Pentecostal. None of the major denominations registered actual declines in the 1961-71 period, but the Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Presbyterian and United Church groups were among those showing losses relative to the total population.

Country of birth. The proportion of the population born outside Canada has ranged during the present century from a high of 22% throughout the period 1911-31, following the heavy waves of immigration in the early decades, to a low of 15% in 1951 following a period of lower immigration and rising birth rates. Persons born in the United Kingdom comprised over 11% of the population in 1911 and 1921, but this percentage declined gradually to 4.3% by 1971 in the face of the rising proportions of Canadian-born and immigration from other European countries. Persons born in the latter countries rose from 5.6% of Canada's population in 1911 to 7.8% in 1971 (Table 4.21).

4.3.4 The native peoples

Many centuries before the first European settlers arrived on what is now Canadian soil, this vast country had received immigrants in the prehistoric period. Present-day Eskimos (Inuit) and Indians are the descendants of these early settlers but as a result of heavy immigration by other groups they now represent less than 2% of Canada's population. Administration relating to the affairs of the Indian and Inuit peoples is described in Chapter 3. Demographic data on their numbers and locations can be obtained from reports of the 1971 Census of Canada, in which summary figures show a total of 295,215 Indian people and