

84.5% in 1966 and to 81.7% in 1971. The proportion of households consisting of two or more families dropped from 3.7% in 1961 to 2.0% in 1971, which is usually an indication of a decrease in the incidence of over-crowding in households. Non-family households, on the other hand, increased both in number as well as in proportion to the total number of households. This increase is mainly attributable to the increase in the proportion of one-person households from 9.3% in 1961 to 11.4% in 1966 and 13.4% in 1971. Thus, new family formation alone was not responsible for the over-all increase in the number of households; some family persons and families who previously shared accommodation with other families now maintained their own households.

The distribution of households by type varied significantly with the sex of the head. Only 35.5% (353,710) of the 997,240 households with female heads were family households, compared to 90.8% (4,579,920) for the 5,044,065 households with male heads. Almost half (49.1%, or 489,620) of all female-head households consisted of women living alone. The corresponding figure for households with male heads was only 6.4% (321,720).

Households by age and marital status of head. The distribution of household heads by age for the census years 1961, 1966 and 1971 is given in Table 4.25. Of particular interest is the upward trend in households headed by persons of under 25 years of age. Although total households increased by 16.6% between 1966 and 1971, the number of households with heads under 25 years of age grew by 54.0%, reaching 414,470 in 1971 from 269,065 in 1966. By province, this group increased by as much as 72.6% in Manitoba and 63.0% in Newfoundland. Quebec registered the largest growth in the number of households with heads 70 years of age and over, increasing 17.5% to 125,095 in 1971 compared to 106,459 in 1966. Nationally, however, the proportion of households with heads 70 and over declined slightly to 10.3% of all households from 10.7%.

Growth in the number of households also varied significantly with the marital status of head, as can be seen from Table 4.26. The most significant increase during the 1961-71 period was recorded by households with divorced heads, at 316.9%. The increase was 49.0% from 1961 to 1966, and 179.8% from 1966 to 1971, so that the proportion of households with divorced heads more than doubled from 0.8% in 1966 to 1.9% in 1971. At 92.2%, the increase in households with single never-married heads was the next highest. The rate of increase over the decade was 36.4% for households with widowed heads and 25.6% for households with married heads (including separated).

4.4.2 Family size and composition

A family, as defined in the Canadian census, consists of a husband and wife with or without unmarried children, or a parent with one or more unmarried children, living together in the same dwelling. Adopted children and stepchildren have the same status as own children.

The number of families in Canada increased to 5.0 million in 1971 from 4.5 million in 1966 and 4.1 million in 1961, a gain of approximately one fourth over the decade. Following the patterns of provincial population growth, and particularly reflecting the factors of migration, the largest rate of increase in the number of families occurred in British Columbia (35.4% in the 1961-71 period), followed by Alberta (25.0%), and Ontario (24.5%).

Families by size. The total number and average size of families are given in Table 4.27 by province for the census years 1961, 1966 and 1971. Although the average size of the Canadian family remained the same at 3.9 persons between 1961 and 1966, it dropped to 3.7 persons between 1966 and 1971 as declines in birth rates across the nation began to be reflected in census family-size trends. Quebec and New Brunswick experienced the largest reductions in average family size, decreasing from 4.2 persons in 1961 to 3.9 in 1971 for Quebec, and from 4.3 to 4.0 for New Brunswick.

Families maintaining own households. Families "maintaining their own households" are those in which the head of the family is also the head of the household. Families not maintaining their own households fall into two census sub-categories: families related to the head of the household, and non-related lodging families. The few who do not fit either of these sub-categories are mostly families of employees living in their employer's household.

As can be seen from Table 4.28, 96.6% of the Canadian families in 1971 maintained their own households. These families increased over earlier censuses both in number as well as in