

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.

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 22 census metropolitan areas over the period 1951-71 appears in Table 4.9. Populations of these areas in earlier censuses were adjusted to conform to the boundaries delineated for the 1971 Census. The 1976 Census population figures have been added, based on 1976 census metropolitan areas.

The proportion of Canada's population in the major metropolitan centres increased steadily and over one half (55.1%) resided in the 22 metropolitan areas as defined for the 1971 Census. Calgary showed the highest rate of growth in the period 1966-71 at 22.1%, followed by Edmonton at 16.5%. The greatest gains in numbers were registered by Toronto at 338,000 and by Montreal at 172,000. Vancouver became Canada's third urban agglomeration to pass the "over-a-million" population mark.

Because of the growing interest in the expanding metropolitan areas a series of intercensal estimates was begun in 1957. As in preparation of intercensal population estimates for provinces, the births in the metropolitan areas were added to the census population and deaths subtracted. Immigrants reporting these metropolitan areas as places of destination were added and allowances made for losses by emigration. Also, the net in-movement by internal migration was calculated from family allowances and other data.

Population density

4.2.2

At six persons a sq mile (2.3/km²) in 1971, Canada's crude or average population density still ranks among the lowest in the world. Table 4.10 shows that if the Yukon Territory and Northwest Territories were omitted from this calculation, there would be 10 persons a sq mile (3.9/km²) in 1971 compared to eight (3.1/km²) in 1961 and six (2.3/km²) in 1951. However, such average density figures over all types of land terrain and open spaces in the country or in individual provinces obscure the high urban densities which can reach close to 20,000 persons a sq mile (7722/km²) as in the overall figure for the cities of Montreal and Toronto. Moreover, the highest provincial densities are not necessarily found among the provinces with the largest populations. For example, the highest average density of any province is that of Prince Edward Island (51 persons a sq mile) (19.7/km²), which has the smallest population and represents an anomaly resulting from its very limited land area rather than from heavy concentrations of population. In contrast, the far more populous province of British Columbia, with its vast mountainous regions and areas of sparse population, has an average density of only six persons a sq mile (2.3/km²).

Urban and rural

4.2.3

The urban population was defined in the 1971 Census as all persons living in incorporated cities, towns and villages with a population of 1,000 and over, as well as in unincorporated places of 1,000 and over having a population density of at least 1,000 a sq mile (386/km²). Also considered as urban were the built-up fringes of these cities, towns and villages if they met the same criteria of population and density. All the remaining population was classified as rural.

Over three quarters (76.1%) of Canada's population lived in an urban environment, with the degree of urbanization ranging from 38.3% in Prince Edward Island to 82.4% in Ontario. In comparison with the national average, only Ontario and Quebec were more highly urbanized. (Table 4.11)

The rural population, 23.9% of the Canadian total in 1971, is classified in Table 4.11 as non-farm or farm. The rural farm population was defined for census purposes as persons living in rural areas on an agricultural holding of one or more