

## 4.8 Nuptiality

This section includes statistics on marriages and marriage rates and also on dissolutions of marriages. In the *Canada Year Book 1973* pp 201-204, expanded coverage of the latter topic focussed attention on dramatic increases in the number of divorces resulting from changes in 1968 to Canada's divorce laws.

### 4.8.1 Marriages

In 1974, there were 198,824 marriages solemnized in Canada. The rate of marriage was 8.9 per 1,000 population, down from 9.0 in 1973, reversing an upward trend which began in the early 1960s. There were similar slight declines in most provinces. In 1974, Alberta recorded 9.7 marriages per 1,000 population, the highest of any province. (Table 4.32)

**Birthplace of brides and grooms.** For Canada as a whole in 1973, Table 4.48 shows that 73.1% of the brides and 68.5% of the grooms were married in the province in which they were born; 11.7% of brides and 13.7% of grooms were married in a province other than that of their birth. Persons born outside Canada constituted 15.2% of the brides and 17.8% of the grooms. There were significant variations in these percentages among the various provinces. In terms of marrying persons born outside Canada, Ontario and British Columbia are both relatively high.

Proportionately more brides tend to marry in the province of their birth than do grooms. Further, the proportions of both brides and grooms marrying in the region of their birth are lowest in the territories, British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario. These are the regions which have generally been subject to the largest net inflows of population in recent years.

**Age and marital status.** Table 4.49 shows that in 1974 the great majority of brides and grooms reported their previous marital status as single, with divorced and widowed following in that order. A total of 172,107 or over 86.6% of all brides in 1974, and 85.8% of all grooms, had previously never been married. The proportion of brides marrying in 1974 who were previously divorced was about 9.6%, and widowed, 3.8%.

In 1974 the median age at marriage — the age above and below which half the marriages occurred — was 23.5 for bachelors and 21.3 for spinsters. In terms of averages, bachelors averaged 24.7 years of age, and spinsters 22.4.

**Religious denomination.** Some indication of the influence that religion has in selecting marriage partners is shown in Table 4.50. For example, about 51% of all marriages in 1974 in Canada (excluding Quebec) were between persons of the same religious denomination. This percentage would have been significantly higher if it had been possible to include marriages contracted in the province of Quebec. Percentages were higher for such denominations as Jewish and Roman Catholic and lower for others: Anglican, Baptist, Presbyterian and United Church.

### 4.8.2 Divorces

The number of decrees absolute granted in Canada has risen sharply as a result of the 1968 changes in divorce legislation. For Canada as a whole the number of divorces rose to over 36,704 in 1973 as compared to an average of about 11,000 divorces over the three-year period 1966-68. Data for 1974 indicate a further increase to 45,019 decrees absolute granted in Canada. In 1974 Alberta recorded a divorce rate of 288.6 per 100,000 population, and British Columbia 285.6, the highest rates among the provinces. By comparison, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island recorded the lowest rates, at 55.5 and 82.3. (Table 4.32)

**Sex of petitioners.** Table 4.51 shows that almost twice as many divorces were granted in 1974 to female petitioners (29,691), as to males (15,328). This represents a ratio of 52 divorces to male petitioners for every 100 to females. Among the provinces, Alberta showed the lowest ratio of male petitioners (38 to every 100 female) while British Columbia had the highest (60).