

proportion of the Canadian population reporting English mother tongue increased from 60.2% in 1971 to 61.4% in 1976, while those reporting French declined from 26.9% to 25.6%. Chinese and Portuguese showed significant advances, while Ukrainian, German, Dutch, Polish and Yiddish were among those registering declines.

Table 4.17 shows the number and proportion of the population reporting English or French as their mother tongue, by province. The relative gains in English mother tongue over the 1971-76 period occurred mostly in the western provinces at the expense of others such as Ukrainian, German and Polish, as descendants of earlier immigrants reported English as their mother tongue to a greater extent than in previous decades.

It should be noted that the not stated category makes direct comparisons between 1971 and 1976 data problematic. In 1971, persons who did not report a mother tongue were assigned a language as mother tongue. Consequently, the 1976 counts are lower for any given language than they would have been if the 1971 procedure had been followed.

Official language. Table 4.18 shows 1971 Census figures on the population reporting the ability to speak one or both of Canada's two official languages, with comparative data for 1961. In 1971 a total of 67.1% were able to speak English only, 18.0% French only, and 13.4% were bilingual. These ratios represent a slight increase in the proportion able to speak both English and French over 1961, when the percentage was 12.2.

Language spoken in the home. This inquiry was introduced in the 1971 Census on the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism and other groups. It added insight into the languages of Canada since some persons, particularly immigrants, did not indicate either of the two official languages as the one they spoke most often in their homes. Conversely, many with a non-English mother tongue no longer used their mother tongue. Table 4.16 indicates that 67.0% of the population spoke English most often in their homes, whereas only 60.2% reported English as their mother tongue.

Ethnicity, religion, birthplace

4.3.3

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 from the 1971 Census, with comparative data for earlier years.

Ethnic groups. The ethnic composition of Canada has changed considerably because of many factors, including differences in the flow and source of immigrants. Trends in recent years have been characterized by a 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, varying from 30.7% in 1901 to 28.7% by 1971. Table 4.19 provides 1971 figures for the larger ethnic groups, together with data from 1951 and 1961.

Religious denominations. Census figures do not measure church membership or the degree of affiliation with a particular religious body. Respondents were asked to enter a specific religious denomination, sect or community, with the opportunity to report no religion if so desired. As shown 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 numerical declines in the 1961-71 period, but the Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Presbyterian and United Church groups were among those showing percentage losses relative to the total population.

Country of birth. The proportion of the population born outside Canada ranged from a high of 22% throughout the period 1911-31 to a low of 15% in 1951 following a period of lower immigration and rising birth rates. Persons born in the United Kingdom