

#### 4.8.1 Marriages

In 1975, there were 197,585 marriages solemnized in Canada. The rate of marriage remained unchanged at 8.9 per 1,000 population. In 1975, Alberta recorded 9.9 marriages per 1,000 population, the highest of any province (Table 4.32).

In 1975 the median age at marriage — the age above and below which half the marriages occurred — was 23.6 for bachelors and 21.5 for spinsters. In terms of averages, bachelors averaged 24.9 years of age, and spinsters 22.5.

**Religious denomination.** Some indication of the influence that religion has in selecting marriage partners is shown in Table 4.50. The majority of marriages in Canada were between persons of the same religious denomination. The proportions 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. The number of divorces rose to over 50,600 in 1975 compared to an average of about 11,000 divorces per year over the period 1966-68. In 1975 Alberta's divorce rate was 309.7 per 100,000 population, and British Columbia 306.6, the highest rates among the provinces. By comparison, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island had the lowest rates, 69.2 and 63.7 (Table 4.32).

**Sex of petitioners.** Table 4.51 shows that almost twice as many divorces were granted in 1975 to female petitioners (33,538), as to males (17,073). This represents a ratio of 51 divorces to male petitioners for every 100 to females.

**Grounds for divorce.** A cause for divorce can be mentioned singly in a decree or in combination with others. Table 4.52 indicates that in 1975 separation for not less than three years was the most frequent cause of divorce, accounting for 33.0% of all causes reported. This was followed by adultery (30.0%), mental cruelty (16.5%) and physical cruelty (13.9%).

**Dependent children.** Of the 50,611 divorces granted in 1975, 42.4% involved no dependent children. Table 4.53 shows increases in the proportion of divorces involving dependent children from 55.8% in 1972 to 57.6% in 1975. Almost two out of every five of the latter cases involved one child only, and almost one-third of them involved two children.

**Duration of marriage.** The duration of marriage in 15.6% of the divorces in Canada in 1975 was less than five years and in 45.0% of the cases it was less than 10 years. The short-term trend over five years indicates a relative shortening of the average marriage period before divorce. Table 4.54 shows that in 1972 only 15.3% of the divorces involved marriages of less than five years and 26.7% to those of less than 10 years. The median duration of marriage for 1972 divorces was 12.1 years compared to 11.4 in 1975.

**Marital status.** More than nine out of every 10 persons divorced in 1975 were involved in a first divorce. Slightly over 5% of the divorces were to persons who were divorced at the time of their last marriage and a little less than 2% to those who were widowed (Table 4.55).

#### 4.9 Migration

Besides the vital components of population change (fertility, mortality, nuptiality), the flows of population across national borders (immigration and emigration) also affect the country's growth and demographic structure. This section provides data on the numbers and characteristics of immigrants entering Canada (Tables 4.56 to 4.62), as well as estimates of the numbers of emigrants leaving (Table 4.63). The relative influence of net migration (excess of immigrants over emigrants) compared to natural increase (excess of births over deaths) in past growth rates of Canada over the period 1851-1976 is shown in Table 4.2.