

Provincial population trends, 1951-76. Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia and the Northwest Territories had growth rates higher than national figures in all five-year periods between 1951 and 1976 (Table 4.4). However, a decline in the rate of growth occurred in all provinces as birth rates began to fall in the mid-1950s. The most spectacular change took place in Quebec where the rate of growth declined by about 76% between 1951-56 and 1971-76 (from 14.1% to 3.4%).

The lowest growth rates for 1971-76 were in Saskatchewan, Quebec, Manitoba and the Atlantic provinces. Saskatchewan registered a decline while the Northwest Territories had the highest growth rate (22.4%) followed by Yukon, Alberta and British Columbia (12.9% each) and Ontario (7.3%).

Provincial estimates. In addition to the five-year census, estimates are constructed for the total population of Canada and for each province on both an annual and quarterly basis. The estimates of population begin with the preceding census counts. Births of each year are added and deaths subtracted; immigrants are added and an estimate of emigrants subtracted. Family allowance statistics showing the number of migrant families by province are used as a basis for estimating interprovincial migration. The next census serves as a basis for revision of all annual population estimates of each intercensal period. Table 4.6 shows population by province for selective years, with 1979 preliminary estimates.

Cities, towns and villages. As at June 1, 1976, some 67.4% of Canada's population lived in 2,079 centres classified as incorporated cities, towns and villages. These are grouped into 13 broad size categories in Table 4.7. Canadian cities and towns having a population of over 50,000 in 1976 are listed in Table 4.8 together with figures for 1966 and 1971. The date of incorporation to their present status is indicated also.

Census terms. A census agglomeration (CA) is an area comprised of at least two adjacent municipal entities, each at least partly urban. Its urbanized core is a continuous built-up area including the largest city and, where applicable, the urban part of surrounding municipalities, the urban fringe and rural fringe. A CA with an urbanized core of 100,000 or more, based on previous census figures, is called a census metropolitan area (CMA). Usually the CMA or CA takes the name of its largest component city.

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 23 census metropolitan areas appears in Table 4.9. Populations of 22 of these areas in earlier censuses were adjusted to conform to the boundaries delineated for the 1971 Census and a 23rd census metropolitan area, Oshawa, was added; population figures from the 1971 Census were adjusted to conform to the 1976 Census boundaries for this area. The 1976 Census population figures of all 23 areas were based on boundaries of the 1976 census metropolitan areas.

The proportion of Canada's population in the major metropolitan centres increased steadily and over one-half (55.7%) resided in the 23 metropolitan areas as defined for the 1976 Census. Calgary CMA showed the highest rate of growth in the period 1971-76 at 16.5%, followed by Kitchener at 14.1% (based on 1976 areas). The greatest gains in numbers were registered by Toronto at 175,058 and Vancouver at 83,996. The Toronto CMA became the largest in Canada, with a population of 2,803,101, some 7.7% more than in 1971. Montreal was close behind at 2,802,485, showing a growth of 2.7% since 1971 (Table 4.9).

Because of the growing interest in the expanding metropolitan areas a series of intercensal estimates was begun in 1957. 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, net internal migration for these areas was estimated from family allowances data.

4.2.1 Population density

At 2.49 persons a square kilometre in 1976, Canada's average population density still ranks among the lowest in the world. Table 4.10 shows that if Yukon and Northwest