

considerably lower at 14%. During the 1971-76 period, growth rates in the number of households ranged from 8.7% in Saskatchewan to 23.9% in British Columbia and 30.2% in Yukon and Northwest Territories. New Brunswick and Alberta had growth rates higher than the national average of 18.6%.

**Households by size.** In the 1976 Census, the average Canadian household had 3.1 persons as compared to 3.5 in 1971 and 3.7 in 1966. In all these censuses, the average number of persons per household was highest in Newfoundland. While the decline in average size of households during 1966-71 was seen mainly in the Maritime provinces and Quebec, a further decline during 1971-76 was realized in all provinces.

**Households by type.** All private-type households are divided for census purposes into two basic categories: family and non-family households.

Family households increased from 4.4 million in 1966 to almost 4.9 million in 1971 and to 5.6 million in 1976, but dropped proportionately from 84.5% in 1966 to 81.7% in 1971 and to 78.6% in 1976. The proportion consisting of two or more families dropped from 2.5% in 1966 to 1.3% in 1976, indicating a decrease in overcrowding in households. Non-family households, on the other hand, increased in number and in proportion to total households; this is mainly due to the increase in the proportion of one-person households from 11.4% in 1966 to 13.4% in 1971 and to 16.8% in 1976. Thus, new family formation alone was not responsible for the overall increase in the number of households; some families and family persons who previously shared accommodation now maintain their own households.

**Households by age and marital status of head.** Although total households increased by 18.6% between 1971 and 1976, the number of households with heads under 25 grew by 41.0%, reaching 584,270 in 1976 from 414,470 in 1971. By province, this group increased by as much as 60.3% in Alberta and 54.5% in Saskatchewan. Yukon and the Northwest Territories registered the largest growth in households with heads 65 and over, increasing 36.6%. Quebec followed with an increase of 25.0% from 1971. Nationally, the proportion of households with heads 65 and over increased from 16.2% to 16.4%.

Analyzed by marital status, the most significant increase during the 1966-76 period was recorded by households with divorced heads, at 452.9%; the proportion of households with divorced heads more than tripled from 0.8% in 1966 to 3.1% in 1976. At 99.3%, the increase in households with single never-married heads was the next highest. The rate of increase over the decade was 34.8% for households with widowed heads and 29.1% for households with married heads (including separated).

### Family size and composition

#### 4.4.2

A family, as defined in the census, consists of a husband and wife without children or with children who have never married, regardless of age, or a lone parent with one or more children who have never married, regardless of age, living together in the same dwelling. Adopted children and stepchildren have the same status as own children.

The 1976 family data pertain to families in private households only. The number of families in Canada increased to 5.7 million in 1976 from 4.5 million in 1966. Following the patterns of provincial population growth, and reflecting the factors of migration, the largest rate of increase occurred in Yukon and Northwest Territories (69.3% in the 1966-76 period), followed by British Columbia (41.4%) and Alberta (35.5%).

**Families by size.** The number and average size of families are given in Table 4.27 by province for 1966, 1971 and 1976. The average size dropped to 3.7 persons between 1966 and 1971, and to 3.5 in 1976 reflecting declining birth rates. The largest reductions in average family size occurred in Quebec (from 4.2 persons in 1966 to 3.5 in 1976), New Brunswick (from 4.3 to 3.7), Newfoundland (from 4.6 to 4.0) and Yukon and Northwest Territories (from 4.5 to 3.9).

**Family structure** refers to the classification of census families into husband-wife families and lone parent families. Husband-wife families consist of a husband and a wife (with or without children), or persons who live common law (with or without children).