

age 20 to the late 30s, and then increased steadily with advancing age. Female mortality rose slowly between 10 and 25 years, then more rapidly. About 11,200 of the male group would have died by age 50 as compared with roughly 6,600 of the female group, and 58,575 males would reach age 70 as compared with 75,995 females.

Life expectancy values over the 1961-76 period are shown in Table 4.42. By 1976 Canadian life expectancy at birth had reached an all-time high of 70.2 years for males and nearly 77.5 years for females. These figures are roughly comparable to the expectancies of other countries with highly developed programs of medical care. Because infant mortality is still quite substantial, life expectancies for male and female infants one year old were only slightly higher than expectancies at birth. Male expectancy at age 20 was 52.1 years, or 6.8 years below the corresponding female expectancy of 58.9. At age 40 the comparative expectancies were 33.6 for men and 39.7 for women. By age 65 the male expectancy had dropped to 13.9 years, with the female expectancy 4.1 years higher at 18.0 years.

Table 4.43 shows the life expectancies by province. The steady widening of the gap between male and female expectancies, evident at the national level, seemed to be continuing in every province to judge from the 1966, 1971 and 1976 figures. What was a small margin of two years in 1931 has since grown gradually to a difference of over six years between the average expectancies of men and women. Although life expectancy varies from province to province, generally being highest in Saskatchewan and lowest in Quebec, the gap between provinces has narrowed in recent years. The latest projections are based on a life expectancy of 72.8 years for males and 79.1 for females by 2001.

Life expectancy at birth has increased 15% for males and over 22% for females since 1931. Part of the reason for the rise in life expectancy has been the drastic reduction in the infant mortality rate (infant deaths per 1,000 births). In 1921 the infant mortality rate was 102.1; the 1976 rate was only 14.0, which was even lower than the US infant mortality rate of 15.1.

#### 4.5.6 Marriages

In 1977, there were 187,344 marriages solemnized in Canada compared to 193,343 in 1976. The rate of marriage declined from 8.4 to 8.0 per 1,000 population. Alberta recorded 9.5 marriages per 1,000 population, down from 9.7 in 1976, but still the highest of any province (Table 4.32).

In 1977 the median age at marriage — the age above and below which half the marriages occurred — was 23.9 for bridegrooms and 21.7 for brides. Bridegrooms averaged 25.1 years, and brides 22.8.

**Religious denomination.** Some indication of the influence that religion has in selecting marriage partners is shown in Table 4.46. 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.

#### 4.5.7 Divorces

The number of decrees absolute granted in Canada has risen sharply as a result of the 1968 changes in divorce legislation. Divorces rose to over 57,155 in 1978 compared to an average of about 11,000 divorces per year over the period 1966-68. British Columbia's divorce rate was 326.7 per 100,000 population, and Alberta 310.4, the highest rates among the provinces. By comparison, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island had the lowest rates, 75.0 and 110.7 (Table 4.47). Estimates based on divorce rates in 1971 indicate that about one-fifth of those persons who married between 15 and 25 (born during 1946-56) may obtain a divorce by the time they are 45.

**Sex of petitioners.** Background information shows that almost twice as many divorces were granted in 1977 to female petitioners as to males, 36,587 to 18,783. This represents a ratio of 51 divorces to male petitioners for every 100 to females.

**Grounds for divorce.** Statistics show that in 1977 adultery was the most frequent cause of divorce (22,649 cases), replacing separation for not less than three years (22,447