

Under the terms of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act, the census must provide population counts by electoral districts (see Chapter 19, for electoral district boundaries established by the 1976 Representation Order).

The 1981 Census was the 12th since Confederation in 1867. The decennial census has followed an uninterrupted sequence since 1851.

Quinquennial census. In 1956 a new census was added, to keep statistical information abreast of the demographic and socio-economic developments that affect decision making in both private and public sectors. These censuses have been taken every fifth year between decennial censuses.

For the 1981 decennial census, every person whose usual place of residence on June 3, 1981 was in Canada was asked questions covering date of birth, sex, marital status, relationship to Person One (instead of the former "head of household") and mother tongue (the language first learned and still understood). Housing type and tenure were asked for each household. Sampling was also used; every fifth private household provided answers on education, migration, income, housing, labour force participation and occupation.

The census is a principal source of information for measuring social and economic change, and for detecting those needs which necessitate the development and implementation of policies and programs such as regional development, health and welfare programs, education facilities, immigration, low-income housing and transportation networks.

Population 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 in conjunction with the migration estimate from Revenue Canada tax files 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 2.6).

Because of the growing interest in the expanding metropolitan areas a series of intercensal estimates for these areas was also 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.

Metropolitan areas. Metropolitan Toronto was still the largest metropolitan area at the time of the 1981 Census. The population of almost 3 million had

grown by 7.0% since 1976. Montréal increased by 0.9% to about 2.8 million and Vancouver increased by 8.7% to almost 1.3 million over the same period. The highest percentage of growth over five years since 1976 was found in Calgary (25.7%), Edmonton (18.1%), Saskatoon (15.3%) and Oshawa (14.1%). The census definition of a metropolitan area is the main labour market area of an urbanized core (or continuously built-up area) having 100,000 or more population. There are 24 census metropolitan areas in Canada (Table 2.10).

2.4 Population distribution

Decennial and quinquennial censuses of Canada make possible periodic assessments of the nation's social and economic conditions and provide data on the distribution of population for many types of geographical, political and statistical areas.

Data from the 1981 Census showed that two provinces, Alberta at 37.5% and British Columbia at 25.6% had rates of population growth above the national level for the 1971-81 period. Yukon and Northwest Territories at 25.9% and 31.4% also exceeded the national rate. Ontario led the remaining provinces with a 12.0% increase. Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick each grew by 9.7%, Newfoundland by 8.7%, Nova Scotia by 7.4% and Quebec by 6.8%. The lowest rates of growth were recorded by Saskatchewan at 4.5% and Manitoba at 3.8%.

These differences marked a redistribution of Canada's population. The Atlantic provinces accounted for 9.2% of the population, down from 9.5% in 1971 and 11.6% in 1951. Quebec at 26.4% was down 1.5 percentage points in 10 years and 2.5 points since 1951. Ontario's share of Canada's population had declined for the first time since 1951. It had 35.4% of the population, down from 35.9% in 1976, the level to which it had climbed steadily from 32.8% in 1951.

The four western provinces and the two territories contained 28.9% of the population, up from 26.8% in 1971. Within the region, Alberta and British Columbia showed rates of growth consistently above the national average throughout the 1951-81 period. Their proportions of the total population increased from 6.7% to 9.2% for Alberta and 8.3% to 11.3% for British Columbia.

Cities, towns and villages. As at June 3, 1981, some 67.4% of Canada's population lived in 2,123 centres classified as incorporated cities, towns and villages. These are grouped into 13 broad size categories in Table 2.7. Canadian cities and towns having a population of over 50,000 in 1981 are listed in Table 2.8 together with figures for 1971 and 1976. The date of incorporation to their present status is indicated also.

Census terms. A census agglomeration (CA) for the 1981 Census was an area comprised of at least two