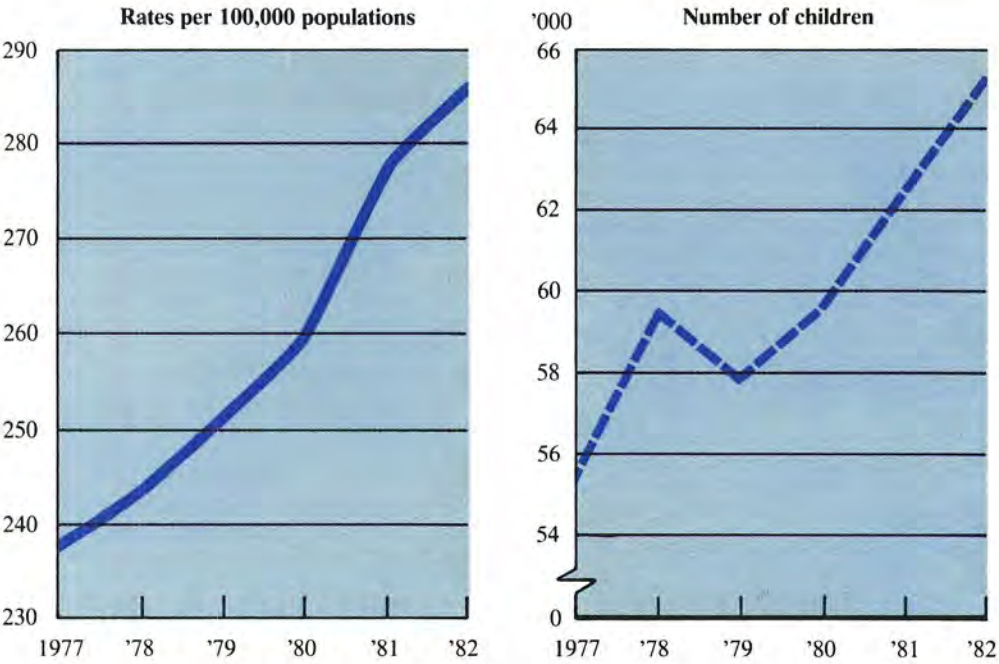


Chart 2.3
Divorces by rates and by dependent children



natural increase rate fell below 10 for the first time in 1971 at 9.5 and dropped further to 8.0 in 1974. It edged up slightly in 1976 to 8.4, but fell to 8.2 in 1981. Table 2.34 gives average rates of natural increase in the provinces for five-year periods from 1961 to 1981 and for the year 1981.

2.7.4 Deaths

The Canadian crude death rate is one of the lowest in the world (7.0 per 1,000 population in 1981). After a gradual decline over the past century, the rate has levelled off since 1967. In the opinion of demographers, a further reduction in the crude death rate is likely to be small. However, the sustained aging of the population due to continued declines in fertility may cause some increases in the death rate in future years.

General mortality. No official crude death rates (rates per 1,000 total population) are available prior to 1921. However, studies of the early Canadian censuses resulted in the following estimated annual crude rates: 1851-61, 22; 1861-71, 21; 1871-81, 19; 1881-91, 18; 1891-1901, 16; 1901-11, 13; 1911-21, 13.

Typical of pioneer populations, Canada had high death rates in the mid-1800s with the crude death rate estimated between 22 and 25. It is assumed that while mortality was high at all ages, the rate among infants and children must have been particularly high. Even in 1921 the Canadian infant mortality rate was 102.1 per 1,000 live births. With increasing

urbanization and improved sanitation and medical services, the crude death rate dropped by 50% from 22 to 11 between 1851 and 1930. It continued to decline to a low of 7.3 in 1970 and 1971, fluctuating slightly for a few years and further declining to 7.0 in 1981.

2.7.5 Marriages

In 1981, there were 190,082 marriages solemnized in Canada compared to 193,343 in 1976. The rate of marriage declined from 8.4 to 7.8 per 1,000 population. Alberta recorded 9.7 marriages per 1,000 population and continued to have the highest rate of any province (Table 2.37).

In 1981 the median age at marriage for persons never previously married — the age above and below which half the marriages occurred — was 24.6 for bridegrooms and 22.5 for brides. Bridegrooms averaged 25.7 years, and brides 23.5.

Religious denomination. The influence of religion in selecting marriage partners is shown in Table 2.39. Most 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.

2.7.6 Divorces

The number of decrees absolute granted in Canada has risen sharply as a result of the 1968 changes in