

5.—Age Distribution.

The same causes which have in the past rendered the sex distribution of population in Canada somewhat unusual have also affected its age distribution. In the first stages of the settlement of a new colony, men in the prime of life constitute the bulk of the population, and women and children are conspicuous by their absence, so that there will be a disproportionately large male population between the ages of 20 and 50, together with a low birth rate. Later on in the settlement of a new country where there is land and food for all and where the early disproportion of the sexes has been overcome, there is a very high rate of natural increase, and an extraordinarily large proportion of children among the population. Thus in 1871 (see Table 15), no fewer than 287 out of every 1,000 of the population of Canada were children under 10 years of age, and over half the total population (526·76 out of every 1,000) were under 20 years of age. But with the growing urbanization of population, the average age at marriage increased and children came to be regarded as a liability rather than an asset. Thus in 1911, out of every 1,000 of the population, only 231·83 were under 10 years of age and 423·42 under 20 years of age. In 1921, however, 239·68 per 1,000 of the population were under 10 years of age and 434·82 per 1,000 under 20 years, the increase since 1911 being probably attributable to the decline in the proportion of adult immigrants to the total population.

Again, the change in the age distribution of the population of Canada since 1871 may be illustrated as follows: taking the Canadian who in 1921 was at the median age (*i.e.*, had exactly as many of the population younger than he as were older than he), we find that as nearly as can be estimated, this Canadian was in 1921, 23·943 years of age. Taking the males alone, their median age was in 1921 24·732 years, while the median age for females was 23·173 years. Now, taking the population of the four original provinces as taken at the census of 1871, and securing its median age as nearly as can be estimated we find that that age was for the total population 18·799 years, for the male population 18·777 years and for the female population 18·821 years. Thus the Canadian of median age, with exactly as many people younger as there are older, was in 1921 5·144 years older than in 1871—a fact mainly attributable to the smaller proportion of children in the population in the more recent year, but partly to the longer average period of life.

15.—Proportion per 1,000 of the Population by Age-Periods, 1871-1921.

| Age Periods. | 1871. | 1881. | 1891. | 1901. | 1911. | 1921. |
|-------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Under 1 year..... | 30·567 | 28·019 | 24·922 | 24·497 | 25·734 | 23·859 |
| 1— 4 years..... | 115·649 | 108·508 | 99·963 | 95·211 | 97·413 | 96·486 |
| 5— 9 “..... | 140·691 | 128·251 | 121·242 | 114·663 | 108·685 | 119·334 |
| 10—19 “..... | 239·854 | 227·404 | 219·712 | 210·906 | 191·585 | 195·138 |
| 20—29 “..... | 171·436 | 175·957 | 178·080 | 173·550 | 189·335 | 159·041 |
| 30—39 “..... | 111·404 | 113·099 | 122·079 | 129·259 | 141·938 | 146·246 |
| 40—49 “..... | 79·995 | 83·817 | 88·441 | 98·494 | 100·071 | 109·480 |
| 50—59 “..... | 54·788 | 58·086 | 62·360 | 67·886 | 69·121 | 73·080 |
| 60 and over..... | 55·128 | 63·269 | 70·141 | 76·396 | 71·027 | 74·915 |
| Not given..... | 0·487 | 13·589 | 13·059 | 9·137 | 5·090 | 2·421 |