

# CHAPTER III.—POPULATION\*

## CONSPECTUS

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NOTE.—*The interpretation of the symbols used in the tables throughout the Year Book will be found facing p. 1 of this volume.*

The records accumulated at the decennial censuses of Canada since Confederation in 1867 to the latest census, 1951, make a valuable contribution to the demographic history of the nation. Each successive decade has added to the vast scope of the material; the detailed statistical analyses and the numerous monographs and studies available under the several aspects of demography and agriculture have made the census a most important statistical measure of accomplishment and progress. An outline of the history of the census is given in the Year Book 1947, pp. 96-97.

The main legal reason for a periodic census under the constitution of Canada is to determine representation in the House of Commons; this, according to the British North America Act, is based on population (*see* Appendix I). The payment of provincial subsidies on a per capita basis is adjusted annually on population estimated from census data. In view of this, each person is counted as belonging to the locality of his regular domicile rather than to the place where he may be at the date of enumeration.

The modern nation-wide census, however important this redistribution purpose, has a much wider sphere of usefulness. It constitutes, through the data collected directly from the people, a true measure of the social and economic progress of the country and can, therefore, be used in the regulation and general administration of public affairs, social security and rehabilitation programs, etc.

Basic figures from the 1951 Census have been summarized under the respective headings of this Chapter. More detailed information and extended analyses may be obtained from Census publications.

### Section 1.—Growth of the Population

The population history of Canada, from the first census in 1666 when 3,215 persons were enumerated to the Census of 1951 when the figure was 14,009,429, reveals an outstanding rate of population growth. Each decade, of course, contributed to this growth but the ten-year periods 1901-11, 1911-21 and 1941-51 merit particular mention. In the decade 1901-11, Canada's population increased by 34.2 p.c., the largest growth in the nation's history. Immigration was the main factor in this gain, 1,900,000 persons having entered the country during the period.

\* This Chapter has been revised in the Census (Demography) Division, Dominion Bureau of Statistics.