

## Section 2.—Births\*

In Canada, the birth rate in 1921 was 29 per 1,000 population. As a rate of 35 per 1,000 is very high for countries of modern western civilization the Canadian birth rate had probably not fallen far or for long before 1921. It fell continuously until 1937 when it was 20 per 1,000 but then, owing to economic recovery and the War, it rose to 22 in 1940, to 24 in 1943 and reached its highest point in 1947 at 28·9. As in most other countries there was a slight decline in 1948 but the Canadian rate remained remarkably steady at just over 27 for the four years 1948 to 1951. It rose to 27·9 in 1952 when for the first time more than 400,000 births were registered. It continued to rise to 28·2 in 1953 and 28·7 in 1954. The birth rates in the provinces followed the same general trend with particularly high rates reported in 1954.

It has always been assumed that the Province of Quebec has had the highest birth rate in Canada, but Table 1 shows that since the late 1930's or early 1940's Newfoundland and New Brunswick have had higher birth rates than Quebec. In 1954 Newfoundland had a crude rate of 34·3, New Brunswick 30·4 and Quebec 30·4; Prince Edward Island and British Columbia had the lowest rates with 25·9 and 26·0 respectively. However these crude rates are based on total population and therefore do not reflect the fertility of the women who are of reproductive age in the different provinces. A more accurate measure of fertility is the rate based on the number of married women in the population in the reproductive age group, 15 to 49. The following figures, based on the 1951 Census, give the birth rates per 1,000 married women in the age group 15 to 49 by province:—

Newfoundland.....	220	Quebec.....	193	Alberta.....	160
Prince Edward Island....	186	Ontario.....	138	British Columbia.....	130
Nova Scotia.....	162	Manitoba.....	147	CANADA (exclusive of the	
New Brunswick.....	200	Saskatchewan.....	155	Territories).....	160

On this basis Newfoundland still had the highest birth rate, followed by New Brunswick and Quebec, and British Columbia had the lowest rate.

**Sex of Live Births.**—Wherever birth statistics have been collected they have shown an excess of male over female births. No conclusive explanation of this excess has yet been given. Nevertheless it is so much of an accepted statistical fact that a proper ratio of male to female births has become one of the criteria of complete registration. The number of males to every 1,000 females born in Canada in 1941-54 varied between 1,052 and 1,067. In 1954 there were 1,057 males born for every 1,000 females. Variations in the provincial sex ratios result from chance variation because of the relatively small number of births involved—the smaller the total number of births, the greater the chance of wide sex-ratio variations from year to year.

\* For international comparisons see Section 8, pp. 234-35.

## 3.—Sex Ratio of Live Births by Province 1921-54

Province and Year	Male	Female	Males to 1,000 Females	Province and Year	Male	Female	Males to 1,000 Females
	No.	No.	No.		No.	No.	No.
Newfoundland.....	1951 5,984	5,754	1,040	Nova Scotia.....	1921 6,695	6,326	1,058
	1952 6,443	6,118	1,053		1931 5,931	5,684	1,043
	1953 6,534	6,263	1,043		1941 7,074	6,829	1,036
	1954 7,026	6,627	1,060		1951 8,842	8,283	1,067
					1952 9,275	8,676	1,069
P.E. Island.....	1921 1,073	1,083	991		1953 9,360	8,916	1,050
	1931 998	881	1,132		1954 9,712	9,197	1,056
	1941 1,078	971	1,110	New Brunswick.....	1921 5,942	5,523	1,076
	1951 1,373	1,278	1,074		1931 5,548	5,253	1,056
	1952 1,405	1,298	1,082		1941 6,200	6,072	1,021
	1953 1,368	1,369	999		1951 8,190	7,885	1,039
	1954 1,405	1,319	1,065				