

**Recipients of family income.** Changes in the composition or economic activities of the family may result in additions or reductions to family income on the part of one or more of its members. Table 6.8 provides a summary picture of income distributions for several different combinations of income recipients within the family structure. The data are shown for (a) the major sub-category of families (husband-wife families), and (b) all other families. The latter include single-parent families and a residual group consisting of two or more related adults such as brothers and sisters.

Table 6.8 shows that the average income of husband-wife families with at least three income recipients (husband, wife and other relative) was \$13,755 as compared with only \$8,687 for husband-wife families in which the head was the only recipient. Other families (one-parent families and those of two or more related adults) had much lower average incomes ranging from \$8,004 for families with at least two income recipients (head and other family member) to \$4,133 for those in which the head was the only income recipient.

## 6.2 Family spending

Household surveys of family expenditure provide information on consumer spending that can be related to family characteristics such as geographic location, family size and income level. In general, the survey program has consisted of two phases: the collection, by means of monthly record-keeping surveys throughout the reference year, of detailed information on family food expenditures; and the collection of information by annual recall of all family expenditure, income and changes in assets and liabilities. The record-keeping phase was not featured in all the survey programs, and this has been particularly true of the more recent surveys.

A primary use of such surveys is to provide information for constructing, reviewing and revising the weights of the consumer price indexes (see Chapter 21). Initially these small-scale sample expenditure surveys carried out in selected Canadian urban centres since 1953 were designed to follow changes in the patterns of a well-defined group of middle-income urban families known as the "target group" of the consumer price index. In recent years the demand for expenditure statistics to serve other needs of government, business, welfare organizations and academic research has resulted in a widening in the scope and size of the surveys. This culminated in the expansion of the biennial program for 1969 to provide a large-scale national survey for the first time since 1948-49 covering both urban and rural households in the 10 provinces.

The most recent survey, the tenth in the series, was carried out in February and March 1973 and refers to the calendar year 1972 (see *Urban family expenditure, 1972*, Catalogue No. 62-541). While no restrictions on family composition or income were imposed, in order to produce data for individual cities of a more satisfactory nature, the main sample was concentrated in eight major urban centres rather than in 11 as in the 1964, 1967 and major urban centre part of the 1969 survey. For the 1972 survey the sample of 4,977 households was distributed in eight census metropolitan areas including city proper and fringe areas, namely St. John's, Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa (excluding the Quebec portion), Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton, and Vancouver.

### 6.2.1 Family (spending unit) concept

The definition of a family or spending unit used in the family expenditure surveys is not the same as that of the census, or the "economic family" concept used in the Surveys of Consumer Finances (see Section 6.1.1). The family or spending unit is defined as a group of persons dependent on a common or pooled income for the major items of expense and living in the same dwelling or one financially independent individual living alone. Never-married sons or daughters living with their parents are considered as part of their parents' spending unit. In the great majority of cases the members of spending units of two or more are related by blood, marriage or adoption, and are thus consistent with the "economic family" definition employed in surveys of family income, i.e., "a group of individuals sharing a common dwelling unit and related by blood, marriage or adoption". However, it should be noted that according to the "economic family" definition, unrelated persons living in the same household would be counted as unattached individuals. Under the definitions in the expenditure survey, it is possible for two or more unrelated persons to comprise one family or spending unit.