

CHAPTER IV.—POPULATION*

CONSPECTUS

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The Population chapter of the Year Book is a *précis* summarizing the growth and distribution of population of Canada between 1871 and 1941, as shown by the successive decennial censuses, in regard to the chief matters investigated at the censuses. Owing to the extent of the field covered, it is quite impossible to include in each edition of the Year Book a full digest of population statistics. The policy adopted, therefore, is to maintain the skeleton of the chapter and the historical tables as a permanent feature and build up each section as statistics are available following each census. The 1934-35 Year Book gives at pp. 98-169 a fairly comprehensive picture of the 1931 Census statistics. The results of the 1941 Census, so far as they are available, are included in the tables of this chapter and certain further preliminary statistics are included in Appendix III at the end of the book.

The Census.—Under the Canadian constitution, the legal *raison d'être* of the census is to determine representation in the House of Commons; after each decennial census a redistribution of seats in the House, following the course of the movement of population, is made in the manner described at p. 36 of this volume. But the census, especially since the introduction of methods of mechanical tabulation, has become far more than a mere counting of heads. It is a great periodical stock-taking of the people and their affairs, designed to show as fully as possible the stage that has been reached in the progress of the nation. Thus the numbers, local distribution, age, sex, racial origin, nationality, language, religion, education, housing and occupations of the people, severally, constitute investigations of enormous importance, to which all the continuous and routine statistics collected in the ordinary course of administration must be related if their full value is to be realized. The census, in fine, rounds out and completes the scheme of information upon which the Government relies in conducting the business of the country.

Early Censuses.†—The first census of modern times was taken in New France in 1666, when some 3,215 persons were enumerated. It was repeated at fairly

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† A résumé of the results of all the censuses taken in Canada between 1666 and 1941 will be published in bulletin form and included in Vol. I, Census of 1941.