

THE CANADIAN PEOPLES.

A Novel Exposition of Vital Statistics.

Census Returns That Yield Surprises to the Investigator—A Country in which Eighty-Seven Per Cent are Native Born.

The Feasibility of Jean Baptiste—How the Various Provinces are Growing—The Conservative Force in Canada of the Roman Catholic Church.

(E. W. Thomson in Boston Transcript.) Ever since a small collection of uniform men climbed up the cliff of Quebec in 1759, Canada has been called an English country. It is very much so in respect of political institutions; but it might be called a French-English country, if the origins of its inhabitants were solely considered. The census of 1891 has effected wonders by the slow process of generating their species more rapidly than the victors do, and it is not inconceivable that history may credit them with the more enduring conquest. To a considerable extent they have been aided by Catholic immigration and to a minute degree by recruits from France. Speaking by and large, it may be truly said that from the issue of the 65,000 inhabitants of 1759 have sprung the 1,650,000 Canadians of French origin in 1901, to say nothing of the swarms thrown out into the republic. How numerous and how prosperous this United States French section is perhaps few Americans understand. Some years ago I saw a gazetteer of French Canada, a firm doing business in New England, which was about as bulky as the city directory of Boston.

Judging by the Canadian census of 1901, so far as reported by its first volume and numerous bulletins, the French of the dominion have been less found than they were formerly. Still they multiply faster than other Canadians. This is evinced by several statistics and figures and percentages not visible in the tables, but to be extracted from them by calculation. Comparing the statement of "population" with that of the French provinces, one discovers that the size of the families was as follows:

Table with 2 columns: Province/Territory and Number of Persons per Family. Includes entries for Canada, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Northwest Territories, and Unorganized.

It will be seen that a diminution in census families occurs everywhere, except in the Northwest Territories. Still the French of the dominion are more numerous than they were formerly. This might, however, signify merely that the French domicile two or three generations under one of "nests" more frequently than other Canadians do. In order to test the return I worked out the percentage of increase in the number of houses and in the number of families, with this result:

Table with 2 columns: Province/Territory and Percentage of Increase. Includes entries for Canada, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Northwest Territories, and Unorganized.

As Quebec gains in number of houses more than any of the older English provinces, her rate of size of family must be somewhat greater than that shown by my first table. The slight discrepancy between the percentages of increase in house and in families is probably due to the presence of some two-family or tenement-houses and to the abandonment of some old domiciles.

Table with 2 columns: Age Group and Number of Persons of Stated Age. Includes entries for Canada, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Northwest Territories, and Unorganized.

This disproves the common assertion that French Canadian children die off more rapidly than others. They do not stay in Canada after maturity so numerously per 1,000 as English Canadians do as signified by the decline in their numbers per 1,000 after twenty years of age. Hence people of the "fifty-fives" are less numerous in Quebec than anywhere else in Canada. The province stands at the expense of rearing many workers for the United States. This partly explains why Quebec appears less prosperous than the Canadian provinces. Per contra, French do not have so many old people to maintain. Those who go to other states appear to stay there until death arrives. By considering Quebec's comparative lack of mature inhabitants one sees that even a greater birth rate for each marriage exists there than the preceding table indicates. It may be worth recalling that the English provinces, because of their larger proportion of the voting ages, would gain in political power if representation in parliament were computed on the basis of mature inhabitants instead of on the basis of total population. French Canadians may be said to vote their children, as the Southern States vote the colored people to whom they refuse the franchise.

It does not appear to be by excessive marrying that the French-Canadian hold their lead. If they indulge in that happiness as commonly as some other Canadians, many of them, as might be surmised from the figures, do so in the states. These are the returns of married people in each thousand of the Canadian population:

Table with 2 columns: Province/Territory and Married People per 1,000. Includes entries for Canada, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Northwest Territories, and Unorganized.

That Ontario, with the largest proportion of married folk, should have so comparatively few children, would please philosophers of the school of H. G. Wells, author of Anticipation, etc. The province is very rich and well educated. Perhaps this makes its married people more prudent in child production than Jean Baptiste is. But their descendants may think the prudence mistaken which now seems not unlikely to reverse the conquest of 1759.

The census of origins indicates their course may be visibly seen in Montreal and in Eastern Ontario, by those who can remember the conditions of thirty or forty years ago. Then the line between the French or East-Enders of Montreal and the British or West-Enders was pretty clearly drawn at Bleury street, while now the French district includes many streets west of that, and ramifies still farther in every westward direction. Similarly Eastern Ontario becomes more and more French.

At the same time the French more and more learn and speak English. Children of both races in the rural parts of intermingling are bi-lingual. In spite of all the efforts contra the English language slowly supplant the French. Many French families speak English in their own houses, but no English families use French that way. On public works one often meets French foremen ordering French laborers in English. It is not necessary to explain this on the theory that English is the more imperative and the more applicable to common purposes, eliminates French where both are indifferently spoken. But it is the more generally useful language on this continent; to learn it may be "big money" in Jean Baptiste's pocket; and therefore he practices it for Jean Baptiste is no fool. Knowing that he has migration in his adventurous blood, he acquires as best he can the language that may enable him to ask intelligently for work anywhere in America. The table shows the distribution of the Canadian French:

Table with 2 columns: Province/Territory and Total French Population. Includes entries for British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Northwest Territories, and Unorganized.

The political power of French-Canadians is far greater than would be estimated from the foregoing figures. In defence of their race, their creed and their language, they can reckon on support from the entire Catholic population of Canada, or 4,225,000 of the total of 5,712,215 people. In the same defence they can number all Protestants who are liberal enough to be conservative of the truly liberal Confederation Act, or Constitution of Canada, which accords to the French that equality of race, creed and language which they value, and by which they are made loyal to the country. Its prosperity depends much on the maintenance of the remarkable accord of accord which the constitutional agreement signalled in 1867, and under which Canadians are solving, perhaps better than any other heterogeneous people, except the Swiss, the problem of agreeing to differ in great matters that formerly bred in Europe many persecutions and many wars. Conservatism and progress of the Canadian sort might not be characteristic of the dominion if the political strength of the English in Canada were equal to their natural desire to further Anglicization.

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