

VITAL STATISTICS

Record numbers of births and deaths and the second highest number of marriages on record were registered in Canada during 1957, according to the preliminary annual vital statistics report issued by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. Other noteworthy features of the year's vital statistics were a record 332,514 persons added to the population by natural increase (net difference between births and deaths) and a record high natural increase rate (per 1,000 population) of 20.1; the second highest birth-rate (28.3 per 1,000 population) on record; a record number of children born in hospital (9 out of every 10); and new record low infant and maternal death rates.

During 1957 a total of 469,093 infants were born alive or at the rate of almost one a minute. Record high totals were also registered in all provinces except Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Manitoba and Saskatchewan; 1957 birth rates (per 1,000 population) in Ontario and British Columbia were the highest on record in those provinces at 26.8 and 26.1; in all other provinces, except Saskatchewan, the 1957 rates were above those for 1956 but slightly lower than the immediate post-war records of 1946 and 1947. Sixty-two percent of Canadian births were to residents of the two central provinces, Ontario (150,923) and Quebec (141,708); Ontario has had more births than Quebec each year since 1953, although Quebec has consistently had the higher birth rate. Among the 10 provinces Newfoundland had - as for many years - the highest birth rate in the country at 36.0 (per 1,000 population), followed by Alberta (30.8), New Brunswick (30.1) and Quebec (29.8); rates for other provinces ranged from a low of 26.0 in Manitoba to 27.5 in Nova Scotia.

Almost 409,500 of the 469,093 infants born in 1957, or 9 out of every 10, were born in hospital, the proportion varying from just over 75 per cent in Quebec to 98.5 in British Columbia. Before World War II less than 40 per cent of all children were born in hospital compared with over 67 per cent at the end of the war and 79 per cent in 1951.

The second highest number of marriages on record were registered in 1957, a total of 133,186 compared with 137,398 in 1946 and 132,713 in 1956. Following the record achieved in 1946 the number of marriages gradually declined until a level of 128,029 was reached in 1955; since that time the numbers have moved upward but the rate has dropped from 8.3 in 1956 to 8.0 in 1957. One of the reasons for the recent declines in the marriage rate has been a temporary reduction in the supply of potential brides and grooms due to the small crop of depression babies born during the 1930's and now reaching marriageable age, thus producing a second-generation effect on the current marriage rate.

Canada's overall death rate at 8.2 per 1,000 population is one of the lowest in the world and compares favourably with a rate of 11.5 for the United Kingdom and 9.6 for the United States. Since 1921 Canada's rate has been reduced from 11.6. There were 136,579 deaths in 1957 but had the 1921 rate prevailed there would have been over 192,000 deaths; thus, over 56,000 deaths were postponed in 1957 because of the improvement in mortality since 1921. Provincial death rates per 1,000 population varied from a low of 7.1 in Alberta to a high of 9.3 for Prince Edward Island and 9.2 for British Columbia. In five provinces the rates were slightly higher than in 1956, in three provinces slightly lower and unchanged in two provinces.

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AGRICULTURAL FLYING

Canadian farmers are taking to the air to keep pace with the times.

Today airplanes are used for many things, from chasing ducks from swathed grain to making a quick trip to town for implement parts.

Yet the first flight for agricultural purposes was made just 38 years ago at Lake Timiskaming, Ont., the same year as the first plane flew from Halifax to Vancouver.

Since 1920, agricultural flying has snowballed to the point where last year 203 craft logged a total of 15,435 hours, according to a study conducted by L.E. Philpotts, of the Economics Division, Marketing Service, Canada Department of Agriculture.

Mainly the airplane was used for spraying and dusting. But the story goes further -- much further.

GUARD AGAINST FROST

A unique mission saw planes flying low over flax, vineyards and other special crops, raising the dawn temperatures so that frost would not damage the crops.

From the air, strayed and injured cattle were spotted and other cattle counted and rounded up. Fences, windmills and other facilities were checked and repaired if needed, and salt blocks dropped for grazing livestock.

A check was made on watersheds, run-off conditions, flooded areas and drainage and irrigation systems.

Weed and crop growth, crop damage, pasture conditions, orientation of field layout, and general field conditions including the time for seeding and summerfallowing, came under survey.

HUNT COYOTES

Other purposes included hunting coyotes, foxes and other predatory game, timber cruising, surveying farm land before purchasing, watching for fires, and taking photographs.

Many farmers now use the airplane in place of a car or small truck. They can transport