

The above table shows that French-speaking Canadians are 30 per cent of the total population. While the majority (80 per cent) lives in Quebec, French-speaking Canadians are found in all provinces, one and a quarter million living outside Quebec. In Ontario they number more than half a million and in New Brunswick they form 39 per cent of the population.

The 1961 census gives the following data about languages spoken by the population:

English only	12,284,762	67.4
French only	3,489,866	19.1
English & French	2,231,172	12.2
Neither French nor English	232,447	1.3
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	18,238,247	

The figure given for bilingual Canadians (12.2 per cent) does not perhaps reflect the true situation. The relevant census question referred only to the ability to speak both languages; it is likely that the percentage of bilingual people would have been higher if the ability to read a second language had also been taken into account, as most Canadians who have been through high school have learned English or French as a second language. Moreover, many Canadians declared that they spoke only one language when they had some knowledge of, but were not fluent in, a second one.

Statistics indicate also that Canadians of French origin are more bilingual (31 per cent) than Canadians of British origin (4 per cent). In Quebec, 25 per cent of the French-Canadians can speak English, while in Ontario only 2 per cent of the Canadians of British origin can speak French. Statistics show also that bilingualism is more widespread in urban areas than in rural areas, among men than among women, and among the better educated. The percentage of bilinguals in the French-speaking population outside Quebec is larger (55 per cent) than in Quebec (25 per cent). It may be added that most immigrants to Canada adopt English rather than French unless they settle in rural Quebec.

The relatively low percentage of bilingualism in Canada is mainly due to the homogeneous grouping of the population. In most rural areas of Quebec, the population is 99 per cent French, while in most other parts of Canada people have little opportunity to speak French.

Governments and Public Administration

The Treaty of Paris (1763), which confirmed the cession of New France to Great Britain, did not refer explicitly to the language of the inhabitants; however, French continued to be used. In 1774, the Quebec Act restored French civil law, which implied that French might be used before the courts, and the retention by the inhabitants of their customs and usages. In the Legislative Council, where the members were appointed and the majority was English-speaking, both English and French could be used in the debates.

In 1791, the territory was divided into Lower and Upper Canada and the country was given a measure of responsible government. In Lower Canada (Quebec), the elected members of the Legislative Assembly decided to conduct their debates and publish all laws and related documents in both French and English. The Common Law was then introduced in Upper Canada (now Ontario).

In 1840, the two provinces of Upper and Lower Canada were united into the Province of Canada, under one responsible government. The Act of Union provided (Section 41) that English was to be the only official language in parliamentary affairs, although all laws were to be translated into French.