

in any other period except the first decade of this century. The inflow of people from outside the country was as large as in the late 'twenties, Canada's last big period of immigration, amounting in the five-year intercensal period to 783,000. At the same time emigration was relatively small. An unusually high proportion of immigrants appears to have remained in the country. In addition, with good economic conditions creating more opportunities at home, the outflow of young Canadians to the United States was a less serious drain than it has often been in the past. As a result, the absolute figure of net migration - 600,000 - was larger than in any past five-year period.

The natural increase rate has been higher recently than at any time since the official records began in 1921. With the birth rate sustained around 28 per 1,000, and the death rate gradually declining to little more than 8 per 1,000, the average rate of natural increase in the past five years has been more than 40 per cent above that for the early 'forties, when there had already been some recovery from the low of the depression.

Helping to explain the high rate of natural increase is the fact that good economic conditions are encouraging more people to marry young and begin raising families. The number of marriages has remained high, considering that the group of native-born young people who have been coming of marrying age in the past few years is relatively small, reflecting the low birth rates of the 'thirties. The immigrants have, of course, done something to augment the numbers in this age group: it has been estimated that something approaching 10 per cent of the population in the 15 to 24 age group in 1956 were postwar immigrants. The influx of young people has by no means offset the effects of the depression birth rates, but there is no doubt that it has helped to sustain the number of marriages.

Young people are also having somewhat larger families than they were, say, fifteen years ago (though very big families are becoming less and less common). There is an apparent tendency towards more families of three or four children rather than one or two. First and second children continue to account for about half of all children born, but the numbers of third and fourth children born have been increasing much more sharply in recent years, and now constitute a substantially larger proportion of the children born than they did a decade ago. Immigration has of course increased the total number of births: about 10 per cent of the annual number of births is now estimated to be to postwar immigrant mothers. Whether, however, it has had any other significant effect, such as encouraging a trend to increased family size, it is impossible to say.

GROWTH FASTER BUT UNEVEN

An interesting fact in this latest intercensal period is that few areas of Canada have failed to share in the acceleration of population growth. While the rates of increase have remained very uneven, it is worth noting that all the provinces except Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick grew faster than in the preceding five-year period - an indication that the stimulus of economic expansion has been broadly diffused through the country. Even Saskatchewan, which had been losing population since the mid-thirties, showed a modest increase of 6 per cent, partly a reflection no doubt of the extension into that province of the oil boom, which had already brought a marked upsurge in Alberta's population.

Nevertheless, the contrasts among the provinces are striking. Half of them - the three older Maritime Provinces and Manitoba and Saskatchewan - showed population gains of less than 10 per cent while the remaining five showed gains of 14 to 20 per cent. (The national average, as has been noted, was 15 per cent). These marked variations reflect not only differing rates of natural increase, but sizeable movements of population across provincial boundaries, including the flow from outside the country. In these movements, the five slower-growing provinces were net losers, their population growth in each case being less than their natural increase. In New Brunswick, for instance, though the natural increase for the period amounted to 60,000, the gain in population was less than 40,000, indicating that, in the shift of people in and out of the province, the net outflow was equivalent to roughly one-third of the natural increase. The drain was proportionately somewhat greater than this in Saskatchewan, and in Prince Edward Island the net outflow was almost as large as the natural increase. It is worth noting, incidentally, that these are the two provinces in which agriculture bulks largest. Nova Scotia, on the other hand, lost the equivalent of only about one-sixth of its natural increase, and Manitoba only a small fraction.

The five faster-growing provinces were net gainers from the movements across the boundaries. Newfoundland's population growth was slightly larger than its natural increase and its rate of natural increase was the highest in Canada. Growth in Quebec, Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia, the provinces most stimulated by resource and industrial development, was substantially larger than the natural increase. In British Columbia, which had the lowest rate of natural increase in Canada, net migration was, indeed, the larger of the two components of population growth.

The comparison between Quebec and Ontario, which together accounted for two-thirds of the population increment in the whole country in this period, is an interesting one. The nat-