

To check these enumerations there are the parish registers kept by the priests during nearly three centuries. These are given from 1621 in Vol. 4 of the Census of 1871, having been supplemented by the compilation of the number of marriages, births and deaths from 1605 to 1621 as extracted from the writings of Champlain and Sagard.

Thus the starting point for a standard by which to measure the normal rate of increase of population is based on trustworthy statistics, which cover a sufficiently long period to eliminate accidental variations.

Moreover the passionate attachment of the French-Canadian to his language has led him to adopt an isolated existence. He has aimed during all these years to preserve his language, his laws, his customs and his religion. The race has been remarkably free from inroads of men of other languages. Beyond the comparatively few McMillans, Frasers, Rosses and others whose presence indicates the amalgamation of a small Scotch stock with the French, there is very little in the census to show the infusion of other blood into the veins of the French Canadian race. From a variety of causes it has also been free from a disturbing factor in the shape of immigration of French speaking people from old France. In all Canada in 1891 there were but little over 5,000 persons whose birth-place was old France.

It would at first sight seem that the adaptability of the French Canadian race as a standard by which to measure the natural increase of population would be affected by two or three facts. The first is the asserted greater prolificness of the French Canadians, and the second the undoubted movement of French Canadians since 1850 to the New England States.

Statistics do not bear out the generally received