

thousand population, an increase of 104% over the 1932 low point. At the end of 1942 a slight dropping off was noticed with 69,620 marriages in the last six months, as against 71,011 in the corresponding period of 1941. Preliminary returns for 1943 give a marriage rate of 9.4 marriages per thousand population. For 1944 the data are incomplete but registration filed with the Vital Statistics Branch of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics for cities and towns with populations of 10,000 and over showed that during the first five months of 1944, marriages amounted to 18,059, as compared with 21,703 in the corresponding period of 1943.

A much more accurate way of gauging the marriage rate is by a nuptiality rate which takes into account the differences in the age and sex distribution of the different provinces. In 1930-32 the net nuptiality rate was 0.82, that is to say, out of every 100 girls 15 years old, 82 would live to be married at least once according to the marriage and death rates of that period. This rate was low for Canada and showed the effect of the depression years and postponement of marriages. Ten years later the nuptiality rate (for the years 1940-1942) was 0.95, which meant that 95% of all girls would eventually marry, a rate so high that it could not continue for any length of time. These figures suggest that the wartime peak of marriages was largely made up of young women marrying earlier than they otherwise would have done, and the high level reached makes recession inevitable. It is probable that marriages are now down to about a normal level and that, if the war continues much longer, a postponement may again be noticeable, due to the absence of men from their homes. The true average age, derived from the nuptiality table, of women marrying for the first time in 1940-42, was 23.8 years, as compared with 25.3 years in 1930-32.

The least ambiguous data about conjugal condition are found in the proportions married by age groups at a census, although these data can only be ascertained at the ten year intervals when the census is taken. Considering women in three age groups, 15-19 years, 20-24 years and 25-34 years, it is found that the Census of 1911 showed the greatest proportion married among the women 15-19 years. In 1921, however, the two later age-groups showed the maximum proportions married, while in 1931, there were low proportions married in all the younger age groups. It would therefore appear that the period of greatest frequency of marriage for women was just prior to the last war. This was followed by a fairly continuous decline and low marriage rates prevailed until the late thirties. The 1941 Census showed that there were slightly more married women under 25 years of age than in 1931, but the proportion in this group was still below the 1921 level. The proportion married between 25 and 34 years of age was less than in 1931. Although by June 1941, the effects of the extremely low marriage rates of 1931-36 on younger women had been wiped out, marriage rates were still at a level lower than immediately after the last war.

A rough estimate of the proportions of women married at June 1942 suggests that by this time about as many women between the ages of 15 and 24 were married as in the peak years of 1911 and 1921. The proportion married between 25 and 34 years of age showed only a slight rise, as the war probably came too late to affect the marriage prospects of women now over 30. It would appear that by 1942 the maximum amount of marriage attainable under existing conditions had been reached and the recession in 1943 was a result of the elimination of the surplus of unmarried. At the present time conditions are still favourable to early marriage, but since many young men are overseas, their absence may accentuate the decline in the marriage rate due to the disappearance of surplus unmarried men. However, it is very probable that a good recovery will be made after demobilization, as happened after the war. Continuing the trend of previous years, the number of divorces per 100,000 population rose steeply in 1942 and 1943.