

## URBAN POPULATION GROWS

Two-thirds of Canada's population resided in urban localities in 1956 as compared with 63.5 per cent in 1951 (excluding Newfoundland), and 37.1 per cent in 1901, thus continuing a sharp contrast between rural and urban population growth which has characterized population movements in Canada since the turn of the century, according to an analytical report based on 1956 Census returns released by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. The report shows that urbanization has been gathering momentum in recent years.

Canada's total urban population at the 1901 national Census was less than 2,000,000 and by 1956 it had grown to more than five times that number. The accumulated addition to the urban population over the 55-year period exceeded 8,500,000, representing as much as 83 per cent of the total growth for the nation as a whole. Over the same period the rural population increased by only 52 per cent from about 3,400,000 in 1901 to 5,100,000 in 1956.

In 1956, 10,714,855 persons were reported as residents of urban areas, and the remaining 5,365,936 persons as residents of rural areas. Between 1951 and 1956 only 174,144 persons were added to the rural population and the rate of increase was 3.4 per cent. Over the same period the gain in the urban population amounted to 1,897,218 persons, which accounted for almost 92 per cent of the total growth in Canada's population. The rate of urban growth was as high as 21.5 per cent in five years, or almost 4 per cent per annum. Since the average annual rate of increase in the urban population over the preceding ten years was less than 3 per cent the record of the 1951-56 period indicates considerable acceleration of urban development. Reflecting this remarkably rapid growth of the urban population, the proportion of the total population reported in the urban areas rose from 62.9 per cent in 1951 to 66.6 per cent in 1956.

Ontario was the most urbanized province in Canada in 1956 (as in 1951), with more than three-quarters of its population residing in the urban areas. British Columbia and Quebec closely followed Ontario in the order given, each with more than 70 per cent of its population classed as urban. In Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan, on the other hand, the bulk of the population in 1956 still lived in the rural areas, although in both provinces the rural population actually decreased between 1951 and 1956 in the recent five years -- by 6.7 per cent in the former and 3.6 per cent in the latter.

In the 1951-56 period the rate of urban growth was most pronounced in the three western provinces of Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan. Particularly notable was the increase of more than 40 per cent, due largely to rapid growth in the Edmonton and Calgary

areas, in Alberta's urban population. In Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Manitoba, urbanization proceeded much more slowly than in the rest of the country. The rates of urban growth for Quebec and Newfoundland were also somewhat lower than the national average.

The dominant feature of Canada's urban settlement pattern in recent years is the development of the metropolitan community in which the social and economic functioning of a number of suburban communities is linked intimately to that of the central city. Large population aggregates spreading over extended areas beyond the city boundaries but integrated within the total organization of metropolitan communities have come to constitute an important sector of Canada's population. Already in 1941, 3,715,072 persons were recorded as residents of the 12 metropolitan areas, accounting for 32.3 per cent of the total population. By 1956, 6,281,598 persons or 39.1 per cent of the total resided in the 15 metropolitan areas of the country.

Over the 15 years from 1941 to 1956 the metropolitan population increased by a little more than 2,100,000 or 52.1 per cent. Between 1951 and 1956 Canada's population increased by 2,071,362 persons from 14,009,429 to 16,080,791; almost half of this had been in the metropolitan areas. Of this increase, slightly more than 1,000,000 occurred during the first 10 years and the remainder in the following 5 years. The rate of total metropolitan growth has thus been accelerating; in the 1941-51 period the average annual rate of increase was less than 2.5 per cent, while in the 1951-56 period it approached 3.7 per cent. This remarkable upturn in the metropolitan growth rate occurred despite the fact that over the last 5 years the population in many of the central cities increased only slowly and in one actually declined. Obviously, the spectacular suburban growth in recent years accounted in large measure for this acceleration of the growth rate for the metropolitan population as a whole.

During the 1941-51 period the rate of population growth in the metropolitan "fringe" was more than 4 times as high as that in the cities proper. In the subsequent 5 years the ratio of the suburban to the city growth rate was even higher. Moreover, the "fringe" areas claimed a far greater proportion of the total metropolitan increase than the central cities; over the 1941-51 period the suburban increase accounted for 58 per cent of the total metropolitan gain, and in the following 5 years for 68 per cent. Consequently, the "fringe" population grew more than 130 per cent in 15 years, whereas the population in the cities proper increased by only 26 per cent.