

71-D-56
c.1

7

STATISTICS STATISTIQUE
CANADA CANADA
NOV 25 2004
LIBRARY
BIBLIOTHÈQUE

NOT FOR LOAN
NE S'EMPRUNTE PAS

**MOMENTS
IN THE
DEVELOPMENT OF THE CANADIAN FAMILY**

A. J. PELLETIER

MOMENTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CANADIAN FAMILY^x

A. J. Pelletier

Acting Chief, Division of Demography
Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Ottawa.

The first attempt at propagating the white race in Canada was rather discouraging, to say the least. Of the 28 persons who wintered at Quebec in 1608, only 8 survived. The first potential family to come to Canada, Michel Colin and his wife, Marguerite Vienne, both died in 1616, the year of their arrival. Michel Colin died on the 24th of March; he was the first person to be buried with the last rites of the Church due to the arrival of missionaries. His wife died on the 15th of July. She was the first European woman to come to this country and the first white woman to be interred in a Canadian burial ground. In the following year, 1617, Louis Hébert arrived with his wife, Marie Rollet, his two daughters, Anne and Guillemette, and a son who died young. This was the first real Canadian family. Their house was the first one erected in Upper Town, Quebec. Hébert was the first colonist and Champlain said of him that "He was the first head of a family who made his living from the soil he cultivated." He did not live long enough, however, to see the result of the courageous example he gave or of the faith he had in the possibilities of this country; an accident was the cause of his death on January 25, 1627, only ten years after his arrival.

EARLY HISTORY OF THE CANADIAN FAMILY

The first marriage took place in 1618 when Etienne Jonquest married Anne, daughter of Louis Hébert. The following year she brought into the world the first Canadian-born child, but unfortunately both the mother and the child died. This was the first white woman to marry and become a mother in Canada. The second marriage occurred in 1621, when Guillaume Couillard married Guillemette Hébert. He settled on a farm near Quebec city and is supposed to have been the first one to turn the Canadian soil with a plow. The second child was born on the 24th of October, 1621, to the wife of Abraham Martin, but it died at birth. The father of this child cultivated the land which subsequently became the famous Plains of Abraham. No other births occurred until 1624 when one child was born, followed by a birth in each of the years 1625, 1626, 1627, 1629, 1633 and 1634, with an increase to 6 in 1636 and a steady increase from year to year until they reached over 50 in 1643. It is of interest to note that in 1651 Massé Gravel took to the baptismal font his two infant daughters, the first Canadian-born twins, and in 1697 Guillaume Pagé had the first Canadian-born triplets baptized.

In 1635, the year Champlain died, the accumulated marriages had reached the total of 8, one of the married being Canadian-born, granddaughter of the first colonist. She was married at the age of 13. Births did not exceed deaths until 1638, when there were 9 births and 2 deaths (not counting 1631 and 1633 with one birth in each year and no deaths). It was not until 1643, or 34 years after the founding of Quebec, that the accumulated births exceeded the number of deaths occurring during this period. This was 22 years after the first registration of birth in the parochial register opened in 1621. In 1751 Bishop Pontbriand ordered that a special register be kept for the registration of stillbirths.

After the surrender of Quebec to the British in 1629, the accumulated vital statistics showed 3 marriages, 7 births and 41 deaths, and the 45 white inhabitants of New France included 4 families comprised of 4 married couples and 7 children, but 10 years later, in 1639, among the 274 inhabitants of New France the native born accounted for 5 married women, 30 boys and 14 girls.

GOVERNMENTAL AIDS TO COLONIZATION AND POPULATION

The families were not increasing very rapidly in number, but they were large and were encouraged by financial aid from the government of the day to augment the number of children. The "allocations familiales" which have been lately advocated in Quebec are not new, considering the fact that they existed in this country 265 years ago and Mercier was only following an old precedent when in 1890 he passed a law giving 100 acres to every father of 12 children. An ordinance of the King dated the 3rd of April, 1669, ordered that the Intendant in New France pay a grant out of the public funds of 300 livres to every father of 10 children and 400 livres to every father of 12 children, not including the children who became members of the clergy or of religious

^xPresented before the Vital Statistics Section at the Twenty-Third Annual Meeting of the Canadian Public Health Association, Montreal, June, 1934.

institutions. The ordinance also stipulated that when distribution of honours or patronage took place, preference be always given to men with a large number of children. Finally, it imposed a fine on the father who did not marry his sons at or under 20 years of age and his daughters at or under 16 years of age. A further ordinance dated 20th of October, 1670, made it compulsory for the father to report every six months why his children who had reached the age required were not married. Marriages of girls 15, 14, and even 13 years of age and boys 18 and 19 were not uncommon. In the year 1670 the King spent 6,000 livres in grants to large families and in wedding gifts.

The above regulations, grants, bonuses, etc., showed results and the marriages increased from 75 in 1667 to 125 in 1669, to 122 in 1670 and 109 in 1671, but dropped to 68 in 1672 as there was no immigration during that year.

Although immigration was small, emigration was kept to a minimum. In a letter dated November 2, 1671, Talon suggested to Colbert that only those who had families in Canada, or who had real estate, be allowed to leave the country, provided they did not sell their property before leaving, and that they not be allowed to sell without approval by the Intendant. Those who were only "engagés" had, before leaving the country, to reimburse the Government for the expenditure incurred when they were brought out. The purpose of this order was to prevent any one coming to New France only temporarily. In a letter written on the 4th of July, 1672, Colbert approved the order without restrictions.

Colbert and Frontenac also thought that if the white men would marry Indian women, the families would increase rapidly, but this scheme failed entirely, even when the sum of 150 livres was offered as a dowry to every Indian woman who would marry a white man. During the period 1608 to 1677 there were only three marriages between French and Indians.

Every encouragement was given the new settlers; some were given 100 francs, together with provisions, clothing and agricultural implements, or paid during two years while they cleared the land. The land was divided in long narrow strips two arpents wide, the purpose of this being to encourage settlements by creating community life and also to enable the settlers to assemble at a moment's notice for defence against the Indians.

The King also gave a very substantial grant to every army officer and soldier who settled on the land. As the difficulty was to find him a wife, girls for that purpose were brought from France. During the period 1665 to 1673 it is estimated that a few hundreds were brought out to Canada. Many of these girls, "Les Filles du Roi", as they were called, were the daughters of army officers killed in the wars; they had been raised and educated by the nuns and consequently were cultured women. Others were recruited in various districts by the parish priests. These future mothers of Canada were carefully chosen, of good morals, and the very few doubtful cases that slipped through were immediately returned. On their way to Canada they were accompanied by respectable old ladies, and on their arrival they were placed under the care of nuns who instructed them and also helped them in the choice of a husband.

The settlers were, moreover, carefully selected before they were accepted as passengers on the ships. During Talon's time not only had they to be morally good, but they had to be healthy, rugged, good looking, able to bear the Canadian climate and between the ages of 16 and 40. Boucher, in "L'Histoire Vraie de la Nouvelle France", tells that every new arrival, if accused of bad conduct or anything which was not according to good morals, was immediately sent back.

FAMILY LIFE

The family life of the early days was exemplary and, according to the "Relations des Jésuites", was edifying and could be likened to the community of the Christians of the early days. The mother with her numerous children divided her days between the care of her progeny and the household duties. With her kindly face, always smiling, vigilant and affectionate, she was the guiding hand, the life and soul of the happy home. Despite her diversified, endless duties - which were legion - she unflinchingly found time to "tuck away" tenderly her children for the night, breathing over them her maternal benediction; her spoken good-night being invariably the pious recommendation so familiar in all French-Canadian homes, "Donne ton coeur au Bon Dieu, et mon enfant."

The father was a strong, straight man, throwing himself whole-heartedly into the performance and accomplishment of his duties. He was constantly on guard against the marauding, murderous Indians while cultivating the land, and was often called to serve in the wars. These things, together with the task of rearing, protecting and providing for his large family, completely filled his life.

A most brotherly feeling existed between the neighbours, every settlement resembling one large family. They were always ready to help each other, and the farms of the colonists who were absent for long periods at the war or held prisoners by the Indians or disabled through accident, illness, etc., were cared for by some of the others. It was a very rugged but wholesome life. The colonist, with his natural gaiety and bravery carried almost to bravado, was happy in spite of the hardship and many of them lived to a grand old age. The first centenarian mentioned in the register was buried in November, 1719.

For a long period, the settlers had to carry a gun while tilling the soil. An ordinance dated the 14th of November, 1654, ordered that every one going to work or elsewhere had to carry a gun with enough powder and lead for six shots, and any one refusing to comply with this order was liable to a penalty. Those who did not have ammunition were told where they could make a fair exchange of wheat and peas for powder and lead.

Morals were at a high standard. Illegitimate children were practically unknown, as we are told that between 1621 and 1690 out of 11,773 births only two illegitimate births were known. Births were numerous; families were large but unfortunately they were sometimes visited by terrible epidemics which did destructive work and were responsible for a large number of deaths, as, for instance, smallpox in 1639, 1703, 1733, 1765 and 1784; typhus in 1665 and 1666; whooping cough, measles and scarlet fever in 1715 and 1730; and all these in the 17th and 18th century, not to mention the epidemics of smallpox and cholera of the 19th century.

Wedding celebrations date a long way back in the history of Canada, but musical instruments were not plentiful in the early days, although it is stated that on the 21st of November, 1645, at the wedding of Jean Dubuisson to Elizabeth Couillard, granddaughter of the first colonist, there were two violins to provide the music, it being the first time violins were noted at weddings. The first regular ball in the history of the social life of Canada was given in 1667 at Sieur Chartier.

EARLY CENSUSES OF POPULATION

At the first census taken in Canada in 1666 (the first census of modern times) the population was 3,215. Of that population, 491 were married women of whom 8 were under 16 years of age and 45 were between 16 and 20 years of age; or, in other words, nearly 11 per cent of the married women were under 21 years of age. The children 10 years of age and under accounted for over 1,000, nearly one-third of all the people. The population was increasing rapidly and at the census of 1673 it had reached 6,705, or double what it was seven years before. Of the increase of 3,490 during that period, there were 2,031 births and 462 deaths; that is, the natural increase contributed 1,569 or 45 per cent.

CENSUS OF CANADA, 1666^x

Familles des Habitans	Agés	Qualités et Mestiers
Pierre Duchesne	29	Habittant
Catherine Rivet	20	Sa femme
Jean Pelletier	35	Habittant
Anne Langlois	20	Sa femme
Noel Pelletier	11	Fils
Anne Pelletier	10	Fille
Rene Pelletier	8	Fils
Jean Pelletier	3	Fils
Une fille non baptisée	8 jours	
Guillaume Le Mieux	17	Travaillant au mois

CENSUS OF CANADA, 1666^x - continued

Familles des Habitans	Agés	Qualités et Mestiers
Jean Tousser	40	Meunier Habittant
Jeanne de Rissecourt	21	Sa femme
Jean Tousser	3	Fils
Gervais Tousser	2	Fils
Jean Rouyer	30	Habittant
Marie Targor	45	Sa femme
Marie Anne Royer	6 mois	Fille
Nicolas Gendron	32	Cons. Habittant
Marie Marthe Hubert	24	Sa femme
Jean Francois Gendron	7	Fils
Jacques Gendron	3	Fils
Nicolas Gendron	13 mois	Fils
Thomas Gasse	22	Engagé domestique

As disclosed by the schedules the families were separated by a line drawn across the page. In each section representing the family was entered first the head of the house, then the wife followed by the children, the servants coming next and finally the roomers and boarders if any, so that each household was kept by itself. It is the method now pursued by most countries in enumerating the population. M^{onsieur} Tanguay, in his book "A Travers les Régistres", states that the first nominal census (1666) was taken during the months of February and March as ascertained by a comparison with the Parochial Registers, the census schedules not divulging the month of the year in which the census was taken.

^xExtract from original

After the beginning of the 18th century, the increase in population came practically all from the large families. Households of 14 and 15 children were common and one, Jean Poitras, had 27 children. Montcalm noted in his Journal that "a soldier of the Regiment of Carignan had 220 descendants settled in four parishes."

The total number of French immigrants during the French regime has been estimated by various authors at from 8,000 to 10,000, and if we consider the thousands and thousands of persons killed during the wars, by the Indians, by accidents of all kinds, and that in 1760 the population was about 65,000, we marvel at the vitality of the first settlers. In 1666 there were in New France 538 households and at the cession of Canada to the British the number had reached 11,210. The census of 1931 gave 538,245 households in Quebec and 2,266,724 for the whole of Canada.

Familial Censuses

Prior to the first census in 1666 we have no figures showing the number of children per family (that is, the number of children living at home), but in the first census the families were separated by a line drawn across the page. In each section representing the family, the head of the house was entered, then the wife, followed by the children, the servants, and, finally, the boarders and roomers, if any. Each entry was classified as to age, conjugal condition and occupation, so that it is easy to establish by age-groups the average number of children per family. The figures quoted represent the Province of Quebec only, as it is the only province completed for the 1931 family compilation.

In 1666 the number of children under 15 years of age averaged 2.27 per family, but 13 years later, in 1681, the number had increased to 2.97, the consequence of the large number of marriages in 1669, 1670 and 1671. The highest average number of children under 15 years of age per family occurred in 1707 when it was 3.03, after which it kept decreasing gradually with occasionally a slight increase, but to fall back again below the previous average until it reached 2.53 in 1739. For the period 1739 to 1851 we have only summary tables of the censuses and the age-groups do not lend themselves to comparison. At the expiration of this 112 years with abnormal changes in the complexion of the population, the census of 1851 gave an average of 2.78 children under 15 years of age per family, decreasing from census to census with the exception of 1891, when it showed an increase of 0.02, and the censuses of 1901 and 1911 when each gave the same average of 2.07, dropping to 2.04 in 1921 and to 1.90 in 1931.

All the family figures quoted so far referred to the census family, which means a group of persons living together in the same dwelling house. The figures quoted hereafter refer to what we may call the private family, that is, the father, the mother and children.

The census of 1921 was the first one to publish tables giving the number of private families reporting children, also tables segregating the families reporting no children, one child, two children, etc.

Comparing the 1931 census with 1921 for the Province of Quebec (the only one completed), we find that for the families with both father and mother living, the average number of children (all ages) living at home shows an increase from 3.67 to 3.72. This increase was due to the larger number 15 years of age and over living at home, while the number under 15 years of age decreased. The number of children per family for all families reporting children dropped from 3.58 in 1921 to 3.49 in 1931, owing to the large increase in the families having a widow or a widower as head and to the large decrease in the number of children in these families.

If we segregate the children by age groups and compare 1931 with 1921, using only the families with both parents living and reporting children living at home, we get the following: Children under 7 years of age averaged 1.30 per family in 1931 against 1.32 in 1921; children 7 to 14 averaged 1.27 in 1931 as against 1.28 in 1921; children under 15 years averaged 2.57 in 1931 and 2.62 in 1921; children 15 years of age and over averaged 1.14 in 1931 against 1.05 in 1921. The increase in the older age group living at home is probably due to the number returning home on account of no work, and to the larger number staying at home because of no prospect for work elsewhere, also probably because of later marriages or non-marriage on the part of the young adults of the family.

Comparing the results of the 1931 census with 1921, it is very interesting to note that the proportional number of families reporting no children, one child and two children, together with the families reporting 10 children or more, show an increase, while the families reporting from 3 to 9 children show a decrease. It should be remembered in this connection that the decrease in the families of 3 to 9 children could cause an increase in those with 2 or less, merely by a transfer of class, so that the increase in 1 and 2 children does not necessarily mean greater fertility in the recent marriages.

TABLE I
Percentage of Families Reporting the Following Number of Children Living at Home

Families reporting	1931	1921	Families reporting	1931	1921
Total	100.00	100.00	9 children	1.72	1.86
No children	26.17	25.51	10 "	1.04	0.84
1 child	17.69	17.16	11 "	0.59	0.44
2 children	14.64	14.09	12 "	0.29	0.19
3 "	11.26	11.61	13 "	0.12	0.07
4 "	8.62	9.24	14 "	0.05	0.03
5 "	6.57	7.18	15 "	0.02	0.01
6 "	4.97	5.28	16 "	0.01	-
7 "	3.67	3.87	17 "	-	-
8 "	2.57	2.62	18 "	-	-

The private families during the decennial period 1921 to 1931 increased from 473,868 to 579,252, an increase of 22.24 per cent subdivided as follows: families of one person increased from 28,971 to 42,018 or 43.03 per cent; total families of two or more persons from 444,897 to 537,234 or 20.75 per cent; families of two or more persons reporting children from 353,000 to 435,567 or 23.39 per cent, and families of two or more persons not reporting children from 91,891 to 101,667 or 10.63 per cent. To put it another way, the families of one person represented 6.11 per cent of all families in 1921 and 7.26 per cent in 1931, and of the families of two or more persons 20.65 per cent reported no children in 1921 and only 18.92 per cent in 1931.

CULTURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE YOUNG CANADIAN FAMILY

The immigrants during the French regime, as a rule, came from good stock; they nearly all read and wrote, as shown by the early registers of births, deaths and marriages. But their descendants were not educated to the same degree due to the difficulty of establishing schools over a large area for a scattered population and to the scarcity of teachers in those days. The first schools were opened by the Recollet Fathers in 1616 and the first college in 1635.

In 1667 young Indians were, at the King's request, admitted to the schools, but this proved a failure and was detrimental to the education of the French boys. The natural inclination of the boys was for adventure, and the stirring stories of the "coureurs des bois" made it hard to make them take interest in their studies. When the young Indians were admitted to the schools, the contact of such wild companions who thought of nothing else but roaming the woods, hunting the beaver or canoeing over unknown lakes and rivers, fired the French boys with such intense longing for the outdoor life that application for study was lacking. In addition, Canada was at war with the Indians, or with rival colonies, and it is no wonder the young were restless and not very eager to settle down to study.

In 1667 l'Abbé de la Tour wrote: "Canadian children, as a rule, have shown great brightness, memory and talent, learn quickly, but, longing for adventure, very fond of freedom, with a great desire and capacity for physical exercise, they lack the systematic application necessary to acquire learning. Satisfied with a certain amount of knowledge to help them in their daily avocations, none of them became highly educated". Although they were not adding much to book learning, it had a compensating factor in that they were increasing their physical strength and their mental alertness, and were developing into a rugged hardy race, which was very necessary for the country at the time.

There was also another compensating factor: the women in the early days of the colony were highly educated. The Ursulines and Hospital nuns arrived in 1639 and a convent was opened the same year, and it became the ambition and pride of every father to send his daughters to school (convents) as long as possible. During those early days, in so far as the general public was concerned, as a rule the women carried on the correspondence for the male members of the family, kept the account books, etc., and, as explained, before, between the years 1665 to 1673 from 800 to 1,000 girls were brought out, who married within six months of their arrival and who had been educated in the convents of France before coming to this New World.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE, ILLITERACY, AND SIZE OF FAMILY

It was indeed fortunate that the mothers of the early Canadian-born population were educated, considering the fact that the mother forms the language of the children, and also has a greater influence on the school attendance and literacy of the children than the father, as shown conclusively in the censuses of 1921 and 1931. The last two censuses compiled tables showing the number of children, the school attendance and the illiteracy of the children cross-classified according to the literacy of the parents. It is remarkable how the school attendance and the illiteracy of the children vary with the literacy of the parents but more pronounced as with that of the mother. In 1921 and 1931 the school attendance and illiteracy of the children 7 to 14 years of age for the Province of Quebec, cross-classified with the illiteracy of the parents, was as follows. In families having both parents literate 91.42 per cent of the children attended school and 2.33 per cent were illiterate. With father illiterate and mother literate 81.09 per cent attended school and 7.01 were illiterate. With father literate and mother illiterate 80.09 per cent attended school and 10.41 were illiterate, and with both parents illiterate only 70.39 attended school and 20.29 per cent were illiterate.

-7-
TABLE II.

Literacy of Parents, Province of Quebec, 1921

Literacy	Number of families	Children 7 to 14 years				
		Number	At School		Illiterate	
			No.	P.C.	No.	P.C.
All Classes.....	312,993	400,459	359,792	89.84	13,421	3.55
Both literate	276,431	350,458	320,400	91.42	8,232	2.35
Mother only illiterate.....	6,275	8,047	6,510	80.90	838	10.41
Father only illiterate.....	21,391	31,327	25,402	81.09	2,195	7.01
Both illiterate.....	8,896	10,627	7,480	70.39	2,156	20.29

TABLE III

Literacy of Parents, Province of Quebec, 1931

Literacy	Number of families	Children 7 to 14 years				
		Number	At School		Illiterate	
			No.	P.C.	No.	P.C.
All Classes.....	364,361	463,682	422,181	91.05	16,621	3.58
Both literate.....	330,573	418,550	385,278	92.05	11,591	2.77
Mother only illiterate.....	5,832	7,116	5,908	83.02	813	11.42
Father only illiterate.....	20,799	30,011	25,043	83.45	2,549	8.49
Both illiterate.....	7,157	8,005	5,952	74.35	1,668	20.84

In 1926 Mr. M.C. MacLean of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics published a complete analysis on this question of school attendance and illiteracy.

Other remarkable data, when cross-classified with the literacy of parents, are the average number of children 15 years of age and over per family living at home. The following table shows that the more illiterate the parents are, the larger is the number of older children living at home. The average number of children 15 years of age and over in families having both parents literate was 1.01, with mother only literate 1.19, with father only literate 1.39, and with both parents illiterate 1.45.

TABLE IV

Families with Both Parents Living Reporting Children, 1921 and 1931

Literacy of Parents	1921			1931		
	Number of Families	Children 15 years of age and over at home		Number of Families	Children 15 years of age and over at home	
		Total	No. per family		Total	No. per family
All Classes.....	312,993	329,449	1.05	364,361	416,132	1.14
Both parents literate.....	276,431	279,370	1.01	330,573	363,313	1.10
Mother only literate.....	6,275	7,444	1.19	5,832	8,350	1.43
Father only literate.....	21,391	29,748	1.39	20,799	33,097	1.59
Both illiterate.....	8,896	12,886	1.45	7,157	11,372	1.59

The number of children 15 years of age and over living at home is largest with both parents illiterate and lowest with both parents literate, and in view of the fact that the children of literate parents are better educated than the children of illiterate parents, the probabilities are that educated children have larger opportunity and a wider field to find employment, while the odd-job young men are as well off in one place as another and consequently stay at home longer.

Another feature of the 1931 census is that we have compiled for the first time the number of children living at home according to the occupational status of the father, which shows the following. The average number of children 15 years of age and over living in the "employer" family is 1.84, in the families where the head is classed as "own account" the number is 0.52, and in the families of "wage earner" heads the average is 0.75, showing the employer with the largest average number of older children living at home.

CONCLUSION

We have only touched on the family as it is to-day because it is impossible to make a complete study of this subject in a short paper. Enough, however, has been shown to make us justly proud of our Canadian family, and although most references were to the Quebec family it is applicable to all. This can not be better exemplified than by quoting from "The Clash" by W. M. Moore. Speaking of the proverbial hospitality of the Canadian family, he said:

"The stranger - English or French - was made welcome in the home; and the guest of to-day was the host of to-morrow. The fires were kept burning under the kettle; pea soup and soupe-aux-pois were one and the same thing when served in the rough-hewn log houses. There was a difference between English and French, it is true; but it was that between p-e-a-s and p-o-i-s.

STATISTICS CANADA LIBRARY
BIBLIOTHÈQUE STATISTIQUE CANADA



1010341388

