

divorce legislation. Divorces rose to over 67,671 in 1981 from an average of about 11,000 divorces per year over the period 1966-68. British Columbia's divorce rate of 347.4 per 100,000 population, and Alberta's 376.2 were the highest among the provinces. By comparison, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island had the lowest rates, 100.2 and 152.6 (Table 2.40). Estimates for 1975-77 suggest that one out of three first marriages and one out of four succeeding marriages end in divorce.

Sex of petitioners. Background information shows that almost twice as many divorces were granted in 1981 to female petitioners as to males, 44,205 to 23,466. This represents a ratio of 53 divorces to male petitioners for every 100 to females.

Grounds for divorce. Statistics show that in 1981 adultery was the most frequent cause of divorce (28,241 cases), replacing separation for not less than three years (26,059 cases). Other alleged grounds for divorce and reasons for marital breakdown include mental cruelty (19,768); physical cruelty (13,417); addiction to alcohol (1,543); and desertion by petitioner for not less than five years (1,066).

Dependent children. Of the 67,671 divorces granted in 1981, 48% involved no dependent children. Divorces involving dependent children ranged from 56% in 1972 to 52% in 1981. More than two out of every five of the latter cases involved one child only, and nearly three out of five involved two or more children.

Duration of marriage. The duration of marriage in 17.0% of the divorces in Canada in 1981 was less than five years and in nearly one-half of the cases it was less than 10 years. The short-term trend during the late 1970s indicated a relative shortening of the average duration of marriage before divorce. In 1975 only 15.6% of the divorces involved marriages of less than five years and 43.7%, less than 10 years. By 1979, 17.7% of couples divorced had been married less than five years and 49.7% less than 10 years. The median duration of marriage for couples who got divorces in 1975 was 11.1 years compared to 10.0 in 1981.

Marital status. More than nine out of every 10 persons divorced in 1981 were involved in a first divorce. Around 8% of the divorces were granted to persons who were divorced at the time of their last marriage and about 1% to those who were widowed.

2.8 Migration

Besides the vital components of population change (fertility, mortality, nuptiality), the flows of population across national borders (immigration and emigration) also affect the country's growth and demographic structure.

2.8.1 Immigration

Canada's immigration policy is based on the principle of non-discrimination and emphasizes the

selection of immigrants who are likely to adapt to the Canadian way of life, making a positive contribution to economic and cultural development in Canada.

Canadian immigration officers apply standard norms of assessment to applicants from all parts of the world and, apart from sponsored relatives and refugees, select those with skills in short supply in Canada.

The employment and immigration commission also regulates the entry of temporary workers and foreign students planning to enrol in public or private institutions and examines millions of visitors who come to Canada each year as tourists or for family, social, cultural or other reasons. The commission facilitates the return of Canadian residents and enforces measures to protect the health, welfare and security of Canadians.

The Immigration Act, 1976 proclaimed in April 1978, brought Canada's immigration policy into sharper focus than ever before. It stated, for the first time in Canadian law, the basic principles underlying immigration policy — non-discrimination, family reunion, humanitarian concern for refugees and promotion of national goals. The legislation links the immigration movement to Canada's population and labour market needs and, after consultation with the provinces, provides for an annual forecast of the number of immigrants Canada can comfortably absorb. The act establishes a new family class, allowing Canadian citizens and permanent residents to sponsor a wide range of relatives, confirms Canada's protective obligations to refugees under the United Nations Convention and establishes refugees as an admissible immigrant class. It requires that immigrant and visitor visas and student and employment authorizations be obtained abroad, and prohibits visitors from changing their status from within Canada.

Canada's refugee policy includes two major elements, resettlement and protection. Traditionally, permanent residence has been provided for the displaced and persecuted when other solutions to refugee problems were not possible. The size and scope of the resettlement program are determined through an annual refugee plan approved by cabinet. As a complement to the plan, humanitarian assistance is extended to others who are displaced or in need due to emergency situations.

The other aspect of Canada's refugee program provides protection for visitors who claim to be refugees. A system is in place to determine the status of such claimants.

Through both refugee and humanitarian programs, more than 20,000 people were helped to resettle in Canada in 1982.

Immigration officers are situated at more than 60 Canadian embassies and consulates around the world and at about 500 Canada immigration centres and ports of entry in Canada.