

The extent of immigration to Canada in any period is affected by conditions at home and abroad. The Immigration Act requires the minister, after reviewing domestic economic and demographic trends, to announce annually the number of immigrants Canada plans to admit over a specified period. The announced level for 1983 was 105,000 to 110,000. Immigrant arrivals for the years 1955-81 are shown in Table 2.45.

Origin of immigrants. In 1981 Canada received 128,618 immigrants from various countries of origin, down from 143,117 in 1980. Tables 2.46 and 2.47, showing the country of last permanent residence and of citizenship of immigrants, indicate that by world area Europe, Africa and North, South and Central America, contributed a higher proportion of the total immigration in 1981 than in the previous year. The British Isles were the largest source area for immigrants with 21,154 in 1981, followed by the United States with 10,559.

Destination of immigrants. On arrival in Canada, immigrants are asked to state their intended destination. According to these records, Ontario absorbed by far the highest proportion of arrivals during 1981 — 42.7% of both males and females. British Columbia was the second most-favoured province of destination, receiving 16.8% of males and 17.4% of females, followed by Quebec with 16.5% of males and 16.4% of females. The proportions intending to settle in the Prairie provinces were 21.5% for males and 14.7% for females, and in the Atlantic provinces, 2.4% for males and 2.3% for females. The provincial distribution has changed little from year to year over the past two decades.

Sex, age and marital status. The sex distribution of immigrants for 1976-81 is shown in Table 2.49. In 1981 females constituted 50.9% of the immigrants and males 49.1%. Except for 1980 the number of female immigrants coming into Canada was higher than the number of male immigrants in every year from 1976 to 1981. Table 2.50 gives the marital status of immigrants for 1979 and 1980 and age groups for 1981.

Data from the 1981 Census. Just under 16% (3.8 million) of Canadian residents were originally immigrants, at the time of the 1981 Census. The structure of the immigrant population had undergone substantial change over the previous 15 years. Those born in Europe still comprised the largest group, nearly 2.6 million, and 83% of these arrived since World War II.

According to the census, Europe remained the primary source of the total immigrant population but its share of those still living in Canada declined from 92% for the 1945-54 period to 36% over the 1970-81 period.

Immigrants from Asia, representing 2.5% of all immigrants for the period 1945-54 increased to

almost 32% of all immigrants since 1970. More than three-quarters of immigrants born in Asia have arrived since 1970.

For the recent period 1978-81, the data on the immigrant population by place of birth show only 29.7% of immigrants from Europe, but 43.8% from Asia and between 5% and 10% from each of the United States, Caribbean Islands and Central and South America.

2.8.2 Emigration

Since the only statement a Canadian resident may be required to file on leaving the country is an income tax return, it is difficult to estimate the annual number of emigrants. Income tax files can be used for this purpose, but the estimates derived from them are invariably too low because not all emigrants file tax returns after leaving.

Another source of data for emigration estimates is the census. First, the total population growth is calculated from the counts recorded in two successive censuses; then, the number of births and immigrants for the same period is subtracted and the number of deaths is added. The result is an estimate of the number of emigrants for the intercensal period (the period between the two censuses). This method was used between 1961-62 and 1975-76.

There is also a third source of data, family allowance records. When a family leaves the country, the children are no longer eligible for family allowances, and the records are updated accordingly. These data indicate children who emigrate. The next step is to estimate the number of adult emigrants: the probability of emigration for children according to family allowance data is multiplied by the ratio of adults to children in the probabilities of emigration according to income tax records. Once this is done, adult emigration and total emigration are calculated. This method was tested and used for the 1976-81 period.

The number of emigrants varies from year to year, but there has been a decline in emigration since the 1966 Census. Specifically, the number has decreased each year since 1967-68, except for 1973-74 and the 1977-79 period. In 1967-68, 111,500 people left the country, but only 41,750 in 1981-82, according to preliminary estimates, with an annual average of 72,000 emigrants since 1966.

2.8.3 Internal migration

As people move from one place to another within a nation, they set up patterns of migration which differ in intensity and directional flow. These internal movements have marked effects on regional economies and influence future population growth. Thus it is of value to measure these various migration streams, such as from rural to urban centres, from cities to suburbs, and from one province or economic region to another.