

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 Immigration Act contains provisions to respond to persons who, while temporarily in Canada, claim refugee status. Those recognized as convention refugees can be afforded Canada's protection. In May 1986, the government announced principles on revisions to this determination process.

Through both refugee and humanitarian programs, 19,885 people were helped to resettle in Canada in 1985.

The immigration program is delivered at more than 60 Canadian embassies and consulates abroad and at more than 400 ports of entry to Canada and Canada immigration centres.

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 1986 was 105,000 to 115,000. Immigrant arrivals for the years 1982-85 are shown in Table 2.35.

Origin of immigrants. In 1985, Canada received 84,302 immigrants from various countries of origin, down from 88,239 in 1984. Tables 2.35 and 2.36, show the country of last permanent residence and of citizenship of immigrants. Immigrants from Asia constituted 45.8% of the influx in 1985. Immigration from Europe was 22.4%. The major source countries were: Vietnam (12.3%), Hong Kong (8.8%), United States (7.9%), Great Britain (5.3%) and India (4.8%).

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 number of arrivals during 1985 (40,730). Quebec received 14,884 immigrants

and British Columbia, 12,239. The Prairie provinces received 14,321 immigrants, the Maritimes, 2,021 and Yukon and Northwest Territories, 107.

Sex, age and marital status. The sex distribution of immigrants for 1982-85 is shown in Table 2.38. In 1985 females constituted 52.2% of the immigrants and males 47.8%. Table 2.39 gives the marital status of immigrants by sex for 1982 and 1983 and by age groups for 1984 and 1985.

2.10.2 Citizenship

In 1981, 20.2 million or 84% of the Canadian population were Canadian by birth and 2.6 million or 11% of the Canadian population were Canadian by naturalization. From 1981 to 1985, 508,000 landed immigrants applied for and were granted Canadian citizenship.

The Citizenship Act came into effect on February 15, 1977. It replaced the Canadian Citizenship Act, passed in 1947, which was the first independent naturalization law to be enacted in the Commonwealth and which created the status of a Canadian citizen as distinct from that of a British subject.

The current Citizenship Act makes equality a basic tenet of the law. It makes no distinction between citizens by birth and citizens by choice. It also treats the citizenship status of women in their own right rather than simply in relation to that of their spouses.

Administered by the Department of the Secretary of State, through 30 citizenship courts and offices, the act covers the conditions for acquisition, retention, loss and resumption of citizenship. All adult applicants for the grant of citizenship face the same requirements, which include legal admission to Canada; three years residence in Canada; basic knowledge of Canada and of one of Canada's official languages; and compliance with the national security and criminal record provisions of the Citizenship Act. The department administers federal-provincial agreements in support of citizenship and language instruction to adult immigrants and is active in the promotion of the concept and values of Canadian citizenship among the general populace. The 40th Anniversary of the proclamation of the first Canadian Citizenship Act was highlighted by the introduction of National Citizenship Week in April 1987.

Sources

2.1 - 2.8 Census Operations Division, Statistics Canada.

2.9 - 2.9.6 Health Division, Statistics Canada.

2.10.1 Public Affairs, Department of Employment and Immigration.

2.10.2 Promotion and Education, Department of the Secretary of State.