

## CHAPTER 2

# DEMOGRAPHY

### 2.1 Population growth

The most fundamental information about a population is its rate of growth which affects almost every aspect of the national life. Several demographic elements combine to produce this rate: births, deaths, immigration and emigration.

Canada's population reached 25,354,064 on June 3, 1986, the date of the 1986 Census. This represents a growth rate of 4.2% (or 1,010,883 people) over the 1981-86 period. In 1988, the population of Canada had risen to 25,923,300, according to Statistics Canada estimates.

Although Canada's population is increasing, its rate of growth is actually slowing down. The growth rate of 4.2% for the 1981-86 period is the lowest five-year growth rate recorded by the Census in the last 25 years, down from a high of 9.7% during the 1961-66 period. This decline may be attributed to lower immigration levels and a declining birth rate.

### 2.2 Canada's Census

**Decennial Census.** The basic legal reason for the decennial Census is to enable a redistribution of seats in the House of Commons. Under the terms of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act, the Census must provide population counts by electoral districts.

The 1981 Census was the 12th since Confederation in 1867. The decennial Census has followed an uninterrupted sequence since 1851.

**Quinquennial Census.** In 1956 a new Census was added, to keep statistical information abreast of the demographic and socio-economic developments that affect decision-making in both private and public sectors. These Censuses have been taken every fifth year between decennial Censuses. Canada's most recent quinquennial Census was taken in June 1986.

The Census is a principal source of information for measuring social and economic change, and for detecting those needs which necessitate the development and implementation of policies and programs such as regional development, health

and welfare programs, education facilities, immigration, low-income housing and transportation networks.

**Census terms.** The general concept of a Census agglomeration (CA) is one of a large urbanized core, together with adjacent urban and rural areas which have a high degree of economic and social integration with that core.

A CA is defined as the main labour market area of an urban area (the urbanized core) of at least 10,000 population, based on the previous Census. Once a CA attains an urbanized core population of at least 100,000, based on the previous Census, it becomes a Census Metropolitan Area (CMA).

Census Metropolitan Area refers to the main labour market area of an urban area of at least 100,000 population.

Census subdivision refers to municipalities, Indian reserves, Indian settlements and unorganized territories.

Occupied private dwelling refers to a private dwelling in which a person or group of persons is permanently residing.

### 2.3 Growth of the provinces and territories

Five of the 10 provinces exceeded the national five-year growth rate, between 1981 and 1986, in the 1986 Census. Alberta led the way with a growth rate of 6.1%, although this is significantly lower than the rate of 21.7% registered during the 1976-81 period. The growth rate in Alberta was primarily due to a much higher than average rate of natural increase (excess of births over deaths). This natural increase, together with migration from abroad, more than counter-balanced a net out-migration of persons to other provinces.

Ontario followed a close second, with a growth rate of 5.7%, up slightly from its rate of increase over the 1976-81 period. In fact, Ontario was the only province east of Manitoba to experience a growth rate above the national average.

In the West, British Columbia, Manitoba and Saskatchewan also all exceeded the national