

# Canada Weekly

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## Green paper prepares the way for new Canadian immigration policy

Manpower and Immigration Minister Robert Andras tabled a "green paper" on immigration policy in the House of Commons on February 3, which will form the basis for public debate before the implementation of a new Immigration Act within two years.

Other discussions will take place, said Mr. Andras, on the development of a "population policy that future immigration to this country may be fashioned to support".

What is at stake, said the Minister, "is no less than the future of Canada's population – its size, rate of growth, distribution and composition – and the basic principles that should govern our decisions to augment the nation's human resources through the admission of migrants from abroad". It was hard to imagine, he continued, any area of public policy that would be more significant in determining the sort of country Canada would become in a very short time.

The paper has been drafted in the belief that:

- immigrants to Canada should be chosen on the basis of non-discrimination, regardless of race, colour or creed;
- that the importance of the family should be respected;
- that Canada should admit refugees for compassionate reasons and to fulfil international obligations; and
- that in selecting immigrants who will enter the labour force, the policy should work in close harmony with all areas of the economic, social and, in particular, with the manpower policy.

### Highlights

The green paper does not make firm recommendations or propose solutions. It explores problems and discusses choices. Some of the highlights follow:

There is virtually no national issue of concern to Canadians today that is not bound up in one way or another with the course followed by the development of our population. The complex dynamics of population change are interwoven with the organization of the economy, the quality of life in our

cities, and the provision of public services. They exert a pervasive influence on the political and cultural evolution of our society as a whole. They affect decisions about how we should plan the use of our land and resources, protect our environment, and overcome disparities – whatever their nature and source – in the opportunities available to individuals or sectors of the Canadian community.

Canada does not face a "population problem" in one customary sense of the expression...however, in another sense, Canada – like any country – has a "demographic problem". It takes the form of urban congestion, regional imbalances, and trends that entail the de-population of some areas, an undesirable rate of growth in others....

Canada, like most advanced nations, counts the costs of more people in terms of congested metropolitan areas, housing shortages, pressures on arable land, damage to the environment – in short, the familiar catalogue of problems with which most prosperous and sophisticated societies are currently endeavouring to overcome.

The advocates of substantial population expansion have frequently cited the view that the competitiveness of Canadian industry would derive significant benefit from the larger domestic market it would afford. Results of a recent study commissioned by the Department of Manpower and Immigration indicate Canadian industry should continue to look principally to an expanding international market rather than to future increases in the size of the Canadian population....

If Canadians wish immigration policy to function as a mechanism to steer population growth along a charted course, then the immigration program must be adapted so as to permit confident forward planning as to the numbers of immigrants Canada receives....

### Distribution and urbanization

The role played by the movement of people within Canada is important in determining how population will be distributed among the provinces, and