

or precision what conditions will be like in Canada in 25 years' time. If any of us have any illusions about this, we merely have to imagine what a similar Royal Commission in 1905 might have said about the future of Alberta. The Commissioners might well have been optimistic. But could they have been expected to foretell the remarkable expansion of overseas demand for our wheat and other farm products which lasted for nearly 25 years, and the terrible depression which followed -- a depression in which Alberta with Saskatchewan was to suffer more than any other part of the country? Or could a Royal Commission established in 1930 -- when the depression was just getting under way -- have been expected to anticipate that within another 25 years Alberta would be looked upon not only as one of the richest of the Canadian provinces in terms of resources, but potentially as one of the richest areas of the whole world?

I do not mean to suggest that some qualified forecasts about the future cannot be immensely valuable -- even if assuredly such forecasts will have to be revised considerably from time to time. On the contrary, I believe that some assessment of our future prospects and of the problems we may expect to face is highly desirable. Surely it is important for us in Canada to estimate -- even in a rough way -- what the demand may be during the next 20 or 30 years for the kind of products we have for export: newsprint; lumber and other forest products; wheat and other agricultural products; fish; base metals of all kinds; oil and gas; manufactured goods of various kinds; and so on. And having estimated the probable demand for these products, it may be useful to do some thinking about the possible alternative sources of supply to which the importing countries may look if our costs get out of line or if we fail to meet the wishes and convenience of our customers in other ways.

What will be the population of Canada in 1980? If it continues to grow at the same rate as it has done during the past 10 years, it might be 30 million. But at the average rate of increase that prevailed during the 10 years before the war, it would be only 20 million. Are we more likely to end the period with a population which is closer to the higher or to the lower of these two figures?

How is this increasing population likely to be distributed throughout Canada? And what about the age factor? Most of us -- certainly all municipal authorities -- are becoming increasingly aware of some of the problems that are developing out of our sharply higher birthrate; the first post-war wave of babies is now bulging the walls of our public schools. They will be ready for high school very soon, and, by the early sixties, some of them will be ready to go to university. Still others -- and perhaps many of them in this increasingly specialized age -- will need technical training of one kind or another. If this coming generation is not to be let down, this means that we must plan to build more schools, more technical schools or colleges, and more or larger universities. And it means that we shall need more teachers who must be trained and who will have to be paid appropriately if the best type of people are to be attracted to what is, and should be generally regarded as, the most important of all professions.