

6. The appointment of the Committee was greeted by a surge of public response. Many concerned organizations indicated their wish to participate in the hearings, while objecting that the initial deadline of 31 July set by Parliament for the Committee's report allowed too little time to prepare submissions. The Committee itself felt that, in view of the numbers wishing to present briefs, it needed more time to complete its task. At the Committee's request, Parliament granted a three-month extension to October 31 for presentation of the Committee's report. This made it possible to extend to September 15 the deadline for submitting briefs. While most organizations found it possible to meet this date, briefs received subsequently have been examined. At the last moment, the Committee found it necessary to request a further extension of two weeks to allow for translation and printing of this Report.

7. How representative were the views gathered by the Committee? How effective was the Committee's method of probing public attitudes by holding public meetings across the country? True, some meetings were packed by noisy representatives of extremist organizations with small memberships who often tried to prevent the expression of opinions different from their own. But on no occasion did these groups fully succeed. Even at the rowdiest meetings, the Committee learned about new problems and heard fresh points of view. Moreover, every public meeting provoked a fresh flow of submissions by mail.

8. In view of the volume and comprehensiveness of the responses received, oral and written, the Committee feels confident that it has had ample opportunity to consider carefully the full range of national views on each aspect of immigration policy. Every view had an advocate. The great public concern, the news coverage of hearings and the Committee's paid advertising combined to ensure that many of the Committee's public meetings were well attended. Coping with too many, rather than too few, speakers for the time allowed was a major problem.

9. On balance, the Committee is satisfied with the method it used to sound out public opinion and believes it offered these important advantages:

- it made the Committee aware of the differing regional approaches to immigration across Canada;
- it permitted the Committee to move beyond the conceptual and geographic frameworks of Ottawa and to become exposed to views it might not otherwise have encountered; and
- it provided Committee members and the Canadian public an opportunity for dialogue and open discussion of an important policy issue.

However, some members of the Committee felt that the method had the disadvantage that it elicited the views of unrepresentative and overly emotional individuals.

10. This report will indicate the Committee's reaction to the range of information and opinion it encountered in the course of this dialogue. As will be evident, the issues raised

by the Government's Green Paper on Immigration Policy and the data it provided often formed the basis for the national debate in which the Committee engaged. The report, however, reflects much more than the Committee's consideration of the Green Paper. It seeks to identify the areas of broad concern that emerged from its interaction with the public and from other investigations; to express the Committee's views on most of these issues; to make recommendations regarding the retention or modification of specific immigration policies or procedures; and finally to suggest broad guidelines for a future immigration policy for Canada.

#### Canada Needs Immigrants

11. The Committee is of the opinion that Canada should continue to be a country of immigration. In reaching this central conclusion Committee members were particularly impressed by demographic and economic arguments, as well as by the need to take account of family and humanitarian considerations for reasons specified elsewhere.

#### Demographic factors

12. Owing to the spectacular decline in the Canadian fertility rate since 1960, immigration is becoming an increasingly important component of population growth. In 1974 Canada's population of 22.3 million grew by 348,000, of which one-half was due to immigration as illustrated in chart 1. (See Appendix B.) The situation of immigration accounting for a large part of population growth is one which Canadians have not experienced since the 1920s. This trend is likely to continue. The Committee was impressed by evidence that even if the decline in the fertility rate were to cease and the current fertility rate of 1.8 births per woman were to be projected into the future, Canada would require *net* immigration of more than 50,000 a year to prevent a decline in total population after the year 2000. Chart 2 illustrates the implications of various levels of net immigration. (See Appendix B.)

13. It should be noted, moreover, that these are net figures which take account of estimated emigration from Canada. Statistics on annual emigration do not exist and present procedures do not allow for the compilation of reliable figures. However, well-informed estimates suggest that emigration may amount to about one-third of the gross numbers of immigrants, so that it would be reasonable to add 50 per cent to the net figures in chart 2 to transfer them into gross immigration figures. On the basis of this calculation, an annual rate of 75,000 immigrants would be needed at current fertility rates to maintain a population level of 28 million during the first half of the 21st century. Even at this figure the population could be expected to decline by two million by the year 2071. If it were desired to have a stable population throughout the next century, it would be necessary to have a gross rate of immigration of 150,000 a year.

14. The Committee recognizes that these figures involve several assumptions and that the situation could vary considerably over time. But they do reveal the long lead time required if population trends are to be modified. Since the Committee believes that a country as large and thinly populated as Canada cannot afford a declining