IMMIGRANTS IN PROFESSIONAL OCCUPATIONS

Interesting facts are brought to light by a survey entitled "Immigrants in Scientific and Technical Professions in Canada" prepared in the Economics and Research Branch of the Department of Labour. The survey is based on questionnaires completed by 3,318 immigrants during the period 1951-56 and thus the data refers to this period generally and not to any specific date.

The report shows that immigrants occupying professional positions account for slightly less than 9 per cent of the total registrations in the Scientific and Technical Personnel Register maintained by the Department of Labour. The proportion of immigrants in most of the professions covered by the Register is within 2 per cent on either side of this average. At one extreme, in the relatively new and rapidly expanding profession of aeronautical engineering, where graduates from Canadain universities have not yet been produced in considerable numbers, the proportion of immigrant registrations to the total Register is as high as 16 per cent. At the other extreme, in agriculture, which is a long established and characteristic Canadian profession with a large body of personnel educated in Canada, immigrants account numerically for rather less than two per cent of the profession. The registrations of immigrants in most of the other professions covered by the Register are close to the respective averages for these professions in the Register as a whole, with the two exceptions of biology, in which the proportion of immigrants to the total Register is low, and of geography, in which the proportion is high.

Scientists and engineers from almost all countries of the world have become part of the Canadian professional labour force. Of the total immigrant labour force at present available in the fields of science and engineering, the largest proportion (44 per cent) was born on the Continent of Europe, a considerable proportion (32 per cent) in the United Kingdom and a smaller proportion (16 per cent) in the United States. This pattern holds roughly true for most of the individual professions, excepting geology and mining engineering in which immigrants born in the United States are relatively much more numerous than those born in any other country. The unusually high numerical incidence of United States born geologists and mining engineers in Canada is probably a result of the steady influx of United States specialists in recent years into the western oil fields and of the large-scale transfer of workers from American parent companies to their Canadian subsidiaries. In aeronautical engineering, on the other hand, the number of professional workers who were born in the United States is very low compared with the percentage whose place of birth was the United Kingdom or some country of Continental Europe.

On the whole, immigrants in the scientific and technical professions are older than their Canadian counterparts in the Register. The median age of immigrants as a group is 44 while for the total Register (including immigrants and native born Canadians) it is 39. This divergence in age may be accounted for, in part, by the fact that the median age for the total Register is becoming lower as new graduating classes from the universities are introduced to the Register each year. Professional workers who have been educated in Canada are mainly concentrated within the 31-35 age group, while immigrants are almost evenly distributed over five age groups, from 31 to 55, with a sharp decrease before and after the commencement and termination of these age groups. In the mining profession, which includes milling and metallurgy, the median age of immigrants is 52, which is remarkably higher than for immigrants as a whole. In agriculture the median age is also higher than for the other professions. In contrast, the median age of immigrants in both geography and veterinary medicine, at 39, is lower than for immigrants as a whole and the median age in physics, at 38, is lower still.

The highest concentration of immigrants with a bachelor's or doctor's degree is at the 31-35 age level. Above 35, master's degrees are more evenly distributed over the groups ending at 50. After the latter age, there is a sharp decrease in the number of immigrant professionals holding degrees. In short, the proportion of scientists and technical persons without degrees is lower in the younger age groups, and relatively high in the middle age groups, with a concentration above the age of 50.

More immigrants were educated in the United States and the United Kingdom than were born there, indicating that some of the immigrants born in other countries received their training either in the United States or in the United Kingdom before coming to Canada.

In most of the professions, the number of immigrants educated in the United Kingdom is roughly double that of those educated in the United States. In forestry, geology, mining and agriculture, however, more immigrants were educated in the United States than in the United Kingdom. One explanation of this might be that the practice of these professions is largely similar in Canada and the United States, and the professions themselves highly developed, while it is governed by many different factors in other countries. In addition, forestry and mineral resources have played a much greater role in the economic development of the United States and Canada than in that of the United Kingdom and most

(Over)