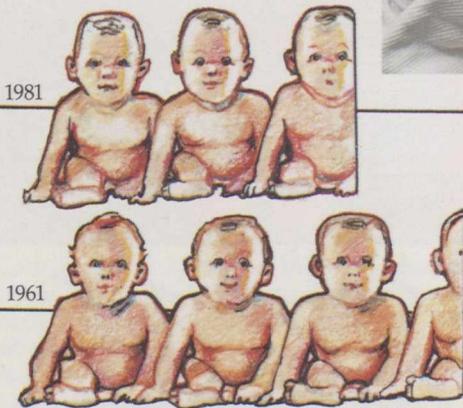


FEWER BABIES

The Canadian fertility rate was booming in 1961 when the average number of births for women past the childbearing years was 3.2. By 1981 it was down to 2.8. The most dramatic drop was in Quebec, from 3.9 to 2.7.

Baby Boom Echoes

About 400,000 children were born in Canada every year between 1952 and 1965, a total of 6,715,000.

The effects have changed society.

As John Kettle put it in his recently published study, *The Big Generation*, "Something extraordinary happened in Canada between 1951 and 1966. It has already wreaked havoc in our lives and will go on echoing down the years into the middle of the next century, disrupting and reshaping and rebuilding most of our society and economy in the process."

In 1981 the children of the boom were between sixteen and twenty-eight years old, leaving childhood and primary and secondary education behind and crowding the job market and institutions of higher learning.

Now there are fewer students and more workers. By the year 2000 the biggest block of Canadians will be income-earning, tax-paying citizens in their thirties and forties and by 2016 they will be retired. (Unless, of course, there is another baby boom.)

Women's Place

The stationary female and the wide-ranging male is the world's accepted arrangement, but the belief that a woman must cherish no hope or ambition of her own is both cruel and unjust. Nellie McClung, an active and effective feminist in Manitoba in the first years of the century.

Men continually study women, and know nothing about them. Women never study men, and know all about them. Bob Edwards, publisher of the *Calgary Eye Opener* from 1902 to 1922.

For most of its life, Canada has been dominated by men. Women were a minority, limited in their behaviour by law and tradition.

They stopped being a minority in 1971 when 1,000 females were counted for every 992 males. By 1981 there were 1,000 for every 983.

Once the law treated them as male possessions, though often beloved. In most provinces they could not own property, though they could in Quebec if they were widows or spinsters.

The most blatantly discriminatory laws have been off the books for years (though the women of Quebec did not have full franchise rights until 1940), and though Canada's Constitution, proclaimed in 1981, spells out equality before the law, the efforts to repeal tradition have been less successful.

In April 1968, a commission headed by Mrs. Florence Bird held public hearings across Canada and discovered that only 5 per cent of law school graduates were women, that women often earned less than equal pay for equal work and that a disproportionate number of women were poor.

Mrs. Bird summed up by saying: "In order to understand the problems of women we have to understand the problems of poverty. . . . Women get paid less, they are relegated to low-level jobs, the burden of child care falls on them and they can least afford to bear it."

Since then things have improved, though not sensationally. Canada now has a Minister of State for the Status of Women and she is a woman, Judy Erola (who is also Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs). The 1981 census shows that there are five times as many women engineers as there were in 1971 and six times as many lawyers; three times as many accountants and four times as many bus drivers.

The number of women working has increased by 62 per cent since 1969, and it is estimated that two-thirds of all women over twenty will have jobs by the year 2000.

Other findings are much less positive.

Female income as a percentage of male income has climbed only slightly in ten years, from 44.1 per cent to 49.7 per cent — a strong indication that most women who will be working sixteen years from now will still be relatively poorly paid.

The discrimination is not as universal as these figures suggest — a woman in a law firm is very likely to be on a financial par with her male peers — but most working women are clustered in low-paying office and service jobs and many, such as bank tellers, are being replaced rapidly by electronic devices. Women in industry are most likely to be where pay is traditionally low: they are a majority in the clothing industry — where the average weekly wage is below \$200 — and a small minority in pulp and paper manufacturing — where the weekly wage is around \$400.

The number of women in traditional, low-paying fields — clerical, sales, teaching and nursing — seems to be expanding. As the number of jobs in light industry has diminished, women