

Immigration trends examined

The federal government will admit between 130,000 and 140,000 immigrants during 1981 as outlined in the *Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration Levels*.

In the report, prepared by Employment and Immigration Canada, immigration trends during the last ten years are examined.

Flow of immigrants

Of the four million newcomers to Canada since the end of the Second World War, one-and-a-half million arrived during the Seventies. During that decade, annual levels fluctuated widely, influenced by economic and social conditions in Canada and abroad and by changes in Canadian immigration law and policy. Arrivals peaked in 1974, when about 218,000 immigrants were admitted. A decline which began in 1975 led to a gross intake of only 86,000 in 1978, and with emigration from Canada assumed to be 75,000 a year, net immigration in that year was only about 11,000. Since 1978, there has been a moderate upturn: in 1979, there was a gross intake of 112,000 (including some 27,500 refugees); in 1980, 135,000 immigrants were expected (including 40,000 refugees).

Areas of origin

During the Seventies, Europe, Africa and Asia, and the Western Hemisphere each accounted for about a third of the total movement. This distribution has been fairly constant over the past five years, although immigration flows from individual countries have varied because of changes in labour market needs which affect the ability of groups to qualify for admission. Other circumstances, such as the civil war in Lebanon and the refugee problem in Southeast Asia, have also caused variations. These shifts also reflect changes in the immigration regulations over the past two decades. Since 1967, immigration selection criteria have been universal and non-discriminatory with respect to race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion and sex.

Types of immigrant

The composition of the immigration movement changes according to several variables. The independent category increases or declines according to labour-

market demand; the flow of refugees varies according to circumstances abroad and to Canada's responses to these circumstances. The family class is less affected by external conditions. It tends to expand shortly after periods of high independent class intake as dependents join family members who have become established. As a proportion of total intake, the family class is higher during prolonged periods of low immigration because it maintains a relatively stable volume. Thus it now occupies a proportionally larger share of the total intake owing to the shrinking of the independent movement over the past few years in response to diminishing labour-market needs.

Independent immigrants are selected according to criteria which stress occupational skills and experience needed in the Canadian labour market. They are admitted to Canada without the sponsorship or assistance of relatives already here. The independent category was predominant during the years 1965-75. Since 1967, however — when this category accounted for two-thirds of all landings — it has declined, and the rate of its decline increased between 1974 and 1980. During the last two years for which complete statistics are available (1978 and 1979), independent landings numbered only 19,000 and 26,000 respectively, or about a quarter of the total landings in each of those years.

Family reunification

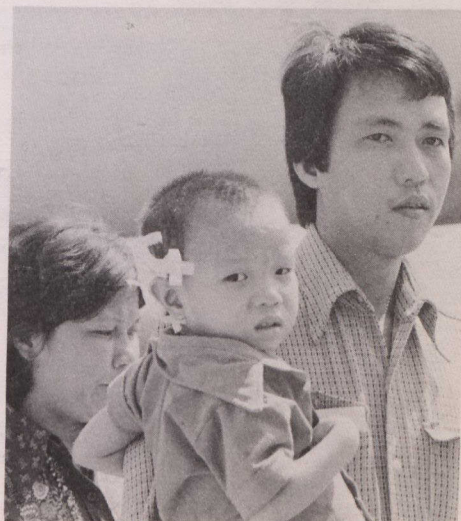
The family class intake reflects the importance of family reunification as an objective of Canada's immigration policy. Family class immigrants are not assessed



Immigrant arriving at the turn of century.

according to the labour-market provisions of the selection criteria, but must of course meet health and security requirements. The number of these arrivals is determined by the number of relatives resident in Canada who submit agreements to sponsor and support family members. The family class is now the predominant part of the immigration movement, and has been so since 1976. Between 1970 and 1975, immigrants in the family class increased from 32,000 to 64,000, or from 22 to 34 per cent of the total. Family class arrivals were just under 47,000 in 1979, which was 42 per cent of the total intake for that year.

Assisted relatives are immigrants who have relatives in Canada willing to help them become established here. Their applications are assessed in part against labour-market selection criteria, but the help they will receive from relatives in Canada is also taken into account. The assisted relatives category was formerly the nominated class, established in 1967 and reflected for the first time in 1968 immigration statistics. This category was fairly stable during the years 1969-77, accounting for a low of about 24 per cent of total immigration in 1979 and a high of 26 per cent in 1976. By 1979, however, assisted relatives accounted for only 10 per cent of the movement. This decline is attributable to a shift of part of the former nominated class into the family class after the introduction of the 1978 regulations. Moreover, some of those who might otherwise enter as assisted relatives qualify as independent immigrants because they are now first screened on that basis.



Immigrants today.

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