

On May 14, 1996, continue a Canadian tradition and count yourself in!

# Census 1996

by C.B. Evans, Editor

*Statistics Canada have asked us to support the 1996 Census and to put together the following article, which contains excerpts from their newsletter "Focus for the Future". — Ed.*

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A census provides a statistical portrait of a country and its people. Almost every country in the world carries out a census regularly to count its population and to collect important information about the social and economic situation of the people living in the various regions. Canada's next census of population and census of agriculture will take place on Tuesday, May 14, 1996. More than 29 million people in over 11 million households across Canada will "count themselves in" as part of the 1996 Census.

Census information is so important that it is a legal requirement, in Canada, to conduct a census every five years. Participating in the census is absolutely confidential by law. No one, including the courts, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police or other governments, can access personal census data.

## **SO WHY TAKE A CENSUS?**

Governments of all levels use census data to make policy decisions about Canada's economic and social programs. In fact, cen-

sus data are related to more than 80 federal-provincial laws, including federal transfer payments, old age security, official languages and war veterans' allowances.

Business, industry, associations, institutions, academia and the media depend on census data as a valuable decision-making tool. Census data are also used to plan important community services, such as police protection.

## **A LONG HISTORY**

The history of the census in Canada goes back more than 300 years, when the colony of New France undertook the first census, completed in 1666, under the guidance of Intendent Jean Talon, who was sent to the new colony by King Louis XIV. Talon, who recognized the importance of having reliable information on which to organize and further the colony's development, took part in the door-to-door enumeration of the colony's 3,215 inhabitants who were settled in places such as Montréal, Trois-Rivières, Cap-de-la-Madeleine and Québec.