

Families smaller according to Canadian report

A number of important changes in the values, norms, and behaviour relating to marriage, family life, childbearing and childrearing have been taking place in Canada, according to a Statistics Canada report.

Children in Canadian Families, by Sylvia T. Wargon, illustrates some of these changes by tracing certain demographic features, and selected income aspects of Canadian families and children, mainly from 1941 to 1976. Recent trends in the formation of Canadian families are analyzed as a background to the interpretation of various trend statistics on children in this country: their numbers, ages, parenting and living arrangements.

Almost all of Canada's dependent children 0-14 years of age live in families with either one or two parents present, or, in a very small number of cases, if parents are absent, with other relatives in family households. Considering all children 0-24 years of age, there has been a shift towards more of them, particularly those in the younger ages, living with single parents, most of whom are female, says the report.

The presence of unmarried sons and daughters 15-24 years of age, living at home, has remained fairly stable and at a high level since about 1941. In the decades preceding the 1940s, young adults, even if in the labour force and financially independent, usually remained at home until they married, according to the report. Prolongation of 15- to 24-year-olds in their status as children in families in recent decades is probably largely due to the lengthening of their school life. The increase in real income of Canadian families well into the 1970s undoubtedly helped to make this possible.

Generally speaking, family size as measured by the number of children at home is smaller now than it was in the 1950s. Furthermore, estimates of children ac-

ording to size of family show that children are increasingly concentrated in families of smaller size, and especially in families of two children, says the report.

Family life still popular

Although more young couples seem to be choosing to remain childless, and those with children are having smaller families, on the whole, Canadians are still interested in families with children and in parenthood. Various demographic, economic, social and housing factors account for the fact that Canadian couples are choosing to have a smaller number of children, and more and more of them, only two children.

The report states that over recent decades, the vast majority of Canadians have continued to choose marriage and traditional family forms such as the husband-wife conjugal unit and the two-parent-and-children nucleus. At the same time, there has been an increase, both absolutely and relatively, in the lone parenthood of families. Although lone-parent families still constitute a small proportion of total families in Canada, interest in such families stems from the recent rise in their numbers and the fact that separated, divorced and never-married mothers in the younger ages with dependent children in their formative years at home, have made considerable contributions to this rise.

Recent rates of separation and divorce among the young mean that there will likely be increasing numbers of young women charged with the full responsibility of supporting, raising and educating one or more children alone.

The report concludes that in demographic and statistical terms, "poor" families, lone-parent families and families disadvantaged in certain ways constitute a small proportion of all Canadian families. Nevertheless, it is their absolute numbers, their increase in absolute terms, and their problems in human terms which are important, and which deserve attention from the community at large. Psychologists, social scientists, and a variety of social practitioners must be prepared to examine, assess, treat and resolve the problems that the apparent continuing increase in such families is bound to create at the individual, family unit and community levels in this country.

News briefs

The Prince of Wales will visit Canada from March 30 to April 3, Government House has announced. Prince Charles, president of the International Council of United World Colleges, will visit Pearson College of the Pacific, near Victoria, and attend meetings of the council.

Prince Edward Island will receive \$32.5 million in the fiscal year beginning April 1 from a federal-provincial development plan, according to Regional Economic Expansion Minister Elmer MacKay. The money is about 10 per cent more than the \$29.3 million being spent on the plan in the 1979-80 fiscal year.

The Export Development Corporation (EDC) has announced the conclusion of a financing agreement of \$1.83 million to support the sale of two spent sulphite liquor collection systems and related services by Powlesland Engineering Ltd. of Rexdale, Ontario, to Companhia de Celulose Do Caima S.A.R.L. of Lisbon, Portugal. The installation of the system at two Portuguese mills operated by the buyer is expected to take about 18 months. The buyer is installing the systems to meet pollution regulations of the Central Portuguese Government.

Directors of Consumers' Gas Company of Toronto and Hiram Walker-Gooderham and Worts of Windsor, Ontario, announced on January 9 an agreement in principle to merge the companies. The transaction valued at about \$1.3 billion would create the fifth-largest company in Canada, based on net profits. A final agreement could be completed in March.

The U.S. Export-Import Bank has approved a \$42.7 million (U.S.) loan to CP Air of Vancouver for the purchase of jetliners. The airline will buy two Boeing 737-200 airliners and one McDonnell Douglas DC-10-30 at a total cost of about \$71.1 million with the help of the bank's loan at a rate of 8.5 per cent.

The world's first Kermode bear born in captivity was rejected by its mother at Stanley Park zoo in Vancouver, but is alive and well in the home of zoo curator Larry LeSage. The female cub was born on January 14, the offspring of a female Kermode and a black bear. The cub, which was five inches long at birth, will probably be sent to another zoo that has a Kermode cub. The Kermode is a white genetic offshoot of the black bear family.

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