

INTRODUCTION TO THE DEMOGRAPHIC REVIEW

The Review of Demography and Its Implications for Economic and Social Policy, informally known as the Demographic Review, was set up in 1986 by the government of Canada to evaluate, extend and integrate the social-science evidence bearing on the relationship between population change and society so as to contribute to the examination of specific issues by the government and the general public. The Review's role was that of contributing to the factual base underlying the debate of population issues; its role was not that of policy analysis.

The first, issue-defining stage of the Review produced 120 first-stage studies, which were listed in *Canadian Studies in Population* (vol. 14, no. 2). This publication included 10 papers based on the most influential of these studies. At the same time, the Review secretariat published a document — *Posing the Questions* (RofD/EED, 1987) — to foster a dialogue with a broader (including lay) audience and to provide a framework of issues for the research work to be supported in the second stage. *Posing the Questions* took the ideas received in the first stage and reflected them back as an image of population and society. It was developed from the totality of the ideas received, from the academic community, from public and private-sector consultation, and from the Review secretariat's reading of the scientific literature.

In the first stage, the Demographic Review secretariat came to the conclusion that substantial evidence was already at hand, bearing on the issues in its mandate. At the same time, there were gaps in the evidence, and it seemed likely that some of those gaps could be filled by new research which was feasible within the stringent limitations of time and budget under which the Review was operating. Following a competitive tender by Supply and Services Canada, 26 research projects were commissioned in June 1987, to report no later than October 1988. Extensive summaries of all these projects, prepared by the research teams, were published by the Review secretariat in *Update* no. 5 (RofD, 1988) and many have since been published in the academic press.

At the request of the Review secretariat, Professor Karol Krótki twice chaired committees sponsored by the Royal Society of Canada to examine work being done for the Review. On the first occasion, the committee evaluated the scientific merit of the 95 proposals for the competitive tender. On the second occasion, the committee evaluated the 26 commissioned studies on their completion. A

summary of the evaluation of the completed studies was included with the summaries of the projects themselves in *Update* no. 5 (RofD, 1988). This issue of *Canadian Studies in Population* presents the work of that second committee in greater detail.

The Review secretariat worked closely with the researchers involved in the 26 studies both while the projects were underway and after their completion, obtaining early notice of their findings as they emerged and also benefiting from the researchers' knowledge and experience beyond the particular projects on which they were working. The secretariat continued to consult with the broader audience of Canadians interested in the implications of demographic change. It also continued to develop its understanding of the significance of the evidence emerging in the first stage for long-term issues of population change faced by Canadian society, adding to it the insights emerging from the research and consultation in the second stage.

The questions and interim conclusions generated by this process were reflected in a graphical presentation of the major trends that will shape Canada's long-term demographic future, given by the Review secretariat to more than 300 audiences. To make that graphical presentation available to a larger audience, a printed version — *Charting Canada's Future* (RofD/EED, 1989) — was prepared, copies of which have been requested by more than 19,000 members of the public.

The editorial in the earlier issue of *Canadian Studies in Population* referred to "the successful first stage of this experiment in bringing together the academy and government" (p. ix). The present issue of the journal signals the successful second stage of the same experiment. Although all the results of the experiment are not yet known, they have already given us all much to ponder on the complex relationship between social science research and policy making in late twentieth-century society.