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TOWARDS A POPULATION POLICY FOR CANADA:
Migration, ethnicity, regions and social concerns

VERS UNE POLITIQUE DÉMOGRAPHIQUE POUR LE CANADA:
Migration, groupes ethniques, régions et problèmes sociaux

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Guest Editors / Rédacteurs invités

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THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF CANADA AND THE DEMOGRAPHIC REVIEW

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Over the last decade the Royal Society of Canada has been giving increased attention to the analysis of issues of importance to Canadian society. Formerly the principal means taken by the Society had been through dedicated sessions at its annual general meeting, such as that of 1961 when the topic was the population explosion — the “baby boom.” This led to the Society’s publication of the volume *Canadian Population and Northern Colonization* (Bladen, 1962), in which many of the same issues as those of concern to the Demographic Review and Its Implications for Economic and Social Policy were discussed.

More recently, topics of current interest have been explored by the Society at dedicated symposia and workshops, but increasingly the Society has embarked on specific projects. In most cases, these have been in the form of examinations of particular issues, such as water quality in the Great Lakes, acid precipitation, lead in the environment and nuclear energy. A recent notable example is the Society’s study *AIDS: A Perspective for Canadians* (Royal Society of Canada, 1988a, 1988b; also see Spurgeon, 1988, for a popular summary). Support for these and other projects has come from government departments, granting councils, foundations and other organizations.

As noted by Professor Bladen, such studies are motivated in part by the “desire of natural scientists, social scientists, and humanists to find common ground and re-establish communication” (1962:vi). The Society is ideally suited for this task as its membership spans all fields of scholarship. Committees and panels formed by the Society to take up projects have adopted this multi-disciplinary approach and have extended well beyond its membership in seeking knowledgeable and experienced people to bring a suitable breadth of interests and views to the topics under consideration.

When the Demographic Review was launched in June 1986 by the Department of National Health and Welfare, the Society was deeply involved in organizing, with the Federation of Canadian Demographers, a colloquium on “The Family in Crisis: A Population Crisis?” The event was held during the

Federation's annual meeting at the University of Ottawa on 28-29 November 1986, and a volume of proceedings has now been published (Légaré *et al.*, 1989). At the same time, 120 working papers were written for the first phase of the Demographic Review, 10 of which were published in *Canadian Studies in Population*, 1987:14(2); a list of all 120 papers is printed therein. The Society was most interested when, following the completion of the first phase of the Review, it was proposed that it assist in the second phase. The call for second phase studies by the secretariat of the Review produced 95 proposals, and a committee of the Society responded to a request from the Review to assist in the assessment of their scientific merit. The Committee — consisting of Mme Madeleine Blanchet and Professors Bernard Bonin, Karol Krótki (chairperson), Susan McDaniel and Anthony Richmond — made its evaluation on 13-15 May 1988. The results were incorporated into the selection of the studies funded by the government.

The Society subsequently agreed to evaluate the final reports of the 26 commissioned studies, which were to be completed by the end of October 1988. A team of readers was selected by a committee again led by Professor Krótki, and they carried out an initial evaluation of the reports as they became available in November 1988. On 23-25 November 1988, an assessment committee of five appointed by the Royal Society of Canada met in Ottawa to prepare summary assessments of each study on the basis of the readers' evaluations and committee deliberations. The results of these assessments were conveyed to the secretariat of the Review and were used to initiate discussions with the authors or those asked to represent them (*amici curiae*) at a symposium held by the Society in Ottawa on 1-2 December 1988. Altogether, 52 people attended the symposium, including authors of 22 of the 26 studies (see Appendix B). Members of the assessment team introduced each topic by summarizing questions and comments based on from one to four studies; the authors or their representatives then responded and general discussions took place. Following the symposium, an enlarged panel of nine members met on 3-4 December 1988 to formulate summary assessments of all the studies and final commentaries, taking into account the results of the preceding symposium. The commentaries presented here, together with the companion volume of summaries of the studies published as *Update* no. 5 (RofD, 1988), are the outcome of this process.

Each of the 26 studies was read by two or three readers for a total of 57 initial evaluations. Altogether, 27 readers — who included the nine members of the final panel — took part and were each responsible for from one to six evaluations. Readers were encouraged to prepare for the evaluation exercise by increasing their familiarity with background documents, including the material

published in *Canadian Studies in Population* and in the Demographic Review *Update* series. To assist in the collation of evaluation results, readers were asked to compose their evaluations according to a set of criteria prepared by the Society's organizing committee. More than 90 per cent of the readers followed the format of seven questions and 22 subordinate points, thereby greatly assisting the work of the panel.

The short time available between the receipt of the reports and the schedule requested by the Demographic Review for the assessment placed severe constraints on the evaluation process. As some reports were not submitted until shortly before the panel met in late November, only about 60 per cent of the time initially allowed for the first readings was available, requiring the recruitment of additional readers at short notice and curtailing the time for committee discussions. Nonetheless, it was the feeling of the panel preparing the final commentaries that the process, although greatly accelerated, had produced judgments of acceptable maturity. Among the factors responsible for this result are the quality of the preparations and the public spirit of the participants.

The Society committee considered the evaluation process to be a generally satisfactory experience, thanks to the constructive and wholehearted manner in which all involved contributed to the symposium and the preparation of assessments and commentaries. Not the least important reason was the bilingual character of the proceedings, in which papers written in one official language were commented upon in either language. The Society also wishes to acknowledge the assistance of the secretariat of the Demographic Review, in particular the help and interest of Dr E.M. Murphy and Ms Krystyna Rudko, in all aspects of the assessment process. The help of the Society secretariat, particularly Ms Sylvie Lemieux, in the organization and preparation of the text is also gratefully acknowledged. Comments on parts of the typescript have been gratefully received from Susan A. McDaniel, then at the University of Waterloo, and Charles W. Hobart of the University of Alberta.

The text offered in this issue of *Canadian Studies in Population* reflects faithfully the various stages of the evaluation process: the advice offered by the individual readers (traditional peer review); the readings and deliberations by the evaluation panel during their meetings prior to the symposium; the discussion and arguments advanced during the symposium; and finally, the deliberations of the evaluation panel following the symposium. The degree of consensus reached by the evaluation panel was high, and it became almost incidental who authored particular comments. It seemed a moot point whether the commentaries should be placed under the joint authorship of the panel or whether the

commentaries should be credited to individual authors. The latter alternative was chosen for the sake of convenience and to simplify the subsequent consultations required by mail. The role of the two guest editors, besides the usual editorial tasks, included expressing their own views, which, for those arising after the meetings of the evaluation panel, usually have been placed in endnotes to relevant chapters.