



THE ROYAL BANK OF CANADA MONTHLY LETTER

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THIS IS CENSUS YEAR

THE door-to-door canvass that will get under way in Canada on June 1st will make all the calls by salesmen in a year look like a small operation.

There will be about 20,000 men and women on the field force, gathering by direct touch with our people the information required for Canada's ninth decennial census.

These enumerators will make history in census-taking. Their work will be watched by governments in dozens of countries. They are expected to revolutionize the age-old practice of counting noses. They will use electronics and ball-point pens of a special sort, and their's will be the first national census in the world to take the new "mark-sense" method of tabulation from door to door.

The census is not a stunt, but a necessity. It is the country's equivalent of the merchant's stocktaking, or of the private person's inventory to learn what insurance he should carry on his house and chattels. The assets to be counted in the census are our people and the various attributes that make them different from people in other countries.

Without periodical appraisal of our condition and affairs, parliament, provincial legislatures, municipalities and business people would all work in the dark. No one would know whether the country was on the road to success or disaster, or whether our standard of living was rising or falling, or what our possibilities were for progress in peace or for defence in war. There would be no clear picture of our national health needs, our national educational level, or of a host of other features by which we are able to judge Canada's progress and plan for the future.

The decisive hour of reckoning is 12 o'clock midnight, standard time, on the night of May 31st to June 1st. Everyone born before that hour, and everyone dying after it, is to be counted in the population.

It is Nothing New

It is nothing new to require that people stand up periodically to be counted. The census goes back 5000 years in Babylonia and China, and three or four

thousand years in Egypt and among the Children of Israel. So no one in Canada needs to feel miffed because a man calls asking questions.

In olden times the purpose was to list the number of fighting men in a country, or to levy taxes; today's objective is to plan constructively for every citizen's welfare.

Credit of taking the first census of modern times belongs to Canada. The year was 1666; the census was that of the Colony of New France. It was a record of every person by name, on a fixed date, showing the age, sex, place of residence, occupation and conjugal condition. There were 3,215 persons listed. The original document of 154 pages is in the Archives of Paris, but anyone interested in this unique event may see a transcript in the Public Archives at Ottawa.

The event is notable because the first modern census in Europe dated only from the 18th century (in France and England from the first of the 19th century) and in the United States of America there was no census of the country as a whole before 1790. The achievement of Canada's colony on the St. Lawrence in instituting what is today one of the principal instruments of government in every civilized country calls for our appreciation.

The British North America Act, under provision of which Canada became a self-governing Dominion, and subsequent legislation, provided for censuses to be taken in 1871 and every tenth year thereafter. In addition, a midway census is taken of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Secrecy of the Census

Census facts are not public property. Marco Polo tells us that in one place he visited every householder was compelled to write over his door the names of all in his household and the number of horses he had. In the 1790 census in the United States, six hundred officials knocked on doors, asked five questions of whoever answered, then tacked their lists on the

walls of local taverns. People who had been skipped could read all about their neighbours and, if they were so minded, add their own names and comment.

In Canada, the answers given by individuals to census questions are absolutely confidential. Every employee of the census is bound by a special oath and penalty against divulging any fact whatsoever that may have been learned through the census. The Bureau of Statistics is forbidden to issue any statement that would directly or indirectly reveal information about a particular person or concern.

But that is not all. Census information obtained from or about you may not be used for taxation or military purposes. It is expressly forbidden by law to use census data to tax a person or to call him for military service.

About Counting Heads

The country is divided into census districts, each of which is placed in charge of a census commissioner. These districts are divided into sub-districts, varying in population from 600 to 800 in rural districts and from 1,000 to 1,500 in urban centres. The sub-district is allotted to a census enumerator, who conducts the house-to-house and farm-to-farm canvass.

The only possible way to get a complete snapshot picture of our population would be to require every citizen to sit down at midnight on May 31 and fill out a form for himself or herself and one for everyone in the family who could not write. That, of course is impracticable. It would take the next ten years to check up to see that everyone really did send in a form. So we have to make house-to-house calls.

Then there are Canadians travelling abroad, Canadians in diplomatic posts abroad; Canadian aircrew on flights abroad, the Royal Canadian Navy and Merchant Marine and, of course, the United Nations Special Force.

There is no exception for any regular Canadian resident, whether he be in hospital, travelling on a train or on a boat, fishing off the East or West Coasts, in penitentiary, or away from home while attending school.

Everyone is assigned to the locality in which he or she is regularly domiciled, and not merely counted in the place where found. This is important, because it affects parliamentary representation and provincial subsidies, and is necessary to many governmental bodies in planning housing, public health, and transportation needs.

Uses of the Census

First and biggest practical use of the census figures is constitutional and legal. The census is taken periodically with the prime purpose of determining our representation in the federal parliament.

By the British North America Act, amended in 1946, representation was assigned to each province on the basis of dividing the total population of the

provinces by the number of parliamentary ridings, and dividing the population of each province by the quotient so obtained. Readjustments are to be made after each decennial census, so that should the population of any province have increased or decreased by the amount of the quotient mentioned by the Act, that province will have its representation in parliament increased or decreased accordingly.

In the readjustment after Canada's last census, Quebec gained eight seats, Ontario gained one, Nova Scotia gained one, and British Columbia gained two. Manitoba and Saskatchewan each lost a seat. New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Alberta remained unchanged. Seven seats were given Newfoundland upon entry into Confederation, and seats in the House of Commons now number 262.

But the census has wider uses than to fix electoral representation. It shows, from the widest possible angle, the stage we have reached in evolution of our national life.

For example, one of the vital matters affecting both individuals and the economic prospects of the nation is the labour force status of individuals. How many are working? How many are seeking work? How many are outside the labour force because of keeping house, going to school, being ill or retired?

The census cannot make a detailed examination into the skill of every Canadian, but it gives much that is useful. It tells for each part of the country the number of doctors and nurses, carpenters and electricians, housemaids and stenographers, with information about each occupation on age, education, language spoken and so on. The census is a unique record of our manpower and skills.

Another thing the census tells is the extent of immigration and the amount of movement within the country from province to province. You might be curious about the number of immigrants who came to this country in the boom immigration period who are still here: the census will tell. Or you might wish to know what has happened to population as a result of war-time munitions manufacture in Quebec and Ontario, of the finding of oil in Alberta, of the development of mineral resources in Quebec: the 1951 census will tell you the answers. Or you may be interested in the much-talked-about trend from farm to city: the census will tell you the extent of the movement dominion-wide, and also the sectors where it is most and least pronounced.

Business Uses of the Census

The census will give business people a better opportunity to increase the efficiency with which they plan, sell, market and advertise.

The manufacturer and distributor must know, if they are to project the future sensibly, how many people there will be as potential customers. This does not mean in numbers only. What kind of people will they be as to age and sex? Where will they be living; in what provinces; in town or country? Are the town

people living downtown or in the suburbs? Where is expansion justified? What quotas should be given salesmen?

By consulting the census figures, bankers are supplied with a variety of information they need for sound appraisal of business development and of investment conditions and opportunities. Boards of trade, chambers of commerce, and other service institutions of the kind are enabled to advise and assist municipal authorities in community planning, locating new schools, erecting electric sub-stations, and so on. These organizations are better able to point out to manufacturers and retailers the advantages of obtaining factory sites and sales outlets, by telling the census figures on the labour market and local purchasing power.

There is, in fact, scarcely a branch of business activity that does not have some specific use for census figures. As a lighter evidence, consider the census report of the number of stenographers in the country: it has been used by manufacturers of typewriter ribbons in estimating how many ribbons they should produce in a year.

The census can be of service to all kinds of persons, from youths leaving school to employers seeking workpeople. It tells how many persons there are in Canada skilled in trades, professions and arts. It tells what the earnings from wages and salaries are in these various pursuits, what the state of employment is, both as to immediate vacancies and the long-term trend. It indicates the ages of people in each line of work, and what level of earnings they have reached at various ages.

In these days when young people are faced with an ever-increasing problem in deciding what to take up as a life work, the census is a splendid background for study. It cannot provide ready-made choices, or an infallible guide, but it can be made to contribute to constructive and instructed thinking.

Age is Important

The need to know the ages of people so as to calculate the future population possibilities of the land is one good reason for including this question in the census, but there are others.

Industry has found that its sales are closely related to the number of people in particular age-sex groups. The market for certain types of women's clothing is an obvious example; magazines have specialized appeal to sex and age groups; both baby carriages and wheel chairs are age-dated.

Without age data it would be impossible to estimate the cost of old age pensions or family allowances, and the governments would have to move blindly in making up their budgets. Medical services use the distribution of ages and sexes to find the potential number of blood donors in various areas. Town planners need this classification if they are to plan intelligently for areas with which they are concerned. Insurance companies need these figures in calculating the mortality rates,

and social workers need them to deal with problems of dependency represented by persons in the very young and very old age groups. Educational authorities in provinces and municipalities must know the population by age groups if they are to provide adequate school accommodation. In fact, there are so many urgent needs for information about the ages of our people that this is one of the most important of the census questions.

In ten censuses, covering a century of Canada's life, the percentage of our population under twenty years has gone down from 56.3 to 37.5, and the percentage of our population over 64 has risen from 2.7 to 6.7.

Special Censuses

As compared with the relatively few questions in the population form, the agricultural questionnaire contains many. Being a census of industry, it must include queries about the numbers, area and output of everything produced on the farm, besides other questions illuminating the condition of the farm business.

The census authorities have shortened the 1951 agricultural questionnaire considerably from the 643 questions it contained in 1941, and a number of questions have been put on a sample basis whereby only 20 per cent of the farmers are called upon to answer them. A copy will be mailed to farm operators in advance of the census date.

A special questionnaire will be used in the three Prairie Provinces and British Columbia dealing with irrigation.

For the first time in our history, we are calling the roll in commercial fisheries. Fishermen have, of course, been included as individuals in every previous census, but the fishing industry has not been covered as a whole in the same way as has agriculture. The main purpose is to obtain information on the development and economic and social circumstances of fishermen. The assistance given by the Prices Support Board can result in maximum benefits only if it is based on accurate and detailed information.

Housing is to be surveyed again. In the 1941 census a survey was made of every tenth dwelling, collecting 27 facts relating to dwelling, equipment, and financial facts related to tenancy and ownership. The 1951 survey will cover housing conditions in much greater detail, and will be done on a sample basis in respect of every fifth home.

It is expected that the housing survey, in conjunction with the individual census, will provide a new measurement of living conditions. Depressed areas will be revealed. Data about conveniences will provide manufacturers and distributors with a wealth of material for market analysis.

How It is Done

And now, how is all this done? How are the forms made up? Who decides what questions to ask? How many staff are needed? What is the cost? When do we get the results?

There is a centralized office at Ottawa, where the key man is Herbert Marshall, Dominion Statistician. He is assisted by several men who are experts in various fields, such as agriculture, mathematics and social analysis.

Two main duties devolve upon the census department: to collect the information, and to compile it into reports. The collecting is done by census commissioners, one for each electoral district, and somewhere about 19,000 enumerators hired under direction of the commissioners.

Enumerators work on a piece-rate basis, depending for their remuneration on the number of persons they enumerate, or the number of reports they complete.

In a recent test the rate was 8 cents for each person enumerated in the population count, 10 cents for each housing report, and 50 cents for each farm reported on. Enumerators are also paid for the time they spend while being trained. An energetic enumerator should earn from \$8 to \$10 a day.

What are the qualifications? It is hard work, and the enumerator must, first of all, be in good health. The man doing rural work should have a car. All enumerators must be able to take a fairly heavy and intensive programme of instruction lasting three or four days. They must be reliable, so that our information will be accurate. They must be trustworthy, because the result of their work is secret. And, finally, they must be available for full time work during the census period.

Enumerators are required to use courtesy and tact in collecting the information, but citizens should bear in mind that refusal to answer a census question is penalized by law. Even in this enlightened age, there still are some people who think the census taker is something like a member of the OGPU or MVD out to grab all their belongings for the State. Instead of that, the census taker is fulfilling one of the functions of a democracy, which is co-operation of all for the good of all. The more truthfully and promptly questions are answered, the easier it will be all around.

What are the questions? There will be eight documents used in the 1951 census: (1) population; (2) blind and deaf; (3) housing; (4) agriculture; (5) irrigation; (6) live stock and greenhouses elsewhere than on farms; (7) commercial fishermen; (8) distribution.

Through courtesy of the Dominion Statistician, we are able to include with this Monthly Letter a form containing the general population questions. These have to be answered by or for every living Canadian. The form we have printed will enable you and your family to play a census "game" now, by filling in the information, and then you will be ready with the answers when the census man calls.

Wonderful Machines

Huge books and forms are no longer in style. Last census the enumerators carried around forms two feet four inches wide; this year they will have forms about seven inches square. These are called "mark-sense" forms. The enumerator merely makes a

mark in the right space instead of writing your answer in full. He uses an electrographic pen.

Then, instead of transcribing the information laboriously by hand, in the old manner, the census people will feed the cards into a machine. Wherever the special ink appears, an electrical contact will be made and a hole will be punched. There emerges from the machine a fully punched card, ready for automatic counting or for filing.

The electronic statistical machine is one of the "wizards" among machines. It will reject cards containing errors. For example, if the enumerator has put a mark opposite "6" for a lad's age, and another mark opposite "married", the circuits won't take it. Similarly, if a farmer's card has a hole punched to indicate he got something like \$55 a bushel for his wheat, the circuits won't take that either. These cards would be thrown out by the machine for correction.

The machines are merely rented to the Canadian Government. When our census is finished, they will be shipped to some other country.

Taking everything into consideration — men, machines, printing, and all the rest — it is estimated that the cost of our census will be about \$9 million. More than 70 per cent of the money goes to enumerators throughout Canada, and to staffs in the regional and central offices. The whole sum works out at about 64 cents per person.

Internationally Important

Canada's census is of interest not only to Canadians, but to people in many other lands. Every wave length will carry the news when it is released about the end of the year.

As the outcome of effort by the United Nations, some 40 countries are counting heads during 1950 and 1951. In the Western Hemisphere, 22 countries are working co-operatively to take a census of the Americas — the first attempt to gather vital economic and social information about the 300 million inhabitants of North and South America at about the same time.

Each nation takes its own census, of course, but certain facts have been agreed upon so that a reasonably accurate comparison may be made of the resulting figures.

It is interesting, in this connection, that Nathan Keyfitz, senior research statistician of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, has been sent on loan to Burma, where he will help plan the census of 1952. In this way, among others, Canada is co-operating with the Technical Assistance Administration of the United Nations.

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With the co-operation of all our people, we shall have at this year's end a full-length portrait of ourselves. The first rough total should be published by November, and by December the count should be available for municipalities. The first detailed results should be ready by March 1952, telling such things as age distribution, sex, and so on. The complete report is expected by March 1953.