Another Census Year

This is a significant census. It comes just six years before Canada's one hundredth anniversary of Confederation. It will be the biggest nose-counting operation in our history. It will provide information to guide Parliament in its welfare plans, manufacturers in their production plans and construction industries in their building of houses.

The census is a tool used in demography — a branch of the social sciences which deals with the past, present and probable future of the population. It considers not only total number but age and sex composition, occupation, mobility, and other measurable characteristics.

Practically every statistic you can think of is grist for the Census Bureau electronic brain. You will be asked 26 questions about the people in your family, reproduced in this Monthly Letter by courtesy of Mr. O. A. Lemieux, Director, Census Division, Dominion Bureau of Statistics. Another sheet of 28 questions dealing with housing may fall to your lot if your household happens to have a number on the census-taker's roll ending in "3" or "8". A third form, to be filled in confidentially by everyone in these households who is 15 years of age or over, inquires into salary, investment income, and so forth.

Finding all the people

A question frequently asked, because the task of taking the census seems to be so vast, is: "Are people missed by the census?" The answer is "yes" — but not so many in Canada, we hope, as in the 1960 United States census, when 323,654 people were mislaid in New York City. The city voted $10,000 to make its own count in an effort to save the $1½ million it stands to lose in charitable contributions from the State government because of these people the census-taker did not find.

 Everywhere in the world taking the census poses difficult problems, demanding imaginative approaches as well as complex administrative and technical operations. The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization census-takers at Hong Kong had to find a way of counting the many families who live in fishing boats, never tying up in the same place two nights running. In Borneo the United Nations people found that many families moved from forest to plain and back again, depending on the season; they had to find out who was going to be where, when and why.

In Canada, the Census Division has worked out effective means for ferreting out even the country's hardest-to-find citizens. Hotel and motel proprietors, for example, co-operate in putting travellers in touch with the census-taker. The Defense Department helps in counting members of the Armed Services.

Who uses census figures?

All this may seem to some people to be making a great fuss about something of only academic interest. But it is not so. The resulting figures are vitally important to government, industry and social workers. The questions must be limited in number, so as to make the taking of the census practicable, but they are so well designed that the answers add up to a broad, accurate and useful picture of the Canadian scene.

Five minutes' thought will reveal the usefulness to thousands of people and organizations of information about how many families have low incomes and how many have high incomes; whether these families live on farms or in cities; how large the families are; how old the head of the family is; whether he is employed; what his education is; whether the dwelling is rented or owned and whether it is in good condition or needs sprucing up. There are special questions to be asked of farm operators, dealing with crops, irrigation, condition of the land, farm machinery, livestock, forest products, dairy products, and so on.
Whether people live in an urban or a rural area profoundly affects the way they live, their social attitudes and family patterns, and to some extent their diseases and causes of death. Comparison of this census with those of preceding years will give a picture of changing social conditions, innovations in living habits, and the rise in living standards.

The end result of the census will be published in bulletin form as speedily as possible by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. The reports may then be published in bound volumes, of which there were nine after the 1951 census, covering population, housing, labour force, wage-earners, agriculture, wholesale and retail distribution.

These detailed reports provide information for the study of markets; they guide manufacturers and distributors in forming policy regarding advertising and selling; they give facts indispensable to social welfare, public health, education and public utilities.

It may be seen, then, that the work of the Census Division is one of the most frequently and widely used pieces of government machinery, though it may not make much noise in the ten years between the taking of the census.

There are other reasons for taking the census. In fact, the original legal reason was to determine representation in the House of Commons. Under the British North America Act of 1867 it was provided that the first rearrangement of seats in the House should be made on completion of the Census of 1871, a similar readjustment to follow every subsequent decennial census.

This national stocktaking is useful in determining provincial subsidy payments, school grants, and other forms of public expenditure where amounts are paid on a per capita basis. The figures give the national, provincial, and local governments a firm statistical base upon which to judge the need and effect of legislation dealing with economic and social matters. How else than by a count of people by ages and marital status could any public body estimate the costs of social security measures such as family allowances and old age pensions? How else could school vocational counsellors determine the advice to be given graduates than by the statistics of employment in various occupations?

Counting heads is not new

All this has been about the Canadian Census, but taking the census is not a new thing. The more advanced countries can afford to compile detailed statistics, but in the kingdom of Mari, said to have been the tenth city to be founded after the Great Flood, a census of the people was not uncommon as a basis for taxation and enlistment for military service. Records unearthed by archaeologists a few years ago show that the proceedings, which lasted for several days, were enlivened by a government issue of free bread and beer.

The honour of taking the first census in the modern meaning of the term belongs to Canada. It was in 1666 that Jean Talon, the Intendant of New France, took an official census of the colony to measure the increase in population that had taken place since the founding of Quebec by Champlain in 1608. Talon's enumeration, recording a total of 3,215 persons, included the name, age, sex, marital status and occupation of every person. The record says that the great Intendant himself carried out a considerable part of the enumeration, "visiting from door to door all the habitations of Mont Réal, Trois Rivières, Cap-de-la-Madeleine, and all places above Québec."

Canada's population

In spite of the fact that our population has progressed from 3,215 to more than 18 million in less than three hundred years, many people in Canada seem to have an inferiority feeling about population.

In truth, the population history of Canada from that first census of 1666 reveals an outstanding rate of population growth. Every decade contributed to this growth, but three stand out particularly. In 1901 to 1911, our population increased by 34.2 per cent; in 1911 to 1921, despite war and the influenza epidemic, our population increased by 21.9 per cent; and in 1941 to 1951 our population increased 18.6 per cent — or, if you add Newfoundland, which joined the other provinces in 1949, 21.8 per cent.

Canada's rate of natural increase — that is, the excess of births over deaths — is among the highest in the world. It exceeds that of other Western industrial countries — in 1958 our rate was 19.7 per 1,000 population compared with 14.8 for the United States and 4.7 for England and Wales. In every year since 1951 our rate has exceeded nineteen per 1,000 population.

Births in Canada averaged 446,226 per year from 1952 to 1959 inclusive. In those eight years a baby was born every 70½ seconds.

The Royal Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects estimated that in 1980, just twenty years ahead, Canada's population will total 27 million, an increase over 1955 of 70 per cent.

Meantime, here we are at the tenth decennial census of Canada. To make the census-taker's task easier, we give, on the next two pages, the questions he will ask. You have time, between now and June 1st, to look them over so as to have the answers in mind.
Here are the Census Questions

1. A. Household Number

B. Exact location of this dwelling?

C. Is this dwelling on a farm or small agricultural holding? Yes □ No □

2. Surname or family name

Given name and initials

3. Relationship to head of household?

Head of household □ Wife of head □ Son of head □ Daughter of head □

If not listed, write here, as: son-in-law, grandson, mother, uncle, niece, employee, partner, lodger, lodger's wife, lodger's daughter, inmate, etc.

4. Sex: male □ female □

5. Age at last birthday? (before June 1, 1961)

6. Single, married, widowed, or divorced

7. In what province (or country) were you born? (If outside Canada, give country according to present boundaries)

Nfld., P.E.I., Que., Ont., Alta., N.W.T., Czechoslovakia, Finland, Greece, Netherlands, Poland, Scotland, U.S.A., Yugoslavia

8. In what year did you immigrate to Canada?

Before 1921 □ 1921-1930 □ 1931-1940 □ 1941-1945 □ 1946-1950 □

Born in Canada □

9. Country of citizenship

Canada □ United Kingdom □ Belgium □ France □ Sweden □ U.S.S.R. □

10. To what ethnic or cultural group did you or your ancestor (on the male side) belong on coming to this continent?

Austrian □ Danish □ Finnish □ Greek □ Irish □ Lithuanian □ Norwegian □ Russian □ Swedish □ Yugoslav □ Belgian □

English □ French □ Hungarian □ Italian □ Negro □ Polish □ Scottish □ Ukrainian □ Native Indian □ Band member □

Czech □ German □ Swiss □ Polish □ Spanish □ French □ French □ French □ French □ French

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If not listed, write here:
11. What is your religion?
- Adventist
- Anglican
- Baptist
- Christian Science
- Greek Orthodox
- Jehovah's Witness
- Jewish
- Lutheran
- Mennonite
- Mormon
- Pentecostal
- Presbyterian
- Roman Catholic
- Salvation Army
- Ukrainian Catholic
- United Church

If not listed, write here:__________________________

12. What language did you first learn in childhood and still understand?
- English
- French
- German
- Indian or Eskimo
- Dutch
- Italian
- Magyar
- Norwegian
- Polish
- Russian
- Slovak
- Spanish
- Swedish
- Ukrainian
- Yiddish

If not listed, write here:__________________________

13. Can you speak English?  □
- French?  □

If not listed, write here:__________________________

14. What was the highest grade or year of schooling you ever attended?
- No schooling
- Kindergarten
- Elementary (Grade)
- High School (Year)
- University (Year)
- Degree

15. Since last September did you attend school or university?
- Yes (any regular day-time attendance)  □
- No  □

Questions 16-25 for all persons 15 years of age and over (as applicable)

16. Did you have a job of any kind last week? (Even if not at work or part-time)
- Yes  □
- No  □

17. Did you look for work last week?
- Yes  □
- No  □

18. Did you have a job at any time in the past 12 months?
- Yes  □
- No  □

If answer is "No" to all three questions omit Questions 19-25

19. Number of hours usually worked each week?
- 1-19
- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50 and over

(Revert Questions 20-25)

20. For whom did you work last week, (or when you last worked)?
Name of firm, government agency, or other employer:

21. What kind of business or industry was this?
- As retail grocery, auto manufacturing, city busline transportation:

22. What kind of work did you do in this industry?
- As sales clerk, lathe operator, purchasing agent:

23. Did you operate your own business or work for others in this occupation?
- WORKED FOR OTHERS
- OPERATED OWN BUSINESS
- With paid help
- Without paid help

24. In how many weeks did you work for wages or salary in the past 12 months?
- 1-4
- 5-13
- 14-26
- 27-39
- 40-49
- 49-52
- None

(Revert Question 25)

25. What was your gross wage and salary income (before deductions) in this period?
- $0
- $100
- $500
- $1,000
- $5,000
- $10,000
- $20,000
- $300
- $700
- $2,000
- $6,000
- $10,000
- $15,000
- $20,000

Question 26 for all Males 25 years of age and over

26. Did you ever have any wartime service in the active military forces of Canada or allied countries?
- In what war(s)?
- Wars prior to 1914
- World War I (1914-18)
- World War II (1939-45)
- In Korea
- None

- In what forces?
- Canadian
- Allied
- Both

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