

CURRENTS

Volume 4, No.1

READINGS IN RACE RELATIONS

1986/87

FOR DISPLAY ONLY

URB0010
1901.C00013

IMMIGRATION AND RACISM

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Guilty appointments:
serving on the Canadian
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of the dominant culture

Policy and practice
of Canadian immigration

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Refugees and
immigrants to the
year 2000

Published by THE URBAN ALLIANCE ON RACE RELATIONS



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CURRENTS: Readings in Race Relations is the quarterly magazine of the Urban Alliance on Race Relations.

The Urban Alliance on Race Relations formed in July 1975 "to promote a stable and healthy multiracial environment in the community," is a non-profit organization made up of volunteers from all sectors of the community.

The Urban Alliance on Race Relations is an educational agency and an advocate and intermediary for the visible minorities. It works toward encouraging better race relations, increased understanding and awareness among our multicultural, multi-racial population through programmes of education directed at both the private and public sectors of the community. It is also focusing its efforts on the institutions of our society including educational systems, employment, government, media, legislation, police, social service agencies and human services, in order to reduce patterns of discrimination and inequality of opportunity which may exist within these institutions.

The work of the organization is carried out through working committees such as: Educational Institutions; Legislation; Media; Law Enforcement.

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The subscription rate is \$20.00 per year, \$30.00 for institutions.

Membership fees to join the Urban Alliance on Race Relations are:

Students & Senior Citizens \$ 5.00

General Membership \$20.00

Sustaining Membership \$50.00 & over

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Articles offered for publication are welcome. They should be typewritten, double spaced, with adequate margins for notation.

All enquiries about advertising should be directed to the Editor.

The Urban Alliance on Race Relations wishes to acknowledge the financial support of the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture.

International Standard Serial Number ISSN 0715-7045.

2nd Class Mail Registration Number 5972.

January 1987

Immigration and Racism

Immigration is an unpopular and emotional topic. The very word conjures up images of restriction, repression, discrimination, bureaucratic bungling and the exploitation of our charitable and compassionate instincts.

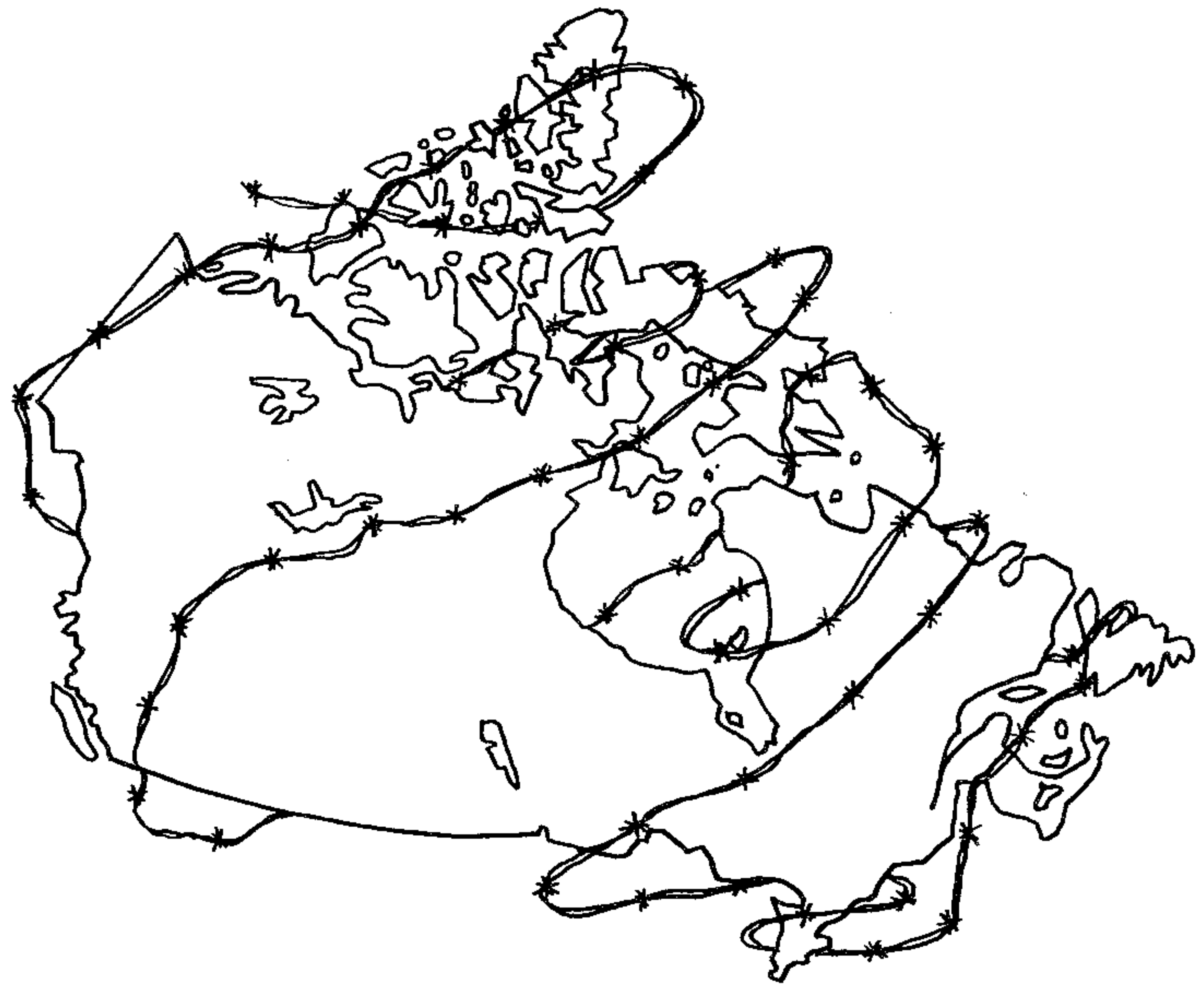
Rarely do we think of immigration as a positive and essential force in Canada's economic, demographic, social and cultural growth and development. And rarely do we think of immigration policy and practice in terms of non-discrimination, justice, and equal opportunity for all regardless of race, religion or nationality.

This prevailing negativism towards immigration may seem contradictory and awkwardly embarrassing when Canada has just been internationally recognized for its generosity to immigrants and refugees by being awarded the Nansen prize.

At a time when we may be encouraged to sit back in self-congratulation for being humanitarian, it might seem churlish to comment critically on public attitudes and public policies towards immigration.

Creators, Not Parasites, Of Economic Growth

Canada's immigration policy, historically, has always been determined first, by economic factors. Yet, the bureaucratic fusion of Employment and Immigration together with the Unemployment Insurance Commission is clearly indicative of the continuing pattern of shaping immigration policy solely according to employment rates. It is surely time that policy and practice should no longer be dictated by these old myths surrounding the relationship between immigration levels and employment levels. It is about time that our Government, the media, and other major institutions take a rigorous pro-active responsibility for demolishing the tired myths, the false fear and loathing, towards immigration, and demonstrate the vital impor-



tance to the past and future development of Canada.

Racial Preferences

Secondly, Canadian immigration policy has historically always been determined by racial preferences. Despite the 1967 regulations that supposedly heralded the end of racial discrimination in immigration policy, David Sangha's article clearly shows that we are still a long way from anything that could be regarded as non-racist in both intent and impact. In addition, one might note the public attitudes expressed in response to the recent arrival of 155 Tamils to the shores of Newfoundland appeared to reflect an unwelcoming strain of racism.

Refugees

The arrival of the 155 Tamils in such dramatic fashion has also highlighted for Canada a rather tardy realization of the new, more urgent realities of global migration patterns in the 1980's. The first two articles of this issue of *Currents* clearly warn that Canada can no longer afford to be comfortably cocooned in the backwaters of world affairs, disinclined to recognize or grapple with its responsibilities towards the global refugee crisis.

Immigrant Literature

In attaining a fuller understanding of the issue of immigration however, one needs more than an analysis of the global context, the detailed regulations of policy, or the statistics of immigration. We need to know and understand the perceptions and experiences of the individual immigrant — of the stranger trying to fit into an alien geography and culture. We need the personal as well as the informational knowledge.

"We're all immigrants here", Margaret Atwood has said, suggesting that the immigrant experience is a central theme of all writing in Canada. One of the best sources of understanding the nature of Canadian society is 'immigrant literature'. The book reviews in this issue of *Currents* are an acknowledgement of this fact and a reminder that one of the functions of art is to make us more conscious of ourselves and of our world.

The immigrants of today come to Canada to escape from war, persecution and poverty. They come to Canada in search of freedom, security and prosperity. These are of course the very same reasons that immigrants have been coming to Canada for over 200 years. The only difference today is that most of them are non-white.

Tim Rees

Immigration to The Year 2000: A Canadian Perspective

Gerry Weiner

I believe immigration is becoming one of the most important issues facing us on this planet. Since accepting my post as Minister of State for Immigration I have become sensitized to the importance of this issue. One has only to look at some recent events to illustrate this: the response of the French government to terrorist acts by placing visa requirements on most countries of the world; the most recent attempt to secure passage of a comprehensive immigration bill in the U.S.; and the arrival in August off the shores of Newfoundland, of boatloads of Sri Lankans seeking a home in Canada. These events illustrate the impact that migration is having today on many countries of the world.

In this article, however, I would like to reflect with you on my perceptions of tomorrow and beyond, at least to the end of the century. First, by reviewing some demographic facts that underlie our future challenges to plan and manage migration in the world; secondly, by focussing on the planning tools currently in place in Canada which allow us to have a more flexible, longer-term vision of the role of migration in our development; and thirdly, by indicating how we are moving to link our immigration planning more closely to demographic issues in the longer term. Finally, I would like to outline to you my views on how these migration issues are converging in developed countries in similar ways. It seems clear to me that, during the next 15 years, we will need to develop an international framework

if we are to achieve success in managing and controlling these large and growing movements of peoples. This framework must facilitate a collective approach to these problems while continuing to recognize the sovereignty of each nation-state.

World Population Change: The Migration Context

The world population is estimated to have reached 5 billion this year and is expected to grow by at least another billion by the year 2000. Currently, about 2.7 billion live in the developing world (excluding China); of these people, 41% or 1.1 billion are under age 15. Most of these children will be of labour-force age in the next 15 years; many will migrate to local urban areas; others will choose to migrate to other countries.

At the same time as the developing world struggles to absorb growth in its labour force, new births will add another one billion people to total size in the next 15 years (again excluding China). The number of urban agglomerates of more than five million inhabitants (there are 23 at present) may double between now and the end of the century. Virtually all new agglomerations seem likely to emerge in the developing countries. The continuing push of rural migration to urban centres no longer prepared or capable to handle such migration may induce migrants to emigrate to more prosperous urban-industrialized centres outside the country.

The conditions lead me to believe that we are currently living in the "Golden Age" with respect to migration policy. The challenges which these global population changes will bring to us over the next 15 years will be enormous; they will require new approaches and new forms of institutions if we are to continue to have planned and controlled movements of people.

At the same time as we foresee this potential demographic exodus of unique proportions compared to any mass migration in history, a demographic implosion is being faced by most developed countries. Fertility rates below the replacement level have become the norm. Canada is no exception; for the past 15 years, we have had below replacement fertility reaching our current level of 1.65. While demographic growth in Canada will probably continue for most of this century, population decline will be inevitable early in the 21st century unless fertility increases or we use immigration more actively to sustain or increase our population size.

So, while the developing world struggles to accommodate growth in the next 15 years, we in the developed world face equally challenging questions centred on demographic implosion. With a certain inevitability, post-industrial societies are witnessing their own reduction in total global population size. Their economic growth, which has been predicted on population expansion, can no longer be viewed as a given. Can our societies adjust to declining population growth and remain healthy? Should we be prepared to let our total population fall? Are members of the public prepared to accept fertility or immigration policies intended to prevent population decline? The answers to these questions are not easy. But the inexorable demographic change which we are witnessing will surely force us to look at them seriously in the next 15 years.

**This article by the Hon. Gerry Weiner, Minister of State (Immigration) was first presented as a speech to the Georgetown Leadership Seminar, Washington, D.C.*

Planning Immigration to Canada: Flexibility and Vision

Canada is a country of immigrants. For over 100 years Canada has used immigration as a program to promote social and economic development. Our first immigration act was passed in 1869; the most recent act was passed in 1977 and implemented in 1978. In this Act, for the first time, 10 objectives of immigration policy are set out.

These provide for non-discriminatory admission policies, the reunification of close relatives, the necessity to fulfill our international legal obligations with respect to refugees, and the role of immigration in fostering economic development, to name a few. These objectives illustrate the multi-dimensional impact of immigration on Canadian life and our use of the program to promote social and economic objectives.

Although the objectives of the Act are clear, their achievement is facilitated through a flexible planning system which allows the government to adjust the intake of legal immigration to Canada according to social and economic conditions inside Canada and international events. Shortly, Canada will be receiving the Nansen Medal from the UNHCR in recognition of our international efforts on behalf of refugees. I am extremely proud of our recent record in this important area of migration and believe that we will continue to show strong leadership in this field as we move towards the year 2000.

Since World War II, Canada has accepted over 5.3 million immigrants. No wonder that our 1981 census indicated 16% of the total Canadian population was foreign-born. I believe that the multicultural character of most of our major cities is welcomed by an increasing number of Canadians.

I could continue at some length on the importance of developing an open planning system for legal migration at the same time that proper controls are instituted to assure the public that we can continue to manage and select our immigrants. I believe that we have one of the most open planning systems in

the world which could well serve as a model to others. For example, we have

- Annual consultations with provinces, non-governmental organizations, academics, and others prior to announcing future immigration levels;
- Comprehensive planning by immigration component to meet the needs of family, refugee, and economic immigrants; and
- Settlement programs for immigrants which provide access to basic settlement services for those most in need, and a Citizenship Act which permits citizenship after three years of landing.

Canada's Demographic Future and Immigration

Canada has a long tradition which links the immigration program to national development. Many predecessors of mine have, at various times, taken the opportunity to make an explicit linkage between immigration and demographic growth in policy statements, white papers and green papers. The current legislation requires that I table a forward-looking report to Parliament each fall announcing future levels of immigration. In doing so, I am obliged under our Act to indicate the demographic considerations that were taken into account in the determination of the level.

Last fall, the federal government announced a new immigration program which would see levels increased from 94,000 in 1985 to 115,000 to 125,000 in 1987. One of the key factors which led to the decision to increase immigration was a growing concern about the prospects of demographic decline in Canada at or shortly after the turn of the century. Our projections indicated that if immigration was not increased from its recent low levels (we've averaged about 140,000 annually over the past 40 years) and if fertility did not increase, we would reach a maximum population of about 28 million and then begin to decline slowly. A growing number of interest groups and academics have expressed concern about this demographic prospect. The government's announcement recognized that the new pro-

gram would not prevent decline, but only delay it. We had, nevertheless, included a concern for the next generation rather than the current one in the rationale to increase levels.

Canada does not have a demographic policy. In this way, we are not dissimilar from most developed countries. But last May the government initiated a three year study of Canada's demographic future. The review of demography and its implications for economic and social policy will be centred in the Department of National Health and Welfare and will look as far ahead as 2025 to see how possible changes in the size, structure, and distribution of the population of Canada might affect our future social and economic life. Immigration will play an important part in this review as the longer-term benefits and costs of immigration to and emigration from Canada will be assessed.

It is hard to be a soothsayer about demographic policy development in developed countries over the next 15 years. Most of us have got by with a fragmented, and in some cases non-existent, policy approach up to now. One wonders, however, how much longer this can continue. The combination of continuing extremely low fertility rates and increasing pressures for people to migrate to industrialized countries is probably going to make many of us develop explicit demographic policies by the end of the century. In Canada, we are embarking upon a journey which may see the framework for such a policy by the end of this decade. If this does occur, it will greatly aid in our immigration levels determination in the 1990s as we look ahead to the turn of the century.

Given the diversity of developed nations' approaches to demographic policy, it is difficult to predict how things will turn out. I am, however, somewhat taken by an analysis made by Dr. Leon Bouvier just prior to the 1984 World Population Conference. In his assessment, Dr. Bouvier suggested that post-industrial societies such as ours would become service and information societies with total fertility between 1.4 and 1.7. Since a 2.1 equivalent rate ensures replacement, the remaining deficit would be contri-

buted by active immigration policies to ensure stationary sizes. If this does come to pass, it will require some fundamental transformation in attitudes about immigration in many developed countries, especially those in the Old World. Nevertheless, a recent article in *The Economist* suggests that, based on current demographic trends, an appreciation of the important role of immigration in European population development may not seem so out of place by the end of the century.

While I have chosen to stress the importance of demographic policy as a guiding element in immigration planning, I recognize it cannot be a panacea. It will probably never be possible to define an optimum population size or distribution; it may be more preferable to adjust to shifts in the age structure rather than to try to adjust the age structure; public sensitivities will always provide limits on what may seem desirable from a planning perspective. Nonetheless, I believe that the challenges we will be facing over the next 15 years will be greatly facilitated if demographic planning does become institutionalized. But this alone will not be enough — we must also reach out in a direct way to build international bridges in support of a more managed and controlled approach to the future people flows on the globe.

Converging Policy Perspectives: The Need for an International Framework

No one country, no one immigration program or demographic policy will, in itself, be sufficient to deal with the migration challenges we will face over the next 15 years. Currently, it is estimated that some 70-80 million people are on the move around the world: about 10-15 million of these are refugees. During this decade, a series of incidents has led to conditions which have driven people from their homelands. In addition, a growing number of economic migrants have been impatiently waiting for economic improvement and have decided to move to where that improvement exists. Most of them are moving from south to north and we are under no illusion that this will diminish in the

future given the demographic trends I have outlined.

In Canada, the most recent manifestation of this movement has been the challenge to our procedures for refugee determination within the country. Currently, we are preparing legislation to improve our refugee determination process. But each passing day sees increasing numbers of applicants arriving at our borders without documentation or with falsified papers to claim refugee status. Many of them have come via developed countries where they find opportunity denied. We are going to design a system to protect bona-fide refugees in a fair and expedient way. But most will probably not qualify: where will they go? Will they continue to remain in orbit in a stateless limbo? How will they be returned? These kinds of questions cannot be answered by individual nations alone. We now recognize that a more international approach must be taken towards this large and increasing flow of migrants. Canada is participating actively in the O.E.C.D. and the U.N.H.C.R. to develop these approaches. For this task, we have developed a framework which reflects the following factors:

1) Policy Convergence

International migration trends and conditions are converging; they should lead to development of more common approaches among developed countries.

2) Sovereignty

The global movements of people now foreseen for the rest of this century will challenge our fundamental concepts of sovereignty as reflected in immigration law and practice. Nations can no longer act as individual gatekeepers who try to build a higher and higher wall.

Instead, we will have to acknowledge that co-operative action will require, in part, the protection and settlement of some of these migrants and the return of others.

3) Economic Role of Immigration

It would appear that the future economic role of immigration will need to be more macro-economic and longer-term in outlook, instead of being tied to short-term labour short-

ages. Regardless of how immigrants are selected, recognition will need to be given to the permanence of this kind of migration.

4) Social Role of Immigration

The volumes of immigrants desired over time will need to reflect an assessment of longer-term social, economic and demographic needs. Most developed countries will find it a major challenge to stabilize their population sizes in view of declining fertility. Immigration will, to the extent desired, be generally able to contribute significantly to these demographic needs.

5) Control of Immigration

Immigration policy must be balanced. We must devise positive programs for accepting more immigrants to meet social and economic needs while, at the same time, contain what will be large and growing migration pressures. The latter, if continued on a separate national basis, will make entry easier for migrants as they will continue to find techniques for gaining access to the most vulnerable countries, and at the same time, will destroy public support for immigration.

6) Accommodating New Migrants

Most developed countries will be receiving and selecting immigrants in the future and we will need to do this in an open way with full consultation and participation of our citizens. Our future societies will be more pluralistic and the task of policy-makers will be to maximize the contribution of immigrants through proper settlement programs. Legislation will be needed, in some cases, to permit permanent residence and to protect the rights of these migrants. The changes that our societies will undergo must be undertaken in moderate, controlled ways that are supported by the public and which emphasize the positive contributions of immigrants to national development.

7) Responsibility to the Sending Country

We know that, given current and projected world population growth, emigration is not, in most instances, a solution to development constraints. Recent evidence does suggest, however, that in the short term, remittances can help the sending country and that emigration can ease social and political

