

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is part of a general review of international and inter-provincial immigration issues prepared for the Immigration Branch of Saskatchewan Department of Governmental Relations and Aboriginal Affairs. The research was conducted by Doug Elliott, the principal of *QED Information Systems Inc.* and the publisher of *Sask Trends Monitor*.

The research mandate included a statistical description of immigration and immigrants and a comprehensive analysis of inter-provincial migration and how it affects Saskatchewan. The research was also to a) deal with the issues of how the labour force and the population of Saskatchewan may be increased, b) examine Aboriginal employment issues and c) document out-migration and in-migration issues.

Section 2 deals with the basic demographic characteristics of the province's population and how it changes. The major findings in that section are highlighted below in point form. All of the data are from Statistics Canada.

- Saskatchewan's population has been effectively at or near one million people for the past twenty years. Except for Newfoundland, other provinces are growing more quickly.
- The "baby boom" generation is still the dominant feature of the province's age structure. Compared with other provinces, Saskatchewan has a high proportion of older seniors and a high proportion of children and youth.
- Although Saskatchewan's fertility rate is one of the highest in Canada, the number of births is declining. The number of deaths is increasing so the "natural" growth rate – births less deaths – is declining. Much of the population growth in Alberta is a result of the higher natural growth rate there.
- Inter-provincial migration has resulted in a net loss of population in 25 out of the last 31 years and is the basic reason why the province's population hasn't grown. The loss of population because of migration is also an issue in several other provinces including Newfoundland, Quebec, and more recently, B.C.
- In terms of their age structure, Saskatchewan's inter-provincial in-migrants and out-migrants are similar to those in other provinces – many are youth but overall trends in inter-provincial migration are mirrored in each of the age groups. Saskatchewan has one of the highest rates of youth out-migration in Canada.
- Alberta is the destination for an ever-increasing proportion of out-migrants from Saskatchewan, accounting for 60% in the most recent year. It is also the single largest source for in-migrants, accounting for 50% in the most recent year.
- In migrants from the Atlantic provinces and Alberta tend to be in their late twenties and early thirties. Out migrants to Alberta, B.C. and the North tend to be in their twenties.

- Saskatchewan attracts very few international migrants; those who come tend to be younger than the province's current residents.

A special tabulation from the 2001 Statistics Canada census was obtained for the research. The information in Section 3 describes persons who were born outside Canada and who were living in Saskatchewan at the time of the census, that is, in May 2001.

This is a different population than the those who immigrated to Saskatchewan because it includes those who moved here from other provinces and excludes those who have left. Refugees, family class immigrants, and skilled workers are included in this group.

The findings from this section are summarized below in point form.

- Nine out of ten recent immigrants originally destined for Saskatchewan come from three immigration groups with approximately the same frequency – skilled workers, family class, and refugees.
- On a net basis, Saskatchewan retains just over one half (57%) of immigrants who originally come to the province, one of the lowest rates in Canada.
- 18% of Canadian residents are immigrants compared with 5% of Saskatchewan residents.

The majority of the data in this section refer to the 2001 population of immigrants in Saskatchewan. "Recent immigrants" are defined as those who came to Canada since 1980.

- One in four immigrants living in Saskatchewan came to Canada after 1990; the majority (56%) came after 1970.
- Recent immigrants are more likely to come from Asian countries – 42% do so – than their earlier counterparts. Among Saskatchewan residents who immigrated to Canada before 1961, 87% came from Europe.
- More than one half of recent immigrants are members of a visible minority group.
- 71% of recent immigrants are in the 20 to 59 age group (compared with 52% of non-immigrants). 52% are women.
- Although 71% of recent immigrants report a language other than English as their mother tongue and 61% use a language other than English at home, 95% can speak English well enough to carry on a conversation.
- Recent immigrants are, compared with non-immigrants or those who came to Canada before 1981, more likely to report a non-Christian religious affiliation or no religious affiliation at all.
- Recent immigrants in the 15 to 24 age group are more likely to be going to school – 68% did so in the 2000-2001 academic year – than non-immigrants.

- Completed education levels among immigrants, particularly those who immigrated after 1961, are much higher than among non-immigrants. More than one quarter have a university degree.
- Recent immigrants with a post-secondary education tend to have degrees, diplomas, or certificates in the physical sciences including engineering. They are less likely than non-immigrants to have one in commerce, business administration, or in the trades.
- Recent immigrants, particularly men, are more likely to be employed than non-immigrants although the rate of employment is not as high as one would have expected given their high levels of education and relative youth. Those who migrated from 1961 to 1980 have a very high attachment to the labour force, however, with 60% working full-time throughout 2000.
- Employment income among recent immigrants tends to be low, partly because employment for women is concentrated in low paying industries. Nevertheless, a much lower proportion of their income (11% in 2000) comes from government transfers than for the non-immigrant population (14%). Many of these women will be refugees.
- Three quarters (74%) of recent immigrants live in Regina and Saskatoon. Larger centres tend to have a higher proportion of recent immigrants than smaller ones although Prince Albert and Yorkton have relatively few immigrants, given their size, and Swift Current has a relatively high proportion.

Section 4 describes, largely in qualitative terms, some of the implications of an aging population.

To deal with the possibility of a general labour shortage which could affect economic growth and well-being, the best strategy is a continuing focus on education and employment for Saskatchewan's young and growing Aboriginal population. Increasing employment levels among the Aboriginal population presents significant challenges so, to be prudent, other approaches should also be pursued.

The approaches discussed in this section that would have a measurable impact include increasing employment rates among disadvantaged groups such as the visible minority population, the immigrant population, the disabled, and those receiving social assistance. Potential employment increases from this approach are, however, limited. Higher employment rates among those at or past retirement age may not be realistic and, regardless, would only delay the impact of any general shortage of labour.

This section also describes the inter-connection between economic growth and population growth, pointing out that much of Alberta's strong economic performance has been the result of population increases.

If the province is to increase in size (both economically and in terms of population), a retention and an attraction strategy will be required. Unfortunately, the statistical evidence

suggests that out-migration of current residents is cyclical and largely beyond our control. It does not appear to be driven by controllable factors such as taxes but by perception and momentum.

The section concludes with the realization that a strategy to attract people from other provinces and countries would probably be more successful than a strategy to stop current residents from leaving.