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Report No. 6

NOVEMBER 8, 1993
NATIONAL CENSUS TEST -

EVALUATION OF FIELD COLLECTION PROCEDURES

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**NOVEMBER 8, 1993
NATIONAL CENSUS TEST -**

EVALUATION OF FIELD COLLECTION PROCEDURES

**May 1994
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Census Collection Section**

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A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Collection for the National Census Test (NCT) went smoothly and according to plan. Materials and training were clear and appropriate. Schedules for collection, follow-up and reporting were met.

The NCT collection experience confirmed some of the conclusions arising from the 1991 Census of Canada, namely:

- it underscored the importance of making contact with the respondents at drop-off;
- it confirmed the need for strategies to deal with such problems as access to apartment buildings and the growing use of telephone answering machines;
- it confirmed the need to simplify the census representative's job by cutting out unnecessary detail and providing efficient materials and procedures.

During the debriefing sessions and through individual debriefing questionnaires, interviewers and senior interviewers provided feedback that will be useful in simplifying the duties of the census representative in 1996. Specifically, the information has bearing on the decision-making process that census representatives must follow:

a) when coding the type of dwelling:

In the opinion of interviewers, there is a need for fewer dwelling type codes and simpler definitions of the dwelling types.

b) when editing questionnaires and performing follow-up:

In the opinion of interviewers, the edit task must be simplified; this can be accomplished by keeping edit rules to a minimum, eliminating the need for special conditions in edit and follow-up rules and by presenting the edit steps in a simpler format in the procedures.

B. DETAILED SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY INTERVIEWERS AND SENIOR INTERVIEWERS

1. Interviewer and Senior Interviewer Training

1. Continue to provide home study programs and separate classroom sessions for drop-off and edit/follow-up.
2. Stress the importance of contact at drop-off and of obtaining a telephone number at each household.
3. Prepare the interviewers to deal effectively with potential refusals.
4. Place less emphasis on special cases.

2. Survey Materials

1. Consider producing an interviewer aid manual containing abridged steps for all procedures.
2. Keep the duties that a census representative performs at the doorstep to a minimum. Provide materials that are easy and efficient to handle at the doorstep.
3. Envelopes:
 - a) In the NCT, the drop-off envelopes were bilingual. Respondents who received double drop-off did not know which language was in which envelope. The recommendation made is to return to the procedure followed in 1991.
 - b) Return envelopes should be larger than the questionnaire by enough to allow the use of a mechanical opener in centralized edit locations.
4. Continue to provide plastic bags. Upgrade the quality of the bags.
5. Provide updated maps for rural areas.
6. For the Census, consider producing a Visitation Record with a stiff cover to provide a writing surface.
7. Type-of-dwelling codes
 - a) Use fewer dwelling classification (TD) codes.
 - b) Provide simpler definitions of all TD codes.

- c) Provide a code for seasonal dwellings.
 - d) Provide both the chart and the picture/paragraph information, arranged vertically so that the interviewer can choose the information he/she understands and can start at the top and work down.
8. Provide a notice of call to leave at dwellings during field follow-up. Regions should consider producing reminder cards and motivational cards in the languages of special populations.
 9. Provide census representatives with good quality identification cards.

3. Drop-off

1. Emphasize the importance of making contact with respondents at drop-off in one drop-off visit. Support this in procedures and training with recommendations for how to achieve contact while making only one drop-off visit, how to respond to objections and how to encourage participation.
2. Plan strategies for gaining access to secured housing (apartment buildings and condominium complexes) at the national, regional and city levels.
3. Ensure that census representatives are well-prepared to respond appropriately to adverse reactions to double drop-off.

4. Edit

1. Keep edit rules and conditions to a minimum.
2. Use "IF ... THEN" tables to present edit rules, rules for determining if follow-up is required and special follow-up rules.
3. If possible, avoid "mandatory" questions. If this is not possible, then:
 - avoid discussion of "mandatory" questions, rather, ensure coverage by the use of "IF ... THEN" conditions;
 - keep these conditions to an absolute minimum;
 - during training, explain the "common-sense" rationale behind the special conditions.

4. Study and establish the most effective criterion for the number of failed questions that is allowable before follow-up is required.

5. Telephone Follow-up

1. Plan national, regional and city strategies for dealing with answering machines. Provide guidance regarding when to leave a message, what to say and how many messages to leave.
2. Prepare the interviewers to successfully obtain cooperation by phone. Provide suggested answers to foreseeable objections on the part of respondents. Provide training on telephone interviewing techniques.
3. Prepare strategies for telephone follow-up to suit the different cultural preferences of special populations.

6. Personal Follow-up

1. Clarify the requirement for three attempts at personal follow-up, specifically, attempt up to three times until contact is made. Allow interviewers to make appointments.
2. Plan strategies for personal follow-up to suit larger special populations areas.

7. Progress and Cost Reports

1. If a set of questionnaires within a project are being studied separately, produce separate reports for these questionnaires. Inform interviewers about the relationship between the questionnaires that are being studied and the other questionnaires in the survey.

C. INTRODUCTION

Following the collection period for the 1993 National Census Test (NCT), debriefing sessions were held across Canada. Members of the project team led discussions in each region with groups of interviewers, some senior interviewers and several program managers.

Debriefing session chairmen were provided with a general outline for the purpose of guiding the discussions. Separate reports were filed after each session by the debriefing session chairmen.

While the emphasis of the debriefings was on the content of the test questionnaire, some time was devoted to gathering feedback on the training, collection procedures and materials provided for the test. This report analyses the comments in the debriefing session reports that pertained to collection.

D. COMMENTS AND ANALYSIS

1.0 Interviewer and Senior Interviewer Training

1.1 Planned

Interviewers were to receive the following training on different days:

- a 2.5 hour Drop-off Home Study Program;
- a 3 hour classroom session on Drop-off;
- a 2.5 hour Edit and follow-up Home Study Program;
- a 4 hour classroom session on Edit and Follow-up.

Senior interviewers received the interviewer training plus a 3 hour classroom session on senior interviewer duties. The interviewer level classroom sessions included role plays.

Training was planned and written at a level suitable for inexperienced interviewers on the assumption that new staff would be hired for the test and that census procedures are usually carried out by inexperienced census representatives.

1.2 Actual

Home studies and verbatim training guides for the classroom sessions were delivered as planned. In most areas, the home studies and classroom sessions were completed as planned.

In some areas, to reduce costs, the interviewers were brought to a central location for one session. These interviewers completed the Drop-off Home Study, then attended a two-day session at which Drop-off training was given on the first day, the Edit and Follow-up Home Study was completed that night and the Edit and Follow-up classroom session was given on the second day.

1.3 Analysis

Some interviewer trainees were inexperienced, others were experienced Labour Force Survey (LFS) interviewers. Inexperienced trainees felt the training was adequate, experienced trainees felt it was good to excellent.

a) Home Study Programs:

The Home Study Programs were considered useful, however, the time allowed to complete them was considered insufficient, especially for inexperienced

trainees. Even the experienced interviewers took, on average, 1/2 hour longer than anticipated to complete each home study.

Trainers who conducted combined training sessions to reduce costs commented that the home studies take longer for an individual to complete at home, while if the home study is done in class, it can be completed in the time allowed. Trainees can get immediate answers to their questions, and this enhances the understanding of the entire group.

b) Classroom Sessions:

The majority felt that the training sessions were suitable and adequate and that the materials were well organized and clear. However, many trainers and trainees felt that much was expected of the interviewers in that there was a large amount of material to cover in the time allowed.

In general, interviewers felt comfortable with their duties only after considerable practice. Role plays were described as effective and illuminating. Some trainers suggested using role plays to present almost all the concepts of the test and some wanted more detailed scripts for the trainers to use in the role plays. For some interviewers, the program appears to have struck the right balance of role plays and lecture as no one commented that the role plays were unsuitable or that there were too many (as often happens in other surveys). However, for some of the inexperienced interviewers, there were too few role plays.

c) Combining Classroom Sessions:

Combining the classroom training programs into one two-day session had advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages:

- where sessions were combined, costs were reduced. Using the same questionnaires and control lists for both sessions made it easier for the new trainees to understand both the content and the process. Trainees received help and support if they did the edit and follow-up home study in class.

Disadvantages:

- the edit and follow-up home study was burdensome if it was done in the evening between sessions. Following the combined sessions, there was a time lapse between the training on edit and follow-up and the start of edit and follow-up in the field. All trainees in these sessions were affected, especially those who were inexperienced. When the edit phase began, they had to re-read their manuals and the trainers report that they had many questions.

Where the sessions were held separately as planned, trainers and trainees appreciated having the content divided into two main areas i.e., drop-off and edit/follow-up. There was less detail to remember after each session and trainees could concentrate on the duties at hand.

d) Content of the Training Programs

It was mentioned that some of the information made available in training wasn't used in the field; specifically, that special cases are covered which may or may not arise.

Trainees would have placed more emphasis on the following:

- the importance of making contact at drop-off;
- obtaining a telephone number at drop-off to make follow-up easier;
- dealing with respondent suspiciousness and hostility;
- how to quickly and effectively avoid refusals.

1.4 Recommendations

1. Continue to provide home study programs and separate classroom sessions for drop-off and edit/follow-up.
2. Stress the importance of contact at drop-off and of obtaining a telephone number at each household.
3. Prepare the interviewers to deal effectively with potential refusals.
4. Place less emphasis on special cases.

2.0 Materials

2.1 Planned

Interviewers were to be provided with the following:

- a) Materials to be left at the households at drop-off:
 - test questionnaires (French and English);
 - respondent guide booklets (French and English);
 - drop-off, mail-back and double drop-off envelopes (bilingual);
 - plastic bags.

- b) Materials used by the interviewer for training and for enumeration:
 - home study programs (Drop-off and Edit/Follow-up);
 - an NCT Control List (list of selected addresses);
 - three sets of pre-addressed labels for each address;
 - an Interviewer's Manual;
 - maps (LFS Cluster Diagrams or EA maps);
 - Cluster Lists (for LFS sample assignments only);
 - a reference card (Type of Dwelling codes, Final Status codes and Official Languages card);
 - an identification card.

The Interviewer Progress and Cost Report was provided in an appendix in the Interviewer's Manual.

2.2 Actual

All materials were produced and delivered as planned.

The front cover of the questionnaire contained a paragraph from the Chief Statistician introducing the National Census Test and encouraging the respondents to participate. For areas where a particular population was sampled, some regions prepared cards explaining the test in the language of the area (e.g., Chinese in Toronto).

2.3 Analysis

In the debriefing sessions, interviewers commented on the manuals, control lists, labels, questionnaires, envelopes and plastic bags, maps and reference card. As well, they had several suggestions regarding a letter of introduction and a notice of call.

a) Manuals:

The interviewers manual and the Senior interviewers manual were considered sufficient and well organized.

When in the field, interviewers need to be able to find a piece of information in the manual quickly. They need to reduce search time and be able to go immediately to the procedural step or the background information needed, especially when they are in contact with the respondents. Being able to find information quickly reduces frustration and allows the interviewer to do the job more efficiently.

To this end, interviewers and seniors appreciated having the colour coded sections in the manuals for edit rules and progress and cost reports, as this helped them to find information more quickly. Many interviewers pleaded for a comprehensive index to reduce search time. Some suggested producing a manual with tabbed sections.

An information booklet or an appendix for quick reference was suggested. It might be worthwhile to produce an "interviewer aid" in addition to the manual in the form of abridged list of steps for all procedures. Interviewers could more easily memorize and double check procedures as they go, while using the manual as their source of detail when needed.

Some senior interviewers felt that there were too many manuals - it was burdensome to have to read a home study and verbatim training guide and constantly refer to a procedures manual and a senior interviewer's manual. This is probably a reflection of the fact that their prior experience involves surveys that are not as comprehensive as a census and their knowledge is built up over time. For a census, separate manuals are needed to divide the work into manageable sections.

b) Control Lists

The control lists were specific to the National Census Test: in a census, the representative uses a Visitation record (VR). Comments from the NCT indicate that interviewers need a control document that is of a size that can be handled at the doorstep, has adequate space for the required entries and provides a surface stiff enough to write on. For the Census, consideration should be given to producing a stiff-backed VR. Otherwise, the current VR meets these needs.

c) Labels

For the National Census Test, address labels were provided to reduce transcription time and error. This was possible because dwellings were pre-selected. Interviewers were instructed to affix a label to a questionnaire in the respondent's preferred official language, or if contact was not made, to questionnaires in both languages.

Interviewers found that their doorstep duties required them to juggle manuals, questionnaires, labels, envelopes, control lists and pencils. They reduced the juggling by affixing the label and entering the type-of-dwelling code after they had located the dwelling and before they went to the door. For a census, the message is: reduce the number of steps the interviewer has to perform at the doorstep and allow him/her to concentrate on making contact and performing an efficient drop-off.

d) Questionnaires

The questionnaires were roughly equivalent to a census 2B questionnaire, that is, a "long" questionnaire produced in one official language. Respondents complained about the cost and confusion of having two questionnaires - this is probably a result of double drop-off. The present procedure for this complaint is to respond by explaining that this is the most cost effective way of complying with the Official Languages Act.

e) Envelopes and Plastic Bags

Drop-off Envelopes:

Interviewers felt that the drop-off envelope should state what language is inside as had been the case in the 1991 Census.

Return Envelopes:

Regional office staff would like to have used a mechanical opener. The envelope was such a tight fit that this wasn't possible, and staff felt that the envelope should be bigger.

Postal regulations dictate the size of the envelope. Many questionnaires, once used, do not fold up as small they were when delivered, therefore, the questionnaire would have to be smaller or thinner. Because there is a trend toward centralized edit, this

factor should be considered.

Plastic Bags:

Interviewers appreciated having the plastic bags for double drop-off, however they felt they were too small and found them hard to handle at the doorstep. As well, they reported that because the bags were of poor quality, they tore easily and were ignored by respondents who mistook them for advertising packages.

f) Maps

Numerous complaints were received from interviewers and seniors about the inadequacy of the cluster diagrams and maps, especially for rural areas. Interviewers with local knowledge were more easily able to find rural dwellings, however, these interviewers noted that the maps had not been updated. Some interviewers bought their own maps. A few interviewers knew that they could get help from the township offices, however, in a census, this is not encouraged at the interviewer level.

In the 1991 census, one of the census representative's duties was to update the map he/she was given, yet this information has not been used. The lack of adequate rural maps remains a serious problem that continues to make a census representative's job more complicated than it needs to be.

g) Reference Card

Status Codes/Official Languages:

The interviewer reference card had final questionnaire status codes and an official languages message on one side. No comments were received on this.

Dwelling Classification:

The other side of the card gave dwelling classification information similar to the back cover of the 1991 VR. Pictures with descriptive paragraphs were given in the top half of the card. The bottom half contained a decision chart for determining the type of dwelling. Comments on this side of the card were received.

- i) Senior interviewers said that the type-of-dwelling (TD) information was useful to the interviewers. Interviewers commented extensively on the TD information when they

completed a debriefing questionnaire.

- ii) Some found the decision chart confusing and preferred the picture-and-paragraph approach. Others found the pictures unclear and the paragraphs confusing: they preferred the decision chart and used it exclusively. This may depend on the interviewer's personal style - some people understand charts more easily than

Note: The decision chart was useful when interviewers were completing a questionnaire by telephone.

Clearly, both the chart and the pictures/paragraphs are needed. Presenting the chart in the left-hand side of the card and the pictures with paragraphs the right half would allow the interviewer to choose the method best suited to him/her.

- iii) In some areas (usually suburban or rural) there was little variation in the type of dwelling and classifying the TD was straightforward. These interviewers used the card less often, referring to it until they had enough skill, then using it only to code an unusual dwelling. Others, usually in urban areas, found that the variety of housing was considerable, and that not all dwellings fit neatly into the categories on the card.

Problems arose where interviewers encountered:

- apartments in duplexes or in buildings less than 5 storeys (codes 4 and 6);
- apartments inside a semi-detached duplex (e.g., within a code 4);
- apartments attached to other structures or businesses (uncertain about codes 4, 6 and 7);
- mobile homes with additions that made them obviously permanent (code 8);
- vacant and/or seasonal dwellings.

Interviewers requested a means of dealing with vacant dwellings, especially vacant seasonal dwellings (cottages). Many "cottages" are suitable for year-round occupancy, but no amount of follow-up will produce a questionnaire if the residents and/or neighbours are not there around the time of the

survey. Interviewers felt there should be a code for seasonal dwellings.

Interviewers who were faced with numerous vacant units in apartment buildings needed to know that it was helpful to contact the management.

- iv) Many commented that the wording of the dwelling type definitions was difficult to understand. One said, "the more you read, the more you get mixed up". Another said, "I finally wrote 'top' for code 6 and 'beside' for code 7". The definitions need to be simplified.

Dwelling classification takes up a disproportionate amount of training time and in too many cases it remains a source of confusion for the interviewer. Solutions lie in reducing the number of dwelling classification codes and providing simpler definitions. Beyond this, the arrangement of the dwelling classification information on the card can be modified so that each interviewer can choose the method (chart or picture/paragraph) that he/she finds easiest to use.

As part of the procedures development now underway for the 1996 Census, Census Collection Section and the subject matter areas concerned are investigating solutions to reducing the number of codes, simplifying the definitions and dealing with seasonal dwellings.

h) Letters/Notices/ID Cards

Introductory Letter:

Field staff noted that respondents do not read the note from the Chief Statistician on the front cover of the questionnaire. Some felt it would be helpful to send out a letter of introduction to notify respondents of the need to participate and to lend credibility to the test.

Notice of Call:

Some regions produced a notice for the interviewer to leave at dwellings during field follow-up to inform the respondent that an interviewer had called and would call again later. Interviewers suggested that such a card should be left during drop-off: they felt that the respondents would complete and return the

questionnaire more quickly.

Reminder Card:

Some regions supplied "reminder cards". It was not clear from the comments when this card was used. A reminder card in the non-official language special populations sample areas was produced by some regions and this seems to have been effective in encouraging participation.

Identification Card:

Respondents were suspicious of strangers and asked to see census test identification. LFS interviewers showed their LFS interviewer ID cards (with photograph). For a census, a clear, authoritative, good quality ID card is needed.

2.4 Recommendations

1. Consider producing an interviewer aid manual containing abridged steps for all procedures.
2. Keep the duties that a census representative performs at the doorstep to a minimum. Provide materials that are easy and efficient to handle at the doorstep.
3. Manuals
 - a) Colour code the sections within the manuals. Consider producing separate manuals for what are now sections, e.g., general information, drop-off, edit and follow-up, agriculture, collectives. Consider providing tabs for the sections within manuals.
 - b) Provide an index.
 - c) Provide a glossary for terms and abbreviations.
4. Envelopes
 - a) Return to the 1991 procedure so that the 2B drop-off envelope indicates the language of questionnaire contained inside.
 - b) Return envelopes should be larger than the questionnaire by enough to allow the use of a mechanical opener in centralized edit locations.
5. Continue to provide plastic bags. Upgrade the quality of the bags.

6. Provide updated maps for rural areas.
7. For the Census, consider producing a Visitation Record with a stiff cover to provide a writing surface.
8. Type-of-dwelling codes
 - a) Use fewer dwelling classification (TD) codes.
 - b) Provide simpler definitions of all TD codes.
 - c) Provide a code for seasonal dwellings.
 - d) Provide both the chart and the picture/paragraph information, arranged vertically so that the interviewer can choose the information he/she understands and can start at the top and work down.
9. Provide a notice of call to leave at dwellings during field follow-up. Regions should consider producing reminder cards and motivational cards in the languages of special populations.
10. Provide census representatives with good quality identification cards.

3.0 Drop-off

3.1 Planned

Drop-off was to be conducted at selected dwellings from November 1 - 5, 1993. Pre-printed labels with the dwelling address and a questionnaire identification number were to be affixed to every questionnaire.

Interviewers were to deliver a questionnaire, a respondent guide and a mail-back envelope to each selected dwelling. If contact was made with the respondent, the interviewer was to leave a questionnaire and guide in the respondent's preferred official language and obtain a telephone number for the household. If contact was not made, the interviewer was to leave a drop-off package consisting of questionnaires and guides in both official languages enclosed in a bilingual double drop-off envelope. All respondents were to receive a bilingual prepaid mail-back envelope.

Interviewers were to record the results and progress of drop-off on an interviewer control list. Required entries included date of drop-off and whether or not contact was made. If contact was made, the telephone number and

preferred official language of the household was to be entered. Additional columns were provided for recording edit and follow-up.

3.2 Actual

Drop-off was conducted as planned. Procedures for drop-off and completing the control list entries were followed without difficulty.

In some areas, drop-off was conducted on Sunday, October 31, 1993. In some areas, this early drop-off was useful as respondents were home on Sunday afternoon. In other areas, this was viewed as unconventional. In fact, the Census Help Line received calls on this procedure.

Where interviewers made contact with a respondent, they were able to obtain a telephone number. Because the debriefing comments do not mention either high or low rates of contact, it is assumed that the rate of contact was about the same as for the 1991 census, that is, at approximately 40%. One observer noted that the rate of contact was about 50% in two special populations sample areas. Census studies show that the rate of contact varies by type of enumerations area (EA).

3.3 Analysis

The most significant points regarding drop-off were:

- the importance of making contact at drop-off;
- the serious difficulty involved in gaining access to apartment buildings.

As well, interviewers mentioned public reaction to double drop-off (leaving questionnaires in two languages when no contact was made). Interviewers also mentioned that conducting the test in November made drop-off more difficult because days are short and driving conditions are poor and respondents in rural areas did not like having an interviewer come after dusk.

a) Contact at Drop-off

Interviewers and seniors stressed the importance of making contact with respondents at drop-off. They recommended conducting drop-off when a "meaningful" household member is at home, that is, after work. For all areas, especially the special populations areas, interviewers stated that personal contact at drop-off is essential to a good response rate.

During the test, time spent on achieving personal contact resulted in less follow-up. Respondents are more likely to cooperate if they see the interviewer's credentials and receive the package by hand. Interviewers can respond immediately to quell objections. However, it is not cost effective to make more than one drop-off visit in an attempt to raise the rate of contact. For a census, the emphasis should be on performing drop-off at the most productive times of day.

b) Access to Apartment Buildings

Access to secured housing was the most frequently mentioned drop-off problem. Many aspects made access difficult, including:

- no on-site manager to permit access;
- respondents connect their phone answering machines to the intercom;
- apartment/condominium numbers are listed in code in the lobby directory, making it impossible to contact the selected unit;
- doormen/guards would not permit access and would not take the questionnaires.

As well, some interviewers found that there were numerous vacant units in some buildings. These interviewers had difficulty determining that the unit was in fact vacant.

Determined interviewers resorted to various strategies to deliver questionnaires. Some stayed near the door until someone entered. They pushed buzzers until they could convince someone to let them in. Some had to locate the management company, obtain the apartment owner's name, then telephone the owner to arrange for drop-off.

c) Unoccupied Dwellings in Special Populations Areas

In some special populations areas, interviewers found that the selected address was a dwelling, currently unoccupied, and owned by persons who live outside Canada.

d) Reaction to Double Drop-off

Respondents and interviewers would like to have some indication on the envelopes as to which language is inside. For the Census, this is not a problem because the census drop-off envelope has a window that shows the contents.

Otherwise, public reaction to double drop-off was similar to what is experienced during a census. Respondents (and some interviewers) felt it was elaborate and a waste of resources in a time of fiscal restraint. In Vancouver, many respondents were offended by receiving a French questionnaire and some returned the French questionnaires uncompleted, but containing angry comments. Objections to double drop-off, however, did not result in refusals.

3.4 Recommendations

1. Emphasize the importance of making contact with respondents at drop-off in one drop-off visit. Support this in procedures and training with recommendations for how to achieve contact while making only one drop-off visit, how to respond to objections and how to encourage participation.
2. Plan strategies for gaining access to secured housing (apartment buildings and condominium complexes) at the national, regional and city levels.
3. Ensure that census representatives are well-prepared to respond appropriately to adverse reactions to double drop-off.

4.0 Edit

4.1 Planned

Edit was to be conducted on each questionnaire. The rule of 6 replaced the mandatory edit rules that were used in 1991.

Edit rules were presented in the interviewer's manual in a revised, simpler format. Rules were arranged in "If ... Then" tables showing conditions and actions required. Tables were given for:

- general edit rules (language consistency, legibility, all applicable questions answered, etc.);
- rule of 6.

Interviewers were to complete the edit for one person before beginning the edit for the next person on the questionnaire.

Instruction was given for determining whether or not follow-up was required. Tables for the special follow-up rules for certain questions were given.

For this test, efforts were made to simplify the edit process and to relax the tolerance for failed-edit questions. The term "mandatory question" was avoided, although the rules were constructed to ensure that essential questions were answered. A questionnaire required follow-up when a step failed edit or when six questions (including part questions) failed edit.

4.2 Actual

Edit was conducted as planned. Senior interviewers commented that the interviewers did not have trouble applying the edit rules. Interviewers, however, felt that there were too many rules, making edit too complicated.

A study of the interviewers' debriefing questionnaires shows that while the majority found the rules easy to understand, there were so many rules and conditions that it was difficult to perform the edits without constantly referring to the manual. The resulting slow-down in the process frustrated the interviewers. Many commented that edit was particularly difficult at first and became easier only with much practice.

4.3 Analysis

a) Format

Interviewers and seniors liked the "If ... Then" table format for presenting edit and follow-up rules. They were able to find an edit rule and the action required quickly.

b) Edit Rules

Interviewers with census experience commented that they found edit easier with no "mandatory" questions.

i) Marking and circling questions:

The rules ensured that follow-up was conducted for unanswered essential questions. For these selected questions, the interviewer was instructed to mark the question for follow-up (and include it in the count of six) or, under certain conditions, to mark and circle it. Any one question marked with a circle required follow-up.

This was a tricky concept for the interviewers to learn. Many interviewers and seniors indicated that they had to constantly look up which questions had a special condition that required circling.

When a rule was "common sense", the interviewers had less trouble remembering it. Reasons for circling a question were based on ensuring proper coverage (i.e., have we got all the right people?), but the interviewer was not told this. The concept of when to circle/not circle might be easier for them to understand if the basic concept behind it was explained during training.

ii) The "Rule of Six"

The criterion of six failed questions (part questions) requiring follow-up was commonly referred to as the "rule of six". Interviewers found the rule of six easy to apply and interviewers with census experience preferred it to the 1991 procedure.

iii) Reasons for Failed Questions

- The requirement for a postal code in the address of a person's place of work was causing too many questions to fail edit. This requirement was dropped during the edit phase because respondents do not know their postal code at work.
- Many respondents didn't complete questions with obvious answers. Interviewers questioned the practicality of follow-up for obvious answers such as marital/common-law status of children.

c) Order of Edit

Interviewers were instructed to edit each questionnaire on a person-by-person basis. In practice, this varied. Some edited person by person, others page by page. Many seem to have edited by person for an entire two-page spread, then turned the page and again edited for all persons on the two pages. (Note that in the research for the 1996 questionnaire development task, observers found that many respondents completed the questionnaire in this fashion also.)

Interviewers look for the most efficient way to edit. Their comments show that the order of edit depended on whether there were one, two or more persons on the questionnaire and whether the persons were over 15 years of age.

4.4 Recommendations

1. Keep edit rules and conditions to a minimum.
2. Use "IF ... THEN" tables to present edit rules, rules for determining if follow-up is required and special follow-up rules.
3. If possible, avoid "mandatory" questions.

If this is not possible, then:

- avoid discussion of "mandatory" questions, rather, ensure coverage by the use of "IF ... THEN" conditions;
 - keep these conditions to an absolute minimum;
 - during training, explain the "common-sense" rationale behind the special conditions.
4. Study and establish the most effective criterion for the number of failed questions that is allowable before follow-up is required.

5.0 Telephone Follow-up

5.1 Planned

Follow-up was to be conducted by telephone for failed-edit questionnaires, for non-response and for households requiring additional questionnaires to enumerate all persons in the household. Telephone follow-up was to begin as soon as questionnaires were received after census test day and continue for a maximum of 3 weeks.

After four attempts to contact the household by telephone (at different times on different days), the case was to be followed up in person.

Interviewers were instructed not to reveal any information on a questionnaire except to the person who completed the questionnaire or for whom the information was entered.

5.2 Actual

Telephone follow-up was conducted as planned. The problems encountered were:

- telephone answering machines and call display telephone functions;
- the reluctance of respondents to give information over the phone;
- the resistance of certain special populations to repeated attempts at follow-up.

5.3 Analysis

Interviewers became aware of the importance of obtaining a telephone number at drop-off. Telephone numbers were easy to get if contact was made or if the questionnaire was returned, otherwise, detective work was required. The times when respondents could be reached varied widely.

Interviewers felt that more time should have been allowed for follow-up. The first returns were available to the interviewers about a week after census test day. Time must be allowed for the required 4 calls and 3 visits, especially if the respondent says the questionnaire has been mailed. Others felt that follow-up should begin earlier (as soon as two days after census test day), while the idea is still fresh in the respondents' minds and to prevent respondents from throwing away the questionnaires after census test day.

a) Telephone Answering Machines

The proliferation of telephone answering machines is cause for concern. Many respondents use answering machines and call display functions to screen calls.

Interviewers were given no direction on how to handle this situation. They had to decide whether or not to leave a message, what to say and how many messages to leave. Those who did leave messages found that it produced a few return calls. Most decided that leaving messages allowed the respondent to be prepared to give excuses, avoid contact, or refuse on a technicality. The best tactic seemed to be to leave no message but to call repeatedly, since some people turn off the answering machines at certain times.

Another aspect that must be considered is that more and more respondents have telephones that display and record the number of the caller. Interviewers are understandably reluctant to divulge their private telephone numbers and expose themselves to

objectionable calls. Respondents who had this feature could tell that the call originated from a private (non-government) phone and this added to their scepticism. Because of the volume of calls in a census and the potential for problems associated with divulging the interviewers' telephone numbers, further research is needed to develop appropriate procedures.

In some provinces, the interviewers made arrangements with their local telephone company so that their telephone number would not be recorded on call-display telephone machines. Also, a few interviewers received harassing reply calls when they left their numbers on a respondent's answering machine.

b) Gaining Cooperation by Telephone

Some respondents were happy to complete the questionnaire over the phone - they felt they needed the interviewer's help. However, most respondents are reluctant to provide information over the phone.

- Much persuasion was required on the part of the interviewer. Some felt they needed training on telephone interviewing techniques.
- Interviewers need to be able to give respondents a regional office telephone number so they can verify that the survey is legitimate. Such a number was not provided in the procedures. In Toronto, the reminder cards used in special populations areas had a "1-800" number that was used to help schedule appointments with the interviewers.

Even where ROs gave a telephone number for verification, interviewers who were only able to reach respondents in the evening had to wait for them to call the RO in the morning. Respondents who called an RO "verification" number were not pleased if they encountered "call channelling".

c) Telephone Follow-up for Special Populations

In special populations areas, interviewers found that only the very young or elderly were at home at most times. These people were often unable to speak English or French.

Depending on the area, there can be great cultural reluctance to disclose personal information. Strategic planning will be needed to obtain a good

response rate during a census. The Pacific region's experience with the (NCT) Vancouver Chinese sample is a good illustration:

- Respondents (usually older respondents) resisted any repeated attempts at follow-up once they had refused to participate or to answer certain questions. The concept of disclosing information for statistical purposes was threatening to them.
- Interviewers from the same culture resisted making subsequent attempts once they had encountered a refusal, since the interviewers regarded these respondents as elders whose decisions should be respected.
- The region was able to get the required response rate by having non-Chinese interviewers conduct telephone follow-up and/or by having a non-Chinese interviewer make personal field follow-up visits accompanied by a Chinese-speaking interpreter who had a very Canadian outlook.

Wherever special populations exist, there will be a need to develop strategies appropriate to the particular culture to achieve an adequate response rate.

5.4 Recommendations

1. Plan national, regional and city strategies for dealing with answering and call-display machines. Provide guidance regarding when to leave a message, what to say and how many messages to leave.
2. Prepare the interviewers to successfully obtain cooperation by phone. Provide suggested answers to foreseeable objections on the part of respondents. Provide training on telephone interviewing techniques.
3. Prepare follow-up strategies to suit the different cultural preferences of special populations.

6.0 Personal Follow-up

6.1 Planned

Interviewers were to conduct personal follow-up:

- for failed-edit questionnaires that could not be completed by phone;

- to obtain a completed questionnaire from non-response households where a phone number was not available or where a respondent did not wish to give information by phone;
- for non-responses questionnaires that were dropped of at dwellings that may have been unoccupied.

Interviewers were to make a maximum of three attempts.

6.2 Actual

Personal follow-up was conducted as planned. A few interviewers attempted more than three visits.

6.3 Analysis

The comments seem to indicate that the requirement for three visits was interpreted in different ways. The intent was that the interviewer should make up to three attempts in person to contact the household in person, and if not contact is made, no further action would be taken. Comments from special populations areas seem to indicate that up to three visits (with contact taking place) were made. Comments did state the following:

- a) Field staff felt that three visits were sufficient. The first visit usually produced results and additional visits tended to be unproductive. Few questionnaires were obtained from subsequent attempts.
- b) The fact that the respondent chooses the time for a follow-up appointment has cost implications. It is difficult for interviewers to arrange several appointments in the same area at the same time.
- c) Some interviewers felt that once they had telephoned three or four times without success, personal follow-up was a waste of time.

6.4 Recommendations

1. Clarify the requirement for three attempts at personal follow-up, specifically, the requirement to make three attempts until contact is made. Allow interviewers to make appointments.
2. Plan strategies for personal follow-up to suit larger special population areas.

7.0 Progress and Cost Reports

7.1 Planned

Reports were required on training sessions, drop-off progress and cost and edit and follow-up progress and cost. Report forms and completion instructions were provided in the interviewers' and senior interviewers' manuals.

Interviewers and seniors completed the reports manually. The reports were automated in the regional office on the Excel program.

Reports were required after each training session and at the end of each week during the test.

7.2 Actual

Reporting for the test was complicated because an Edit Sample Study was conducted during the time that interviewers were performing edit and follow-up. The study measured the difference between questionnaires completed by respondents alone and questionnaires that may have been influenced by the interviewer.

The decision was made to not inform the interviewers about the study for two reasons: to avoid having interviewers bias the results by paying attention to the questionnaires in the study sample and to avoid complicating the interviewer's job with explanations of a process that did not involve him/her.

The report forms included separate columns for reporting the edit results for questionnaires that were returned to the interviewer via the regional office (i.e., that had been completed by the respondent without intervention) and for questionnaires that the interviewer helped to complete (by interview or follow-up).

7.3 Analysis

Most of the comments on reports came from the senior interviewers and PMs. While they said that the reports worked well when done correctly, the process was hard to understand and hard to explain.

a) Interviewer and Senior Interviewer Reports

Some seniors commented that the instructions were clear and that new interviewers had no problems. Others stated that the reports were long and difficult

and that they had to re-do many of the interviewers' reports from the beginning because the numbers didn't balance.

The interviewers would have understood the reports more easily if they had been shown why the edit results for questionnaires returned through the RO had to be reported separately. As well, it should be stated clearly and stressed that these edit results are not changed on the report after follow-up even though follow-up may result in a completed questionnaire. A "total" column similar to that on the senior's report would help make this clear. Managers felt that if separate information was needed, separate reports should be produced.

b) Regional Office Reports

The PMs appreciated having the reports automated in the regional offices. The Excel program worked well. PMs commented that it was "clear and painless". They appreciated the fact that it calculated results automatically and gave rapid information on progress and cost. When a few problems were experienced with the automated transmissions to head office, PMs printed the reports and sent them by fax.

c) Frequency

The planned frequency of reports was adequate although a few PMs wanted to see more frequent reports towards the end of the test.

7.4 Recommendations

1. If a set of questionnaires within a project are being studied separately, produce separate reports for these questionnaires. Inform interviewers about the relationship between the questionnaires that are being studied and the other questionnaires in the survey.



