CANADIAN SOCIAL TRENDS

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WINTER 1997 No.47

FEATURES

ON OUR COVER:
"Village in the Laurentian Mountains" (1924) oil on canvas, 89.2 x 130.7 cm. Collection: National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

About the artist:
Clarence A. GAGNON was born in Montreal, Quebec in 1881. He first studied drawing and painting under William Brymner at the Art Association of Montreal. Between 1903 and 1909 he studied in Paris, and from 1911 to 1936, he divided his time between Montreal, Paris and Baie St. Paul. The Art Club of Montreal honoured Gagnon in 1936, and in 1938 his 54 original paintings for Maria Chapdelaine were exhibited at the Art Association of Montreal and in the National Gallery of Canada. In 1938, he was made an honorary L.L.D. by the University of Montreal. Gagnon died in Montreal in 1942 at the age of 61.

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Acknowledgements
C. BROOKS, I. FAST,
G. ROBERTS, T. VRADENBURG

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Indexed in the **Canadian Magazine Index**, **Public Affairs Information Service, Inc.** and available on-line in the **Canadian Business and Current Affairs Database**.
ISSN 0831-5698

Canada's caregivers

by Kelly Cranswick

We live in a society in which social support networks are increasingly being put to the test. The number of seniors has more than doubled in the past 25 years, and most of them are living longer; for example, women born in 1941 can expect to live four years longer than those born in 1921. This growing population of older Canadians with greater life expectancy has increased the caregiving responsibilities of families, especially offspring. Recent changes in the health care system and social services have put further pressure on the caregiving capabilities of families; for instance, shorter hospital stays and greater use of outpatient treatment have increased the need for care at home. These new demands occur at a time when the majority of women — traditionally the primary caregivers — now participate in the labour force. As such, Canadians face the burden of multiple responsibilities to employers, their own spouse and children, and to parents, relatives or friends requiring care.

Many people provide care without any sense of obligation, while others may view it as a duty, as a sacrifice, or as a necessity if formal structures are no longer available. Regardless of the reasons for becoming a caregiver, the responsibility entails a significant commitment and can be intense and time-consuming. Caregiving tasks fall into two categories: "instrumental activities," such as preparing meals, doing housework, doing yard work or providing transportation; and "personal care" activities, such as bathing, dressing or toileting.[1] Meeting these demands often necessitates adjustments to the life of the caregiver, and may affect the time the caregiver spends with family and friends, personal time, or the priority given to paid employment and household responsibilities. This article looks at the unpaid, informal care being provided by Canadians to people with long-term health problems — that is, any condition or physical limitation lasting, or expected to last, more than six months. It focuses on who these caregivers are, and how well they are coping.

[1] A second type of care covered by the 1996 GSS is *caring about*. Caring about involves a psychological connection between people; for example, by providing emotional support, keeping someone's spirits up or giving reassurance and encouragement. Caring about can also include checking up on someone, either by visiting or telephoning, to ensure he or she is all right.

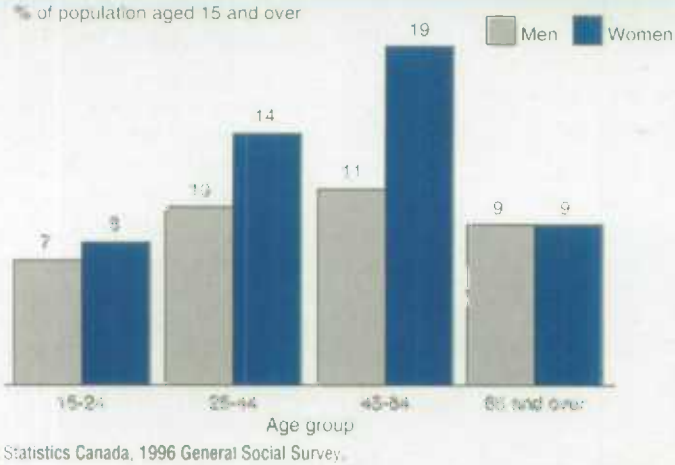
CANADIAN SOCIAL TRENDS BACKGROUNDER

Defining care with the General Social Survey

This article uses data from the 1996 General Social Survey (GSS) on social and community support. Between February and December 1996, the survey interviewed almost 13,000 Canadians aged 15 and over living in private dwellings in the ten provinces. Data on caregiving refers to help provided by respondents in the 12 months preceding the survey interview. The GSS collected data on both formal and informal caregiving. Informal care is defined as the performance of tasks by family and friends, without pay, that helps maintain or enhance people's independence; since 86% of caregivers were providing informal care, it is the focus of this article.

Please note that this analysis of caregiving relationships does not take into account the amount of time spent providing care. Research using data collected by the 1996 GSS on the actual time devoted to caregiving will provide further insights into caregiving.

Women aged 45 to 64 were most likely to provide informal care to people with long-term health problems



Source: Statistics Canada, 1996 General Social Survey.

Who are the caregivers? While much caregiving is still done by women, many men also provide help to people with long-term health problems — 10% of men compared with 14% of women. There is a concentration of caregivers in the 45 to 64 age group — 19% of women and 11% of men — which is to be expected, since the data indicate that many people of this age group were providing help to elderly parents. However, it should also be noted that a considerable proportion of seniors aged 65 and over provided care to their spouses, friends and neighbours.

Having paid work outside the home did not prevent people from providing support when the need was there, as 15% of employed women and 10% of employed men were caregivers. Among unemployed people, 16% of women and 12% of men combined their job search activities with caregiving duties. About 15% of women who worked in the home were also caregivers.

Having a family seemed to have little impact on caregiving. Sixteen percent of women living with their spouse and children were caregivers, as were 14% of those living with their spouse only. A somewhat smaller proportion of women living with their children only (12%) provided care to someone with a long-term health problem. Roughly one in ten men were caregivers, regardless of their living arrangements.

So who are the caregivers? No one specific "type" of person seems more likely than another to become one. It appears that people provide care when their help is required, regardless of the responsibilities they already shoulder. Most caregivers already have many obligations, with the majority being married with children and having work commitments outside the home.

Who are they helping? People caring for others with long-term health problems or physical limitations can be faced with widely differing sets of tasks depending on the situation. For example, the help needed by an elderly parent may be quite different than that required by a child with a developmental disability or by a terminally ill friend or relative. A caregiver may be called on to assist with instrumental tasks, such as cooking or cleaning, or with personal care, such as bathing or dressing.[2]

Almost half of assistance with instrumental activities was given to parents and parents-in-law (47%). About 24% of care involved help to friends,[3] 13% to members of the extended family and 5% to spouses. Close to two-thirds of the help with personal care was given to parents (46%) and spouses (16%); friends (13%) and children (5%) received less than one-fifth of personal care. This finding is not surprising due to the intimate nature of these tasks, and supports the view that family becomes more important than friends when help is needed for such personal activities as dressing and using the washroom.[4, 5]

[2] "Instrumental activities" is defined as help with at least one of the following activities: childcare; meal preparation and clean-up; house cleaning, laundry and sewing; house maintenance and outside work; shopping for groceries and other necessities; providing transportation; banking and bill-paying.

[3] "Friends" also includes neighbours, co-workers and ex-partners.

[4] Eric G. Moore, Mark W. Rosenberg et al., *Growing Old in Canada*. Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 96-321-MPE, No. 1, 1997, p. 46.

[5] Leroy O. Stone, 1993. "Social consequences of population ageing: The human support systems dimension." *Proceedings of International Population conference*. Montreal: International Union for the Scientific Study of Population. 3: 25-34.

Most informal care to people with a long-term health problem was given to parents

CST

% of care given (by relationship to caregiver)

	Instrumental tasks	Personal care
Total	**100**	**100**
Spouse	5	16
Child[1]	3	5
Parent[1]	47	46
Sibling[1]	6	5
Extended family	13	11
Friend[2]	24	13
Other	1	--

-- Sample too small to be released.
[1] Also includes those related by marriage or adoption, eg. stepchild, mother-in-law, brother-in-law.
[2] Also includes neighbours, co-workers and ex-partners.
Source: Statistics Canada, 1996 General Social Survey.

Caregivers generally feel positive about their activities

CST

	Never	Rarely/ Sometimes	Nearly always	Don't know/ Not stated	Total
			(%)		
How often do you feel ...					
you don't have enough time for yourself, because of the time you spend helping people?					
Women	55	31	12	--	100
Men	65	25	9	--	100
Total	59	29	11	1	100
others help you more often than you help them?					
Women	64	26	9	--	100
Men	63	29	6	--	100
Total	63	27	8	2	100
stressed between helping others and trying to meet other responsibilities for family or work?					
Women	41	40	18	--	100
Men	55	32	12	--	100
Total	46	36	15	2	100
by helping others, you simply give back what you have received from them?					
Women	21	27	50	3	100
Men	25	27	45	--	100
Total	22	27	48	3	100
angry when you are around the person(s) you are helping?					
Women	75	19	3	2	100
Men	82	14	--	--	100
Total	78	17	3	2	100
by helping people, you simply give back some of what life has given you?					
Women	15	22	60	3	100
Men	15	26	56	3	100
Total	15	24	58	3	100

-- Sample too small to be released.
Source: Statistics Canada, 1996 General Social Survey.

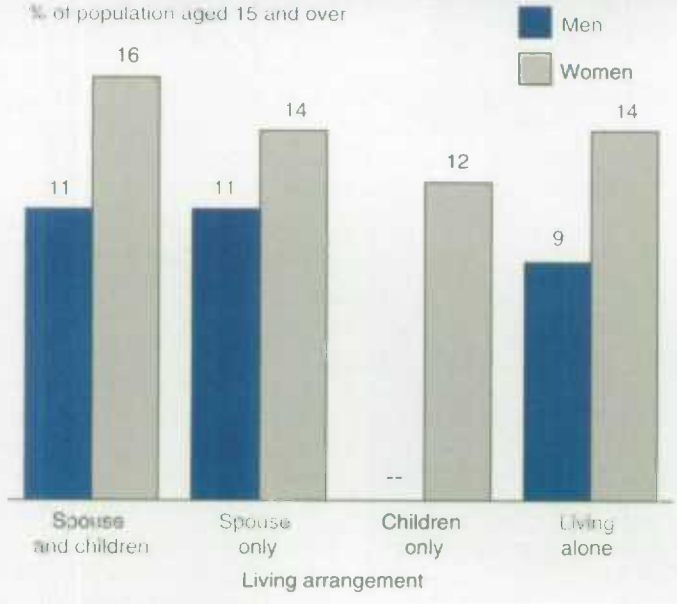
How do caregivers feel? Whether it is viewed as a completely voluntary activity, as one's duty, a sacrifice, or a necessity, some significant costs can be associated with caring for someone with a long-term health problem. These can include negative feelings the caregiver may harbour, disruptions to the caregiver's life or economic costs.

Respondents were asked a set of questions intended to assess how they felt about their caregiving responsibilities. When asked, 59% of caregivers said they rarely felt that helping others meant that they did not have time for themselves, and 11% said they nearly always felt that way. When the question focussed on the impact caregiving had on their families, almost half of caregivers (46%) rarely felt stressed about helping others while trying to meet family and work responsibilities, while 15% reported nearly always feeling that way. In both instances, women were more likely than men to feel pressed for time.

Some questions tapped the feelings caregivers had towards the person they were helping. The majority (64%) of caregivers nearly always felt that helping others strengthened their relationship with them; in contrast, 13% rarely felt that way. Most caregivers only rarely felt angry when they were around the person they were caring for and only 3% nearly always felt angry. While higher proportions of women than men felt anger, both women and men were equally likely to experience the positive feelings of a strengthened relationship. This finding may reflect the type of caregiving being performed by women; as the data suggest, they are doing the more demanding tasks such as personal care. However, when asked how often they wished someone else would take over their caregiving duties, 63 % of caregivers said they did so only rarely, and only 4% reported that they nearly always wished for such relief from their responsibilities.

Caregivers were also asked to state, overall, how great a burden it was to be caring for others. More than half (56%) did not feel at all weighed down by their duties, while about 5% felt "quite a bit" or "extremely" burdened. This response, in particular, suggests that caregivers not only give help, but do so willingly. Although a higher proportion of women than men felt burdened, on the whole differences between men and women were minimal.

Having a spouse and children did not prevent men and women from accepting informal caregiving responsibilities

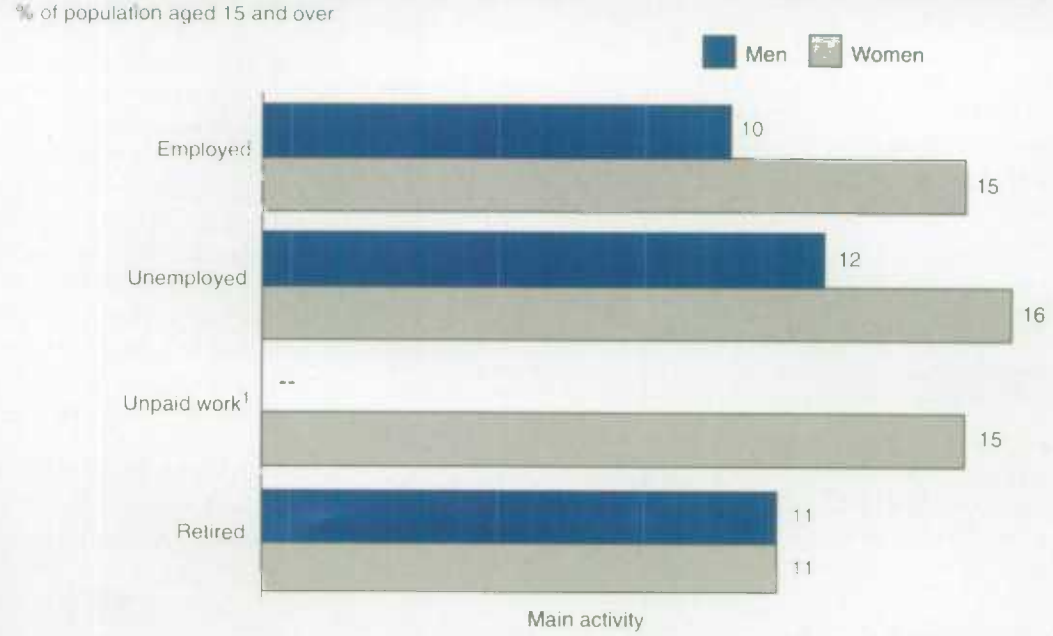


-- Sample too small to be released.
Source: Statistics Canada, 1996 General Social Survey.

People care, but at what cost? Less subjective than feelings are the changes that caregiving responsibilities can have on a person's life. According to the 1996 GSS, 45% of caregivers said they had modified their social activities because they were helping someone, and about 25% had altered their vacation plans. About 12% of caregivers reported that they or the person they were caring for had relocated in order to be in closer proximity to one another, while 6% of caregivers had actually moved in with the person they were assisting.

Some caregivers interrupted their education and work plans. Approximately 6% of caregivers postponed plans to enrol in an education program, while caregivers with paid work reported even more substantial changes in their lives. Half of employed caregivers (55% of women and 45% of men) stated that their caregiving duties affected their work, citing instances of coming to work late or leaving early (34% of women and 31% of men) or having to miss at least one day of work (34% of women and 24% of men). Possibly more significant

Caregivers' main activity did not prevent them from providing informal care



-- Sample too small to be released.
[1] Includes keeping house and/or looking after children.
Source: Statistics Canada, 1996 General Social Survey.

Most caregivers experienced some disruption in their lives CST

% of caregivers who agree that helping others caused them...

	Total	Men	Women
to make changes in social activities	45	44	47
to change holiday plans	25	25	26
to postpone plans to enrol in an educational or training program	6	5	7
to have repercussions at work	50	45	55
to move in with person being helped	6	5	7
to move closer to person being helped	12	9	15
to change sleep patterns	29	26	31
to incur extra expenses	44	46	42
to affect health	21	12	27

Source: Statistics Canada, 1996 General Social Survey.

was the financial cost of providing help to someone with a long-term health problem; 44% of caregivers reported that they had incurred extra expenses in the previous 12 months because of their responsibilities.

Without question, the most severe alterations to caregivers' lives were the changes in their own health status: 29% of caregivers reported that their sleep patterns had changed and 21% said that their health had been affected. The impact on health showed marked gender differences, with women more than twice as likely to report that their health had been affected.

What help do the caregivers need? While most caregivers did not have negative feelings about their responsibilities, many experienced substantial changes in their lives. This was especially true for women. But, when asked what, if anything, might make it easier to cope with the demands of providing care, about half of the caregivers said they needed nothing. Many others suggested potential sources of help, however.

Almost one in seven caregivers (15%) wished someone would occasionally take over their duties, with an equal proportion of women and men feeling this way. Since many people incurred extra expenses, 15% of women and 16% of men caregivers reported that financial compensation for their unpaid work would help them to continue. This finding suggests that there is a group of caregivers whose duties are taking an economic toll on their families.

Knowledge was also regarded as important, with 14% of women and 12% of men wanting information on the nature of long-term illnesses and disabilities. Information on how to be an effective caregiver was also important to both women (14%) and men (10%). An equal proportion of men and women believed that counselling for caregivers would be beneficial (5%).

Summary Among the many social changes facing Canadian society, one of the most important is the need for informal care for people with long-term health problems. The findings of the 1996 GSS indicate that many Canadians already provide such help, and that they do so without resentment. While the majority of caregivers feel very positive about their activities and report few hardships, the demands on some can have considerable consequences, altering the routine of their home and work lives and, in some instances, causing some degree of financial hardship. Further analysis should help to identify measures that will allow caregivers to provide support to their family and friends with greater ease.

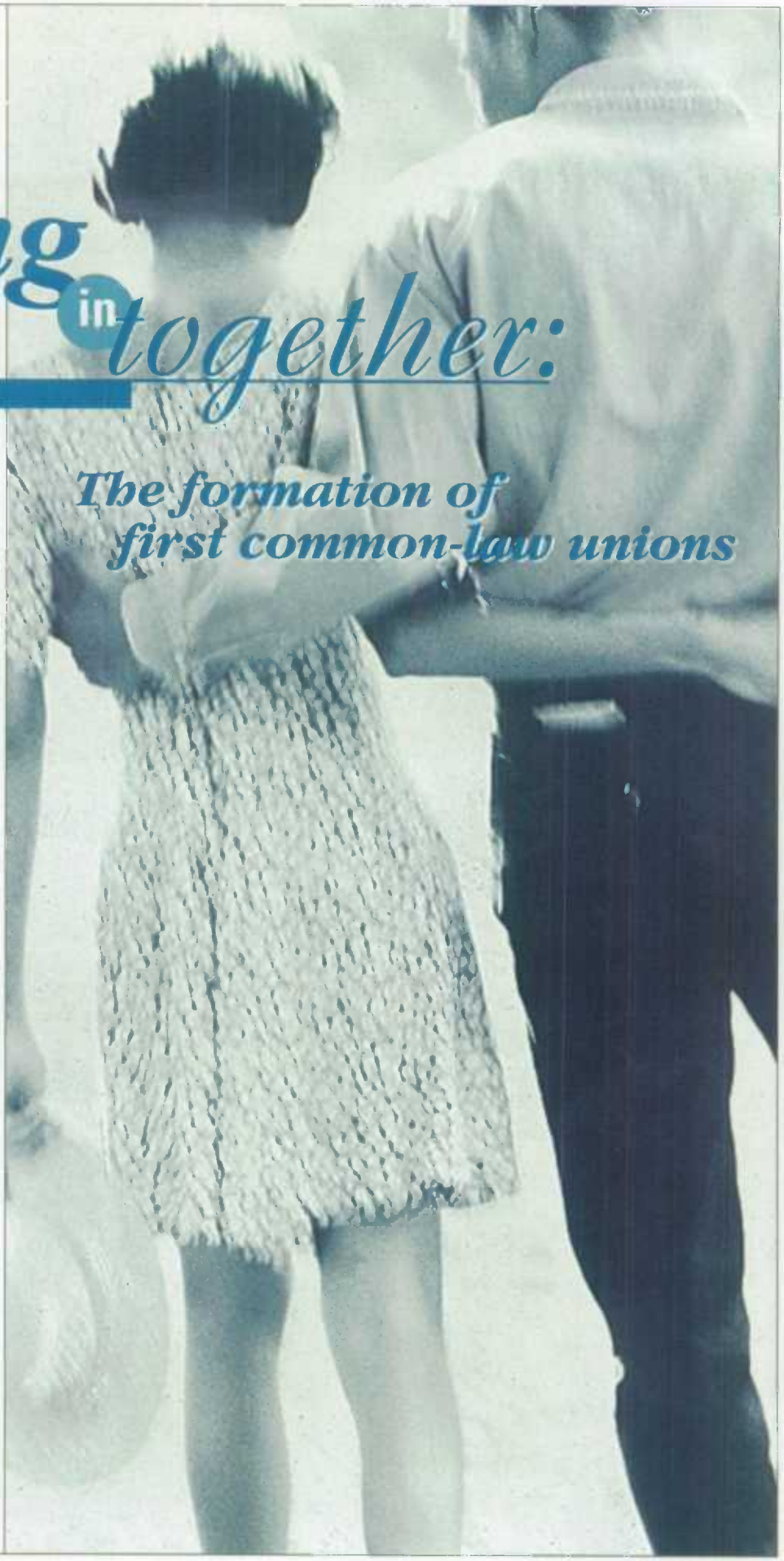
Kelly Cranswick is an analyst with Housing, Family and Social Statistics Division, Statistics Canada.

CST

Moving in together:

The formation of first common-law unions

by Pierre Turcotte and Alain Bélanger



The first conjugal union has a special meaning in one's life. The circumstances attending its creation are generally quite different from those leading to subsequent relationships, as it often coincides with the end of formal schooling, the start of one's working life or leaving the home where one grew up. But in Canada, as in a number of industrialized countries, domestic and family relationships have become much more diverse in the past 30 years. One aspect of this diversification is that new forms of families have appeared; among the main trends is a marked increase in the prevalence of common-law unions.

This study analyzes the influence of selected demographic and socioeconomic characteristics on the likelihood of establishing a common-law union as the first union. The results of the analysis do not differ greatly between men and women, so to avoid repetition, most of the discussion centres on the dynamics of union formation for women.

Majority of first unions are now common-law Nowadays, it appears that Canadian women prefer to live common-law in their first conjugal relationship. Over half (57%) of first conjugal unions formed between 1990 and 1995 were common-law. The proportion is much higher in Quebec, where 80% of all first unions formed during this period were common-law. This form of first union has more than tripled over the past two decades: only 17% of first unions formed in 1970-74 (21% in Quebec) were common-law. This remarkable growth leads us to examine the variety of factors that influence the formation of such unions.

Women in recent birth cohorts choose common-law for first union The probability of living in a first union outside marriage is significantly higher for women in more recent birth cohorts. For women born between 1971 and 1980 (i.e. aged 15 to 24 at the time of the survey), the likelihood of cohabiting was approximately 30% higher than for those born between 1961 and 1970 (aged 25 to 34 at the time of the survey). The probability declines for women born before 1961. Women in these older cohorts generally began their conjugal life before the mid-1970s, well before common-law unions became a widely accepted alternative to marriage.

Choosing a common-law union as the first union is more popular among francophones, regardless of their province of residence. The risk ratio for forming such a union is greater for women whose mother tongue is French, even if they live outside Quebec, than it is for women whose mother tongue is English or a language other than French.

Women who attend religious services every week are half as likely to experience a first common-law union as women who attend only occasionally, and native-born Canadian women are nearly twice as likely as immigrants to opt for a common-law relationship as their first form of conjugal union. The parents' marital history also exerts a major influence on the type of first union that women choose; if their parents' marriage had collapsed before they were 15 years old, women were 75% more likely to opt for a common-law union.

An increasing proportion of first unions are common-law unions CST

Period of formation	% of all first unions		
	Canada	Quebec	Other provinces
1970-74	17	21	15
1975-79	37	47	33
1980-84	41	64	33
1985-89	51	70	44
1990-95	57	80	50

Source : Statistics Canada, 1995 General Social Survey.

Women with children more likely to enter a first common-law union Women who have a child before entering their first conjugal union have a higher risk of forming a common-law relationship. This result differs from that obtained

CANADIAN SOCIAL TRENDS BACKGROUNDER CST

Analyzing the formation of first common-law unions

Most of the data that appear in this article are drawn from the 1995 General Social Survey (GSS). The 1995 GSS collected data from nearly 11,000 respondents aged 15 years and over living in private households in the ten provinces; almost 2,500 of these respondents (just under 1,000 in Quebec and about 1,500 elsewhere in Canada) reported that their very first conjugal union was a cohabitation outside marriage. Other data are drawn from the censuses of 1981, 1986 and 1991, which have collected information on the total number of persons who describe themselves as living in common-law unions.

Determining the risk factors The technique called "event history analysis" was used to analyze the 1995 GSS data. This technique combines two tools — life tables and regression analysis — and is ideal for analyzing data gathered by a retrospective survey such as the 1995 GSS, which collects information about life history from respondents. Using life tables in conjunction with regression analysis allows the researcher to measure the net effect of different factors on an individual's probability (or "risk") of experiencing an event. In this article, event history analysis is used to measure the likelihood that, given certain characteristics, Canadians will choose a common-law relationship as their first conjugal union.

The results of the event history analysis are presented in a table showing the risk ratios for a number of variables. Each variable used in the model includes a reference category (shown in parentheses); by definition, the risk ratio for this reference group is equal to 1. The ratios calculated for the other categories of a variable are interpreted in relation to the reference category. If the ratio for the non-reference group is more than 1, the risks of forming a first common-law union (compared with forming no union at all) are greater than for the reference group. Conversely, a ratio less than 1 indicates that the risks are lower for the non-reference group than for the reference group.

Age and employment status are important risk factors for women forming a first common-law union

CST

	Characteristic (Reference variable in parentheses)	Relative risk (Reference ratio = 1)
Birth cohort	1971-1980	1.319
	(1961-1970)	1
	1951-1960	0.697
	Before 1951	0.130
Mother tongue and region of residence	(French, Quebec)	1
	French, other provinces	0.814
	Other languages, Quebec	0.590
	Other languages, other provinces	0.599
Religious practice	Never	1.423
	(A few times per month or year)	1
	At least once a week	0.523
Place of birth	(Canada)	1
	Abroad	0.512
Dissolution of parent's marriage	Yes	1.740
	(No)	1
Employment status	Employed	1.958
	(Not employed)	1
Educational level	Less than secondary diploma	0.932*
	(Secondary diploma/college)	1
	University	1.082*
Birth of first child	Before union	1.462
	(Not before union)	1

Note: Significant at the 0.05 threshold unless marked with an asterisk (*).
Source : Statistics Canada, 1995 General Social Survey.

in a study based on the 1984 Family History Survey, which found that out-of-wedlock births tended to lower the risk of entering a common-law union.[1] Other studies have also shown that the majority of single mothers ultimately marry, often within a few years of the child's birth. The 1995 GSS results seem to support recent research in the United States, which found that the probability of a first marriage declines if a child is born before the first union, but that the likelihood of a first common-law union increases.[2]

Being employed[3] increases the probability that a woman's first union will be common-law; in fact, women who had held a job were twice as likely as those not working outside the home to opt for a common-law union. This finding appears to indicate that women's participation in the labour market gives them a degree of financial autonomy that allows them greater flexibility in choosing their conjugal arrangement.

The likelihood of entering a common-law union does not vary significantly among women with different levels of educational attainment. Women with less than a secondary school diploma and those with university education showed approximately the same probability as those who had a secondary school diploma.[4] On the other hand, women who were presently enrolled in an educational program were 30% less likely to form first common-law unions than those who were not going to school. Similar findings have been obtained in the United States and Europe.[5]

CANADIAN SOCIAL TRENDS BACKGROUNDER

CST

Common-law unions: a growing phenomenon
Since the early 1980s, the number of persons living common-law has nearly tripled. By 1995, 2 million people (nearly 1 in 7 Canadian couples) were living common-law, compared with 700,000 (less than 1 in 16 couples) in 1981. Not only has the prevalence of common-law unions increased rapidly, but their rate of increase has also accelerated.

	% of couples living common-law		
	Canada	Quebec	Other provinces
1981	6	8	6
1986	8	13	7
1991	11	19	9
1995	14	25	11

Sources: Statistics Canada, 1981, 1986 and 1991 Censuses; 1995 General Social Survey.

Men's behaviour is similar to women's, with one exception In general, the demographic and socioeconomic factors that influence the formation of first common-law unions are no different for men than for women. That is, if a characteristic such as mother tongue increases the likelihood that women will experience a first common-law union, it also increases the likelihood for men. The magnitude of the effect is not always the same, but it is usually within the same range. However, while women's probability of living common-law increases from one birth cohort to the next, the same is not always true of men. For example, men born between 1971 and 1980 (aged 15 to 24 at the time of the survey) are not significantly more likely to opt for a common-law union than those born between 1961 and 1970 (aged 25 to 34).

[1] Desrosiers, Hélène and Céline Le Bourdais, "Les unions libres chez les femmes canadiennes: étude des processus de formation et de dissolution", *Population, reproduction, sociétés. Perspectives et enjeux de démographie sociale*, Montréal, Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1993, pp. 197-214.

[2] Bennett, Neil G., David E. Bloom and Cynthia K. Miller, "The influence of Nonmarital Childbearing on the Formation of First Marriages", *Demography*, Vol. 32, No 1, 1995, pp. 47-62.

[3] "Employed" is defined as holding a job for more than six months.

[4] The approach used to estimate transition periods for education does not take account of the fact that some people temporarily interrupt their education.

[5] Blossfeld, Hans-Peter (editor), *The New Role of Women - Family Formation in Modern Societies*, Westview Press, Social Inequality Series, Boulder, 1995.

A few words about marriage The same techniques used to assess the risk factors associated with forming a first common-law union were also applied to first marriages. The analysis identified two major groups of characteristics: those that affect the likelihood of forming a conjugal union of either type, and those that influence the choice between marriage and a common-law union. For example, two factors that appear to have a strong influence on union formation are being employed and/or having a child. However, a woman's age and cultural characteristics seem to influence which type of union she chooses. Interestingly, the dissolution of her parents' marriage has no significant effect on the likelihood that a woman will marry, but it does have a significant impact on the probability that she will live in a common-law relationship.

Summary The proliferation of common-law unions is thought to be associated with many recent social changes that have influenced trends in family behaviours and attitudes. Several factors appear to underlie these changes, including the massive entry of women into the labour market (with the resulting increase in women's autonomy); the dissociation between sexuality and marriage and between fertility and marriage; the decline in religious practice; and the redefinition of the roles and expectations of spouses. The 1995 GSS does not address these issues directly, but it has identified several characteristics that have a significant effect on the probability that people will live common-law in their first conjugal relationship.

This article is an excerpt from "Dynamics of Common-law Unions in Canada," a Statistics Canada Research Paper, available on the Internet. The URL is http://www.statcan.ca/english/Vlib/other9.htm

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CST

"I feel overqualified for my job..."

by Karen Kelly, Linda Howatson-Leo and Warren Clark

The Canadian population has become more highly educated in the last 25 years: between 1971 and 1996, the percentage of adults with more than a high school education more than doubled from 21% to 50%, while the proportion with a university degree tripled from 5% to 15%. At the same time, many jobs are demanding more sophisticated and technically complex skills, as shifts in Canada's industrial structure and rapid advances in information technologies raise the basic skill requirements of the workplace. It may seem odd that, in a time when an internationally competitive economy needs highly skilled workers, many well-educated workers feel that their education and experience exceed the demands of the job. Nonetheless, many well-educated Canadians feel they are overqualified for their jobs.

This article cites data from the 1994 General Social Survey (GSS) and focuses on Canadian workers who have graduated from a university or community college.[1] Workers were asked: "Considering your experience, education and training, do you feel that you are overqualified for your job?" Although respondents did not identify their reasons for describing themselves as overqualified, well-educated workers may feel overqualified if they take jobs requiring lower levels of skill; if their skill set does not match the requirements of the job market; or if their job expectations remain unmet.

[1] Includes university and college graduates who were employed at the time of the survey and whose main activity during the previous year was working at a job or business.

One in five well-educated Canadians felt overqualified for their jobs In 1994, there were 4.4 million employed Canadians — 39% of all workers — with a university or community college certificate, diploma or degree. More than one-fifth (22% or just under 1 million) of these workers felt overqualified for their jobs. Twenty-seven percent of those with an earned doctorate, master's or diploma above the bachelor's level felt overqualified, compared with just over one-fifth of those with a bachelor's/first professional degree[2] (22%) or a community college diploma (21%).

Postsecondary graduates in jobs that may not require postsecondary education are more likely to feel overqualified. For example, in 1994, 23% of university and community college graduates were employed as clerical, sales or service workers, and 37% of them felt overqualified for their jobs. When the effects of other demographic and socio-economic factors are held constant, the odds of feeling overqualified was at least twice as great for graduates working in clerical, sales and service jobs as for those in management or professional jobs.

Women more likely than men to feel overqualified In 1994, one in four women with a university or community college education felt overqualified for their jobs, compared with one in five male graduates. While it is true that women are more likely to work in service and clerical positions,[3] the difference in men's and women's assessment of their jobs can only partially be explained by their differing occupational profiles. All other factors being equal, the odds of feeling overqualified were 1.3 to 1.6 times greater for women than men. One possible explanation is that more women than men may accept jobs with lower-level requirements in order to balance family demands and earning an income; for example, taking a retail sales job because it allows them to work part-time.

Young adults feel over-educated for their jobs According to the GSS data, some of the most highly qualified young graduates have difficulty finding jobs that they believe match their educational credentials and experience. This belief was most frequently reported by young graduates aged 20 to 29 with a bachelor's/first professional degree (37%). Bachelor's graduates in their twenties may have felt overqualified because almost 30% of them held clerical, sales, service, or blue collar positions, whereas the likelihood that older graduates held such jobs was much lower. But even after accounting for other factors, including occupation, the odds of feeling overqualified were 1.8 times greater for bachelor's degree-holders aged 20 to 29 than for those aged 35 to 44 or 55 to 64.

A somewhat smaller proportion of community college graduates in their twenties (25%) felt overqualified for their job, even though they were more likely to be employed in the type of occupations in which university graduates felt most overqualified. This seems to suggest that college graduates found jobs more closely matching their skills and expectations. All other factors being held constant, the odds of feeling overqualified were about half as great for young college graduates as for those aged 55 to 64.

A high proportion of postsecondary graduates work in clerical, sales, service or blue collar jobs

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Educational attainment	Felt over-qualified	Type of job held when interviewed: Management, professional	Clerical, sales, service	Blue collar
	(%)	(% distribution by occupation)		
Postsecondary graduates	22	64	23	13
Community college certificate or diploma	21	46	30	24
Undergraduate diploma or certificate	23	58	32	10
Bachelor's or first professional degree	22	78	17	5
Master's degree, earned doctorate[1]	27	83	12	5

[1] Includes university diplomas or certificates above a bachelor's degree.
Source: Statistics Canada, 1994 General Social Survey.

Graduates working in clerical, sales or service occupations were most likely to feel overqualified

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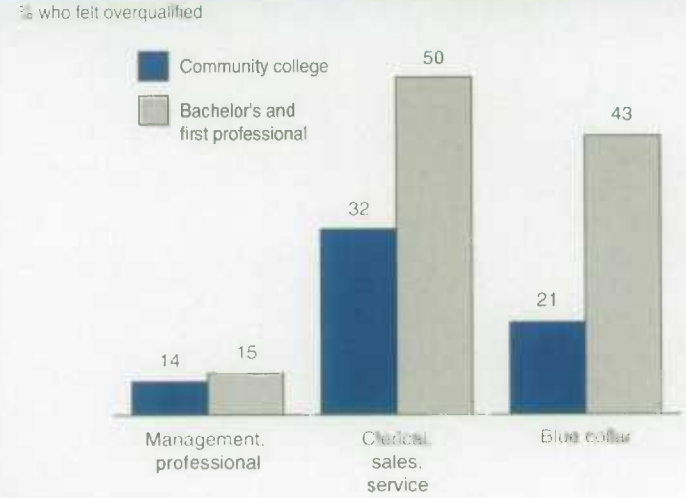


Source: Statistics Canada, 1994 General Social Survey.

[2] Includes first professional degrees in medicine (MD), dentistry (DDS, DMD), veterinary medicine (DVM), law (LLB), optometry (OD), and divinity (MDIV), and one-year B.Ed after a bachelor's degree.

[3] In 1994, women who had completed university or community college were three times more likely than men to have a clerical or service job (24% versus 8%).

Influences on feeling overqualified for a job are complex

The 1994 GSS asked respondents if they felt they were overqualified for their current job, given their education, training and experience. A wide range of factors can influence a person's answer to that question; for example education, current occupation, earnings, age, sex and work history. Of course, other factors that were not collected by the GSS may play a significant role in determining people's opinion of their job such as job expectations, relationships with co-workers and supervisors, skill requirements, and skill resources.

A simple model has been developed to illustrate the relationship between feeling overqualified and socio-demographic characteristics. The table below shows how great an effect various socio-demographic characteristics had on workers' belief that they were overqualified for their job. It presents the odds that a group of workers with a certain characteristic will feel overqualified relative to the odds that a bench mark group of workers will feel overqualified (odds ratio) when all other variables in the analysis are held constant. The bench mark group is shown in boldface for each characteristic. For example, the odds ratio for college graduates in blue collar jobs is 3.4; this indicates that the odds they feel overqualified for their job is 3.4 times greater than college graduates in managerial or professional occupations (bench mark category), after the influence of all other variables shown in the table has been removed. A number of variables — for example occupation, income and field of study — interact together. The model has not accounted for these interactions in order to simplify the description of the results.

Odds ratio for feeling overqualified for a job

Socio-demographic characteristics		Odds ratio	
		College	Bachelor's and first professional
Age	20-29	0.4	1.8
	30-34	0.4	1.3
	35-44	0.4	1.0
	45-54	0.5	1.8
	55-64	**1.0**	**1.0**
Sex	**Men**	**1.0**	**1.0**
	Women	1.3	1.6
Field of study	**Education, recreation, counselling**	**1.0**	**1.0**
	Commerce, management and business administration	1.0	1.7
	Engineering and applied science	--	2.0
	Engineering and applied science technologies and trades	0.2	--
	Fine and applied arts, humanities, social sciences	0.7	1.3
	Health professions, sciences and technologies	0.6	--
	Math and physical sciences	--	1.6
Occupation	**Management, professional**	**1.0**	**1.0**
	Clerical, sales or service	2.4	4.9
	Blue collar	3.4	4.6
Employment income	Less than $15,000	3.3	5.9
	$15,000 to less than $50,000	1.4	4.9
	$50,000 or more	**1.0**	**1.0**
Lost job in last 5 years	Yes	1.5	1.0
	No	**1.0**	**1.0**
Job tenure	for every year of job tenure	0.96	0.95

-- Sample too small to be released
Source: Statistics Canada, 1994 General Social Survey.

CANADIAN SOCIAL TRENDS BACKGROUNDER

What is an odds ratio?

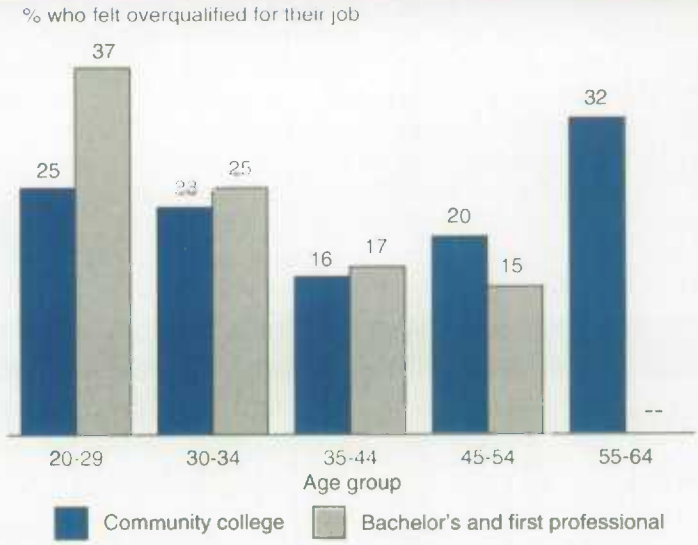
To help understand what an odds ratio means and how to interpret it, the following example using hypothetical numbers might be instructive. If there were 20 men who felt overqualified for their job and 80 who did not feel overqualified, then the odds of feeling overqualified are 20÷80=0.25. This implies that for every 100 men who do not feel overqualified, there are 25 who do feel overqualified.

An odds ratio expands on this concept by measuring the strength of association between two variables. The value of an odds ratio can range from zero to infinity, where an odds ratio of 1 indicates there is no association between the variables being studied. For example, the odds ratio could compare the odds of feeling overqualified for women to the odds of feeling overqualified for men. An odds ratio of 1 means there is no association between gender and feeling overqualified for the job, but an odds ratio of greater than 1 means that women are more likely to feel overqualified than men. Similarly, when the odds ratio is less than 1, women are less likely than men to feel overqualified. So if 25 women felt overqualified for their jobs and 75 didn't, the odds of women feeling overqualified is 25÷75=0.33. Returning to the example for men, the odds ratio of women feeling overqualified relative to men is 0.33÷0.25 = 1.32.

Some labour market observers believe that some young well-educated Canadians are unable to find meaningful work and therefore this group is more likely to feel overqualified. Also, young people have little previous work experience and are perhaps judging the job as inadequate before its real nature (and full responsibilities) have become apparent; when fully initiated into the job, the young worker may assess it differently.

This suggestion seems to be supported by the GSS, which shows that workers in transition (i.e., those with short job

Young adults were more likely to feel overqualified for their job than older adults



-- Sample too small to be released.
Source: Statistics Canada, 1994 General Social Survey.

Feelings of overqualification varied by field of study

Field of study	College	Bachelor's and first professional degree
	%	
Total	**21**	**22**
Education, recreation, counselling	30	18
Fine and applied arts, humanities, social sciences	24	27
Commerce, management and business administration	33	26
Engineering and applied science[1]	--	24
Engineering and applied science technologies and trades[2]	10	--
Health professions, sciences and technologies	14	--
Mathematics and physical sciences	--	20

-- Sample too small to be released.
[1] University level engineering and applied science programs.
[2] Technology and trades programs in engineering and applied science field.
Source: Statistics Canada, 1994 General Social Survey.

CANADIAN SOCIAL TRENDS BACKGROUNDER CST

I want a good job when I graduate

Finding a job consistent with their educational attainment is an important goal for young people. They expect to receive a sufficiently high return on their investment in education to compensate for their costs and foregone income while they were studying. Without stable work, young people may be deprived of the material and social benefits of a job; without rewarding work, they may feel dissatisfied with their job, have poor relationships with co-workers, low job motivation, a high rate of job turnover and lower psychological well-being.[1] The lack of stable and rewarding work may also inhibit other social transitions such as formation of separate households, marriage, and a sense of self and maturity.[2]

The belief that they are overqualified for the job may change as young graduates adapt to the work environment and family priorities. A study of recent graduates in the United States found that the most important characteristics of a job when a young person first started working were very achievement-oriented – challenge and diversity, opportunities for technical or managerial career advancement, and a high degree of authority for their project. After some work experience, however, factors related to quality of life — such as time to reflect on the job, work schedules and benefits — became increasingly important.[3]

[1] Borgen W.A., N.E. Amundson and H.G. Harder, "The experience of underemployment," *Journal of Employment Counselling*, Vol. 25, December 1988; and J. Hersh, "Education match and job match," *Review of Economics and Statistics*, Vol. 73, No. 1.

[2] Hartnagel T.F. and H. Krahn, "Labour market problems and psychological well-being: A panel study of Canadian youth in transition from school to work," *British Journal of Education and Work*, Vol. 8, No. 3, 1995.

[3] Cotterman R., "How recent graduates view their jobs," *Research Technology Management*, Vol. 34, No. 3, May-June 1991.

tenure), regardless of age, were more likely to feel overqualified than workers who had long-term employment in the same job. In 1994, one in three of those who had been in their job for less than two years felt their qualifications exceeded the job's requirements, compared with one in six of those with five or more years of job tenure.

Previous job loss affects perceptions of current job In 1994, 16% of college graduates who were working at the time of the GSS had lost a job at least once in the previous five years. The odds of feeling overqualified were 1.5 times higher for these workers than for those who had not lost a job. Interestingly, job loss had a greater influence on older graduates feeling overqualified, even though younger graduates were more likely to have experienced a job loss during this period. Older workers often have a more difficult time than younger workers in finding new employment at the same level of skill, knowledge and authority associated with their previous job. Also, if some people had depleted their financial reserves and were forced to take employment simply to make ends meet, their higher rate of discontent with their current job is understandable.[4]

Feelings of overqualification varied by field of study The 1994 GSS shows that workers who had completed college programs in engineering and applied science technologies and trades (10%)[5] and health professions, sciences and technologies (14%)[6] were least likely to feel overqualified. Evidently, most of them had found jobs that matched their expectations. On the other hand, the workers most likely to feel they had more qualifications than the job needed were graduates of college programs in commerce, management and administration (33%).

[4] Daniel C. Feldman, "The nature, antecedents and consequences of underemployment," *Journal of Management*, Vol. 22, No. 3, 1996.

[5] Examples of training programs in engineering and applied science technologies and trades at the community college level include computer science technology, microcomputer and information systems, architectural technology, earth resources technology, drafting, survey and photogrammetric technology.

[6] Examples of training programs in health professions, sciences and technologies at the community college level include nursing, X-ray medical technology, dental assistant and pharmacy assistant.

A 1992 survey of people who had graduated in 1990 found that bachelor's/first professional graduates in general arts and science, humanities, social science or fine and applied arts were most likely to report that their job did not require a post-secondary qualification.[7] The 1994 GSS found that graduates from these fields were the most likely bachelor's graduates to feel overqualified (27%). About a quarter of bachelor's/first professional graduates from commerce, management and business administration or engineering and applied science also reported the same feelings.

Low employment income has a strong effect on workers' opinion of job Almost half (47%) of university and community college graduates who earned under $15,000 in 1994 felt their skills and knowledge exceeded the requirements of the job, while only 11% with earnings over $50,000 felt that way. This finding is not unexpected, nor is it surprising that the impact of low earnings is particularly marked for university graduates. After holding all other factors constant, the odds of feeling overqualified were 5.9 times greater for university graduates with earnings under $15,000 than for those making over $50,000; among workers with community college, the odds were 3.3 times higher for low-earners.

Summary Canadians have become more highly educated in the last 25 years while new jobs require increasingly higher levels of education. Nonetheless, 1994 survey data show that over one-fifth of Canada's well-educated workers feel they are overqualified for the job they are doing. People generally prefer to have jobs appropriate to their education and experience; finding such a match, however, may be difficult and some workers may accept jobs that require less skill and knowledge than they possess.

The advancement of information technology may have contributed to the problem. Computers in the workplace first displaced people processing relatively simple information and working in highly paid manual jobs. Computers now have the processing capabilities to replace some of the human labour of people in the well-paid white collar jobs that were traditionally held by postsecondary graduates.[8] The result has been the disappearance and "deskilling" of some white collar jobs. Consequently, well-educated workers may feel overqualified if they remain in a deskilled job, while those who do not have the training now needed in the fast-growing fields of high-skilled knowledge jobs may be forced into lower level jobs. However, almost half the workers who believe they are overqualified for their job are under 35, and their feelings may change as they acquire more work experience, obtain better jobs or adjust their expectations.

[7] Don Little and Louise Lapierre, *The Class of 90: A compendium of findings from the 1992 National Graduates Survey of 1990 Graduates*, Human Resources Development Canada and Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. MP43-366/1996E, 1996.

[8] Michael Dunkerley, "The jobless economy? Computer technology in the world of work," Polity Press, 1996, p. 33.

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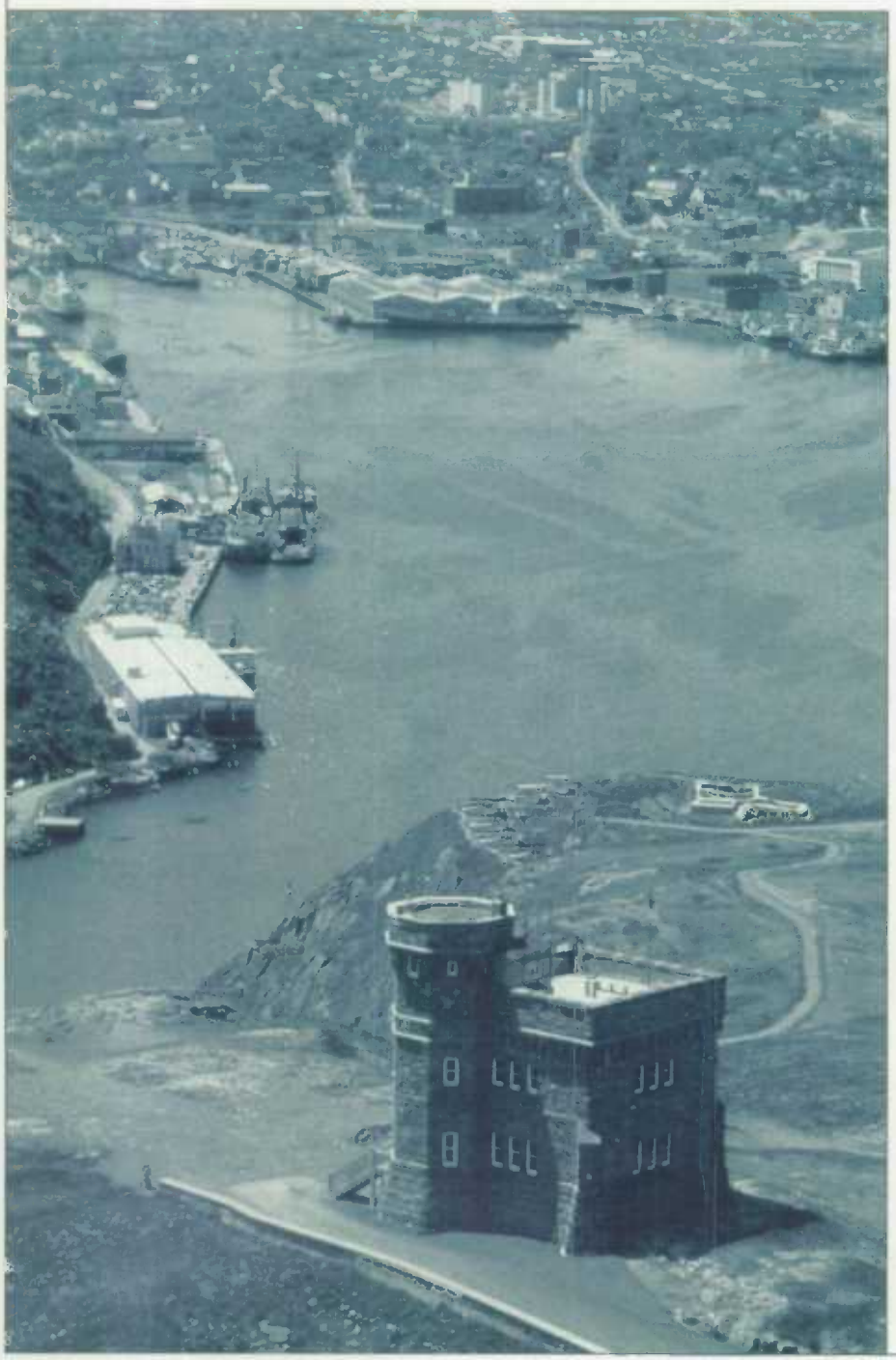

St. John's, Newfoundland is one of the oldest settlements in North America, and has survived for five centuries to become one of Canada's most charming and unique cities. Located on the island's eastern extremity, the Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) of St. John's is the second most populous region in the Atlantic provinces. With one of the finest harbours in the North Atlantic, it provides a supply and service base and repair centre for international fleets. As well, it is the primary distribution centre for the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Over the past year, St. John's and Newfoundland have celebrated the 500th anniversary of John Cabot's arrival on the island.

BY SYLVIE OUELLETTE AND CAROLE BLAIS-ST.DENIS

An aging population The CMA of St. John's has grown slowly but steadily in recent years and had 174,050 residents in 1996. Although the provincial population declined for the first time in its history (down 2.9% between 1991 and 1996), St. John's population grew by 1.3% over the same period. However, the increase was largely due to migration, mainly from other regions of the province, rather than natural population growth.

Roughly 60% of the migration to St. John's is intra-provincial. For instance, in 1994-95, the CMA of St. John's had a net influx of almost 1,200 people from other parts of Newfoundland. Since most colleges and university campuses are located in or near the city, students from other areas of Newfoundland who want to stay in the province to pursue their education usually have to move to St. John's. The high rates of unemployment and seasonal employment also contribute to the exodus of people from the province's towns and villages. At the same time, however, the capital city loses some of its residents to other major urban centres. Toronto, Halifax and Vancouver together took over one quarter of all the people who left the CMA of St. John's in 1994-95. Except for those returning to their native province, very few people move to Newfoundland. In 1991, 90% of the people who lived in the CMA of St. John's, and 93% of those in Newfoundland, had been born in the province. This is a much

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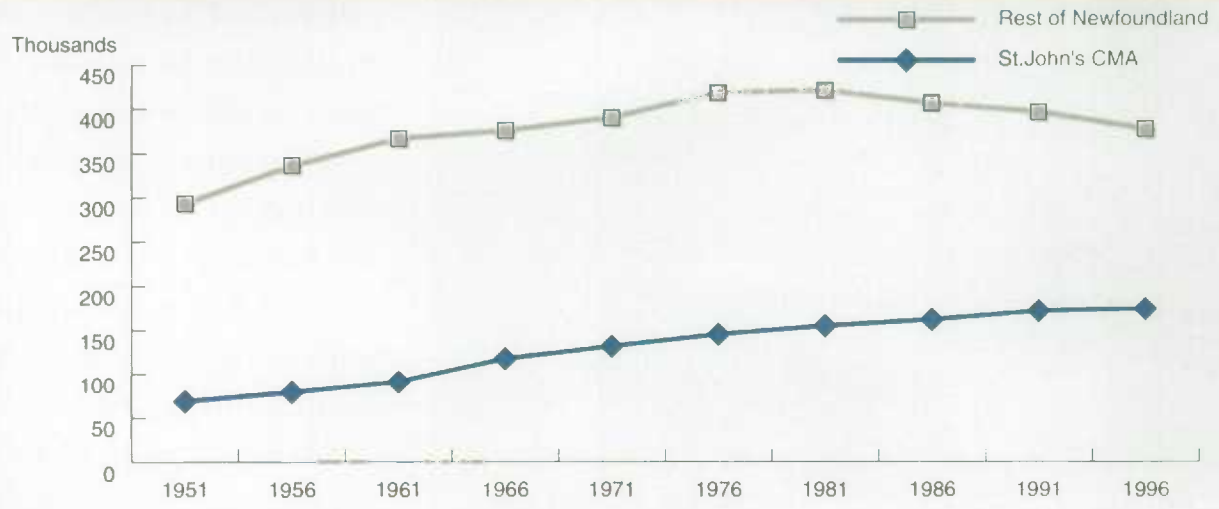
St. John's – A consistent first

- The first census of St. John's, conducted in 1675, enumerated 185 people.
- Italian electrical engineer Guglielmo Marconi became obsessed with the idea that waves could be used for transmitting information without the need of wire connections. Wireless telegraphy became universal in 1901 when, in St. John's, Marconi received the first radio-wave signal, sent out from Cornwall in England. On the night of April 14, 1912, this invention helped save many lives when the Titanic sent out an SOS call, after colliding with an iceberg off the Grand Banks.
- Seventy-eight years ago, Captain John Alcock and Lieutenant Arthur Brown made the first ever nonstop transatlantic flight from St. John's to Clifden, Ireland. The flight took 16 hours and 12 minutes.
- The Royal St. John's Regatta is North America's oldest continuous sporting event. The first recorded official date for the race is 1826, but it is likely the boat racing began in the 1700s. Men's crews row a 2.45 kilometre course and women's crews a course of half that distance. Regatta Day attracts between 40,000 and 50,000 people to St. John's every year and generates approximately $1 million for the local economy.

The population has grown in the CMA of St. John's but declined in the rest of Newfoundland CST



Source: Statistics Canada, Censuses of Population.

Median total income is higher in the capital area of St. John's

Family type	Median total income St. John's	Newfoundland	Canada
All families	$43,300	$34,700	$44,300
Husband-wife families	$49,100	$38,400	$49,000
Lone-parent families	$18,000	$15,700	$20,900
Non-family persons	$13,600	$12,100	$16,100

Source: Statistics Canada, 1995 Family Databank.

CANADIAN SOCIAL TRENDS BACKGROUNDER

What a celebration!

Five-hundred years ago, in 1497, Italian-born explorer John Cabot (Giovanni Cabota) and his crew left Bristol, England in their vessel the Matthew. They sailed across the Atlantic Ocean to an island just south of Greenland. Off the coast of this island — thought to be Newfoundland — one of the world's most important discoveries took place: instead of gold, Cabot and his crew found an overwhelmingly abundant supply of fish. Thereafter, thousands of fishermen from Spain, Portugal, France and England came every summer to fish the Grand Banks, making the settlement of St. John's their temporary home. Eventually, these men brought their families with them to begin a new life in the New World.

Newfoundland became England's first overseas territory when, in 1583, Sir Humphrey Gilbert declared to the captains and crews of the fishing vessels in St. John's harbour that he was claiming "New Founde Lande" for Queen Elizabeth I. By 1610, St. John's was granted a special charter as Newfoundland's first colony. The island achieved colonial status in 1832 when Great Britain granted Newfoundland the right of representative government. In 1948, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador voted by a narrow margin to join the Canadian federation. On March 31, 1949, Newfoundland became Canada's tenth province.

In 1997, Newfoundland and Labrador celebrated the John Cabot 500th Anniversary. The year-long festivities were launched in January with a Sunrise Ceremony on Signal Hill. Events included "Festival 500 - Sharing the Voices" which united over 30 adult and youth choirs representing over one thousand singers and conductors from all over the world. In May, Skipper David Alan-Williams and his crew left Bristol, England in a reproduction of the Matthew to retrace the voyage taken 500 years ago by John Cabot. Seven weeks later, on June 24, the skipper and his crew made landfall at Bonavista, Newfoundland, to be greeted by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, as well as other dignitaries. In June, the "Cabot and his World" symposium attracted about 7,000 participants to Memorial University; on July 1, Canada Day was celebrated at Signal Hill; and in the first week of August, the Royal St. John's Regatta was held on Quidi Vidi Lake for the 171st consecutive year.

higher "native-born" rate than the average recorded for all Canadian provinces (69%).

At the same time, natural growth is declining. Although Newfoundland has long been known for its large families, the average family size in St. John's and Newfoundland in 1995 was about 3.1 people, close to the national average of 3.0. That same year, the total fertility rate for Newfoundland was 1.25 children per woman, the lowest rate ever recorded for a Canadian province. One consequence of the decline in natural growth and the rise in out-migration has been a considerable aging of the population. In 1996, the median age of the population of St. John's was 33 years and the rest of Newfoundland was 34 years, up almost 10 years from 1951.

British background As the city's history would suggest, the people of St. John's are almost exclusively of European origin – more specifically, of English and Irish descent. In the first three centuries after its founding, St. John's was populated by people from England, Ireland and France. By 1951, however, nearly 95% of the population of Newfoundland reported their ethnic origin as English, Irish, Scottish or Welsh, whereas no more than 1% were of French descent; in 1991, the ethnic composition was largely unchanged. Not surprisingly, English is the mother tongue of virtually all residents (about 98%), whereas the French language is exceptionally rare.

Unique traditions Newfoundlanders have always shown a keen interest in arts and culture, especially music, perhaps because many of them are of Celtic descent. A number of musical groups such as Rawlins Cross and Signal Hill from St.John's and Buddy Wasisname and the Other Fellers from Gander are very popular throughout Newfoundland and the Maritimes, while Great Big Sea is attaining national recognition, going platinum with their recent album "Up." The Sea plays traditional acoustic instruments and sings four-part harmony to traditional ballads and jigs as well as their own songs.

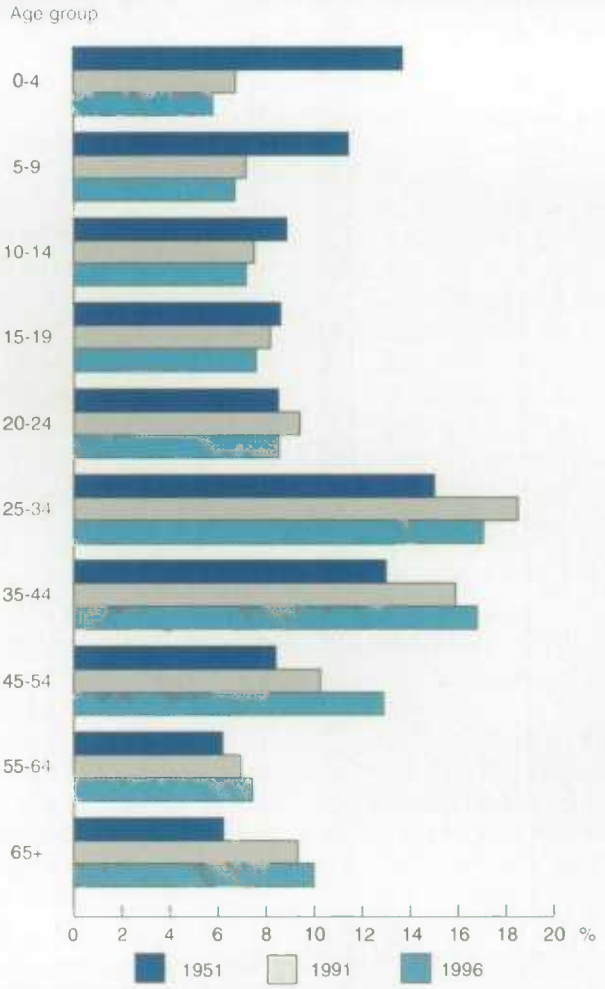
The people of Newfoundland are also fans of amateur dramatics, an art form whose popularity has grown rapidly since 1949. Folk arts such as ballad

A higher percentage of people have postsecondary education in the CMA of St. John's

Educational attainment	% of population 15 and over	
	St. John's CMA	Rest of Newfoundland
0-8 years (elementary)	9	19
Some secondary education	18	23
Graduated from high school	15	16
Some postsecondary education	15	8
Postsecondary certificate or diploma (includes trades certificate)	30	27
University degree	14	8

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, 1996.

The population has aged significantly in the St. John's CMA



Source: Statistics Canada, Censuses of Population.

singing, songwriting and storytelling have been enjoyed for centuries, while a variety of speech patterns and numerous dialects, especially in the outports, add to the richness of the performance. Square dancing and step dancing are very popular at folk festivals.

Catching up on education Newfoundland's education system has changed significantly from the days when many schools had only one classroom for all grades, and few teachers had attended university. In 1949, a child had only one chance in 700 of obtaining a Grade 11 education (high school completion), partly because secondary education was inaccessible in many areas. Today, high school is available to all children in Newfoundland, and more Islanders than ever before go on to university or college.

People living in the St. John's area have even more opportunities to further their education. St. John's boasts a number of private colleges and Memorial University. Not surprisingly, the level of education is higher than elsewhere in Newfoundland. In 1996, 44% of the people in St. John's had a postsecondary certificate/diploma or university degree, compared with only 35% in the rest of the province.

Working in the capital city Newfoundland had one of the highest rates of unemployment in Canada in 1996, at 19%. The CMA of St. John's fared better at 14%. One-third of the province's labour force lives in St. John's. Moreover, a large proportion of workers (42%) are in managerial and professional occupations, and only the CMA of Ottawa-Hull boasts a higher percentage of workers in these occupations (47%). As in other large urban centres, the majority of jobs are in the service and health care sectors. In 1996, the main sources of employment were hospitals, the federal and provincial governments, the food industry and communications. By comparison, the economy in the rest of the province is still, to a large extent, based directly or indirectly on natural resource industries. Fishing remained the biggest employer outside St. John's in 1996, in spite of the 1992 fishing moratorium that was imposed on certain species (partial

CANADIAN SOCIAL TRENDS BACKGROUNDER CST

Highlights

Newfoundland

Entered Confederation:	March 31, 1949
Original Name:	"New Founde Lande" was the name given to the island by its first explorers
Provincial Flower:	Pitcher plant
Provincial Tree:	Black spruce
Provincial Bird:	Puffin
Provincial Capital:	St. John's

St. John's (Census Metropolitan Area), 1991

Language spoken at home:	English (98%)
Ethnic Origin:	Of the population who reported a single ethnic origin: English, Scottish, Welsh (76%), Irish (20%) and, French (1%).
Religions:	Catholic (49%) Protestant (47%)

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Diversifying the economy

The provincial government has launched a number of initiatives in an effort to diversify the Newfoundland economy. Many companies from abroad have taken advantage of incentives introduced by the EDGE Program (Economic Diversification and Growth Enterprise), which exempts all new companies from paying municipal and sales taxes for ten years, as well as providing a $2,000 grant for each job created. The government is also providing incentives for self-employment and telework, both of which are fast gaining acceptance throughout the province.

Perhaps the best-known of Newfoundland's economic projects is the Hibernia oil project. Building the oil-drilling platform has created many jobs in the St. John's area for a number of years; employment averaged 4,400 to 5,500 workers in 1996. The Hibernia rig is the largest oil-drilling platform ever built. With a 600,000-tonne concrete base, it is designed to withstand 30-metre waves and 6-million-tonne icebergs. The five-layer superstructure contains a petrochemical plant, a hotel, an infirmary, a cafeteria and exercise rooms. Although the construction phase of the project is now over, Hibernia will continue to provide permanent employment for about 1,000 people. The rig is scheduled to begin pumping oil by mid-December, 1997, and is expected to produce 135,000 to 150,000 barrels of oil a day for approximately 20 years. When the oil field is abandoned, the platform will be towed to land and dismantled.

reopening was granted in May 1997). Of the many affected people in the fishing industry, some registered with the TAGS program (The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy is an income support, training and adjustment program), some diversified their activities in the industry, while others may have moved to St. John's or other parts of Canada to look for work.

Total income in St. John's is roughly the same as that for Canada, mainly because the CMA has many jobs in the high-tech and service industries. In 1995, total median income for all families was $43,300 in the capital, compared with only $34,700 in Newfoundland. For husband-wife families, the figures were $49,100 for St. John's but only $38,400 for the province.

Summary The province of Newfoundland and Labrador is faced with considerable challenges as it enters the next century. But as the Cabot 500 celebrations have shown, St. John's and Newfoundland are reaching out to the world. Since the province joined Confederation in 1949, it has improved access to education and worked to diversify its economic base. Much energy has been devoted to developing high-tech skills to meet world-class standards; for example, every school in the province is connected to the Internet, compared with only 20% of schools elsewhere in the country in 1996. All these efforts are bearing fruit, as St John's is rapidly becoming a leader in telecommunications technology and a world centre for marine and cold ocean research.

Sylvie Ouellette was an analyst with Housing, Family and Social Statistics Division, Statistics Canada and **Carole Blais-St.Denis** is the research assistant with *Canadian Social Trends*.

CST

The social context of school for young children

Schools play an important role in children's intellectual, social and physical development. Recent information from the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) may be able to cast some light on how children become successful learners. Based on the responses of the children's teachers and principals, and the results of a standardized mathematics test, it is possible to examine how children's school experiences, environment, and family socio-economic background influence their development and education.

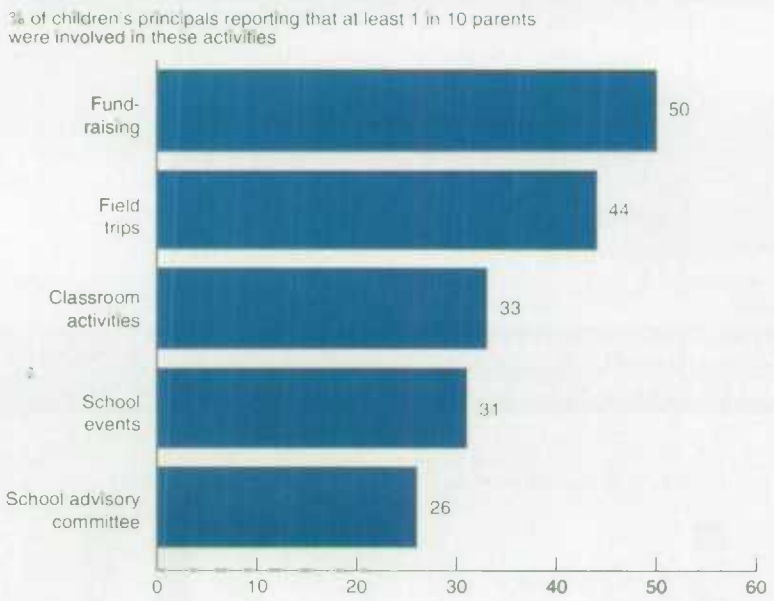
This article briefly highlights some of the results from the first cycle of the NLSCY. It focuses on parental involvement in school, socio-economic status and academic outcomes, and indicators of school problems.

by Garth Lipps and Jeffrey Frank

Parents often involved in their children's schools Parental involvement in the school may improve a student's education by strengthening the link between home and school. In 1994-95, the NLSCY collected information on the ways in which parents can be involved in their child's education. These forms of involvement include direct activities, such as parent-teacher meetings and volunteering at school, and less direct involvement such as supporting the educational efforts of the teacher and school.

In general, the children's teachers reported that parents took an active role in their child's education. For more than 9 out of 10 children, at least one parent had attended a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference. Similarly, for about 7 out of 10 children, the parents had called the teacher to discuss their child's education or behaviour at school. As well, for about one-half of children, the teacher had telephoned the child's parents at some point during the school year; in 9 out of 10 of these cases, the parents returned the phone call.

Parents most frequently involved in fund-raising



Source: Human Resources Development Canada and Statistics Canada, National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, 1994-95.

CANADIAN SOCIAL TRENDS BACKGROUNDER

Data source and definitions

The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, a joint project of Human Resources Development Canada and Statistics Canada, is a comprehensive survey concerning factors that influence child development. Information will be collected every two years on the same children as they grow up, as well as on the environments in which they live, learn and play. Information is collected from parents, teachers, principals and from the children themselves.

The first cycle of the survey took place in 1994-95 and collected information on almost 23,000 children, from newborns to 11-year-olds. In an interview with the person most knowledgeable about the child (usually the child's mother) the NLSCY gathered information on demographics, socio-economic background, child health and development, behaviour, relationships, education, literacy, recreation and leisure activities, family functioning, parenting, child care arrangements and family custody history.

In addition to the household-based interview, the NLSCY collected information on child development and functioning using a variety of other methods: mathematics computation and vocabulary tests; self-completed questionnaires (for children aged 10 and 11 only); and questionnaires completed by the child's school teacher and principal. These latter questionnaires collected information on children's academic achievement and behaviour at school, and on their classroom and school environments.

The School Component of the NLSCY covers children aged 4 to 11 attending school in 1994-95 (mainly in kindergarten to Grade 6). Data are available on the behaviour and educational functioning of 7,000 of the 12,500 eligible school-aged children (from the teacher's questionnaire) and on school characteristics for about 6,900 children attending approximately 2,800 schools (from the principal's questionnaire).

Teachers' perceptions also provide insight into indirect aspects of parental involvement. According to teachers, the parents of virtually all children were either "somewhat" (30%) or "very" (67%) involved in their child's education. Similarly, teachers stated that most of the parents perceived school to be "very important" (77%). They also reported that most parents "strongly support" (75%) their teaching efforts.

Parents may also contribute to the quality of their children's education by getting involved in school activities; however, principals reported that many parents did not participate in school activities. Those who did, though, most frequently chose activities such as fund-raising and field trips. Parents were less likely to take on roles that usually required a continuing commitment, such as being involved with classroom activities, the school advisory committee, or helping with school events such as sports or plays. According to principals, parents were least likely to be involved in supervising children at school.

Socio-economic status and academic achievement Social barriers may prevent some people from making the most of their talents and abilities. One such barrier is socio-economic status (SES). Numerous studies[1] indicate that people who go furthest in school tend to come from families belonging to the highest SES groups. The relationship between SES and academic performance, however, is complex. To some extent it involves how conducive a child's environment is to learning: the availability of resources such as high quality day care, nutritious diets and greater opportunities for intellectual

[1] H. Ishida, W. Müller, J.M. Ridge, "Class origin, class destination, and education: A cross-national study of ten industrial nations," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 101, No. 1, pp.145-193, 1995.

T. Siedule, "The influence of socio-economic background on education ," Ottawa: Economic Council of Canada, Working Paper no. 34, 1992.

Children from highest socio-economic status families were most likely to be near the top of their class

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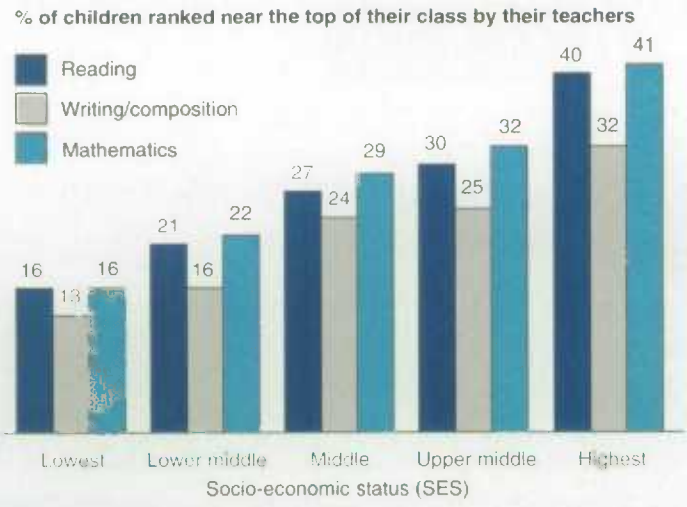
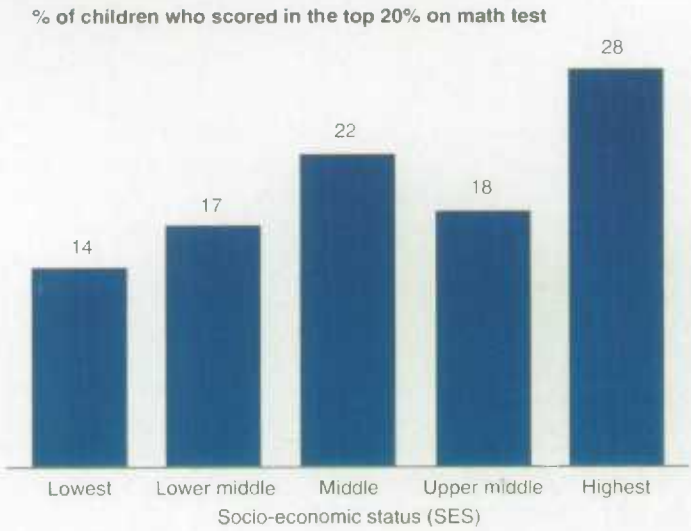




Source: Human Resources Development Canada and Statistics Canada, National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, 1994-95.

CANADIAN SOCIAL TRENDS BACKGROUNDER

CST

Measuring socio-economic status

The NLSCY includes a composite measure of family socio-economic status (SES), providing an opportunity to explore the influence of SES on Canadian children's academic functioning. This measure combines family income, parents' occupations and parents' education to arrive at an overall indicator of SES. For this analysis, five equally sized groups (or quintiles) were created, each containing 20% of the children, according to their ranking in terms of family SES scores. Children whose families were in the top 20% of SES family scores are in the highest SES group, while those in the bottom 20% are in the lowest SES group.

stimulation can certainly influence a child's development. But it goes well beyond the availability of physical resources, as children's socialization also affects the likelihood they will do well in school.

Despite the existence of such barriers, children's outcomes are by no means predetermined: many children from low SES families perform well in school and many from advantaged backgrounds experience educational difficulties. In addition, previous research using data from the NLSCY suggests that in Canada, SES may have less of an impact on children's academic achievement than in other developed countries where differences between social classes may be greater. Further research is needed to examine precisely how children's socio-economic background influences their academic performance. In the meantime, some simple observations of family SES and children's academic progress using NLSCY data are presented below.

Higher socio-economic status related to higher levels of academic achievement Children from the highest SES families were two to three times more likely to be rated by their teachers as being near the top of their class in reading, writing and mathematics, compared with children from the lowest SES families. Performance on a standardized mathematics computation test showed a similar pattern across socio-economic groups. In comparison with children from the lowest SES families, twice as many children from the highest SES families scored in the top 20% of all students on the math test.

Many schools offer special education programs for students who have advanced artistic or intellectual capabilities (gifted programs) and for those students who have physical, emotional, intellectual or behavioural problems (remedial programs). In 1994-95, about 7% of children received some form of gifted education, while 10% of children received remedial education.

Children from low SES families were about three times more likely than those from high SES families to be in a remedial education program. Conversely, in comparison with children from low SES families, children from high SES families were nearly twice as likely to receive gifted education. Furthermore, although relatively few children overall had repeated a grade at some time during their schooling (about 4%), the rate for children from the lowest SES families was about twice as high as the average.

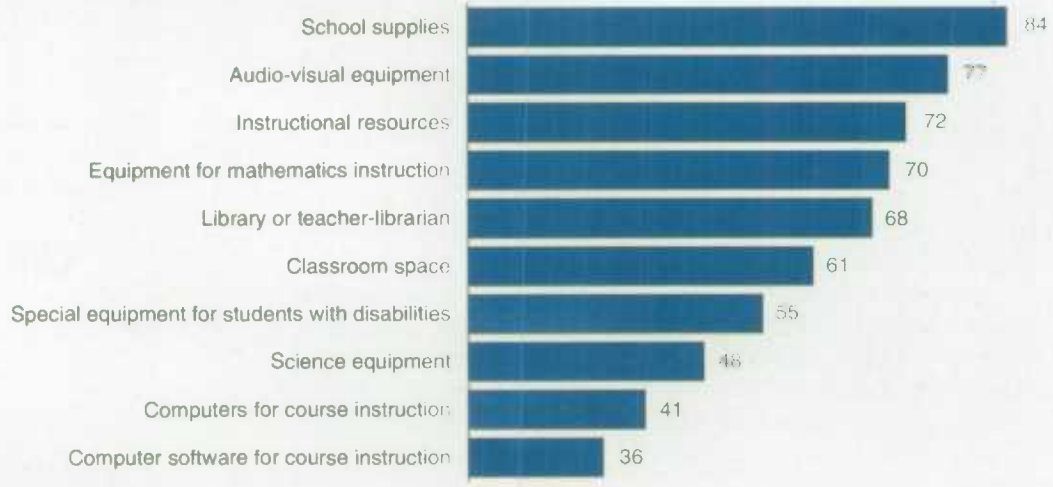
Absenteeism and truancy not common problems Missing school with parental permission (absenteeism) and skipping school without authorization (truancy) may be associated with lower academic performance because when students are absent from school for any reason, they are missing the opportunity to learn. But they were not common problems among children aged 4 to 11. In fact, roughly one in every nine children (11%) had not missed any days during the school year due to absenteeism, and 50% had missed four days or less. A small proportion of children (4%), however, had missed 20 or more days of school — the equivalent of about one month. As for truancy, teachers reported that the vast majority of children (98%) had not skipped a single day of school.

The most common disciplinary problems encountered were verbal or physical conflicts, and groups of students harassing individual students. Twenty-eight percent of principals reported they "usually" or "always" had to discipline students for verbal conflicts, 11% for physical conflicts, and 5% for harassment by groups of students.

Science and technology resources least likely to meet class needs

CST

% of children's teachers reporting that resources adequately or completely met instructional needs



Source: Human Resources Development Canada and Statistics Canada, National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, 1994-95.

More serious disciplinary problems such as drug use, assaulting staff, carrying weapons and theft of staff belongings were rare. More than 95% of principals reported they "never" or only "rarely" had to deal with these problems in their schools. Analysis of serious disciplinary problems at the school level may become more relevant in future cycles of the NLSCY when the children enter high school.

Science and technology resources often lacking The instructional resources available in classrooms are issues of importance to parents, teachers, principals and children. For most types of materials and equipment, children's teachers felt that the resources in their classrooms adequately or completely met their needs. Less than half of teachers, however, reported that resources such as computers (41%), computer software (36%) and science equipment (48%) were adequate for course instruction. Given the importance of science and technology in contemporary society, this finding suggests that some children may not have access to certain relevant instructional tools.

Summary The results from the first cycle of the School Component of the NLSCY suggest that, with a few exceptions, children and their classrooms and schools are functioning well: parents are involved in their children's education; absenteeism and truancy are rare; schools are relatively free of serious disciplinary problems; and children's classrooms are adequately equipped. However, some children, many of them from low SES families, appear to experience some difficulties in school. As well, adequate instructional resources are not always available for certain subject areas. Understanding the education and development of children will deepen as subsequent cycles of the NLSCY follow these children into youth and adulthood.

• This article was adapted from "The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, 1994-95 — Initial Results from the School Component." This document is available on the Internet at: http://www.statcan.ca/english/school/school.pdf.

• For more information on the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth see *Growing up in Canada*, Statistics Canada and Human Resources Development Canada, Catalogue no. 89-550-MPE, 1996.

Garth Lipps is an analyst and **Jeffrey Frank** is a senior analyst with the Centre for Education Statistics, Statistics Canada.

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EDUCATORS' NOTEBOOK

Suggestions for using Canadian Social Trends *in the classroom*

Lesson plan for "I Feel Overqualified for my Job..."

Objectives

- To develop skills in interpreting analytical information.
- To learn to assess how choices made today may have a long-term impact on future opportunities.

Method

1. Develop a profile of the type of person who is most likely to feel overqualified for their job. Do the same for someone who is least likely to feel that way.
2. Identify some of the reasons why young people are more likely to feel overqualified for their jobs than older workers in their 30s and 40s.
3. Discuss the expectations the students have about their working life. What do they believe would make a job most satisfying to them?
4. Discuss the students' own plans for college or university. In light of the experiences of other young adults just beginning their careers, ask if the students think they will find a "fit" with the kinds of careers they hope to have after graduating.
5. Using E-STAT and the census databases, explore employment levels over the past ten years in high-skilled occupations such as engineering and natural science, teaching, health care, and other professions. Are employment levels growing? If so, how fast? Ask the class if they think there will be enough high-skilled jobs for them when they graduate from college or university.

Using other resources

- For educators with access to E-STAT, a related classroom lesson is available in the economics lesson section of the *Teachers' Handbook* or on the Statistics Canada web-site. The URL is http://www.statcan.ca/english/Estat96/estat/Pdf/classroom/economic.pdf (p.13.)

Share your ideas!

Do you have lessons using CST that you would like to share with other educators? Send us your lessons and we will ship you lessons using CST received from other educators. Also, the first ten educators who send in their comments on this column will receive one complimentary copy of a compendium of profiles on employment equity populations in Canada. For further information, contact Joel Yan, Dissemination Division, Statistics Canada, Ottawa K1A 0T6, 1-800-465-1222; fax: (613) 951-4513 or Internet e-mail: yanjoel@statcan.ca

EDUCATORS – You may photocopy *Educators' Notebook* and any item or article in *Canadian Social Trends* for use in your classroom

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CUMULATIVE INDEX: SPRING 1993 - WINTER 1997

CUMULATIVE INDEX: SPRING 1993 - WINTER 1997

CUMULATIVE INDEX: SPRING 1993 - WINTER 1997

HEALTH

JUSTICE

CULTURE AND LIFESTYLES

MISCELLANEOUS

SOCIAL INDICATORS

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
POPULATION								
Canada, July 1 (000s)	27,379.3	27,790.6	28,120.1	28,542.2	28,947.0	29,255.6 R	29,615.3 R	28,846.8 F
Annual growth (%)	1.8	1.5	1.2	1.5	1.4	1.1 R	1.2	1.2
Immigration[1]	178,152	202,979	219,250	241,810	265,405	234,457 F	215,470 R	208,791 PP
Emigration[1]	40,395	39,760	43,692	45,633	43,993	44,807	45,949	47,230 PP
FAMILY								
Birth rate (per 1,000)	15.0	15.3	14.3	14.0	13.4	13.2	12.9	12.5E
Marriage rate (per 1,000)	7.0	6.8	6.1	5.8	5.5	5.5	5.4	5.3E
Divorce rate (per 1,000)	3.0	2.8	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.7	2.6	•
Families experiencing unemployment (000s)	808	879	1,096	1,184	1,198	1,130	1,044	1,079
LABOUR FORCE								
Total employment (000s)	13,086	13,165	12,916	12,842	13,015	13,292	13,506	13,676
– goods sector (000s)	3,928	3,809	3,582	3,457	3,448	3,545	3,653	3,681
– service sector (000s)	9,158	9,356	9,334	9,385	9,567	9,746	9,852	9,995
Total unemployment (000s)	1,065	1,164	1,492	1,640	1,649	1,541	1,422	1,469
Unemployment rate (%)	7.5	8.1	10.4	11.3	11.2	10.4	9.5	9.7
Part-time employment (%)	16.6	17.0	18.1	18.5	19.1	18.8	18.6	18.9
Women's participation rate (%)	58.3	58.7	58.5	58.0	57.9	57.6	57.4	57.6
Unionization rate – % of paid workers	34.1	34.7	35.1	34.9	34.3	–	–	–
INCOME								
Median family income	43,995	45,618	46,389	47,199	46,717	48,091	48,079	•
% of families with low income (1992 Base)	11.1	12.3	13.0	13.5	14.6	13.5	14.2	•
Women's full-time earnings as a % of men's	66.0	67.7	69.6	71.9	72.2	69.8	73.1	•
EDUCATION								
Elementary and secondary enrolment (000s)	5,075.3	5,141.0	5,218.2	5,284.2	5,347.4 P	5,402.4 P	5,465.5 E	5511.0 E
Full-time postsecondary enrolment (000s)	831.8	856.6	903.1	931.0	951.1 P	964.7 E	961.2 E	961.2 E
Doctoral degrees awarded	2,573	2,673	2,947	3,136	3,356	3,552	3,621 E	3,532 E
Government expenditure on education – as a % of GDP	5.5	5.8	6.3	6.4	6.2	5.9	5.7	•
HEALTH								
% of deaths due to cardiovascular disease – men	39.1	37.3	37.1	37.1	37.0	36.3	36.0	•
– women	42.6	41.2	41.0	40.7	40.2	39.7 R	39.3	•
% of deaths due to cancer – men	27.2	27.8	28.1	28.4 R	27.9	28.3	30.3	29.3 E
– women	26.4	26.8	27.0	27.3	26.9	27.0	27.3	27.9 E
Government expenditure on health – as a % of GDP	5.9	6.2	6.7	6.8	6.7	6.2	6.1	•
JUSTICE								
Crime rates (per 100,000) – violent	908	970	1,056	1,077 R	1,072	1,038 R	995	973
– property	5,271	5,593	6,141	5,868 R	5,524 R	5,212 R	5,235 R	5,192
– homicide	2.4	2.4	2.7	2.6	2.2	2.0	2.0	2.1
GOVERNMENT								
Expenditures on social programmes[2] (1995 $000,000)	175,372.4 R	183,505.7 R	190,745.5 R	207,245.8 R	214,317.3 R	215,567.4	208,494.6	•
– as a % of total expenditures	56.1 R	56.0 R	56.8 R	58.5 R	60.0 R	60.1	58.3	•
– as a % of GDP	23.0 R	24.5 R	26.7 R	28.8 R	29.4 R	28.2	26.9	•
UI beneficiaries (000s)	3,025.2	3,261.0	3,663.0	3,658.0	3,415.5	3,086.2	2,910.0	•
OAS and DAS/GIS beneficiaries[m] (000s)	2,919.4	3,005.8	3,098.5	3,180.5	3,264.1	3,340.8	3,420.0	3,500.2
Canada Assistance Plan beneficiaries[m] (000s)	1,856.1	1,930.1	2,282.2	2,723.0	2,975.0	3,100.2	3,070.9	•
ECONOMIC INDICATORS								
GDP (1986 $) – annual % change	+2.4	-0.2	-1.8	+0.8	+2.2	+4.1	+2.3	+1.5
Annual inflation rate (%)	5.0	4.8	5.6	1.5	1.8	0.2	2.1	1.6
Urban housing starts	183,323	150,620	130,094	140,126	129,988	127,346	89,526	101,804

– Not available • Not yet available P Preliminary data E Estimate m Figures as of March IR Revised intercensal estimates
PD Final postcensal estimates PP Preliminary postcensal estimates PR Updated postcensal estimates R Revised data F Final data

[1]For year ending June 30

[2]Includes Protection of Persons and Property; Health; Social Services; Education; Recreation and Culture.

Transit ridership down

Despite encouragement to take public transit, Canadians are using it less and less. In 1996, each Canadian took, on average, about 46 trips on some form of urban transit, the lowest level since 1970, when the average was 43 trips per person. In contrast, Canadians were using mass transit at three times that rate at the end of the Second World War. For every $1.00 in operating expenses in 1996, transit authorities collected only about $0.55 in revenue from passenger fares. The last time revenues from fares routinely outpaced expenses was in the early 1960s.

Surface and marine transport service bulletin, Vol. 13, No.4
Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 50-002-XPB

Little interest in shorter work week among Canadians

According to the 1995 Survey of Work Arrangements, given the opportunity, a third of Canadian workers would opt for a change in the time they work each week. Most people would prefer longer hours with more pay, according to the 1995 Survey of Work Arrangements. Two-thirds of workers appeared satisfied with their current work hours, preferring to work the same hours for the same pay. However, 27% preferred to work more hours for more pay, compared with only about 6% who wanted a shorter work week with less pay.

Working more? Working less? What do Canadian Workers Prefer?
Statistics Canada, Product no. 11F0019MPE

Depression: an undertreated disorder

In 1994, an estimated 6% of Canadians aged 18 and over — 1.1 million adults — experienced a Major Depressive Episode (MDE). Less than half of these people (43%) reported talking to a health professional about their emotional or mental health. Furthermore, only 26% of those who had an MDE consulted a professional four or more times regarding the condition.

Depression that was not chronic was more likely to remain untreated. In addition, MDE sufferers whose physical health was good and those who had not recently experienced a negative life event were less likely to be treated. Low educational attainment and inadequate income also seemed to act as barriers to treatment. Also, men and married people were less likely to receive treatment.

Health Reports, Spring 1997, Vol. 8, No. 4
Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 82-003-XPB

Job sharing an option for some

Job sharing has become a viable option for certain workers wishing to work part-time in full-time positions. Job sharers, most of whom were women (84%), represented 171,000 or 8% of part-time paid workers in 1995. As a whole, they were older than other part-timers, better educated and more likely to work in professional occupations.

One in four job sharers filled teaching or nursing positions, compared with one in seven regular part-timers. Half of job sharers were parents with children at home, compared with 35% of regular part-timers. Shared jobs were more likely to be permanent and unionized (81% and 36%, respectively) than were regular part-time positions (71% and 23%). They were also likely to offer more benefits and higher-than-average hourly pay.

Perspectives on Labour and Income. Summer 1997, Vol. 9, No. 2
Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 75-001-XPE

Breast cancer deaths down

In 1995, breast cancer mortality rates reached their lowest levels in more than four decades. In 1995, 28.4 in every 100,000 females of all ages died of breast cancer, down from 31.3 in 1990. Between 1986 and 1995, statistically significant decreases in breast cancer mortality rates occurred in all age groups from 30 to 69. In 1995, 57.4 women in every 100,000 in their fifties died of breast cancer, down from 62.4 in 1990. Similarly, 80.4 women in every 100,000 in their sixties died of breast cancer in 1995, down substantially from 103.5 in 1990.

Health Reports, Summer 1997, Vol. 9, No.1
Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 82-003-XPB

Death most common in winter and on Saturday

In 1995, there were 210,733 deaths in Canada, an average of 17,561 per month and 577 per day. More deaths happen in some months than in others. Above-average numbers of deaths occurred in December, January, February and March (parallelling the elevated incidence of pneumonia and influenza in the winter months). The number of deaths between June and October were well below the monthly average. Adjusting for the number of days in each month, the average daily number of deaths peaked in February at 635 and fell to a low of 529 in August. Not only are deaths more likely to occur in some seasons than in others, but some days of the week tend to be especially hazardous. Between 1974 and 1994, the highest average daily number of deaths occurred on Saturday, and the lowest on Thursday.

Health Reports, Summer 1997, Vol. 9, No.1
Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 82-003-XPB

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Canada: A Portrait

A Memorable Journey Through Canada

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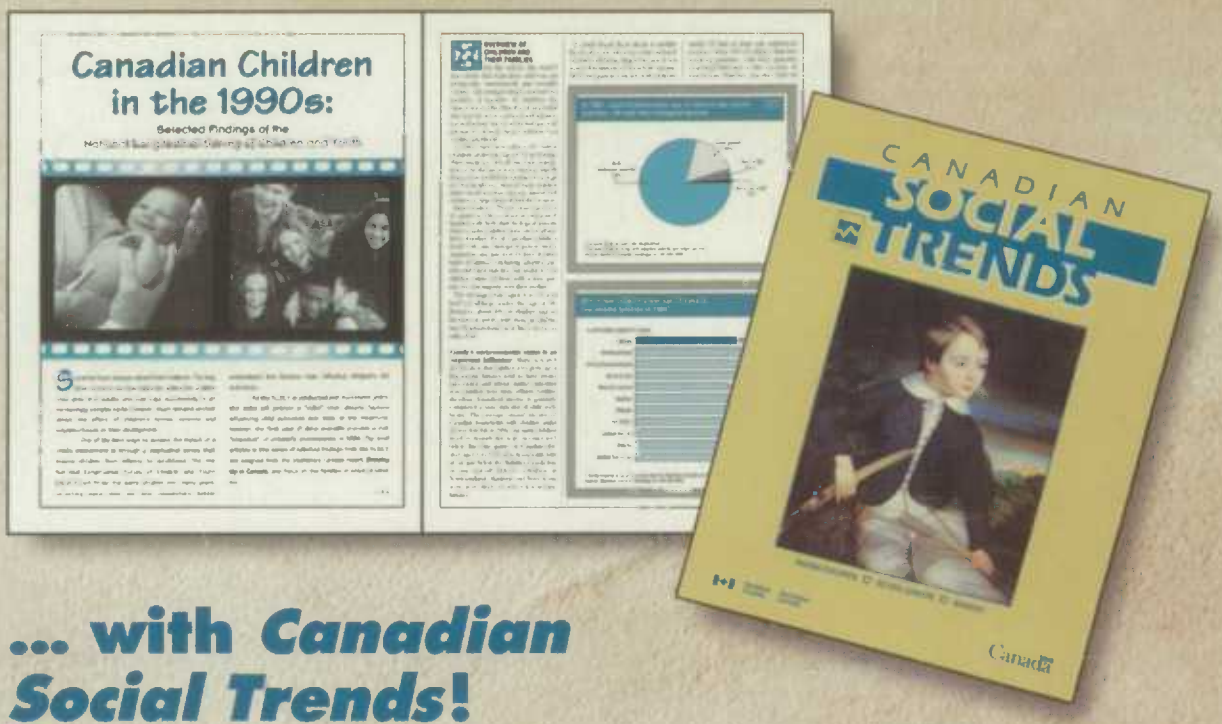

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