

# Immigration to Canada Now That We've Grown

By John Meyer

Thirty years ago immigration to Canada was given its broadest examination in a national context in the Green Paper. The economic studies forecast lower per capita income growth with higher rates of immigration. Public opinion surveys showed very strong support (2:1) for a moderate population size and for very low levels of immigration.

Despite the clear delineation of public interest and public will for a balanced level of immigration which would have seen Canada's population stabilize at around 27 million, back room policy makers chose to implement the highest rate of immigration in the world.

Now three decades and five million additional people later, as predicted, Canada has under performed every other OECD country in per capita income growth as our productivity has been left in the dust by nations focused on investing in their people. After all, importing cheap labor "to do the dirty low paid jobs that Canadians reject" was a policy designed to perpetuate low paying jobs and their inherent low productivity and poor working conditions. It worked.

Canadians economic well-being stagnated or declined but in simple GDP growth terms – still used as our main social and economic barometer – the economy boomed. Our national policies reflect what we measure and although GDP represents only a fraction of the wealth creation process, much less social well-being, it is still our main yardstick.

Immigration is the engine of a rapid population growth strategy, unique in the world, that no one seems to be willing or able to explain. The Canadian level is twice as high as that of the U.S. and four times that of Europe. And Immigration Canada is working toward boosting levels even further by 50% to 320,000 annually

with escalating levels forever as called for in the Liberal Party Red Book. Such a smoke stack era policy assumes unlimited natural resources and ignores any negative effects on a myriad of social and environmental issues.

Fulfilling Canada's Kyoto commitment to carbon emissions 6% less than our 1990 level would be possible if, by 2012, we had the 1990 population. But we won't. We will have seven million more consumers with a resource-intensive industrial base geared to building one additional Regina every year. By 2050, the Red Book

---

*"With our current annual level of immigration around 230,000 (much less 320,000), any commitment Canada makes to Kyoto is worthless."*

---

level pushes Canada's population to 52 million and our carbon emissions to 1230 mega tons – almost 2 ½ times our Kyoto target of 520.

With our current annual level of immigration around 230,000 (much less 320,000), any commitment Canada makes to Kyoto is worthless. But as one immigration policy maker remarked years ago, "The environment is not our responsibility."

And neither, it appears are stagnant per capita incomes or the deficits/program cuts that result from a cheap labor economy. Boosting hundreds of thousands of people into more productive, higher paying jobs would increase per capita income, reduce deficits and bolster social programs. But creating millions of low paying jobs, as Canada has demonstrated, makes it impossible to both balance budgets and maintain full social programs. An

---

*John Meyer is a Canadian businessman and a past-president of ZPG-Canada (Zero Population Growth).*

expanding pool of cheap labor fuels deficits as well as simple GDP growth.

It is safe to say Canadians want reduced working hours, higher incomes, longer vacations, more family time, cleaner air, less congestion, lower crime rates, and a full slate of social programs. High immigration impacts none of these areas positively. Knowing what we are measuring, looking down the road and developing integrated policies are core competencies for a democratic government – as is keeping a full set of books. Despite this, the impact of mass immigration on environment and deficits has never been officially examined, and for good reason; comprehensive analysis is not flattering. Immigration stands unchallenged, unscrutinized and unaccountable.

Where does the current policy come from? Follow the money. Cheap labor employers are supported by huge indirect subsidies and mass immigration makes markets for land speculators. The immigration lobby shouldn't be allowed to control immigration policy any more than the tobacco industry should be allowed to write health legislation.

Canada has matured and with 32 million people and a rapid loss of prime farmland is most likely now a net food importer. Few of our resources are being used below their sustainable levels. When did we change our national vision from feeding the world to consuming it?

Thirty years after the Green Paper, we are no longer asking questions about immigration and are locked in a downward spiral of dumbed down social policy fronted by a very controlled, murky, and detached political process.

The world is entering an era of climate change and resource exhaustion as our apparently once stable environment goes dynamic. Yet Canada's accounting system remains cash flow-based and positively values events such as the Quebec ice storm, crime, paving farmland, and sitting in traffic because these events increase the level of paid economic activity. We need to progress to a real wealth accounting system which values both environmental assets and unpaid human time so we can forge comprehensive and socially relevant national policies – of which limits on immigration are an integral part. •

*A Collection of Writings  
by Professor Albert A. Bartlett*

## The Essential Exponential! For the Future of Our Planet

Published by the  
**Center for Science, Mathematics  
and Computer Education**  
University of Nebraska  
Lincoln

Professor Albert A. Bartlett has been writing and lecturing on the importance of understanding the exponential function since the mid-1970s. He is known for his saying: "The greatest shortcoming of the human race is our inability to understand the exponential function."

More than 30 articles by Professor Bartlett along with articles by M. King Hubbert and L. David Roper are included in this new book along with tutorials on "The Arithmetic of Growth" and the 11-article series on "The Exponential Function" published in *The Physics Teacher* magazine from 1976 to 1996. The complete table of contents can be found at the Center website: [www.unl.edu/scimath](http://www.unl.edu/scimath).

***The Essential Exponential!*** (300 pages) will be available after June 1, 2004 at a cost of \$25. Bulk prices are available.

The book can be ordered at the Center website noted above, or by contacting:

Ms. Brenda West  
bwest1@unl.edu

