

HALTON HILLS & AREA PARADE OF HOMES

By Mack Parliament Director of Publications

Canadian Real Fatate Association

The latter half of the twentieth century has been marked by a high mobility among the Canadian population. The frequency with which people move from one address to another has recently been stepped up from once every four to five years to once every three years.

Some only move across town; others move across the country with the same ease. They gravitate to where the opportunities are, rather than waiting for the opportunities to

come to them. This has given rise to the quick growth of some cities like Toronto and Vancouver and a drain of young hopefuls

from some rural areas and les prosperous regions. But job and economic opportunities are not the only things migrants are seeking. Some want new cultural and educational opportunities. Others want a change in climate, lifestyle, a wider choice of accommodation, or a community where there is dedicated participation of residents in its progress and growth.

The federal Department of Urban Affairs recently completed a study entitled "Quality of Life Comparisons for Canadian Cities" in which some of the factors which combine to reflect the desirability of being a resident of one of the country's large urban areas were compared.

On the surface it would appear to be relatively easy to pick the city with the most going for it-to select the utopla of Canada and settle there with the comforting knowledge of being a resident of the best community in the country and live there happily ever after. However, there is no easy answer and the authors of the

summarizes the quality of life in urban areas is inot likely to be successful. "The diversity and complexity of urban institutions, practices and lifestyle is such that the derivation of one overall indicator of how one Canadian city is performing vis-

study warn: "The search for a universal measure that

a-vis other urban centres is probably impossible." By the time the study was completed some of the figures were out of date, but assuming the trends in motion are still valid, here are a few of the pros and cons of urban communities across the land:

The researchers awarded Saskatoon the honor of having the lowest new housing costs in the country and Toronto the highest, based on the average cost of a new single detached dwelling financed under the National Housing Act (NHA). Saskatoon was also the most peaceful on the labor front with less than half a day per 100 workers lost through strikes per annum.

On the other hand, Toronto outranked Saskatoon when it came to cultural facilities-70.4 square feet per 100 population, compared to 7.8 for Saskatoon.

Other areas where Toronto ranked first among the 22 urban areas across the country included: percentage of crimes solved;; the diversity of ethnic groups; the participation of women in the labor force (56.5 per cent), and the per capita use of public transportation. It also had the lowest fire and automobile hazard rating.

Although there is little agreement on which air pollutants should be monitored or their relative importance. Kitchener and the St. Catharines-Niagara region got the nod for air quality. Hamilton and Calgary received the worst ratings.

There is no full employment utopla in urban centres, but Sudbury and the Ottawa-Hull region have the closest thing to it with jobless persons composing 4.4 per cent and 4.2 per cent of the labor force in these centres respectively. Despite their other enticements, the Chicoutimi-Jonquiere region of Quebec and Vancouver are the least attractive places for jobseeking migrants with rates of 8 per cent and 7.1 per cent respectively.

"Survey research has shown that most Canadians desire a house of their own," the Urban Affairs study noted. "It is likely that those who own their own dwelling have a greater interest in their community, are less transient, and may devote more time and money to maintaining and improving their home environment." Thunder Bay, Ont., with 71.4 per cent of its dwelling units owner-occupied, ranks highest in the home ownership category. Others following dosely behind are the St. Catharines-Niagara region, Windsor and St. John's Nfld.

Those with the lowest percentage of home ownership include Montreal (35.8 per cent); Quebec (42.9 per cent), and Ottawa-Hull (45.6 per cent).

As expected, Montreal has the highest number of apartment units as a percentage of its housing stock at 51.6 per cent. Quebec is second with 49.2 Thunder Bay, with the highest home ownership rating, also has the fewest apartment units. They represent only 21.1 per cent of the city's housing

For families moving to a new city and seeking apartment accompdation Sudbury has the highest percentage of vacancles at 5.1 The most difficult places to find an apartment-all with less than I per cent vacancy rates-appear to be Edmonton, Thunder Bay, St. John's, Nfld., Saskatoon, Regina, Victoria and Vancouver.

Some persons measure the attractiveness of a city by its occupational status-its drawing power for highly skilled labor. In this regard the Ottawa-Hull area, with its large number of well educated civil servants, tops the list. It also ranks second to Toronto in cultural facilities, and its residents have the highest mean income after federal taxes. Other cities with a high occupational status include Quebec, Calgary, Montreal and Toronto.

Competition in the labor market is a factor many persons consider when moving to a new city as well as the education level of the workers they are competing against. The study isolated the 20-to-34 age group with no more than grade 10 education and found Vancouver had the highest percentage of these, with Calgary and Edmonton a close second and third.

Cities with the fewest in the less educated group in the 20-to-34 age bracket were Montreal, Sudbury, Quebec, St. John's, Nfld. and the Chicoutimi-Jonquiere region.

What makes an urban community a desirable place to live depends on what a person is seeking. No one community in Canada has the best of everything or can be all things to all men. Some have high wages counterbalanced by high housing costs. Some have lower housing costs and few career opportunities; while others have excellent housing choices but few cultural advantages.

For mobile individuals or families attempting to decide what Canadian city they will call home next the above pros and cons may be of some assistance in making a selection. Or maybe they will decide they already live in the best community in Canada, all things considered.

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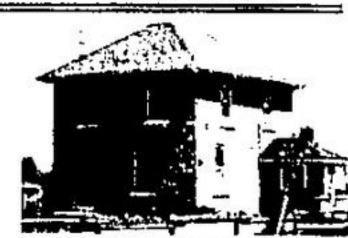
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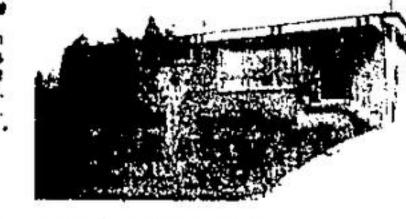
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