

# Canadian real estate consumers show similar traits

The emergence of first-time home buyers as a driving force in most large cities in Canada and the reluctance of investors to enter the residential real estate market are among the major findings of the Royal LePage National Survey of Canadian Real Estate Consumers, released today.

Canadian real estate consumers are not a homogeneous group, but there are similarities across the country, according to the study that examined over 66,000 real estate transactions in the past 18 months and compared them with annual statistics going back to 1987.

"In most localities, first-time buyers are leading the market," says Gino Romanese, Executive Vice President of Royal LePage. "We believe it's a result of pent-up demand, lower interest rates and a realization that prices are at their lowest level."

Nationally, the number of first-time buyers has increased from 32 per cent to 39 per cent of the market, up 7 per cent since 1989. This cross-Canada trend is strongest in Montreal, where 60 per cent of all purchases in the first three months of 1991 were made by this group. In Toronto, 50 per cent of all homes were bought by first-time buyers.

Typical first-time buyers are couples between the ages of 20-39; 48 per cent were without children and 66 per cent bought

detached homes.

The second major trend identified in the Royal LePage study is the sharp decline in the number of people buying residential property as an investment. In 1988, 19 per cent of real estate transactions involved investment properties. By the spring of 1991, this figure had dropped to 8 per cent. While the trend is national, Mon-

tréal and Ottawa are the cities where it is most evident. Only 3 per cent of real estate purchases in these cities were made as investments. Toronto and Winnipeg were close behind with 4 per cent.

"Speculators are not a major factor in any residential real estate market in the country," Romanese said.

The Survey shows that while there are discernable national trends, most cities are unique markets. Some highlights:

- Nationally, in 1990, 39 per cent of home buyers have bought more than two homes in their lifetime, 41 per cent of home buyers were couples, 30 per cent of home buyers were aged 30 to 39, 68 per cent bought a detached home, and 87 per cent bought a principal residence.

- The number of single women buying homes has edged up every year since Royal LePage began the survey in 1987. In Vancouver, for example, 51 per cent of all single home buyers last year were women.

- Vancouver also has the greatest proportion of older buyers, with one in four over the age of 50 in 1990. Surprisingly, in the first quarter of 1991, over-50 buyers in Vancouver dropped to 18 per cent.

- The youngest home buyers in Canada are now in Regina, with 43 per cent in the 20-29 age group. Hamilton is not far behind at 40 per cent.

- In past years, condominiums were most popular in Vancouver, Ottawa and Toronto, where they accounted for over 20 per cent of all sales. In 1991, Edmonton joined this group for the first time.

Vancouver shows increasing buyer activity in condominium townhouses and apartments, where they represent 37 per cent of all purchases so far this year, compared to 23 per cent in 1987.

- In Calgary, families with children account for 42 per cent of all purchases, which is the highest such figure in the country.

The Royal LePage National Survey of Canadian Real Estate Consumers is the largest, most comprehensive study of its kind in Canada, with detailed demographic information on real estate consumers and types of

housing in 11 cities from coast-to-coast. The Survey includes historical data back to 1987.

Information contained in the Survey is based on Royal LePage sales and purchase data filed by company residential real estate specialists. Since the Survey was begun in 1987, over 500,000 transactions have been analysed.

Royal LePage is Canada's leading full-service realtor, with over 11,000 employees and representatives in close to 475 residential, commercial and associate broker offices in Canada, the United States and overseas.

## ECOLINE

By Catherine Forley



### BETTER LAWN CARE

Lawns and gardens receive a heavier dose of pesticides than most other land in North America: 4 kg per acre - five times as much as soybeans.

But these chemicals also kill earthworms, spiders and mites, which are part of a healthy lawn.



Switch to a safe and drug-free lawn:

- Don't be weed phobic! Hand pick unwanted weeds when they appear, and remember to dig out the roots too.
- Cut your grass high (about 2 inches), and leave the clippings on the grass to provide nutrients.
- When watering, "soak" the lawn to encourage deep roots.

Remember... the best defence against weeds is a healthy lawn.



## Phil's Basement



When it comes to academics, the women of 14 Croissant Crescent are stars this month. I bragged to you last week how our 15-year-old daughter got an A on her science project. Well, Em just got an A in the French class she's been taking. To celebrate, she took us all out for dinner at Le Fromage Bleu to impress us with her French.

When she translated the menu for us, Belinda and Kyle decided they wanted sweetbreads until they found out that sweetbreads were neither breads nor sweet. They settled for omelettes. We had just received our meals when a flushed-looking cook hurried from the back to urgently discuss something in French with the maitre d'.

Em listened intently to what the man was saying. "He's saying that there's a fire!" she hissed. Sure enough, the maitre d' hustled us all out of the dining room as a few wisps of smoke came from the kitchen.

Fortunately, it wasn't a major fire and we received vouchers for a free meal but as we drove home, it occurred to me that while I thought our house was pretty free of electrical fire hazards, we didn't have an escape plan for our family should we ever have a fire.

We've got smoke detectors installed, and a fire extinguisher in the kitchen but Em noted that we haven't put our emergency numbers into the memory of the new kitchen phone, or stuck them up on the wall. So we did that, and mapped out an escape route for each member of the family, plus an alternative. We also established where we would meet outside to count heads.

There were a few ground rules to talk about as well. The first, of course, is to get your family out of the house. You never open a door if the knob is hot to the touch. Always call the fire department from a neighbour's house, and never, ever re-enter your house for any reason until you've got official permission.

So next week we'll try Le Fromage Bleu again. And this time, I'm going to order snails and ask them if they happen to know the one who ate my geraniums last year.

*This newspaper, in conjunction with Ontario Hydro, is bringing you Phil's Basement to help "bring home" ideas on how to save energy. To receive the brochures "Prevent Electrical Fires In Your Home", call Ontario Hydro at 1-800-263-9000 and tell them Phil sent you.*

## Choose a good location

The purchase of a home means finding the one that is right for you—one that you are comfortable in, one that you can enjoy. Yet, the purchase of a house also represents the family's single largest investment. Although the deciding factors are based on lifestyle needs and affordability, the future consideration of resale value cannot be overlooked.

The greatest influence on resale value is that of location. The house itself can always be changed or renovated, but the lot can never be moved. Being close to transportation, shopping and schools is a prevalent aspect in determining resale value.

A lack of certain amenities, although they may not affect you personally, will definitely come into play if you decide to sell your home. The lack of a nearby school for example may not mean anything to



**REAL ESTATE AND YOU**  
Jamie Johnston

you if you don't have school-aged children, yet you are eliminating all possible families with school-aged children from buying your home.

These local amenities are key to deciding whether or not your location is a good one. Even if transportation, parks, shopping and schools are not important to you now, they can be the deciding factors when you try to sell your home.

For a free copy of our "How to Buy A Home" brochure, please call or visit a Canada Trust Realty office near you.

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This LONG custom brick rancher with LOVELY light filled, spacious rooms and neutral decor is LOW priced for action. Call today, Heather (Whiting) Scotland, Associate Broker, at 853-2086. RMAC91-46

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Set back from road on private, well groomed lawns with mature trees is this spacious triple brick home which features 5 bedrooms and 3 bathrooms, 2 family rooms plus a den, 3 enclosed porches and enough garage space for 7 cars. This fine home would suit a large or extended family, as well as an in-home occupation. To arrange your personal tour, please call Heather (Whiting) Scotland, Associate Broker at 853-2086. RMAC91-43

**LET'S GO BACK TO YESTERDAY - \$179,900**

Experience the charm of original wood work and plate railing, a cozy fireplace, French doors, etched glass windows and enclosed porches. This conveniently located solid older home features 3 bedrooms (with closets) plus a developable attic, updated wiring and plumbing - just waiting for your decorating touches. Call Heather (Whiting) Scotland, Associate Broker at 853-2086. RMAC91-48