

*Diversity and Change:
A Profile of British Columbia Families*

Vancouver: BC Council for Families, 1997. 71 pp. Tables.
(BC Council for Families, #204-2590 Granville St.,
Vancouver V6H 3H1).

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THIS IS A VERY USEFUL REPORT. It is divided into two sections: the first, "Marking a Milestone," outlines the views of the BC Council for Families; the second, "BC Families: Statistical Profile," has been prepared by Statistics Canada. Originating in 1977, the BC Council for the Family adopted its present name twenty years later, signalling a commitment to "all BC families: families of all shapes and sizes, including members of various ages, with children and without, and from diverse cultural backgrounds – families that follow familiar paths, and families forging new directions" (xiii). This inclusive vision recognizes how economic uncertainty, cultural diversity, and demographic change, together with the ever-present reality of gender relations, create substantial complications and opportunities for individual women and men. In the face of mean-spirited governments and a confused public, the council urges "progressive policies to encourage and maintain

healthy family development" (xxi). The statistical profile provides ample evidence of the complex and often trying situation facing British Columbians. Tables covering the years from the mid-1970s to 1996 offer a wealth of information on "Selected Characteristics of the Population in British Columbia," "Family Characteristics," "Labour Force Characteristics of Families in British Columbia," "Income and Expenditures," "Housing and Household Amenities," and "Time Devoted to Unpaid Work." Recent scholarship has clearly informed compilers who correctly alert readers to such influential factors as immigration, proportion of seniors, polarization of income, and the disparity between women's and men's contribution to productive activities. The result is a convenient little treasure trove for policy makers and educators, not to mention a reality check for ill-informed journalists and the right wing. It deserves wide circulation.