

was 2.8%. The Innovations program supports new labour market approaches rather than providing direct assistance, and officials noted that initiatives focussing on entrepreneurial training for older workers have shown promise.

It is noteworthy that, according to figures provided by Employment and Immigration Canada, older Job Strategy participants benefit just as much from participation as do other groups. In 1986-87, 63.1% of former CJS participants aged 45 or more were either employed or in further training three months after program completion. The comparable figure for all participants is 64.9%. These figures suggest that, with appropriate assistance, older workers can overcome labour market barriers posed by discrimination based on generalized negative stereotypes.

As for Labour Canada, its officials, while affirming that one of the most basic current issues is the need to ensure that everyone in the labour market is treated equally, irrespective of sex, race or age, focussed their presentation to the Committee on labour market characteristics of departmental clienteles. The Committee was informed that the number of assistance recipients under the Labour Adjustment Benefits Program, which provides assistance of last resort to laid-off workers aged 54-65 in designated industries, has grown ten-fold over the last five years. The average claimant was described as 60 years old, with only seven years of formal education, employed in the same industry for twenty-nine years and employed by the same firm for twenty-four years, and without entitlement to a pension before age 65. "LAB claimants," the Committee was told, "like many other displaced older workers, face severe adjustment difficulties" (27:15-16). On a substantially broadened basis, the Program For Older Worker Adjustment announced in the February 1986 budget will provide assistance akin to that of the LAB Program.

D) Observations and Recommendations

The Committee would like to offer two general observations on the relative importance of direct age discrimination and of labour market uncompetitiveness in explaining the employment difficulties encountered by older workers.

First of all, it is important to recognize that these explanations are not mutually inconsistent and that the phenomena upon which each focusses may indeed be mutually reinforcing. Some older workers, it would appear, face a double disadvantage consisting of generalized age discrimination on the