

Management Information Systems

Mr. Caccia: What I am endeavouring to do is meet, at least partially, the wishes of the hon. member in order that he might be better acquainted with the subject matter of his interest.

Mr. Howard (Skeena): Just table the document and we will be apprised of it.

Mr. Caccia: Along this line, before the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard) interrupted, I was trying to convey some information about the manner in which the department has seen fit to carry out this program. If the hon. member is not interested in that information he may as well say so, in which case I would submit there was no reason in the first place to submit this request.

Mr. Skoberg: Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary has indicated that I may not be interested in these papers. Let me suggest that this is the reason I tabled the notice for the production of papers. If he is prepared to give us the information verbally, possibly he is prepared to just table the papers at this time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Let me suggest to the hon. member that the point he has just made is merely a point of debate and not a point of order.

Mr. Caccia: Mr. Speaker, we are very pleased to learn about the continuing interest of the hon. member who just spoke. I am very happy to provide this information, as I am endeavouring to do now, by establishing the areas of approach to information systems which are being adopted at the present time in our department.

The manpower department has over the years developed a management reporting system. This system has special emphasis on information required for the objective management of resources, and to provide a quantitative and qualitative basis for program forecasts and estimates. Operational performance in the some 390 field offices across the country, namely our Canada manpower centres, will be evaluated in terms of efficiency, based on staffing criteria determined for the work processes and services rendered, and in terms of effectiveness, based on the degree of success in rendering services that meet specified levels of quality. This management reporting system is being implemented on a so-called manual basis using current data. However, it will be progressively expanded and computerized as the capability for providing more data is developed.

• (5:10 p.m.)

Then, we have in the department a system called ACIS which stands for automated client information system. This is in operation on an experimental basis in Ottawa. The hon. member is most welcome anytime he wishes to see this operation in the Canada manpower centre. It is a very interesting operation to watch. This system is intended as an aid to the Canada manpower centres as well as to departmental management. For example, it will help identify the most suitable workers or job opportunities from which final selection can be made by the counsellor. It will be in essence a matching operation.

[Mr. Skoberg.]

The value of the automated client information system is most obvious in large metropolitan centres, but it has a potential for introduction throughout the entire country, together with other benefits which will mean a gradual reduction in clerical activity and perhaps an increase in counselling services and identification of problem areas, provision of analytical reports and so on.

With regard to the Canada Manpower training program, an information system has been in operation since the introduction of the program away back in 1967. This system has gone through several stages of improvement and is now capable of assisting with the requirements of program operation, program management and program review. With the help of the computer, faster and more flexible reporting is possible from a comprehensive and standardized data base. This, in turn, has opened the door to a greater use of mathematical models for forecasting and long range planning. The department uses information system to retrieve data on clients under the Canada manpower mobility program in much the same way as is done with the training program.

Further there is within the department an information system which assists in management of staff resources. This, in phase one, is a semi-automated system which at present provides quantitative measurement on a strength and man-month basis and supplies management reports which facilitate decisions on departmental organization, staffing and control.

When phase two will be fully computerized, which should be by the end of 1971, it will include additional data on such items as pay and classification, education, work experience and official language proficiency. It will permit qualitative measurement and will supply management with data for decision making in such areas as staff planning, career development, training needs, staff rotation, staff relations and retirement planning.

I notice from the absorbed attitude of the hon. member opposite how interested he is in this particular matter. I wonder actually why he took the trouble to request the production of the papers.

Mr. Skoberg: On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, if the parliamentary secretary would take the time to get the information he would not have to worry about the time of this House. My point of privilege is that I can well pay attention to what little he is or is not saying without worrying about looking at him directly.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Caccia: After all this, Mr. Speaker, and after it has been possible to capture the attention of the hon. member, I shall proceed with my explanation. I believe I had arrived at the completion of a brief expose of the departmental information system. There is one more system in which the hon. member might be interested. It is the department's financial information system which permits financial control at all levels of management. This system also assists with long and short-range financial planning and budgeting.