

Jobs, women and welfare

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development in Paris has published a study, *Manpower and Employment, Problems and Prospects*, by R.A. Jenness, senior policy adviser to the chairman of the Economic Council of Canada.

The study was submitted as background documentation to an OECD experts' meeting on "Structural Determinants of Employment and Unemployment" in March 1977. It is the first study by a Canadian economist ever published by the OECD.

Manpower policies

The study reviews the manpower policies followed in the main OECD countries, including Canada, and relates these to their education, their insurance programs, income security and unemployment, and to labour market problems likely to develop in the 1980s. In most western European countries, manpower policies are administered through a mixture of public and private intervention, so that employers through their associations, or as a result of regulations, surtaxes or some variant thereof, are directly involved and responsible, along with unions, for the administration and funding of most manpower policies.

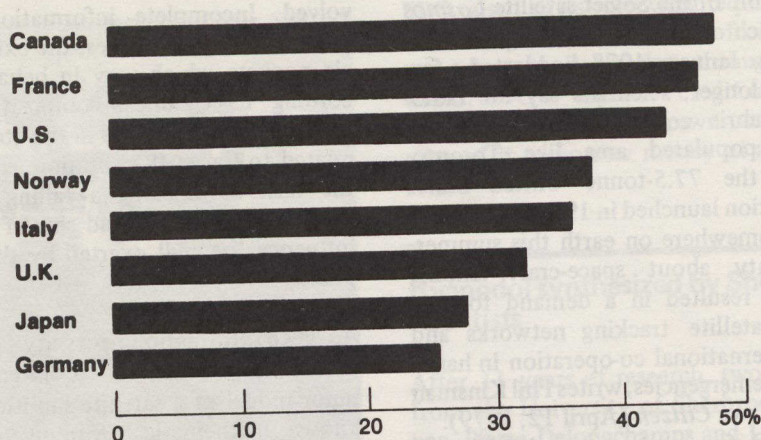
By contrast, employers in Japan, as part of the reciprocal lifetime commitments with their employees, bear virtually all of the costs of occupational training and mobility, and of keeping unemployment rates low. At the other extreme, in Canada almost all manpower initiatives involve government programs that are funded from general tax revenues.

Female participation

A hallmark of the 1960s and early 1970s has been the shifts in family expenditures patterns away from manufactured products and foodstuffs towards personal services and travel or towards collective goods such as education and hospital and medical services. It has also coincided with increasing participation of women in the work force throughout the OECD area. The increasing role of women has undoubtedly broadened their opportunities, and contributed to rising family incomes. But not without sacrifice.

Jenness cites a UNESCO report which shows that, when both housework and child-care are included as work, a wage-

STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION UNDER AGE 25 YEARS PROPORTION OF FEMALES



Source : OECD; *Educational Statistics Year Book*, Volume II, Paris, 1975.

employed wife toils about three hours a day longer than a wife who stays home, and over one hour a day longer than do employed men. Moreover, males still enjoy preferential treatment not only in employment and wages but also in their prior educational opportunities. In Norway, Britain, Germany and Japan less than 40 per cent of students in higher education are women. In Canada, women represent close to half of all post-secondary students, a higher proportion even than in the United States.

OECD countries have enjoyed over the past two decades, industrial productivity increases of over 4 per cent annually. But taking account of the growing service-orientation in family expenditures it is not at all clear that their own demands for manufactured goods will grow fast enough to keep pace with their growing labour forces. If this is so, the implication is that most OECD nations including

Canada will have to broaden their reliance on international trade and look to wider markets for their industrial output. Jenness concludes that with the evolution to service-oriented economies: "Increasing numbers of the labour force will have non-permanent jobs, either from their own inclinations, the dictates of consumer demand, or simply the competitive pressures of wage costs. As basic wage rates rise, it will pay entrepreneurs to use part-time help, or to lease workers in order to avoid the overhead costs of regular employees...services cannot be stock-piled as can material goods, and many demands for services involve daily, weekly or seasonal peaks or troughs which result in corresponding ebbs and flows of jobs..."

Who winds up in these "secondary jobs"? Usually those with the least bargaining power in the labour market, the least interest in a permanent career, or the least qualified.

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