

## 400 babies

# Feeding for the future

*A Canadian baby food company has completed a study of infant nutrition that ranges over the period from birth to 18 months of age. The results pose some interesting questions about recent nutrition theories.*

Among the many issues that confronted us during the 1970's, one of the more significant concerned the food we eat. The growth of the "fast food" industry, the penchant for "fad dieting" and growing "organic foods" all contributed to the widening discussion on diet and health. Food as an industry grew rapidly during the decade, but the welcomed abundance was accompanied by fears over the use of preservatives and basic food quality. For example, concern was expressed over the quantity of cholesterol in the blood, first in adults, then in teenagers and finally in young children. Bookstores which once kept cookbooks in

a dusty corner expanded their shelving to introduce sections on home gardening, cooking to preserve vitamins, and racks of books on nutrition in general.

Unfortunately, however, this flurry of books far outstripped the actual research done on these subjects. Aware of this, a group of dieticians at the H.J. Heinz Company of Canada's Baby Food Division decided to start at the beginning to find out just what was being fed to newborn infants and how diet was affecting their development.

Dr. David Yeung, an infant nutritionist and team leader of the study, comments: "We felt it important to know how infants were being fed. A great deal has been written in recent years on the subject, particularly about infant obesity and its possible effects in later life."

In order to give the answer to these questions a frame of reference, Dr. Yeung de-

veloped the parameters for an extensive study, financed in part by an NRC Industrial Research Assistance Program (IRAP) grant. "In 1972, a 'Nutrition Canada' survey was completed," he says, "but it was a cross-section of the country at one point in time. Our study was to be a 'longitudinal study' of a group of infants from birth to 18 months of age. We proposed to study 400 babies, all living in the metropolitan centers of either Toronto or Montreal. The urban locations offered the advantages of a large number of babies being born at any given time as well as providing subjects from the

**A technician prepares to record data in the H.J. Heinz analysis laboratory in Leamington, Ontario. (Photo: Walter Clemente)**

**Une technicienne se prépare à enregistrer des données au laboratoire de la compagnie H. J. Heinz, à Leamington, dans l'Ontario. (Photo: Walter Clemente)**

