

Committee agrees with the President of Treasury Board who has recently stated his concern that the existing concentration of evaluation activity and expenditure decisions on new policy proposals should be broadened to include more consideration of old programs.⁶ The Auditor-General has expressed a similar concern in his Report for 1975. The activity of placement, matching job seekers to job opportunities, is certainly the longest continuing responsibility of the Division.

A review of placement activities was strongly recommended by the Economic Council of Canada in its *Eighth Annual Review* in 1971. The Council explicitly rejected the piecemeal approach to the evaluation of the vast number of individual programs carried out in the Canada Manpower Centres, because such an approach could give rise to misleading conclusions about interrelated functions. The Council was concerned that no real data was available in the public domain about the effectiveness of placement function in 1971.⁷ No such data was available to the Committee in 1975.

The Division has routinely put forward placement figures based on the departmental definition of placement as an indicator of the flow of activity in Canada Manpower Centres. The exact definition of a placement was the subject of confusion in the Committee hearings. Mr. Manion has provided a clarification of the Department's definition in a letter to the Chairman, July 21, 1975:

The word 'placement' follows the common usage in other countries, namely that it represents an employer's firm acceptance of the worker for the vacancy notified. Some difference in definition arises as between 'permanent' and 'casual' jobs in which placements are made. Canada has accepted, for want of a better measure, the definition of a 'casual' job placement as placement in a job which is to last less than one week.

In international terms, in distinguishing between permanent and casual placement this follows German practice. The U.S. Employment Service uses a three-day criterion, the United Kingdom and France make no distinction between casual and permanent placements, and Sweden keeps no placement statistics at all. This unqualified approach to total placement statistics has led one critic of the Division to suggest that "probably not since the days when the Pentagon was churning out its Vietnam body counts, have government-supplied figures opened up such a yawning credibility gap."⁸

The accuracy of official placement statistics was challenged as a result of the meeting at which the panel of employers appeared before the Committee. In the course of the meeting on May 1, 1975, the Manpower Division, for reasons of its own, freely offered the Committee its detailed figures regarding placements and vacancies for each of the four companies whose representatives were witnesses that day. The employers agreed that the names and figures prepared by the Division should be given to the Committee. The Departmental representative who was present, explained that the placement figures relating to the

⁶ quoted in *Financial Post*, October 4, 1975.

⁷ Economic Council of Canada, *Eighth Annual Review*, page 191.

⁸ *Financial Post*, May 24, 1975.