

*Defence and Society*

As Canada addresses the broad question of defence requirements and structures for the coming years, those responsible must bear in mind that the armed forces play an important role in national society that must be respected as adjustments and shifts take place. The contacts between defence personnel and their fellow citizens are many and varied, and certainly contribute significantly to the overall, national well-being.

The Department of National Defence is a major employer, and also an important source of income for industry and services. In some particular locations or parts of the country, it is the primary provider of both jobs and contracts.

The Department is also a major contributor to research and development and to the provision of scientific and technological information.

The Armed Forces are very effective in providing skills to the thousands of recruits who enter each year. Most service personnel who sign up for a few years acquire technical or other skills that they can use afterwards to earn a livelihood in civilian life. This contributes significantly to the economic development of the country.

The Department also supports education for young Canadians, most notably through the military colleges. It gives broad training in discipline and citizenship to more than 60,000 young people who are enrolled in the Cadet movement.

The armed forces Reserves, too, encourage character-building among young people, while also providing some financial support on a part-time basis. The Militia and other Reserve forces have long helped to maintain a sense of national identity, purpose, values and service, especially in local communities spread across the country.

The armed forces constitute an important human part of the national mosaic. Their families are also vital members of many local communities, especially in areas including