

*Volunteer Organizations*

Welfare and Social Affairs must be empowered to study and report on the volunteer sector in order to evaluate its social and financial impact.

Notwithstanding the great interest in the volunteer sector, there are practically no independent or empirical statistics on a national scale, except for Novia Carter's 1975 study. Statistics Canada's national survey is the first wide-ranging survey ever done in Canada. It will go a long way towards filling the gap of missing data in that field, but it alone cannot possibly meet the demand for statistics. It was designed only to gather information on volunteer workers generally rather than to make an in-depth study of the characteristics, activities and motivations of a given group of volunteers.

The survey was aimed at one third of all participants in the February 1980 survey on the working population, roughly 18,745 households or 43,000 individuals. Its objective was threefold: Obtain information on the total amount of volunteer activities in Canada as well as descriptive data on individual volunteers; determine the kinds of volunteer organizations which exist and the types of services they are offering; discover why the people who were previously engaged in volunteer work have quit and why those who at one time considered engaging in volunteer activities have abandoned this idea.

In view of the enormous amount of data collected, I will limit myself to a brief analysis covering the widest possible range of general information. I will deal with three major issues: the rate of participation in volunteer work and the characteristics of the people involved in it, the amount of volunteer work done, and the types of volunteer organizations.

Mr. Speaker, the generally accepted notion of the typical volunteer is that of a middle-age married woman who is bored, well-off financially and anxious to help others. But the few empirical studies made so far runs counter to that notion. A 1969 survey carried out in Great Britain indicated that middle-age married women of the middle class no longer make up the vast majority of volunteers. On the other hand, the Novia Carter study indicated a surprisingly high proportion of men and a large participation of young people, low income workers and poorly educated people. A similar survey made in the United States confirmed these findings.

To draw up an adequate profile of the volunteers which this survey has identified, we should consider two factors: the rate of participation in the volunteer sector and the social and demographic traits of the volunteers.

Before looking into the rate of participation in the volunteer sector, it is logical to deal first with volunteer activities as a whole. The survey indicates that there is in Canada a large number of volunteers, 2.7 million in all, or 15.2 per cent of the active population have done volunteer work without pay during the year under review, namely, from February, 1979 to February, 1980.

The analysis of the rate of volunteers per age and sex brought to light a number of interesting findings, the most important of which being the comparable rates between men and women, respectively 14.2 per cent and 16.2 per cent. Age seems to be a determining factor in both sexes, the oldest groups, 25 years and over, demonstrating higher rates of volunteering than younger groups. For instance, the rates for people aged 25 to 44 being 19.8 per cent alone is more than twice that for people aged 15 to 19 at 9.4 per cent, or for those aged 20 to 24 at 9.3 per cent.

Moreover, the highest rates are among those aged 25 to 44, married and with an education up to at least one university degree. It is interesting to note the higher incidence of volunteer service among people having an occupation, namely 16.4 per cent, as compared to the unemployed, 9.8 per cent, or to people outside the work force, 14.2 per cent. It therefore appears that, contrary to a widespread belief, volunteer service is not limited to people without gainful employment. Figures show, however, that part-time workers are more likely to engage in volunteer service than those with a full-time job.

Finally, a breakdown by occupation shows that workers in the "management and professional," "primary sector occupations" and "business" groups have the highest rates, while a breakdown by industry shows the highest rates in "farming" and "public service".

To summarize, let us say that the highest rates of volunteer service have been noted in the following groups: middle-aged persons of either sex, married people, employed people and people with a relatively higher level of education.

Finally, in relation to population and volunteer service rates, employed persons have the highest ratio of volunteers when compared with other groups of activities and more than 80 per cent worked full-time.

Indeed, a few months ago, Mr. Speaker, I had a poll taken of my constituents in Argenteuil-Papineau in order to know and compare the results of the Carter Survey and the volunteer situation in my constituency.

Now, my constituency has some 327 volunteer associations, in which 9,062 persons do volunteer work for a total 993,316 hours. The typical volunteer is married in 79 per cent of cases, his or her income is approximately \$20,000 in 46 per cent of cases, and \$25,000 and over in 31 per cent of cases. He or she is aged 51 to 64 in 29 per cent of cases, a female in 52 per cent of cases and a male in 48 per cent of cases. The volunteers of Argenteuil-Papineau want to contribute to society in 62 per cent of cases, and to increase old-age security benefits in 24 per cent of cases.

In short, it seems that the profile of our volunteers is essentially as drawn by Mrs. Carter. The stereotype of the unemployed, middle-aged, married woman true to the traditional concept of the typical volunteer does not come out in