

Change in labour situation challenges government

Changes in the labour situation in the 1980s and their implications for government policy were discussed in two reports released recently by Employment and Immigration Canada.

The reports, entitled *Labour Market Development in the 1980s* and *Unemployment Insurance in the 1980s*, were produced as a basis for wide-ranging consultations with provincial governments and the private sector.

The reports indicate that a continually changing labour market will present challenges for Canada in the coming decade. More women will enter the work force and the number of young workers will decline. The western provinces will assume an even greater role in Canada's industrial development. The structure of jobs will change sharply as new growth industries emerge and new technology makes old jobs obsolete.

Policy changes

The Task Force on Labour Market Development proposed a number of broad policy directions for the 1980s. These include:

- greater emphasis in post-secondary training on technological, engineering, science, and business and technological training, coupled with incentives to industry to provide more and better trades training;
- the introduction of various measures, including special training, wage subsidies and progressive employment practices to facilitate the entry and advancement of women, Native peoples and disabled persons in productive jobs;
- a fundamental change in job-creation programs in areas of high unemployment, with the emphasis on longer term community-based economic development. A new organization, the Canada Opportunity Development Corporation, would coordinate local corporations which would be responsible for identifying local resources and developing comprehensive plans for their development;
- reduction in government support for declining industries — in particular tariffs, quotas, tax incentives and loan guarantees — an increased use of employment-related cash grants to employers;
- improved labour market intelligence and placement services; and
- increased emphasis on assistance to workers to move from declining industries to growth industries.

The report warns that unless there are changes in Canada's college and university training systems, Canada will face shortages of engineers, scientists, technologists, technicians and business specialists while producing surpluses of people trained in arts, social sciences and education.

The task force recommends changes in the structure of public funding for post-secondary education and increased incentives for employers to become involved in special training programs at post-secondary institutions. It adds that the public sector should redirect some funds from post-secondary training to the training of highly-skilled trades people for industry to head off impending severe shortages of skilled workers.

The report also recommends that training programs sponsored by the federal government should place more emphasis on higher skills, training, and upgrading of skills of mature workers.

Incentives for women

On the subject of women in the working force, the report recommends better pre-employment counselling and wage subsidies for women entering or re-entering the work force. It also suggests a program to encourage progressive employment practices to ensure that women achieve better access to jobs, training and promotions. Similar recommendations are made to ensure greater participation by Native peoples and the disabled.

The task force report on unemployment insurance recommends extensive changes in the current unemployment insurance program. The changes are designed to simplify the system greatly, improve service to the public, facilitate labour market operations and reduce program costs.

Unemployment insurance modified

The proposals for revamping the unemployment insurance program would extend program coverage to more part-time workers and would provide more equitable treatment of individuals. They would also extend maternity benefits to adoptive parents who are required to leave the labour force temporarily to care for a new child. The report also suggests a streamlined structure of entrance requirements and benefit entitlements, which would continue to recognize that the requirement for income protection between jobs varies among regions.

Journal relates explorer's activities

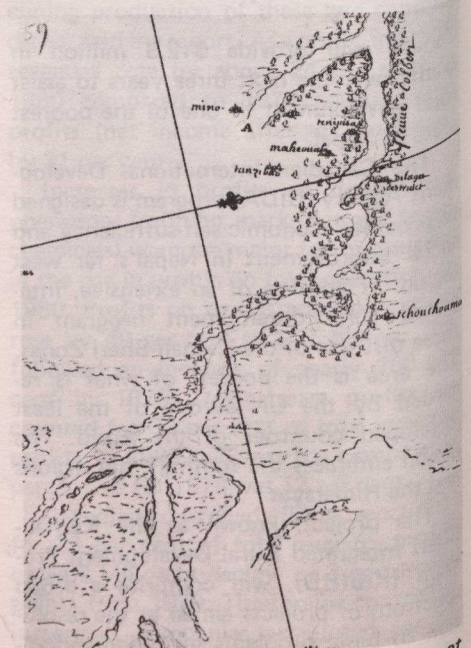
The Public Archives of Canada has acquired in the United States an historical document relating to the era of New France.

It is a journal written in 1684 and 1685 by a French engineer and cartographer named Minet. Accompanied by two maps and two drawings, it traces René-Robert Cavelier de La Salle's explorations of the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico.

The document, which is completely unedited and appears never to have been consulted by historians, sheds some light on the French explorer's adventures.

In the first section, Minet describes the descent down the Mississippi by Cavelier de La Salle and his companions from 1678 to 1682. While Minet himself did not take part in these voyages, he relates what was told to him by two of La Salle's fellow travellers, namely, Barbier and Nicolas de La Salle. The narrative provides a number of details concerning the daily routine of the expedition and many observations on the customs of Amerindian tribes encountered by explorers.

The second section covers the last expedition of La Salle from 1684 to 1687, when he attempted to reach the Mississippi by passing through the Gulf of Mexico. Minet meticulously describes events up until the moment he returned to France, in 1685.



The mouth of the Mississippi River, at that time, called the Colbert River is depicted in the journal.