

fective only when we have, in every community, a manpower centre to which people of all kinds naturally turn for information, advice and assistance about employment; a genuine focal point that the business man uses as naturally as he uses his bank and that the community as a whole sees as a vital element in its working life. This is the kind of organization we are trying to create. I believe that the calibre of manpower counsellors that we are developing within the service will enable us to succeed.

I referred earlier to an arbitrary point on the intelligence scale. Education authorities are today increasingly asking the question, "retarded for what"? More attention is being paid to the development of "work-study" programmes in the special vocational or occupational schools. Students in these schools are functioning at slightly retarded or dull normal levels and a high percentage are able to proceed to apprenticeship or technical training courses. An individual who does poorly in an academic course may do well in a practical learning situation.

I am pleased to report that local manpower centres have been involved in the planning of the courses offered in vocational schools to ensure that the skills taught are not obsolete and that there is a demand for them. Naturally the manpower counsellor is responsible for assisting in the job placement of the graduate.

As you will see, it is our expectation that the Canada manpower centres will eventually be able to serve a high percentage of persons with handicapping conditions and complex problems. However, we are not burning our bridges. Long established services of proven worth will still be available.

#### VOCATIONAL ACT EXTENDED

Most of you are, I believe, familiar with the provision of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act and Agreement through which the Federal Government has been able to share with the provinces in the cost of services to assist handicapped persons to prepare themselves for substantially gainful employment. Salaries of certain industrial rehabilitation workshop personnel and fees for vocational assessment and training of mentally retarded adults have, in many cases, been met through the provisions of this Act. This agreement, signed initially by all provinces except Quebec, is effective till March 31, 1968. To enable us to give planning for the future the careful consideration it deserves, I have asked the provinces to agree to an extension of one year.

In co-operation with provincial authorities, through the provisions of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, 302 mentally retarded persons became self-supporting in 1966-67. The costs to taxpayers involved in supporting these people were \$250,000 a year before their rehabilitation. The same people's annual income was \$506,000 after rehabilitation....

Some people ask whether, in view of the complexity of today's world, there is a place for the mentally retarded in the labour force. The answer is yes, for a number of persons.

In our affluent society, people have more money to spend and they are also living longer. The result

is an increase in service jobs of all kinds, in clubs, restaurants, nursing homes, institutions, in greenhouses, gas stations and, yes, even on farms. For although farms are largely mechanized today there is still a need for at least one "hired hand" just to "be there" when needed.

#### FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AS EMPLOYER

Against this background, I should discuss the Federal Government in the role of an employer. Federal Government departments are reminded from time to time to consider sheltered workshops for the disabled when work is being assigned to outside firms. It will interest you to know that the Ottawa Adult Workshop for the Retarded has an important contract refinishing desks and other office furniture for the Department of Public Works. There are other contracts in adult training workshops but this is a large and continuing one, extremely useful in work training.

The policy of the Public Service Commission of Canada has always been to consider the disabled person for employment on his own merits. It is not permitted to take extra advantage of a handicap but care is taken to see that candidates are not placed at a disadvantage, during Public Service examination, because of disability. This policy has worked successfully for most disabled persons but it has not been entirely satisfactory in the case of the mentally retarded.

The reason seems to be that the examinations are not particularly suitable for retarded persons, or, necessarily, relevant to the jobs for which they are candidates. During the past year, senior officers of my Department have been meeting and are now meeting with officials of the Public Service Commission in order to develop a more appropriate selection process for this particular group, and I am sure that we will shortly be in a position to report upon the relative usefulness of new procedures in this respect....

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#### COMMUNICATIONS EXPERTS VISIT

A group of 13 experts in electronics and telecommunications from 12 countries arrived in Canada recently to inspect Canadian installations and manufacturing facilities in the sphere of long-distance communications.

Asia, Africa and Latin America, from where the mission has come, are enlarging their communications networks to meet the needs of their expanding economies. The visitors, who are influential in preliminary planning and purchasing decisions regarding telecommunications projects in their own countries, will obtain firsthand knowledge of Canadian research and manufacturing capability through industrial tours in major centres and informal discussions with Canadian authorities in industry and government.

During their visit, accompanied by officers of the Department of Trade and Commerce, they will attend the International Electronic Conference in Toronto.