

### Cost/Benefit Analysis

Some of the data arising from the evaluation process has been given an exaggerated importance. Figures based on cost/benefit analysis were used by officials of the Manpower Division to demonstrate an astonishing degree of success for two large manpower programs—Training and Mobility. In the opinion of many witnesses cost/benefit analysis is an imperfect evaluation tool. This view emerged particularly with regard to its application in the assessment of the benefits of manpower training.

The Economic Council in 1971 commented on the use of cost/benefit analysis of manpower programs:

In large social programs, even less may be known about the relationships between programs and their ultimate results. . . . This does not rule out the use of these techniques entirely, but it does imply that they must be treated with caution. . . .<sup>4</sup>

The application of the cost/benefit formula to attribute the effects of a program not only on those directly concerned but consequently for all members of society, should be only one of several factors used in the evaluation of programs of the Manpower Division.

### Publication of Evaluation Reports and other Departmental Statistics

The Committee discussed at some length with Mr. Campbell how evaluation reports are used and distributed, and particularly which components are routinely published. The official departmental policy is that the recommendations and conclusions of these reports fall within the guidelines established by Privy Council Office to protect the confidentiality of advice which is, in essence, given to the Minister through these evaluation reports. Mr. Campbell explained:

The need for confidentiality in that respect conflicts potentially with another broad principle, which is the principle of the right and need of the public to know what it is getting for its money, to know what programs are doing and what they are achieving or not achieving. We have tried to work out a reasonable resolution. . . . We have begun to produce from them what we call statistical and analytical reports on the programs that we evaluate. . . . Those reports are available to anyone on request in both languages. . . . Any interested academic, any citizen, who wants to ask for a copy can have one. (24:8)

Mr. Campbell informed the Canadian Economic Association in June 1974 that the main statistics on the operation of departmental programs would be published quarterly in the *Canada Manpower Review* and in regional *Manpower Reviews*.

Reports prepared in cooperation with provincial governments or other federal agencies require the agreement of the other party to their release. Where a report is of sufficient general interest and quality to warrant the expense of full-scale publication it is released. . . . Other non-confidential reports, technical memoranda, and studies of limited general interest are available on request in the language in which they were written.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Economic Council of Canada, *Eighth Annual Review*, page 54

<sup>5</sup>"Publication and Release of Data". Notes distributed to the Canadian Economic Association, June 1974.