

In trying to determine how far and in what way the Department should go about preparing its employees for retirement, one must first decide on the basic responsibility of the Department as an employer. Some of the literature on the subject of retirement, and preparation for it, assumes that the welfare of its former employees is a direct responsibility of the employer. For instance, the Financial Post article on retirement (issue of 24 June, 1972) says that "Experts in retirement gerontology said that industry is sadly shirking its responsibilities to ensure the welfare of its retired employees." (It is assumed here that this goes beyond the question of adequate pension plans.) Presumably these experts would include most other employers as well as "industry" and almost certainly "Government", with this very important difference: "Government", in comparison with private industry, has ensured that its pensioners are reasonably well taken care of financially through its pension scheme. On the other hand, Government otherwise has been less concerned with the fate of its retired employees than many private corporations. The point that needs to be considered is the bland assumption that it is industry's - or let us say the employer's - responsibility to "ensure the welfare of its retired employees", beyond the question of pensions.

From an industry's point of view, there are a number of considerations, and since Government as an employer must compete with industry, what industry does is relevant. In the first place, "ensuring the welfare" must cost money after the employee has retired unless the pre-retirement programme is such that it automatically "ensures the welfare" after retirement. But none of us live in isolation, much less in Canada where such a high percentage of our GNP comes from exports, where because of our small, widely-spread population, high cost of winter, demands for parallel standards with the U.S. involving closely related wage rates, employers are not free to adopt policies or programmes that add to costs of production. (A point raised by the Dutch Consul General at the Conference Board Seminar) If industry cannot adopt such programmes and thus assume the "responsibility" for