

group. Consumers' groups of disabled persons have estimated that the rate of underemployment and unemployment among people with disabilities approaches 80%.

## 2. Major Programs

At the federal level, Employment and Immigration Canada administers a range of employment and human resource development programs. A number of our witnesses from consumers' groups drew attention to the low participation rates of persons with disabilities within these programs, and argued that community-based programs run by and for persons with disabilities have achieved more favourable results.

Canada Employment Centres, for example, are normally the services of first resort for job seekers and, during 1988-89, placed approximately 7,700 disabled people in jobs (on the basis of figures provided in departmental Main Estimates, this represents approximately 0.9% of all placements). The Canadian Jobs Strategy (CJS) consists of six major programs providing developmental assistance to targeted clienteles such as the long-term unemployed, and young people or women facing difficulties entering the labour market. While departmental officials indicated that the CJS sets "fair target levels" for the participation of people with disabilities within each of its components and trained over 6,000 in this group during 1988-89, this figure represents a participation rate by persons with disabilities of only 1.7%. As well, persons with disabilities constituted less than 1% of the number of students who participated in the Department's summer student program, Challenge 88.

Employment and Immigration Canada also administers the collection of data that is required by the *Employment Equity Act*, which was proclaimed on 13 August 1986. The second report to Parliament under the Act, tabled in December of 1989, demonstrated that the representation of disabled persons in the federally regulated workforce remains unacceptable. Persons with disabilities represented 1.71% of the workforce in 1988, an increase from 1.59% in the previous year. There is reason to believe, furthermore, that a significant portion of this increase reflects a greater number of existing employees identifying themselves as persons with disabilities and not new positions filled by disabled persons.

Within the public service itself, Treasury Board administers an employment equity program involving the establishment of departmental action plans and the reporting of results. Since 1987, this program has required departments to establish numerical representation targets by major occupation, including the management category. Current targets require that 6,907 disabled persons be employed by 31 March 1991, an increase of 40% over 31 March 1988. While final conclusions on the success of this program would be premature, witnesses from the Treasury Board Advisory Committee on Employment of Disabled Persons indicated that results do not reflect true equity principles.