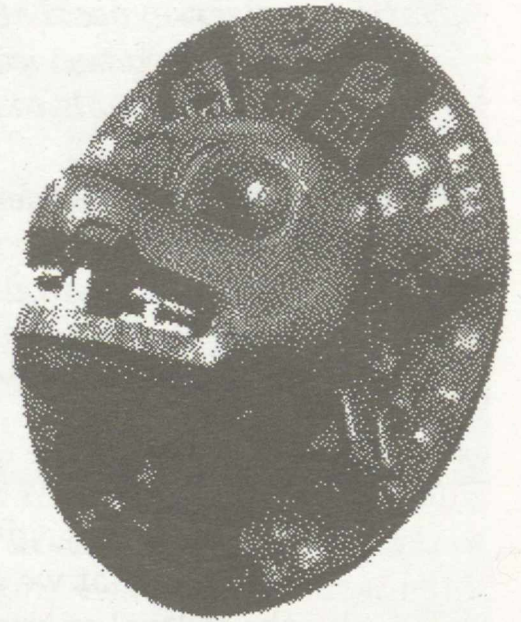


Collection and Use of Data

Programs, policies and even departmental structures themselves cannot deal with the 'real' world, if they are based on obsolete, inaccurate or incomplete information about that world. Furthermore, the political and bureaucratic 'will' to apply that data must exist so that government can target its actions to achieve the maximum effect. These detailed data are all the more critical when they are needed to devise programs that assist a neglected group like Aboriginal people with disabilities.



All departmental officials who came before the Committee stated that they were working with Statistics Canada in efforts to obtain more reliable information about Aboriginal people. Although they could not provide complete data, not one of these officials disagreed with the accepted fact that the incidence of disability amongst Aboriginal people remains far greater than amongst other Canadians. Neil Faulkner, Assistant Deputy Minister, Medical Services Branch, Health and Welfare Canada summarized some of the data available when he told us that:

The incidence of disability among the Canadian Indian population is two to four times the national average. Two-thirds of these relate to agility and mobility, 25% are as a result of accidents, 17% as a result of an aging process, 10% are congenital, and 22% are visually impaired. Of course, a number of people suffer from multiple disabilities.