

## EMPLOYMENT AND INCOMES

### 5.1 Government in relation to employment

#### 5.1.1 Labour Canada

The federal Department of Labour (Labour Canada) was established in 1900 and now operates under the authority of the Department of Labour Act (RSC 1970, c.L-2 as amended by 1980-81, c.60, June 30, 1981). The Minister of Labour is responsible for the Canada Labour Code, in effect since July 1971. It contains sections on labour standards, safety of employees, and industrial relations. The Department administers acts covering fair wages and hours of work, income maintenance for older employees laid off from designated industries, and worker compensation for government employees and merchant seafarers. The Minister reports to Parliament on behalf of the Canada Labour Relations Board, the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, the Merchant Seamen Compensation Board and the Labour Adjustment Review Board.

Federal industrial relations legislation applies to employers, employees and trade unions employed on federal works and undertakings, including the interprovincial and international railways; highway transport; telephone, telegraph, and cable systems; pipelines; canals; ferries, tunnels and bridges; shipping and shipping services; radio and television broadcasting, including cablevision; air transport; banks; grain elevators; flour and feed mills, feed warehouses, and grain seed cleaning plants; uranium mines; and the employees of some Crown corporations and agencies.

The Department is responsible for conciliation and arbitration procedures in industrial disputes and for processing certain complaints stemming from alleged violation of legislation. It determines wage rates and hours of work for federal government contracts for construction or supplies, and promotes improved industrial relations through union-management consultation and by preventive mediation through industrial relations consultants. The Department funds practical research on the

human impact of technological change in the workplace, facilitates labour participation in important policy discussions, and makes possible temporary staff exchanges between labour organizations, government departments, and joint labour-management institutions.

Labour Canada strives to secure a working environment conducive to physical and social well-being, a fair return for effort, and equitable access to employment opportunities. Headquarters is in Ottawa. The six regions are served by regional offices in Moncton, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver and district offices in other cities. Programs and services to the public include enforcement and regulatory responsibilities, education, training and promotional information. The regional offices respond to complaints, investigate accidents, conduct technical surveys, process claims for worker compensation, provide counselling on labour-management relations, organize information seminars to explain legislation administered by the Department, and sponsor conferences to further departmental goals and objectives.

**The Women's Bureau.** Since its establishment in 1954, the Women's Bureau has worked to fulfil its mandate of promoting and strengthening, through research, policy development and information, the efforts of women to achieve equality in the workplace. The Bureau monitors women's progress in the paid workforce and researches emerging policy issues. It works with employers, unions, women's groups and the public to promote better working conditions for women. The Bureau also participates in provincial and international efforts to improve the situation of women in the workplace.

Recent research has focused on work and family responsibilities, equal pay for work of equal value, part-time work, technological change, reproductive health hazards in the workplace and international obligations respecting employment standards. Research results and other information is available in the form of publications, video presentations, exhibits, conference sponsorship