THE TELEPHONE EXPERIMENT IN THE CANADIAN LABOUR FORCE SURVEY

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This paper summarizes the results of a telephone experiment conducted in conjunction with the Canadian Labour Force Survey over the period June 1972 to November 1973. Included in the paper is a detailed outline of the purpose and design of the experiment. A discussion of the impact telephone interviewing had on the cost of enumeration, non-response and participation and unemployment rates is given. In addition, interviewer and respondent attitudes toward telephone interviewing are described. Finally, the paper summarizes the experiences gained from this experiment and indicates some areas where further examinations related to telephone interviewing can be carried out.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Labour Force Survey is conducted as a monthly sample survey. In one particular week each month about 30,000 households throughout the country are visited by approximately 750 interviewers who obtain information on the labour force activities of all members of each household fourteen years of age and over. All selected households remain in the survey for a period of six months.

In the past the Labour Force Survey used only the face-to-face method of interviewing even though the use of the telephone appeared to have definite advantages, particularly from a cost and timeliness point of view. However, possible repercussions on the quality of the survey were of sufficient consequence to rule out implementation of telephone interviewing until adequate testing and control were carried out. Consequently, beginning in 1971 and continuing through 1972 and 1973, telephone interviewing was introduced on an experimental basis in selected metropolitan areas. Of interest, in addition to the results of this experiment is the gradual and closely monitored expansion of the telephone procedure in order to protect the continuity and validity of the ongoing survey. As a result of the experimental work, telephone interviewing has now been successfully introduced in almost all Canadian cities.

This paper deals with the development and results of the telephone experiment over a period of eighteen months from June 1972 to November 1973. A comprehensive set of tables and graphs highlighting the major findings of the experiment is included. Section 2 details the purpose for which the telephone experiment was established, while Section 3 outlines the design of the experiment. Sections 4, 5 and 6 look at the effect of telephone interviewing on the cost of enumeration, non-response, and unemployment and participation rates. Section 7 discusses interviewer and respondent attitudes toward telephone interviewing. Finally, Section 8 ponders some future considerations.

2. PURPOSE OF THE TELEPHONE EXPERIMENT

During the last few years escalating costs have led to annual increases in the amount of funding required to carry out the Labour Force Survey. It was primarily in an endeavour to offset and to more effectively control these rising costs that an experimental procedure involving the use of telephone interviewing was first suggested. The basic assumptions made were that telephone interviewing would lead to a considerable saving in the cost of enumeration and to some reduction in non-response. The telephone experiment was set up to test these assumptions, and it was designed to provide a measure of the changes in both cost and non-response as well as to measure the effect of telephone interviewing on labour force characteristics such as unemployment and participation rates.

Initially a pilot study was undertaken in 1971 in the Toronto and Vancouver metropolitan areas to determine the feasibility of telephone interviewing and to test the adaptability of interviewers to a telephone operation. This study was operative for four months only, but subsequent analysis of the results indicated that further experimentation should be undertaken. Accordingly, in June 1972, the telephone experiment began in the six English-speaking regional office cities[1] and was further expanded to the two French-speaking regional office cities[2] in April 1973.

1. St. John's, Halifax, Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Vancouver.
2. Montreal, Ottawa-Hull.

3. DESIGN OF THE TELEPHONE EXPERIMENT

3.1 The Telephone and Control Subsamples

In order to compare the telephone interviewing procedure with the regular face-to-face interviewing procedure, a "telephone" subsample and a "control" subsample were selected within the metropolitan area of each regional office city on the basis of interviewer assignments consisting of 45 to 55 households. Interviewers in the telephone subsample were to complete all telephone calls using their own home telephones. Consequently, prior to choosing the subsamples, interviewers who had only party line telephones were excluded from the selection scheme in order to comply with the secrecy provisions of the Statistics Act, and their assignments formed the "non-participant" group. The remaining assignments in each metropolitan area were numbered in a serpentine fashion and systematically allocated from a random starting point to either the telephone subsample or the control subsample. In other words, a circular systematic subsampling of interviewer assignments was made, so that about one half the assignments were selected for the telephone subsample and one half for the control subsample.

Thus, the design of the telephone experiment yielded two major categories: (a) the telephone subsample and (b) the control subsample. Although this design did not remove different interviewer effects between the subsamples, it was easy to implement and control in the field. Moreover, the effect of rotation group bias was minimal since all rotations groups had an equal representation in both subsamples.

3.2 Interviewing Procedure

In the telephone subsample, interviewers were required to make both personal visits and telephone calls. Any first month interview[1] with a household was to be completed by a personal visit. If the respondent granted permission to be interviewed by telephone, then the subsequent

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1. First month interviews include situations when (a) a dwelling containing a household rotates into the Labour Force sample, (b) a dwelling which was vacant in the previous month is now occupied by a household, and (c) there has been a complete change in the composition of the household.

months' interviews were conducted using the telephone. Personal visits also had to be made to households which could not be telephoned for any of the following reasons: no telephone available, refusal to be interviewed by telephone, telephone interview impossible due to language or hearing problems, and inability to reach the respondent by telephone (personal follow-ups were required to complete an interview or to determine the reason for no interview).

Interviewers in the control subsample, on the other hand, made only personal visits to households in their assignments.

3.3 Implementation of the Telephone Experiment

In June 1972 telephone and control subsamples were established in the metropolitan areas of six regional office cities: St. John's, Halifax, Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton and Vancouver. Telephone and control subsamples were also set up in the regional office cities of Montreal and Ottawa-Hull in April 1973. The division of the metropolitan areas of St. John's, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver into telephone and control subsamples continued until November 1973. At that time results indicated the desirability of the telephone procedure. Therefore, in December 1973 all interviewers in the control subsample began telephone interviewing. Earlier, in March 1973, all control assignments in Edmonton had been designated for telephone interviewing, but the two subsamples continued in Halifax, Ottawa-Hull and Winnipeg until March 1974. Gradual introduction of telephone interviewing to cities other than regional office centres has been in progress since December 1973.

In this paper monthly results are frequently presented for all regional office cities combined. Because the experimental phase-in of the eight cities occurred at different times, the data at this level represents various combinations of cities depending on the month as follows:

(a) June 1972 to February 1973 - St. John's, Halifax, Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Vancouver

(b) March 1973 - St. John's, Halifax, Toronto, Winnipeg, Vancouver

(c) April 1973 to November 1973 - St. John's, Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa-Hull, Toronto, Winnipeg, Vancouver.

4. THE COST OF ENUMERATION

The cost of enumerating households consists of two components: (a) fees which represent the total cost of the time taken for interviewing households, contacting households (travelling time, making call-backs, and so on) as well as completing work for transmittal and home study exercises, and (b) expenses which include the mileage cost of travelling and other authorized expenses such as meals. The sum of fees and expenses gives the enumeration cost. The enumeration cost per household is calculated by dividing the enumeration cost by the number of households (all sampled dwellings less the number of vacant dwellings). Fees per household and expenses per household are calculated in a similar manner.

In order to measure the savings achieved by the telephone procedure, the percentage difference between the cost (fees, expenses, enumeration cost) per household in the telephone subsample and in the control subsample was calculated each month. This measure, called the percentage saving in cost per household for the telephone subsample over the control subsample, is defined as $(C_c - C_t)/C_c \times 100\%$ where C_c and C_t denote the cost per household in the control and telephone subsamples respectively.

The percentage savings in fees, expenses and enumeration cost per household for individual regional office cities are summarized on Table 4.1. This table shows that the telephone interviewing procedure led to a substantial saving in the cost of enumeration over the personal visit interviewing procedure. Although it was impossible to identify the enumeration cost associated with telephone calls only, it is reasonable to assume that the enumeration cost of telephone interviewing was lower than face-to-face interviewing since the amount of time spent on travelling was reduced (indicated by the substantial saving in the expenses component).

While the cost of first month visits in both subsamples can be assumed to have been approximately equal, the cost of completing other personal visits within the telephone subsample was probably very high due to the long distances necessary to complete only a few households. The savings which occurred in the telephone subsample, therefore, appear to have resulted from the large number of telephone interviews. Table 4.2 summarizes the enumeration cost per household in the telephone and control subsamples for all regional cities combined over the one year period from December 1972 to November 1973.

Table 4.1: Percent savings in enumeration cost per household between telephone and control subsamples by regional office city, December 1972 to November 1973

R.O. City	Fees	Expenses	Enumeration Cost
St. John's	2.2%	32.0%	8.5%
Halifax	17.6%	48.1%	22.8%
Montreal[1]	20.7%	34.9%	23.1%
Ottawa-Hull[1]	5.0%	4.3%	4.8%
Toronto	17.5%	37.2%	20.9%
Winnipeg	- 9.9%	28.9%	- 0.5%
Edmonton[2]	26.0%	50.0%	29.8%
Vancouver	11.5%	20.0%	12.8%
All R.O. cities	13.7%	32.5%	17.4%

1. April 1973 to November 1973 only.
2. December 1972 to February 1973 only.

Table 4.2: Enumeration cost per household in the telephone and control subsamples, all regional office cities combined, December 1972 to November 1973

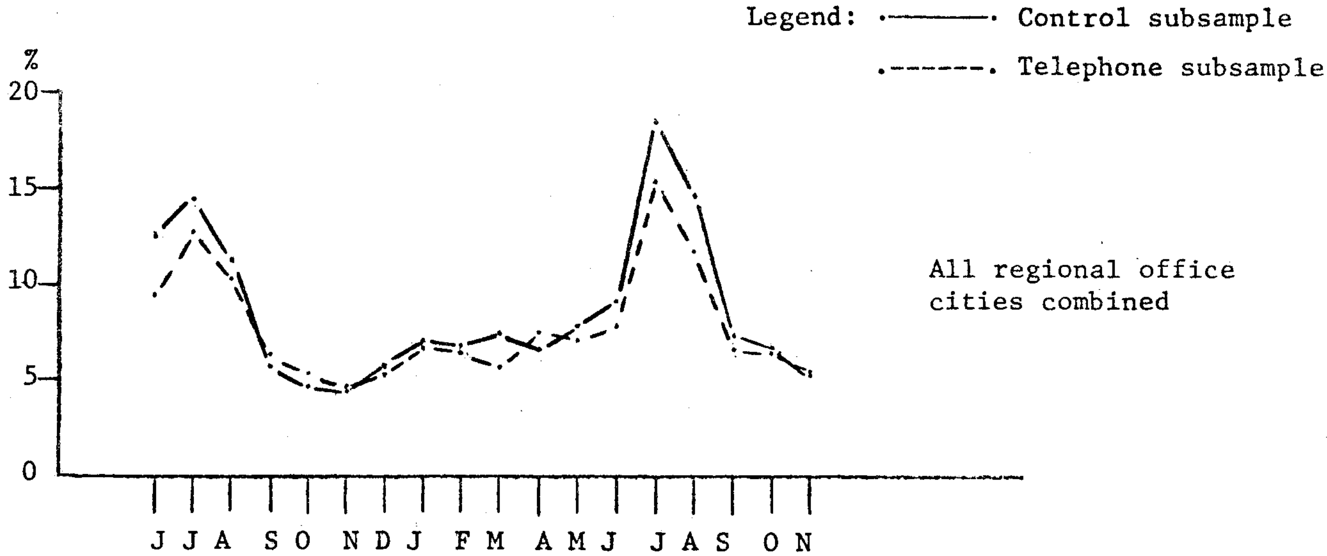
Month	Enumeration cost per household		Percentage saving telephone over control
	Telephone subsample	Control subsample	
December	$1.74	$2.12	17.9%
January	$1.83	$2.15	14.9%
February	$1.68	$2.04	17.6%
March	$1.68	$2.15	21.9%
April	$1.61	$1.93	16.6%
May	$1.86	$2.23	16.6%
June	$1.82	$2.17	16.1%
July	$1.87	$2.17	13.8%
August	$1.85	$2.27	18.5%
September	$2.01	$2.47	18.6%
October	$2.11	$2.56	17.6%
November	$1.98	$2.49	20.5%

5. NON-RESPONSE

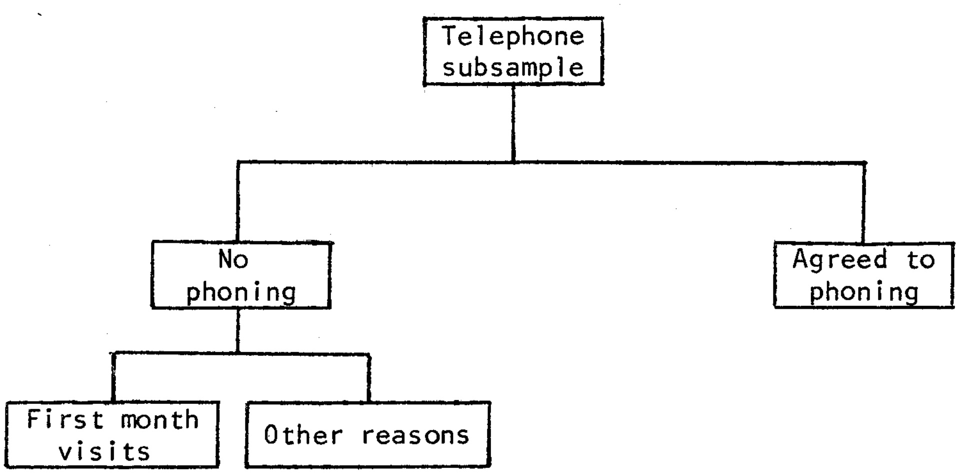
In any survey non-response can be expected to occur due to operational difficulties, time and cost restraints, the lack of co-operation from respondents, the inability or unwillingness of interviewers to work hard enough to track down missing respondents, or for some other reason. The non-response rate measures the severity of this non-response problem, and it is calculated as the percentage of non-respondent households out of all sampled households.

Non-response rates were calculated each month for both the telephone and control subsamples, and these rates are shown on Graph 5.1 for all cities combined and Graph 5.2 for each regional office city.

Graph 5.1: Non-response rates in the telephone and control subsamples, June 1972 to November 1973

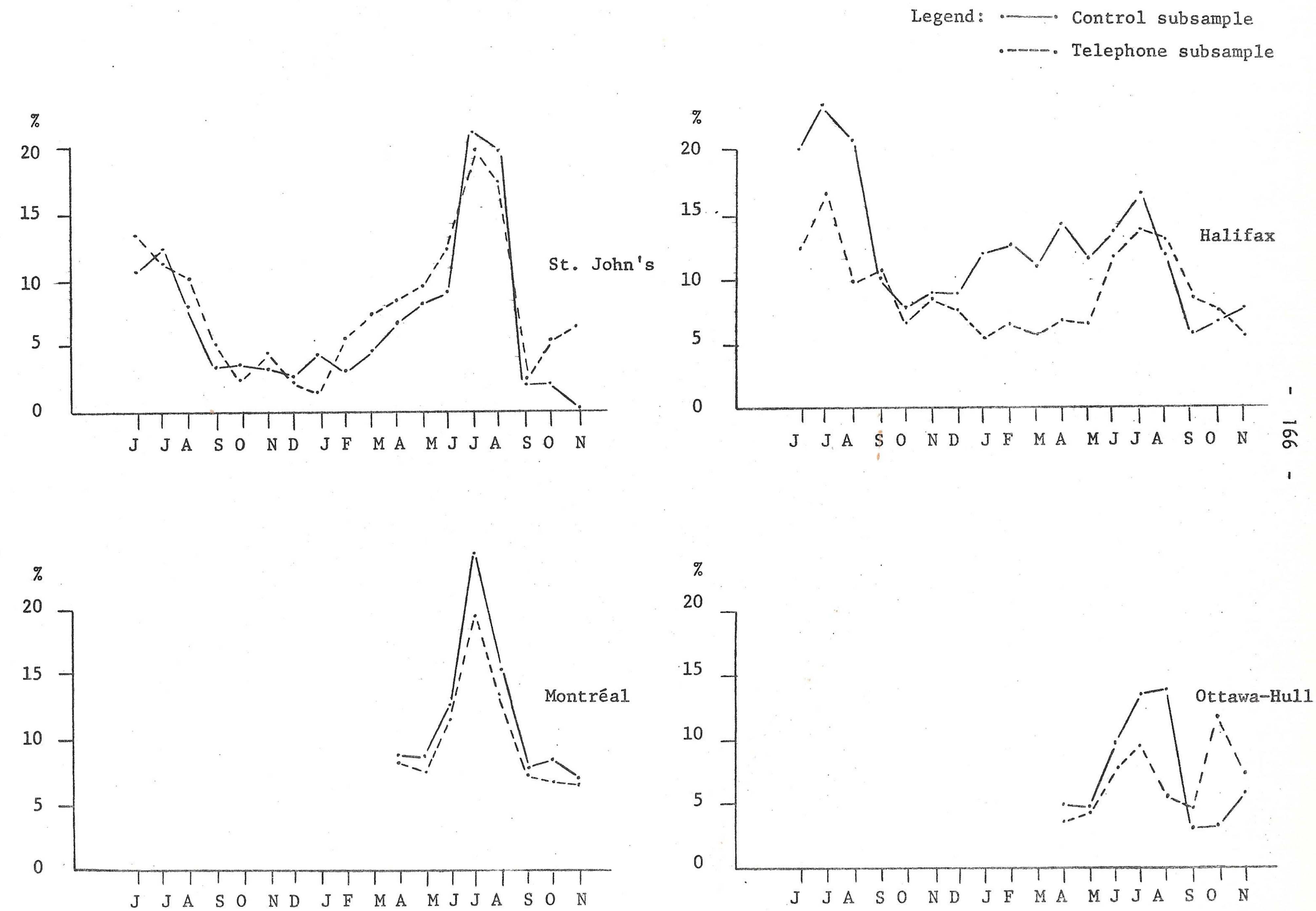


Although it had originally been hypothesized that the telephone interviewing procedure would lead to some reduction in non-response, this reduction does not appear to have occurred. However, the telephone experiment made possible a more detailed analysis of non-response by partitioning the telephone subsample into the following groups.



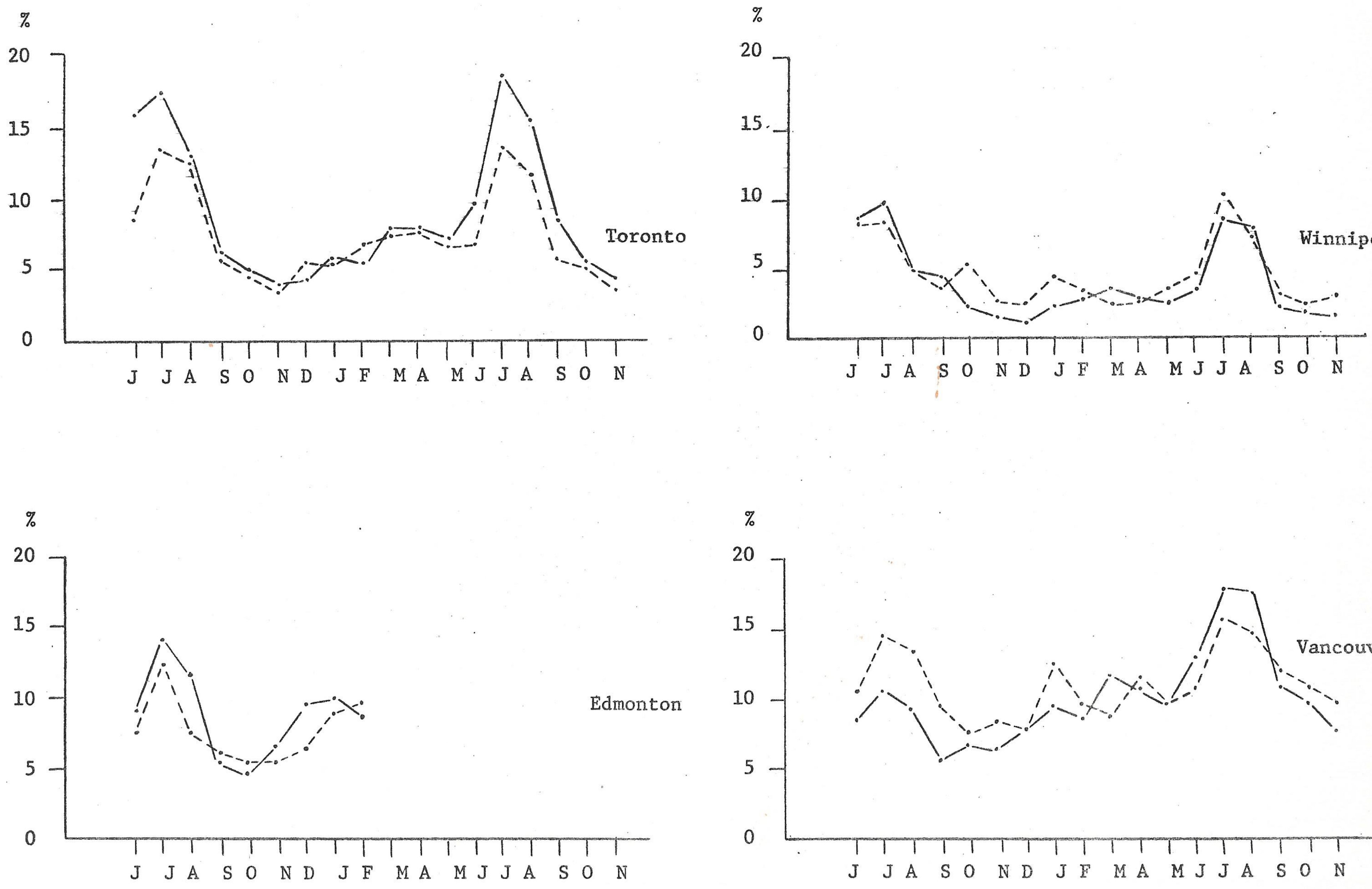
In this diagram, the "agreed to phoning" group is the aggregate of all households which agreed to be interviewed by telephone and received at least one phone call during interview week. The "no phoning" group

Graph 5.2: Non-response rates in the telephone and control subsamples, June 1972 to November 1973



Graph 5.2: Non-response rates in the telephone and control subsamples, June 1972 to November 1973

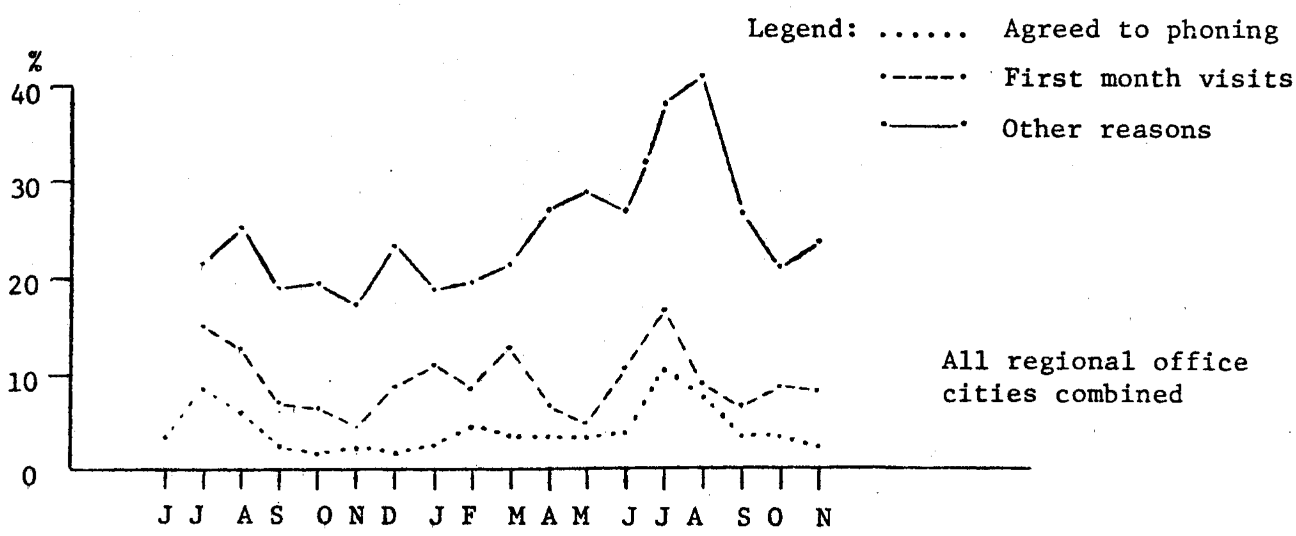
Legend: •——• Control subsample
•- - - -• Telephone subsample



consists of two sub-groups: "first month visits" and "other reasons". The "first month visits" group includes households which rotated into the Labour Force sample for the first time as well as households which, although in the sample, had not been enumerated in previous months. The "other reasons" group consists of all remaining households in the telephone subsample which were not telephoned for reasons such as refusal to give consent, no telephone available, or respondent had hearing or language problems.

The telephone subsample, therefore, was able to be partitioned into three groups: (a) agreed to phoning, (b) first month visits, and (c) other reasons. Graph 5.3 illustrates for all regional office cities combined the relationship that existed among the non-response rates for these three groups.

Graph 5.3: Non-response rates in the agreed to phoning, first month visits, and other reasons groups in the telephone subsample, June 1972 to November 1973



It can be seen from this graph that the households in the "agreed to phoning" group were co-operative, and the results reflect this situation since the non-response rate for this group was lower than the other two groups. The non-response rate in the "first month visits" group was higher than the "agreed to phoning" group but substantially lower than the "other reasons" group.

Table 5.1 shows the percentage of households belonging to each group as well as the contribution to the total non-response by each group. The households in the "other reasons" group, on the average, had a non-response rate of approximately 25 percent and accounted for almost 45 percent of all non-respondents in the telephone subsample even though they represented only 15 percent of all households in the subsample. Thus, a small group of households accounted for a very large portion of non-response. In this way, the telephone interviewing procedure has provided a means of isolating the group of households which will have the greatest probability of being non-respondents. These households can be identified after the first month interview. Since they cannot be interviewed by telephone for one reason or another, the interviewer will be forewarned that they will require an extra effort to obtain successful interviews. In the long run this should result in lower non-response rates as interviewers acquire special skills in handling this type of problem household.

Table 5.1: Average contribution to non-response by the agreed to phoning, first month visits, and other reasons groups in the telephone subsample, July 1972 to November 1973

Regional office city	Number of households	Number of non-respondent households	Group	Percentage of households	Contribution to non-response
St. John's	135	11	Agreed to phoning	74.4%	41.2%
			First month visits	17.3%	18.7%
			Other reasons	8.3%	40.1%
Halifax	260	24	Agreed to phoning	71.0%	33.9%
			First month visits	16.5%	18.7%
			Other reasons	12.5%	47.4%
Montreal[1]	1,223	124	Agreed to phoning	68.5%	38.3%
			First month visits	18.0%	19.3%
			Other reasons	13.5%	42.4%
Ottawa-Hull[1]	271	18	Agreed to phoning	58.0%	34.9%
			First month visits	17.7%	21.9%
			Other reasons	24.3%	43.2%
Toronto	1,180	87	Agreed to phoning	68.7%	40.9%
			First month visits	17.3%	19.6%
			Other reasons	14.0%	39.5%
Winnipeg	505	22	Agreed to phoning	66.5%	39.8%
			First month visits	17.2%	23.9%
			Other reasons	16.3%	36.3%
Edmonton[2]	423	32	Agreed to phoning	70.4%	26.9%
			First month visits	15.3%	21.3%
			Other reasons	14.3%	51.8%
Vancouver	615	64	Agreed to phoning	65.7%	26.2%
			First month visits	17.3%	19.8%
			Other reasons	17.0%	54.0%
All regional office cities combined			Agreed to phoning	67.9%	35.5%
			First month visits	17.3%	20.0%
			Other reasons	14.8%	44.5%

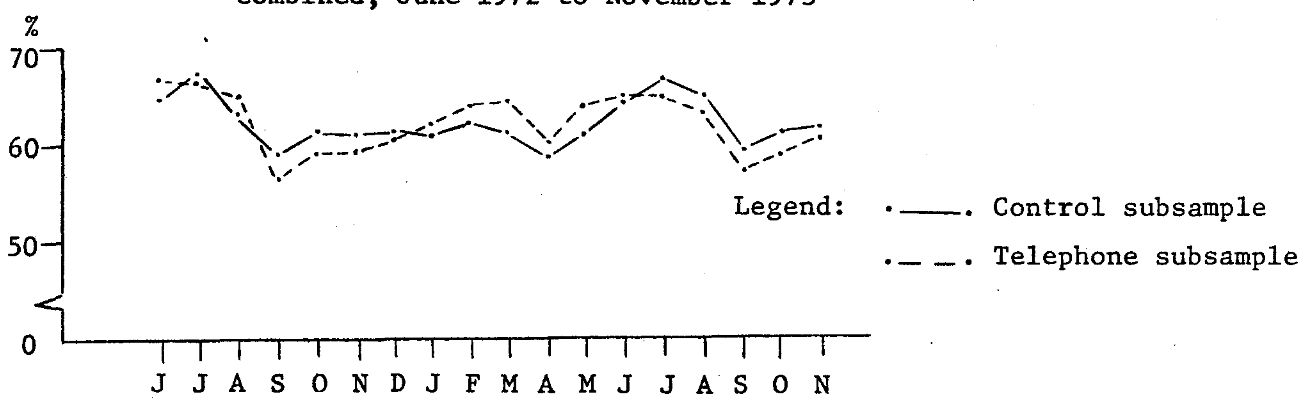
1. April 1973 to November 1973 only.
2. June 1972 to February 1973 only.

6. PARTICIPATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

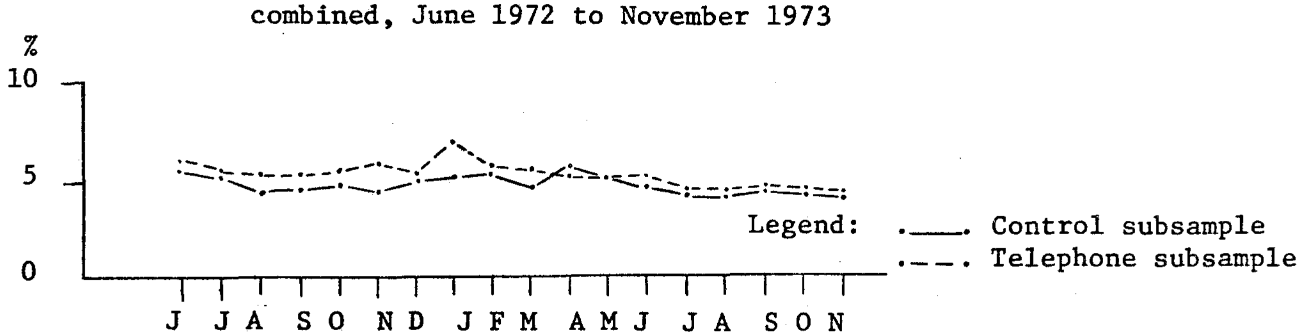
An important aspect of the telephone experiment was to study the effect of the telephone interviewing procedure on labour force characteristics. Participation and unemployment rates were examined in detail. The participation rate represents the labour force[1] as a percentage of the civilian non-institutional population fourteen years of age and over, while the unemployment rate is the number of unemployed persons as a percentage of the labour force.

Graphs 6.1 and 6.2 below show the participation and unemployment rates in the telephone and control subsamples for all regional office cities combined from June 1972 to November 1973.

Graph 6.1: Participation rates, all regional office cities combined, June 1972 to November 1973



Graph 6.2: Unemployment rates, all regional office cities combined, June 1972 to November 1973



1. The labour force is the civilian non-institutional population fourteen years of age and over who, during the reference week for the Labour Force Survey, were employed or unemployed.

Statistical tests of significance were carried out for each month, for all regional office cities combined, and it was found that no significant differences occurred between the participation rates in the telephone and control subsamples. With respect to unemployment rates, the results indicate that the unemployment rate in the telephone subsample remained at a higher level than the unemployment rate in the control subsample for sixteen months of the eighteen month experimental period, but the observed differences were statistically significant in only two months: November 1972 and January 1973. However, it was notable that the unemployment rates in each subsample generally followed the same pattern over the eighteen months and moved in the same direction from month to month.

In order to learn more about the differences in the unemployment rates between the telephone and control subsamples, tests of significance were also undertaken for each regional office city. Significant differences did not occur more than twice in every city except Winnipeg. In Winnipeg, the unemployment rate in the telephone subsample was greater than the corresponding rate in the control subsample in seventeen out of eighteen months and significant differences between the two subsamples occurred in six of these months. A special study was carried out to explore the possibility of an "area effect" on labour force characteristics in that the telephone subsample in the Winnipeg metropolitan area was biased toward a less affluent (and hence higher unemployment) area. The results of the study substantiated this possibility, and it was concluded that the unemployment rates in the two subsamples in Winnipeg had different expected values and that the selection scheme had biased the results rather than the interviewing procedure itself.

After April 1973, the unemployment rates in the telephone and control subsamples tended to converge and became almost equal. This appears to have occurred because Montreal was introduced to the experiment at this time, and in Montreal as well as Toronto (where the labour force population was very large in each subsample) the unemployment rates in the two subsamples followed the same general pattern and were almost equal throughout the experiment.

The conclusion was reached that the telephone methods of interviewing did not adversely affect the measurement of labour force characteristics. Moreover, through the gradual and closely monitored introduction of the telephone procedure to other cities, it was felt that the continuity and validity of the ongoing survey was protected.

7. INTERVIEWER AND RESPONDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD TELEPHONE INTERVIEWING

7.1 Interviewer Attitudes

The interviewer's job is to collect accurate information on labour force status and occasionally supplementary subjects from a sample of households and persons. The final statistics can be no better than the information recorded at this initial stage and, therefore, a great deal of faith and reliance has to be placed on the interviewer's ability to gain the confidence of the respondent. Does the telephone facilitate this work? Does the fact that personal contact is reduced affect an interviewer's attitude to the new procedure? In order to answer these questions interviewers were asked in October 1972 to complete a questionnaire designed to pick up their reactions to the telephone procedure, and on two later occasions group sessions were held to discuss their concern and their feelings about the new interviewing procedure.

It was found that many interviewers take the job because it gives them a chance to get out of the house, to meet other people, and at the same time to do something useful while earning money. The telephone procedure initially created some hostility in interviewers as they felt it would cut their chances of getting out and meeting other people. These feelings were responsible for a less than satisfactory performance during the early months but as the realization took hold that almost 30 percent of households still required a personal visit (first month visits, households which denied permission to be interviewed by telephone, call-backs, etc.) much of this hostility vanished, and during the winter months telephoning became a positive boon since interviewing could be completed on time regardless of weather conditions.

As interviewers gained facility in the new procedure they indicated that, given the present mix of telephone and personal visits, they could handle assignments of 70 to 90 households compared to 45 to 55 households prior to the introduction of telephone interviewing. However, not all interviewers were happy with the change of method. A check carried out early in the experiment on assignments of interviewers who either did not like or were not happy with the telephone procedure indicated these assignments contained a large proportion of highly mobile persons (for example, immigrants and other persons living mostly in collective-type dwellings such as rooming and boarding houses). These situations did not lend themselves to the use of the telephone, as frequently only one telephone was available and it was located in a common hall. Therefore, personal visits were necessary in these cases.

A general impression from the frequent questioning of interviewers supported the theory that the longer a procedure is used the more it gains in acceptability. As interviewers became more adept at using the new procedure, the less fault they found with it. Interviewers hired after the introduction of the technique have shown no reservations whatsoever.

7.2 Respondent Attitudes

Respondent acceptance was measured by calculating the <u>rate of telephone activity</u>. This measure was defined as the percentage of households interviewed on the telephone out of all respondent households in the telephone subsample. Ideally this rate should include all households except the one-sixth that rotate into the Labour Force sample each month (that is, in percentage terms about 83 percent of all interviewed households).

The extent of this acceptance was shown quite dramatically in the difference between the overall results for June 1972 (introductory month) and November 1973 (termination of review period). The actual rate of telephone activity increased from 59 percent to 74 percent and, given that first month visits were relatively stable in both months at about 17 percent, the reduction in the percentage of households visited personally in the telephone subsample decreased from about 24 percent in June 1972 to less than 9 percent in November 1973. This represents a very remarkable improvement over a span of seventeen months.

Table 7.1 provides information on the rate of telephone activity. Column 3 on this table indicates the percentage of interviewed households actually completed by telephone, and column 4 provides similar data for households which should have been telephoned but which, for one reason or another, were enumerated by personal visit. Columns 5 to 10 give the breakdown by reason of the personal visits reported in column 4. Table 7.2 provides similar information for a post survey period of four months. It may be significant to the possible future expansion of telephone usage that, while the proportion of telephone interviews to personal visits in Table 4.1 was roughly two-thirds telephone and one-third personal visits, corresponding percentages in Table 7.2 were almost three-quarters telephone and one-quarter personal visits. In other words, this seems to suggest that the rate of telephone activity can be expected to stabilize at 74 or 75 percent, with 17 percent first month visits and only 7 or 8 percent requiring personal visits for any other reason.

Table 7.1: Average rates of telephone activity in the telephone subsample, June 1972 to November 1973

Regional office city	Interviewed households			Personal visits by reason (%)					
	Average households per survey	By telephone (%)	By personal visit (%)	First month visit	Permission to phone denied	No telephone available	Language or hearing problems	Complete change in household composition	Other
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
St John's	124	75.1	24.9	17.0	0.3	1.9	0.0	1.1	4.6
Halifax	236	72.2	27.8	16.8	1.7	3.4	0.2	2.4	3.3
Montreal[1]	1,099	70.5	29.5	18.1	1.9	2.3	1.4	1.5	4.3
Ottawa-Hull[1]	253	55.7	44.3	17.5	2.1	2.9	0.6	1.3	19.9
Toronto	1,093	67.9	32.1	17.1	2.5	1.9	2.9	2.1	5.6
Winnipeg	483	64.9	35.1	17.0	10.8	2.6	1.0	1.7	2.0
Edmonton[2]	391	71.2	28.8	15.6	2.5	2.3	1.0	5.0	2.4
Vancouver	551	69.7	30.3	17.4	1.5	4.0	1.9	2.3	3.2
All R.O. cities		68.5	31.5	17.2	3.3	2.6	1.7	2.1	4.6

1. April 1973 to November 1973 only.
2. June 1972 to February 1973 only.

Table 7.2: Average rates of telephone activity, December 1973 to March 1974

Regional office city	Interviewed households			Personal visits by reason (%)					
	Average households per survey	By telephone (%)	By personal visit (%)	First month visit	Permission to phone denied	No telephone available	Language or hearing problems	Complete change in household composition	Other
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
St. John's	325	77.8	22.2	17.1	0.2	2.8	0.0	1.0	1.1
Halifax	255	79.8	20.2	15.2	0.4	2.0	0.0	1.4	1.2
Montreal	2,278	74.6	25.4	17.8	1.4	2.4	0.4	0.4	3.0
Ottawa-Hull	412	59.4	40.6	17.0	1.1	1.9	0.9	1.0	18.7
Toronto	927	73.8	26.2	18.2	1.6	1.6	1.7	0.5	2.6
Winnipeg	499	77.5	22.5	16.5	1.5	2.0	1.1	1.0	0.4
Edmonton[1]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vancouver	1,169	72.6	27.4	18.6	1.0	3.2	2.0	0.8	1.8
All R.O. cities		73.8	26.2	17.7	1.2	2.4	1.0	0.7	3.2

1. No data available for Edmonton.

8. FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

The telephone experiment was, for those of us involved, a unique experience because no previous data was known to be available in Canada or elsewhere to guide our deliberations or to provide a degree of support for the decisions we took and the actions we embarked upon. We learned, therefore, as we progressed, and in the process we acquired two things: firstly, a considerable expertise in a telephone interviewing procedure and secondly, a knowledge of the direction in which our future studies should lead us.

As a consequence of the information gained during the experimental period, a phased introduction of telephoning in other large cities was initiated. This was carried out in a single step; that is, an entire city was converted to telephone interviewing without recourse to the intermediate telephone and control observation period. For several months after each introduction, a monitoring procedure was set up which enabled an immediate study of key indicators such as non-response and cost to be carried out. This system allowed quick action whenever problem areas surfaced.

These new cities behaved in a similar manner to the original eight regional office cities. For example, nine cities introduced to telephoning during December 1973 and January 1974 had, over a three month period, achieved rates of telephone activity of approximately 74 percent. This was almost identical with the rate for the original eight cities over the same period. Non-response and cost also followed a similar parallel to the eight original cities.

It would seem, therefore, that the "settling in" period is over and telephone behavior can now be predicted within close limits. The difficulty of interviewing, for example, may be determined from a respondent's willingness to accept or reject a telephone interview. If a household is agreeable, the risks of refusal in the future are less and the cases of non-response due to absence are minimized by a more flexible timetable of phone-backs. Households which cannot be telephoned, however, require special skills and attention. In fact, our experience has shown that many of these households have never completed an interview. A unique feature of the telephone experiment was that it provided a means of isolating these households for further study. These results provoked considerable thought, and one of the outcomes was the belief that perhaps a centralized telephone interviewing procedure would enable these so-called problem households to be dealt with more effectively.

The basis for this centralized strategy would be a pairing concept whereby each assignment would be assigned two interviewers: one to specialize in personal visiting and the other to specialize in telephone interviewing only. The former would be located in the area of the assignment while the latter could be located at a position remote from the assignment. There are many additional consequences that could be dwelt upon. However, what is clear is that centralized telephoning should streamline the overall interview operation and allow for greater specialization in techniques. It is to this area that our further examinations will lead us.

One rather important consequence of the increased use of the telephone is that telephoning makes it more difficult to conduct lengthy supplementary surveys. This serious problem has not escaped attention, to the extent that work on the development of an overall supplementary strategy is underway.

Has the telephone project been successful? Was the experimentation worth the time, effort and money spent upon it? If usage of the procedure is the criteria, then it has been very successful. Coverage of the telephone procedure in the ongoing Labour Force Survey has expanded to include approximately 42 percent of the households in all self-representing and non-self-representing units combined, or about 76 percent of the households in self-representing units. If cost reduction is a criteria, then the experiment must again be termed successful. Moreover, in the long run, the ability to predict and to isolate problem households for non-response will enable corrective measures to be introduced. This should lead to higher response rates.

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RESUME

Le présent document résume les résultats d'une expérience téléphonique menée conjointement avec l'enquête sur la population active canadienne pour la période de juin 1972 à novembre 1973. Les buts et le plan de l'expérience sont exposés en détail. On discute de l'incidence des entrevues par téléphone sur le coût du dénombrement, les taux de non-réponses et de participation et sur les taux de chômage. De plus, on décrit l'attitude des interviewers et des répondants envers ces entrevues. Enfin, l'article résume les conclusions tirées de l'expérience et indique certains domaines qui pourront faire l'objet d'études supplémentaires relatives aux entrevues par téléphone.

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