

Accountability, Evaluation and Performance Monitoring:

A Comparative Perspective

Bob Segsworth

Laurentian University

June 2003

INTRODUCTION

This paper addresses three issues, accountability, policy/program evaluation and performance management, and the links between them in contemporary public management. The paper begins with a discussion of the notion of accountability and recent refinements to its meaning to generate hypotheses about the relationship between accountability, evaluation and monitoring. The hypotheses are tested by examining developments in the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Ontario largely since these jurisdictions came under the influence of New Public Management (NPM) notions and practices. These jurisdictions are not the only ones to have implemented innovative practices. Certainly, some comparative studies include European countries, the United States and a number of states like Oregon, Florida and Texas. The decision to limit the comparative review to the five jurisdictions is based, in large part, on the argument presented by Bouckaert and Pollitt (2000 pp. 39-61). In each case, we see majoritarian government, a

separation in minister/mandarin relations, a public interest administrative culture and a dependence largely on the public service for policy advice. The fact that all of the jurisdictions are Westminster-type parliamentary systems suggests that the incentives and constraints in terms of accountability are roughly the same.

Following the discussion of accountability, the paper describes the concepts of performance monitoring and evaluation. This section presents the argument that performance monitoring and evaluation are different, albeit complementary, functions.

The approach taken in this paper is quite different from that presented by Professor Dobell. His ambitious paper provides insights into what the evaluation literature reveals about the processes of evaluation and their application to the development of deliberative democracy. This paper deals with internal governmental processes of performance measurement and evaluation in five jurisdictions.

The discussion that follows the descriptive material links the findings with the hypotheses and generates a series of questions and recommendations related to the extent to which the Government of Ontario shares the commitment and practices found elsewhere.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability has had a particular importance in discussions of responsible government and in public administration generally. Kernaghan and Langford (1990, p.162) suggest that “ a persuasive argument could be made that accountability has been the dominant administrative value over the past fifteen years and is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future”.

Discussions of accountability often are contained in broader analyses of the concept of responsibility. The classic debate on the subject of political responsibility is found in the work of Finer (1941) and Friedrich (1940). Finer argued that because of the growth of government power in the modern state, external controls over bureaucratic behaviour by the legislature, judiciary and the hierarchy of the public service were necessary. Without external controls, he claimed (p.377) that "sooner or later, there is abuse of power". Friedrich suggested (p.10) that “parliamentary responsibility is largely inoperative and certainly ineffectual”. He believed that political responsibility could be achieved if the appropriate norms and values were internalised by public servants and the public was informed of the views of public servants on key issues.

Mosher (1968) develops these ideas in his treatment of objective and subjective responsibility. Objective responsibility (p.7) “connotes the responsibility of a person or of an organisation to someone else, outside of self, for some thing or

some kind of performance”. Subjective responsibility concerns itself with (p.7) “to whom and for what one feels responsible and behaves responsibly”. Kernaghan and Langford (1990) argue that accountability has the same meaning as objective responsibility only.

In British Parliamentary systems, the principles and application of ministerial responsibility are the traditional mechanisms providing accountability in governance. In its study of accountability of third party arrangements that primarily involve alternative service delivery agents, a steering committee of Canadian deputy ministers defined (1994, p.6) the fundamental underpinnings of this form of accountability as:

1. The formal accountability link with Parliament is the responsible minister;
2. The accountability of the minister to Parliament includes the obligation to report on the manner in which responsibility has been discharged;
3. Effective accountability to Parliament requires that public servants support their minister through their actions, advice and information;
4. Public servants appearing before parliamentary committees do so at the discretion of their minister and under his or her

direction.

In terms of minister – public servant relationships, the notion of individual ministerial responsibility includes conventions of public service anonymity, political neutrality by a merit-based career public service enjoying security of tenure subject to good behaviour, confidential advice to ministers and zealous implementation of government decisions by public servants regardless of their personal views.

The application of NPM approaches over the past 15 years has had significant consequences for this traditional notion of accountability in British parliamentary systems. The first is the separation of policy and management evident in the creation of Executive Agencies in the U.K. and contractual arrangements in New Zealand. The second is the increased emphasis on accountability for ‘results’ rather than simply compliance with process (Kernaghan and Siegel, 1995).

The concerns resulting from the first issue have been summarised neatly by Hodgetts (1991, p. 13)

If the inevitable drift of public management into the political realm of governance itself ... is to be the path of the future, then we must be prepared to see senior managers assume the role of scapegoats for the failure of others who, in our system of responsible cabinet

government, have hitherto been elected to bear that direct responsibility.

The Al-Mashat Affair in Canada and British experience with HM Prisons provide examples of the veracity of Hodgetts' argument. In the first case, the former Iraq ambassador to the U.S. was admitted to Canada as a landed immigrant. The public controversy that followed led federal cabinet ministers to blame publicly a senior public servant (Sutherland, 1991). In the second case, the Home Secretary refused to accept responsibility for a number of prison breakouts and prison suicides and sacked the Director-General of HM Prison Service, an executive agency. The Minister, Michael Howard, argued that the appointed official should be held accountable for short-term operational matters while he, as minister, should be held responsible for longer-term policy (Barker 1998).

Jenkins and Gray (1993) raised concerns about the second issue. "At issue is what mechanisms and powers Parliament has to scrutinise the agencies" (p.88). They note that in practice "results reporting" rarely deal with the product or service itself or with the impact of the activities of agencies. As they describe it (p.92) "the good delivery of bad policy is hardly the measure of a healthy state".

Some contemporary observers argue that the separation of policy and service delivery and the emphasis on results have, in fact, enhanced ministerial responsibility. Aucoin (1995), for example, argues that these developments in

Britain and New Zealand encouraged (p.247) “those responsible for operations to serve ministers well by doing what ministers want done”. He concludes (p.253) that “accountability - of ministers to Parliament, public servants to ministers, and through them to Parliament – has been enhanced in the three other Westminster systems”. Armstrong (1998) supports this conclusion but adds that Parliament has an obligation to ensure that rigorous discipline is applied within the public service to protect the public interest.

Critics of this view suggest that reliance on ministerial responsibility is no longer appropriate. The OECD (1997), for example, notes a distinction between the public accountability of politicians and the managerial accountability of officials. Cooper (1995) argues that public officials now face an increased emphasis on legal, individual and market mechanisms of accountability. Farrell and Law (1999) remind us of notions of professional accountability and public accountability in addition to those already mentioned. Barberis (1998) attempts to develop a model of accountabilities for public officials that responds to the fundamental questions of who is accountable to whom, for what, by what means and with what outcomes. He argues that a clearer specification of what civil servants are accountable for is essential. Paquet (1999) argues that “360-degree accountability” must become a central feature of the new governance arrangements that have emerged and that will develop in the future.

In Canada, the Office of the Auditor General and Treasury Board Secretariat (1996) responded to the perceived need to clarify and update the understanding of accountability in a contemporary setting. They defined it as a relationship based upon the obligation to demonstrate and take responsibility for performance in light of agreed expectations. In the context of NPM, this definition fits well with the situation that Aucoin has described (1997) and the emergence of results reporting as an important management tool. It suggests that government is responsible for achieving results that are clearly defined. It responds to one citizen who argued in a letter to the Editor of the Sudbury Star (18 April 2000) that “the government should be setting an example. They should be able to show how efficiently and correctly things are being done. After all, we elected them because we believed that they could do the job properly.”

In essence, the notion of accountability remains hierarchical. Public servants remain accountable to their superiors and through them to the minister. The minister is responsible to Parliament and parliamentarians are accountable ultimately to the electorate.

Public servants are fundamentally accountable for the management of public policy. In the New Zealand case, this means the economic, efficient and effective provision of specified (contracted) outputs. Politicians retain responsibility for policy outcomes. There is, of course, the nexus of minister-public servant relations,

which involves the provision of policy advice by public servants, but with the clear understanding that the final decision on policy rests with the elected politicians.

The development of results reporting enhances, at least in theory, and closes the accountability loop by providing both policy and managerial information to Parliament and the public. As the President of the Treasury Board put it (1999) “Parliamentarians have a vital role to play in this process. Indeed, managing for results can succeed only if parliamentarians are actively and fully engaged.” (President’s Message). Delacourt and Lenihan (1999) go even further and suggest that results reporting could “re-energize” parliamentary committees by providing “an integrated and complete picture of departmental planning and evaluation...assigning committees the significant role of providing bottom-up feedback on the plan, permitting members to situate specific initiatives, such as legislative bills in a broader departmental context and perhaps by allowing for a more collegial and less adversarial relationship between ministers, departmental officials and parliamentary committees” (p.117).

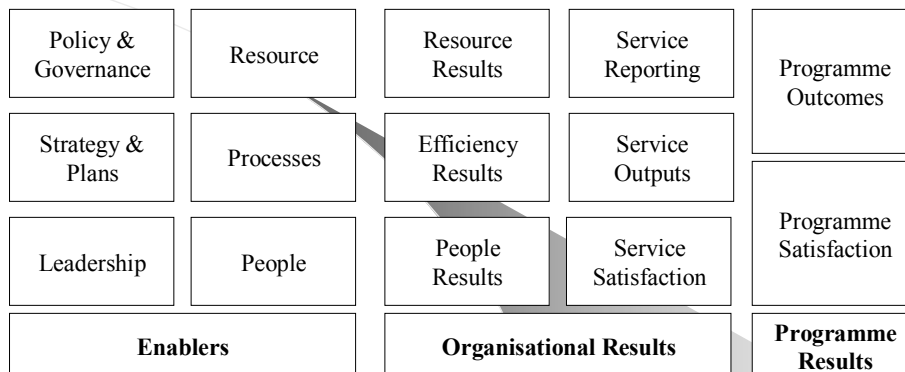
This neat picture of contemporary accountability is threatened by at least three elements. The first involves the growing popularity of partnerships, especially collaborative partnerships. Such arrangements lead to shared accountability for the attainment of the desired outcomes and create potential problems for the notions of accountability discussed earlier. This accountability

relationship is different from service delivery by contractors or specialised government agencies where accountability is hierarchical. It is different from departmental cooperative arrangements where the verticality of accountability (albeit through more than one minister) also applies. Accountability becomes particularly complex in federal systems where two "sovereign" levels of government enter into collaborative agreements. The danger here is that of "partial accountability" wherein, for example, federal officials and the federal government could be held accountable only for their particular responsibilities in the collaborative. A related potential problem is that of verifying the extent to which other partners are fulfilling their obligations. The Auditor General of Canada cannot audit the provincial or local government's use of public resources. Simply put "the partnership creates accountability arrangements among the partners. In addition, each partner retains accountability obligations to its governing body such as Parliament in the case of federal partners ". (Office of the Auditor General and Treasury Board Secretariat, 1998 p.8).

The second major issue related to the question of "for what are public servants accountable". If NPM reflects a return to the politics-administration dichotomy in that public servants are primarily responsible for program delivery and politicians are responsible for policy and policy outcomes, then another form of partial accountability in contemporary regimes becomes likely. Colin Talbot's

public service excellence model (2000) provides a helpful way of visualising the issue.

Public Service Excellence Model



What Talbot's model suggests in terms of evaluation and performance monitoring is a focus on outputs and service satisfaction and quality. These clearly reflect the results of public service activities over which public servants have control. The model also suggests that evaluation and performance monitoring provide bases on which one can make informed judgements about program outcomes and program satisfaction. Nonetheless, a problem remains. Programs and the activities associated with them are the means by which governments attempt to achieve policy goals. In both cases, we are limited to only partial accountability.

Accordingly, we hypothesise that evaluation and performance monitoring do not complete the accountability cycle. Rather, at best, they provide a basis for the accountability of how well or how badly public officials manage their activities and programs and, perhaps, the immediate outcomes of those efforts.

A third threat to comprehensive accountability by means of results reporting rests in the huge range of activities for which government has responsibility and the large number of different types of structures that deliver programs to citizens. The table below, derived from the Management Board Secretariat’s **Alternative Service Delivery Framework** (1999) provides a useful summary.

Service Delivery Alternatives, Examples and Accountability Mechanisms

Privatisation	Ontario Hydro	Market
Franchising	Canada Post	Market
Self-Management	Safety Regulations	Set/Enforce Standards
Agencies	LCBO	Supervision
Service Contracting	Garbage Collection	Results
Partnership	LMDA	Results
Devolution	Hospitals	Results
Direct Delivery	CPP	Results

This table indicates a broad range of functions and service delivery systems for which results reporting would be an appropriate accountability mechanism. For two instruments, privatisation and franchising, the market provides accountability.

For self-management, there appears to be no results requirement to support accountability.

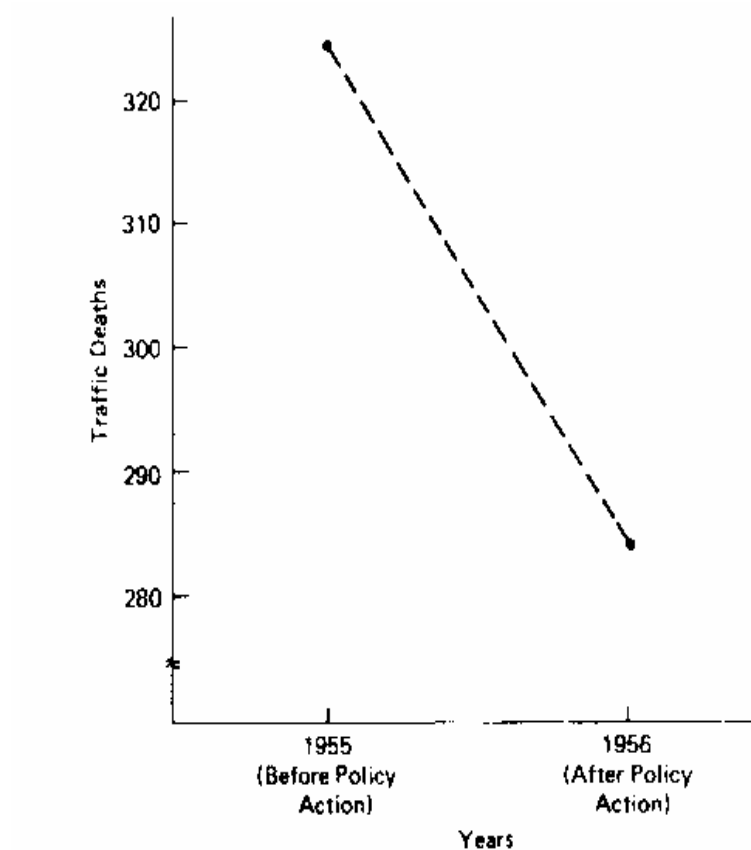
In this case, the threat to comprehensive accountability is two-fold. The first is the enormity of the task required to develop meaningful results measures and/or to evaluate each of these operations to provide regular, ongoing evidence of efficiency, effectiveness, service quality and service satisfaction. The second is that for one of the areas in which government plays an important role, such as safety regulation, there is no apparent accountability for results. This third threat to comprehensive accountability supports the earlier arguments that generated a hypothesis of partial accountability.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

For purposes of this paper, performance monitoring includes program monitoring, (the traditional counting of clients, tracking of expenditures and concern for inputs) as well as performance measurement with its concern for outputs and outcome. Performance monitoring is based the notion that we can determine what actions we are implementing and measure the results that they are producing. A simple example is the Connecticut crackdown on speeding. Enforcement of speed limits was enhanced in an attempt to reduce the number of

traffic fatalities. The result of the experience is presented below. These results led the Governor to declare that the program was a success.

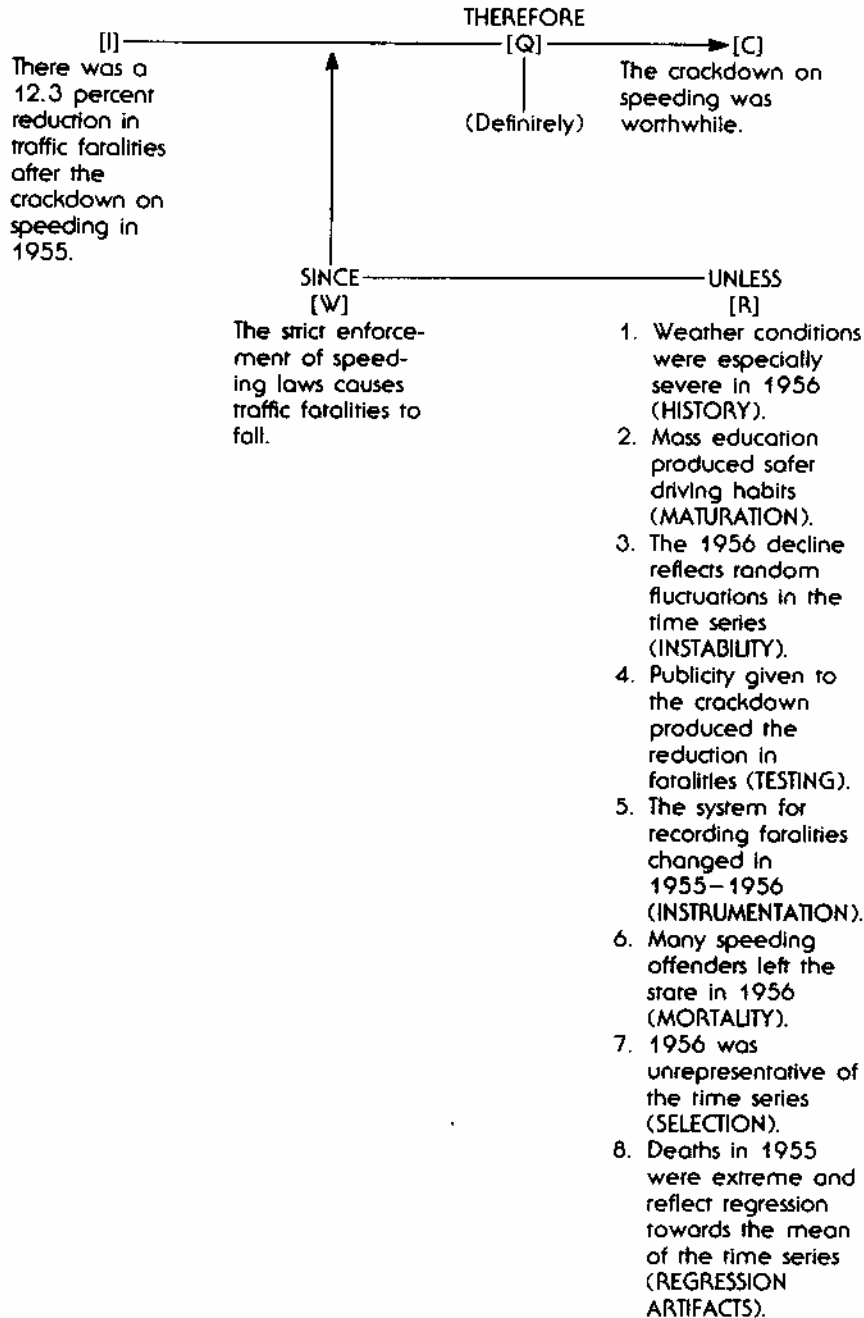
Number of Traffic Deaths before and after Intervention



Source: W. Dunn (1994) **Public Policy Analysis**.

The problem here is the assumption of a causal relationship that the decline in traffic fatalities is a result of the increased enforcement of speed limits. This conclusion may not be valid, as William Dunn (1994) has noted.

Threats to the Validity of the Policy Claim



In most governments, performance measurement and program evaluation are viewed as distinct and perhaps complementary functions. Despite John Mayne's

(2001) efforts, the reality is, as Hendricks (2000) has pointed out, “attribution is the Achilles heel of performance measurement”. The outcomes measured by performance indicators may be wonderful and reflect objectives achievement but those indicators do not, and cannot tell us if those outcomes are the result of what we are doing. If they are not the result of what we are doing, then it follows that government is wasting money to achieve something that would have been achieved anyway. Ultimately, if one wishes to complete the performance information loop completely, one must not only demonstrate good results, but also that they are the result of what we are doing. That requires what governments have traditionally defined as outcome, impact or effectiveness evaluation.

EVALUATION POLICY AND PRACTICE

Although many definitions of evaluation exist in the literature, for the purposes of this paper the definition provided by the 1988 Management Board Directive on Activity Review will apply. Evaluations are “systematic studies assessing (1) the adequacy and relevance of program objectives; (2) the effectiveness of the programs used to achieve objectives; (3) the appropriateness and efficiency of mechanisms used to deliver programs to the intended recipients”.

In this section of the paper, we review evaluation policy and practice in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and Ontario.

The United Kingdom

Jenkins and Gray (1990, p.53) cite Wass, a former senior British public servant who stated “it is surely right that policies should be rigorously evaluated and their effects set against objectives”. This noble vision remains unfulfilled. The United Kingdom has no official policy on evaluation and the initial expectations following the implementation of the Financial Management Initiative in 1985 remain unrealised.

The *Guide on Program Evaluation* published in 1988 reflected the idea that evaluation would be established as an integral part of the policy management process. By the end of the decade, Jenkins and Gray concluded that there were no coherent and established procedures for initiating, conducting and utilising evaluations in the policy process. They go on to argue that there was (p.69) “more political lip service to evaluation than any commitment to develop it in a rigorous fashion”.

In 1999 the Blair government issued *Modernising Government*. It contained a commitment to “more evaluation of policies and programs, the modernisation of standards and tools and an enhancement of the evaluation capacity of government (Gray and Jenkins 2002, p.136). There is some evidence that “New Labour” is

more supportive of evaluation. Evaluations of the Health Action Zones are underway. A longitudinal evaluation study of the Surestart program with conceptual, theoretical and practical concerns has begun. A team of evaluators at the University of Warwick is evaluating some 50 pilot projects funded by the Ministry of the Environment. At this stage, however, Gray and Jenkins (2002,p. 150) conclude that “the new government’s commitment to evaluation, considerable at the level of rhetoric has still to be tested, including during the next round of public service agreements and, most telling of all, when robust evaluations provide evidence that questions sacred policy cows”.

New Zealand

In many ways, the experience in New Zealand is similar to that of the United Kingdom. There is no formal policy on evaluation. Truman and Washington (2002, p.357) claim that “evaluation has existed in the New Zealand public sector since the 1960’s, but has been limited in its scope, usage and impact”. Aitken (1997, p.8) noted that “formal ex-post evaluation has had little institutional manifestation or procedural role in the New Zealand reforms”.

The government imported much of its evaluation expertise from overseas and the focus of evaluations studies tends to be service improvements and operations issues of programs. A State Services Commission (1999) review of cabinet committee papers found that only 7 percent included a proposal to evaluate

or provided a logic model lucid enough to facilitate a subsequent impact evaluation. The 2000 Report of the New Zealand Auditor General found little in the way of a robust evaluation capability within the New Zealand public sector. He recommended that Parliament should demand more evaluations. This enthusiasm for evaluation is shared by the State Services Commission, which criticised current management systems and highlighted the lack of outcome evaluations.

There are some indications that change may be underway. As Turner and Washington (p.371) note:

1. clear statements of outcomes expected are demanded;
2. there are demands that departments demonstrate that the services deliver on government policies and generate the results intended; and
3. there is a recognition that evaluation is part of essential management practice whether or not it is contracted for explicitly.

The Pathfinder Project, a pilot effort involving eight departments is the first significant attempt to introduce, apply and utilise evaluation on a fairly wide scale in the New Zealand public sector.

Whether evaluation will assume a more prominent role in New Zealand public management and whether it will serve the accountability needs of the New Zealand Parliament and citizens remains unclear.

Australia

Australian experience with evaluation is quite different. In 1988 the Australian cabinet promulgated an evaluation strategy. According to Mackay (1994,p.16) the strategy had three major objectives:

1. encourage program managers within portfolios to use evaluation as a standard and commonplace management tool;
2. to provide fundamental information about program performance to aid Cabinet's decision-making and prioritisation, particularly during the budget process;
3. to strengthen accountability in a devolved environment by providing formal evidence of program managers' stewardship of program resources.

The strategy required evaluation plans for each portfolio to be submitted to the Minister of Finance. Every program was to be evaluated on a 3-5 year cycle. All new policy proposals had to include an evaluation plan. Completed evaluations were published.

Mackay reports that in 1990-91, 23 percent of new policy proposals were influenced by evaluation studies. By 1993-94, the percentage had increased to 43. Evaluation influenced about 58 percent of the savings options in the 1993-94 budget and about 30 percent of total cabinet decisions. In approximately half of these decisions, the influence of evaluation was significant.

1996 saw the new government introduce public service reforms with an explicit emphasis on performance measurement. Mackay (2002, p.171) notes that “the new approach to evaluation accepts performance measurement as an integral part of performance management reflecting a philosophy that if the environment of public sector governance is strongly conducive to evaluation being conducted and used, then that will happen.... The danger in this expectation is that it might mirror a similar, but erroneous one in the early 1980s, when it was assumed that if the structural framework of public service management was ‘correct’, then an evaluation culture would almost certainly follow”. The issue, for Mackay, is that if the evaluation culture is not strongly embedded, evaluation will be replaced largely by performance measurement, the current fashion.

Canada

Treasury Board Circular 1977-47 (1) stated that “departments and agencies will periodically review their programs to evaluate their effectiveness and the efficiency with which they are being administered”. The 1983 audit of the

evaluation function conducted by the Auditor General of Canada reported major improvements during the 1978-1983 period. The 1986 follow-up audit reported improvements in the quality of evaluations. By the mid 1980s, approximately 100 formal studies were conducted each year.

In 1991, there was a change in evaluation policy. The most significant alteration was the elimination of the requirement to evaluate all programs. The 1993 audit of the evaluation function conducted by the Auditor General indicated a decline in the number of evaluation studies and in evaluation capacity within the Canadian public service. This was reflected in the 1994 decision to rescind the evaluation policy and to replace it with a new policy on review. In this new policy (Treasury Board Secretariat 1994, p.3) “evaluation was one of four means by which departments were to determine and review the performance of their policies, programs and operations in a timely, relevant and cost-effective fashion, emphasising results, innovation and lessons learned”. Structurally, evaluation units merged with internal audit units even in the Office of the Comptroller General, the agency with overall responsibility for the evaluation function. By 1993 the Office of the Comptroller General merged with the Treasury Board Secretariat.

Assessments of the role and success, or lack thereof, of evaluation were common throughout the period from 1977-2000. Dobell and Zussman (1981,p.406) noted that “a solid decade – almost two – has gone into changing the words and the

forms. Yet even the most dedicated do not argue that evaluation efforts have led to decisive results or significant government action”. The 1986 *Report* of the Task Force on Program Review found that government program evaluations were generally useless and inadequate. Donald Savoie (1990) pointed out that evaluation played no role of consequence in assisting government to deal with its financial crisis. Douglas Hartle (1990) was highly critical of the program evaluation function in the Government of Canada and classified federal evaluation studies as largely management consulting reports.

In 2001, following a review, Treasury Board issued a new evaluation policy. It clearly established evaluation as a management tool that would help managers design or improve upon the design of policies, programs and initiatives and provide, where appropriate, periodic assessments of policy or program effectiveness, of impacts both intended and unintended and of alternative ways of achieving expected results. The policy established the three evaluation issues as relevance, results and cost-effectiveness. Evaluators were expected to develop results-based management and accountability frameworks.

Treasury Board Secretariat has established a Centre of Excellence in support of the federal evaluation function. It has developed a recruitment initiative and it has established an internship program.

At this stage, there is little evidence to suggest that the number and/or type of evaluation studies undertaken in the Canadian public service have changed. Recently, (December 2002) an official with the Office of the Auditor General of Canada indicated to me that evaluators were busy producing Results and Accountability Frameworks rather than credible and useful evaluation studies.

Ontario

Following the 1986 budget, Management Board created an Activity Review Branch within Management Board Secretariat with two objectives:

1. to increase the awareness of the need to do evaluations of efficiency and effectiveness and to ensure that evaluations took place and were acted upon; and
2. to develop a policy on evaluation.

The 1988 Management Board Directive on Activity Review required activity review co-ordinators in each ministry, the annual submission of evaluation plans to Management Board Secretariat, the inclusion of evaluation plans for new or enriched program submissions, and an annual activity review report for ministries on the status and results of evaluation studies. In 1989, the Activity Review Branch was disbanded. That decision sent a message to many ministries that evaluation was no longer regarded as important by the centre. By the end of the 1980s there

was little clarity in terms of the role, capacity or utilisation of evaluation in the government of Ontario.

The decision to move to business planning and performance measurement taken shortly after the election of the Harris Government did little to improve the situation insofar as evaluation is concerned. Performance measurement became the dominant accountability tool. There is no common understanding of what program evaluation is within the Ontario Public Service. There is little, if any evidence to suggest that the centre is supporting and encouraging serious evaluation efforts. Indeed, one senior official in a line ministry told me that Management Board Secretariat actually discouraged his unit from conducting serious evaluation studies. Thus far there is little evidence to indicate a meaningful attempt to revive evaluation in the OPS. Where an evaluation culture has existed, it continues to function. In most ministries, it is perceived as a function performed by performance measurement.

There are two conclusions that a review of evaluation policy and practice in the five jurisdictions provide. The first is that with the exception of Australia, evaluation has not made a significant contribution to policy decisions and current developments suggest that its influence in Australia may be on the wane. The second is that there is little evidence that Parliaments want this information. Pollitt (1995) and Jenkins and Gray (1990, 2002) outline the British experience. Mackay

(2002, p.169) claims that “in practice, Parliament has generally possessed neither the infrastructure resources nor the perspectives to focus on the insights into program performance that evaluation findings can provide”. Truman and Washington (p.364) argue that “the New Zealand Parliament has not showed much interest in outcome evaluation information”. Segsworth (1992) makes a similar observation regarding the Parliament of Canada.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The United Kingdom

There has been a great deal of change in the British public service since the election of Mrs. Thatcher and the introduction of NPM. For our purposes three are particularly important. The Financial Management Initiative of 1982 required departments to develop performance indicators that focussed on efficiency and productivity. The Next Steps Exercise led to the creation of executive agencies and a formal separation of policy and service delivery. Finally, **Modernising Government** in 1999 emphasised a shift from output to outcome measures. This last change is linked to a revised expenditure management approach.

Spending reviews went into effect in 1998. The second round of the biennial exercise is now almost complete. As van den Noord (2002, p.33) put it “the core of

the budgeting framework consists of the biennial spending reviews to grant three-year spending limits to departments and agencies, which in turn are being held accountable for achieving policy targets specified in the Public Service Agreements”.

For departmental accountability and reporting purposes, there are four key documents: the Public Service Agreement, The Service Delivery Agreement, the Expenditure Plan and the Annual Report.

The Public service Agreement is a means to link governmental and departmental priorities. In the case of the Department of Education and Skills, the agreement identifies the aim as helping to build a competitive economy and inclusive society by creating opportunities for everyone to develop their learning, releasing potential in people to make the most of themselves, achieving excellence in standards of education and skills. From this general aim, six objectives are derived. The first is to sustain improvements in primary education. This is followed by specific targets for each of the objectives. In this example, the targets are to raise the standards in English and maths so that:

- by 2004, 85% of 11 year olds achieve level 4 or above and 35% achieve level 5 or above with the level of performance sustained to 2006;
- by 2006, the number of schools in which fewer than

65% of pupils achieve level 4 or above is significantly reduced.

“Service delivery agreements set out how the major government departments will meet the public service agreement targets and how they plan to modernise and reform government to help achieve the targets.” (NAO 2001, p.15) A typical service delivery agreement involves four related sections. The first is a statement of who is accountable for the delivery of targets. The second involves a description of how the targets will be delivered together with a description of the structure in place to achieve the result. The third requires identification of key output targets critical to the delivery of the public service agreement targets. Finally, the department is expected to explain how it will organise itself to deliver the targets and improve performance in a manner that responds to **Modernising Government**.

One of the interesting features of this exercise has been the change in the types of targets required by the public service agreements from 1999-2002 to 2001-2004. The National Audit Office (2001, p.21) summarises these differences as follows:

Public Service Agreement Targets		
	1999-2002	2001-2004
Outcomes	15%	68%

Outputs	27%	13%
Process	51%	14%
Inputs	7%	5%

Obviously, the current system places a far greater emphasis on outcomes.

The Ministry of Defence **Expenditure Plan 2002-2003 to 2003-2004** (2002) contains seven sections ranging from the structure of the ministry to public spending. For our purposes, what is interesting is the inclusion of the public service agreement targets expressed in terms of aim, objectives and sub-objectives. In this document, we do not find a large number of performance indicators.

That information appears in the annual **Performance Report**. For 2002, the Ministry of Defence provided some 21 pages of performance information in a 93-page document. For example, the public service agreement target is that by 2005, ensure that a minimum of 90% of rapidly available units are at a required state of readiness. Four measures are provided. The Ministry states that is it on course to meet this target in terms of the short and medium readiness forces ready for operations with 93% of the Navy/Marine contingent, 81% of the Army contingent and 90% of the Air Force contingent meeting the standard in 2002. The Ministry claims that based on an assessment of an ability to transport these forces, it is on course to meet the target. It notes that there has been slippage in establishing the operational capability of the Joint Rapid Reaction Forces and that it has taken

action to respond. Finally it reports that it has met the requirement to provide the strategic lift capability by putting 4 C-17 aircraft into operation on budget and ahead of schedule.

For Executive Agencies, there are three key documents: the Framework Document, the annual target setting for executive agencies by departments and annual reports. The Framework Document for the Defence Procurement Agency has 8 sections and series of annexes that establish status, roles and accountability, objectives and outputs and performance evaluation. The Framework Document makes it clear that (p.2) “the Secretary of State is accountable to Parliament for all matters concerning the Defence Procurement Agency”. Executive Agencies are required to prepare corporate and business plans for approval by the Minister and key targets, set annually by departments relate to performance, cost, time and efficiency.

The Office of Public Service Reform’s (2002) **Better Government Services: Executive Agencies in the 21st Century** notes that there are now 127 Executive Agencies, which account for 57% of the Home Civil Service. They deliver and report on specified outputs. The Comptroller and Auditor General (2002) reported that in 1998-99, Executive Agencies and 4 departments reported annually on 1,200 key targets. 91 large executive non-departmental public bodies reported on another 650 key targets.

Three interesting issues emerge. The first is the obvious movement in emphasis to stress outcome measurement and reporting. The second is the volume of indicators. The third is the attitude towards and the relevance of, targets. In the case of Executive Agencies, there is some recent evidence on this last issue. **Executive Agencies in the 21st Century** (p.13) noted “ there is a strong view from both agencies and departments that targets are too many, are unprioritised and have little link to business objectives or customer needs and that authority, rewards, incentives, penalties or opprobrium bear no relation to performance”. One Chief Executive is quoted as stating (p.31) that “target setting is a game”. The report goes on to conclude (p.34) that “at present, annual reporting is generally seen as an expensive and resource-hungry exercise that is of little value except as conformation of high level audit”.

New Zealand

Public sector reform in New Zealand was dramatic in the 1980s and change continues into the 21st century. The State-Owned Enterprises Act of 1986 initiated a process of creating profitable, highly efficient state enterprises. The State Sector Act of 1988 conferred considerable managerial freedom. Heads of departments became Chief Executives employed by the State Services Commission on fixed term contracts. Departments and agencies entered into purchase agreements with ministers that specified the volume type and price of outputs required by the

Minister to achieve the desired policy outcomes. Despite the apparent split between the service delivery and policy function, the **Cabinet Manual** (n.d. para 2.162) makes it quite clear that “Ministers are accountable to Parliament for ensuring that the departments for which they are responsible carry out their functions properly and efficiently. On occasion, this may require a minister to account for the actions of a department when errors are made, even which the Minister had no knowledge of, or involvement in, those actions”. The State Services Commission (n.d., p.16) described the system as follows:

The new strategic management system is fundamentally straightforward – Ministers decide and specify the government’s priorities, the public service distils them into achievable objectives for each chief executive and department, Ministers and chief executives conclude formal contracts to cover these, performance against these agreements is assessed and the information obtained feeds back into the loop to improve the quality of the next cycle.

The Public Finance Act of 1989 introduced further changes that were designed to improve parliamentary scrutiny, enhance accountability and improve managerial performance. Rae (2002, p.14) argues that the focus continued to be on outputs and that “ neither departments nor central agencies extensively measure or

evaluate outcomes, and New Zealand is one of the few OECD countries that does not present to Parliament its performance against outcome targets”. He notes, however, that the country has taken steps to respond to such concerns and that one of them involved improved performance documents. These include purchase agreements, strategic plans, forecast reports and annual reports.

Purchase agreements are formal contracts and are quite specific. They identify the term of the agreement (typically one year), a description of the outputs and their costs and a description of the performance measures to be used and reported as well as the appropriate standards to be achieved. A section on the procedures to be used for assessing standards is included. Finally, the document contains provisions regarding reporting requirements, rewards and sanctions, procedures for amending the agreement and procedures for resolving disputes.

Strategic plans are relatively short documents which attempt to link departments’ goals and objectives to government goals that are specified in **Key Government Goals to Guide Public Sector Policy and Performance**. In the case of the Ministry of Transport, the strategic plan for 2001-2006 is only 11 pages long. It identifies the specific government priorities to which it intends to contribute. It outlines four strategic departmental goals, specifies related objectives and states which performance measures will be used to measure objectives achievement. For the goal of a sustainable transport system, the plan provides 10

objectives. One of these (1.2) is to improve levels of accessibility for public transport services”. The performance indicator is that (p.6) “by June 2004, third party assessments will show public transport and total mobility funding policies are improving accessibility”. Another objective (1.6) is to improve transport sector safety outcomes. The performance indicator is (p.6) “transport safety outcome trends will show reductions to the risk of death or injury”.

The Ministry’s **Departmental Forecast Report for the Year Ending 30 June 2002** is a larger 39-page document. It provides a statement of government goals, key priorities and output classes as well as a lengthy financial section. One of the output classes is policy advice which among other things will improve the accessibility of the transport system and improve transport safety outcomes. The measures used to demonstrate progress are specified and are the same ones indicated in the strategic plan. The Report also describes the performance measures targets for 2000/01 and 2001/02 for the quantity, quality and cost of policy advice. For example, the targets are that 100% of cabinet papers will meet Cabinet Office technical criteria and 95% of policy advice papers will meet Cabinet Office deadlines.

The **Annual Report** of the Ministry is the most substantial of the four documents, some 99 pages for the year ended 30 June 2002. Almost one-third of the report is devoted to objectives and service performance information. That is, by

far, the largest section of the report. For example, it provided the number of deaths by class of transportation (rail, road, air and maritime) for 2000/01 and 2001/02. In terms of policy advice the report notes that in 2001/02, 12% of policy advice papers did not include a summary when one was required and that 19% exceeded the 10-page limit. For 2001/02, 33% did not include a summary when one was needed and 17% exceeded the 10-page limit. The target of 100% compliance is published in the same table. In terms of timeliness, the report notes that against a target of 95%, the Ministry submitted reports on time 87% of the time in 2000/01 and 88% of the time in 2001/02.

These documents indicate a growing emphasis on requiring departments to demonstrate how their activities and programs contribute to the attainment of the outcomes desired by government. They also demonstrate a rather remarkable consistency in terms of objectives and performance indicators.

Norman (2002, p.623) suggests that “a lot of the reporting and accountability in the budget cycle has become a game which departments and central agencies are increasingly adept at playing”. He claims (p.624) that “most energy is put into planning and the spelling out of expectations but there is little monitoring to assess the actual results” and that “no visible consequences have been observed as a result of Chief Executives failing to deliver on performance agreements”.

Australia

The election of a new government in 1996 brought changes to the public sector in Australia. These reforms involved an explicit emphasis on performance measurement. The creation of Centrelink, an executive agency, in 1997 reflected a move, at least partly, to a separation of the policy and service delivery functions. By 1998, the government had established the Performance Improvement Cycle with four clear phases. Phase 1 is a review of government activities designed to answer the question ‘should we be doing this’. Phase 2 assesses the most efficient ways by which government can be involved. Phase 3 addresses the efficient implementation of improvements. Phase 4 examines how well the improvements are working and whether the government actions remain relevant under current conditions. One of the most important recent changes was the development of the outcomes and outputs framework.

The framework addresses three basic questions:

- (i) what does the government want to achieve (outcomes);
- (ii) how does it achieve this (outputs and administered items);
- (iii) how does it know if it is succeeding (performance reporting)

(Department of Finance and Administration 2000, pp.3-4)

The expectation is that the successful implementation of the framework will result in enhanced public accountability and improved agencies’ corporate governance.

The **Outcomes and Outputs Framework Guidance Document** (p.5)

outlines the decisions hierarchy as follows:

- government (through its Ministers and with the assistance of relevant agencies) specified the outcome it is seeking to achieve in a given area;
- these outcomes are specified in terms of the impact government is going to have on some aspect of society (e.g. education), the economy (e.g. exports), or the national interest (e.g. defence);
- Parliament appropriates funds to allow the government to achieve these outcomes through administered items and departmental outputs;
- Items such as grants, transfers and benefit payments are administered on the government's behalf by agencies with a view to maximising their contribution to the specified outcomes;
- Agencies specify and manage their outputs to maximising their contribution to the achievement of the government's desired outcomes;
- Performance indicators are developed to allow the scrutiny of effectiveness (i.e. the impact of the outputs and administered items on outcomes) and efficiency (especially in terms of the application of administered items and the price, quality and quantity of outputs) and to enable the system to be further developed to improve performance and accountability.

In this context, two key documents are required annually from departments. The first is the Portfolio Budget Statement and the second is the Annual Report.

The 2000-01 Portfolio Budget Statement of the Department of Industry, Science and Resources includes an outcome statement that the government intends a stronger, sustainable and internationally competitive Australian industry, comprising manufacturing, resources and service sectors. It provides five effectiveness indicators:

Production: changes in Australia's per capita gross GDP relative to its major international trading partners and trading competitors, at purchasing power parity;

Exports: trends in exports from the manufacturing, resources and services sector;

Productivity: trends in labour productivity and multi-factor productivity in the manufacturing, resources and services sectors.

The Department's Annual Report provides the values of these indicators to Parliament.

Australia appears to be following the United Kingdom and New Zealand examples. It has moved to a performance management system in which accountability is based on measures of effectiveness and performance. In addition, it has moved some way to separate the policy and service functions. This structural

split does not appear to have impacted significantly on traditional notions of accountability and responsibility. Mulgan (2002, pp.54-55) concludes “Ministers still take responsibility for administrative decisions, particularly in Parliament. Except for the issue of employment conditions, there has been no attempt to delineate separate spheres of public responsibility and accountability for ministers and the Centrelink managers”.

Canada

Following the 1994 Program Review exercise initiated by the new Liberal Government, a number of developments were undertaken in an attempt to develop a results-based management system in the public service. From my perspective there are four key developments:

1. the Improved Reporting to Parliament Project (1995);
2. the modern comptrollership initiative (1997);
3. the new management framework (2000);
4. ongoing discussions regarding accountability.

The Improved Reporting to Parliament Project followed the 1988 revisions to the Estimates documents. The Auditor General criticised the new documents on the ground that the information provided was incomplete and not helpful. This resulted in an effort to engage parliamentarians in discussions regarding the information included in Estimates documents. The perception was that this would result in the

provision of more relevant information. In 2001, Treasury Board issued guidelines regarding the content of performance reports. They were to:

- provide a coherent and balanced picture of performance that is brief and to the point;
- focus on outcomes, not outputs;
- associate performance with earlier commitments and explain any changes;
- set performance in context;
- link resources to outcomes; and
- explain why the public can have confidence in the methodology and data used to substantiate performance.

(Auditor General 2002, Chap. 6, 7)

The President of the Treasury Board set up an independent review panel on modern comptrollership in November 1996 and it reported in 1997. The Report (p.4) indicated that there are four key elements of modern comptrollership: performance information – financial and non-financial, historical and prospective; risk management; control systems and ethics, ethical practices and values (beyond a focus on legal compliance). The key benefit of modern comptrollership according to the panel is the increase in effectiveness of the government in fulfilling its mission and achieving its objectives. A Treasury Board Secretariat

document (n.d., p.1) states that “ it is about working smarter for better results, better informed decisions, better public policies and better service delivery”. A series of pilot projects were initiated and a summative evaluation of the comptrollership initiative is planned for 2004.

In 2000 the President of the Treasury Board outlined a new management framework for the Canadian Public Service. It too specifies changes to firmly establish results-based management. The framework involves four key commitments – citizen focus, values, achievement of results and reporting on them to elected officials and to Canadians, and responsible spending. The document goes on to make the argument that performance information is critical to the success of the framework (pp.6-7).

The foundation of results-based management is accurate and timely performance information. Departments and agencies need to implement an information regime that measures, evaluates and reports on key aspects of programs and their performance in key areas; holds managers accountable for achieving results; and ensures unbiased analysis, showing both good and bad performance.

Here we appear to see a notion of managerial accountability distinct from political accountability. This reflected the Modernization of Comptrollership notion (1997,

p.18) that “in general terms, ministers determine what is to be done, and public servants are responsible for how that happens”.

The discussions of accountability largely involve the Treasury Board Secretariat and the Office of the Auditor General. In 2000 Treasury Board Secretariat’s **Accountability Expectations and Approaches** (p.1) claimed that “the federal government’s approach to results-based management consists of a three-step strategy: 1) identify key results; 2) measure performance, learn and improve; 3) report to Parliament and Canadians on what was achieved in a balanced and credible way.” The Auditor General (2002, p.13) argued that “accountability in a performance-based public service requires being able to credibly demonstrate:

- the extent to which the expected results were achieved;
- the contributions made by activities and outputs of the program to the outcomes;
- the learning and change that have resulted;
- the soundness and propriety of the means used”.

The Auditor General goes on to reiterate the importance for accountability of being able to assess credibly the program’s contribution to achieving the outcome.

At this stage, Canadian rhetoric reflects what we have seen in the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia. Public accountability is enhanced by

providing performance information to parliamentarians and citizens that reflects the relative effectiveness and efficiency of government activities and programs. The difference between Canada and the other jurisdictions appears to lie in the implementation of results-based (or performance) management.

In the Canadian case there are two, perhaps 3, key documents. The first is the departmental report on plans and priorities. The second is the annual performance report. The third is **Results for Canadians**. Increasingly, **Results for Canadians** provides broad societal indicators and attempts to link changes in them to the effects of government policy and other factors. For purposes of this paper, attention is focussed on the first two documents.

Treasury Board Secretariat's **2002-03 Estimates: A Report on Plans and Priorities** is a useful example. It includes a vision statement and strategic outcomes such as good public management of federal resources. It defines (p.6) accountability as "accountability for results throughout the public service is clearly defined and key results are publicly reported". There is a good deal of discussion of activities and initiatives underway in Treasury Board Secretariat and elsewhere, yet no quantitative targets are provided and there is no indication of how (beyond process completion or continuance) one might establish success.

In terms of annual performance reports, Fisheries and Oceans Canada's 2002 Report is a particularly disturbing example. It is over 100 pages long and section

three, which deals with departmental performance, is 52 pages long. There are five strategic outcomes such as management and protection of fisheries resources. There are eleven business lines to achieve strategic outcomes; however, a high level performance framework with 19 indicators is “still being reviewed to determine which ones are most meaningful and which ones need to be modified, amalgamated or eliminated”(p.16). The report goes on to note that “we are currently developing performance indicators to give us an indication of the impact and efficiency of our services” (p.18). The report is filled with “activities stories”. Treasury Board Secretariat’s 2001 Performance Report is similar in that it provides little in the way of performance measures (indicators) but many pages devoted to “activities stories”.

In practice the Canadian public service has a long way to go if it seriously intends to implement a meaningful performance management system that produces the relevant and useful information by which parliamentarians and citizens can hold government to account. This implementation tardiness also appears to apply to the modern comptrollership initiative. The Auditor General (2002, Chap.7, 8) noted that “ the government is now in its fifth year of the modern comptrollership initiative. In our view, progress towards establishing sound comptrollership principles in departments continues to be slow”. The Report goes on to state (p.20) “moreover, the information on the modern comptrollership initiative that

Parliament has received from Treasury Board Secretariat has not met the Secretariat's own standards for reporting on performance".

Finally, there remains the question of demand for such information. The Auditor General (2002, Chap.9) reported that the scrutiny of performance reports by Parliament is limited. The Public Policy Forum (1998) reported that Members of Parliament and Canadians have not used them extensively. The Forum reports that (p.2) "it is clear that the participating Members of Parliament did not view the performance reports as relevant to what they are doing or to the parliamentary process" and (p.3) "it is unlikely that citizens will use performance reports if their elected representatives are not making use of them".

Ontario

Shortly after forming a government, Mr. Harris and his colleagues appointed the Financial Review Commission. It recommended (Program Management and Estimates Division 2000, p.5) "an integrated framework that better links planning, monitoring, reporting and evaluation to improve the management and accountability processes in ministries". By 1996-97 the first business plans were approved and published. In 1998-99 the annual reports of ministries were incorporated into the business plans and tabled in the Legislative Assembly. Business plans are seen as a means to provide accountability to the legislature and citizens and are the key document for purposes of this paper.

In its business plan, a ministry is expected to include its vision, a description of core businesses, a discussion of strategies, the identification of cost-drivers and policy risks, an outline of proposals and clear indications of how it intends to measure performance. These documents “provide accountability to the public by the inclusion of performance measures and past year achievements against targets”. (Program Management and Estimates Division 2000, p.28).

The 1997 Management Board Directive on Accountability (p.3) argues that there are three key elements for effective accountability:

1. defining expectations and managing consistent action;
2. reporting on and monitoring performance;
3. taking action based on results.

The Directive goes on to state that (p.5) “performance reporting and monitoring should be based on established performance measures. The reported information should be valid, timely, cost-effective, consistent and accurate to demonstrate the achievement of intended results”.

By 2000, it is quite clear that the notion of results includes outcomes. The Draft Business Planning and Allocations Directive states that business plan submissions to Management Board of Cabinet should include core business measures. Core business performance measures (p.4) “outline the desired outcomes for each core business, the related performance measures, long-term targets or

standards, current year commitments and achievements and commitment(s) for the coming year”. The draft goes on to state that performance measures should deal with effectiveness, efficiency and customer service concerns. The published business plans must (p.6) “detail published core business performance measures, showing desired outcomes, targets, standards and commitments for the new year”.

In Ontario, this enthusiasm for performance measurement was extended to municipalities. Beginning in 2000 each municipality was required to report to its citizens and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on a series of performance measures. The objectives of the Municipal Performance Measurement Program (Municipal Affairs and Housing 2001) are:

1. to provide a tool to assess how well municipal services are delivered;
2. to improve performance measures of cost-efficiency and service effectiveness of local services;
3. to strengthen accountability to taxpayers;
4. to provide a systematic resource that allows municipalities to share information on performance and learn better and/or new practices from each other.

Municipalities are required to provide reports to their citizens annually and to forward the data to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

From a policy perspective, Ontario appears to share the views expressed in the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and Canada insofar as the value of performance reporting to enhance public accountability is concerned. Unfortunately, as in the Government of Canada experience, practice does not reflect the promise of policy.

The 2001-02 and 2002-03 published business plans of Management Board Secretariat are useful examples. The 2001-02 plan identifies five core businesses including corporate comptrollership. In the performance section we find under core business a ministry-wide measure – the percentage of MBS customers, clients and stakeholders surveyed who are satisfied with MBS services and advice. The target is 90% and the 2000-2001 commitment is 80%. There are no performance measures for corporate comptrollership. In the 2002-03 business plan there are again no performance measures related to the corporate comptrollership business line. Regarding service satisfaction, the plan provides a new measure – the percentage of customers and clients surveyed who are satisfied with the clarity, timeliness and practicality of policy and advice from MBS. The target remains at 90%. In this case, the performance indicator notion is meaningless for the two-year period because MBS is measuring different things and different groups that purport to indicate client satisfaction.

An even more egregious example exists in the Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services 2002-03 Business Plan. It notes that (pp.10-11) "the ministry is developing comprehensive outcome-based measures to demonstrate the effectiveness and efficiency of the Violence Against Women Prevention Initiatives". Perhaps the best (worst) example, however, involves the core business of Children's Services. Two programs, the Ontario Early Years Centres and Access to Appropriate Services for Families with Children Prenatal to Six Years, are included. In both cases, the outcome is the same (pp.22-23) "outcomes for children are improved through education, prevention and early intervention initiatives". This is not a meaningful outcome measure and clearly does not meet MBS criteria.

The Municipal Performance Measurement Program also fails. For 2001 year reporting, the number of indicators was increased and some of the 2000 indicators were changed. We also know from discussions with municipal officials that the measures are costed differently in different municipalities. In addition, the reports of municipalities submitted to the Ministry are not public. On this basis, the program cannot meet its objectives. There is no consistent tool to assess how well municipal services function; there is no evidence that performance measurement by municipalities has improved; without consistent and/or cross sectional data, public accountability is, at best partial, and at worst, misled; and since the

information is not shared publicly by the ministry, how can municipalities share information and learn from each other in an efficient manner?

The evidence would suggest that over the past six years, despite considerable effort, the Government of Ontario has failed to implement an effective performance reporting system that meets the criteria outlined in the Draft Business Planning and Allocations directive and enhances accountability to either the legislature or the public.

DISCUSSION

Recent developments in the United Kingdom and New Zealand suggest the emergence of a more comprehensive approach to results measurement and reporting. This involves:

1. the government specifying its policy goals and setting targets;
2. departments specifying the policy goals to which they will contribute;
3. departments defining the means (activities and programs) by which they intend to contribute to the attainment of the government's policy goals, specifying the measures that they will use for outputs and outcomes and setting performance targets;
4. departments and agencies reporting regularly on their performance

against the targets;

5. a multi-year time frame.

The introduction raised a number of issues related to a concern about partial accountability. These included the separation of policy from service delivery, an increasing emphasis on managerial accountability and outputs, the volume of activities and service delivery mechanisms characteristic of contemporary government, and challenges to the traditional notion of ministerial responsibility. The brief review of evaluation policy and practice in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and Ontario allows for some tentative conclusions regarding those issues, but it raises some other concerns such as the supply-demand issue, implementation, and the potential replacement of evaluation by performance monitoring to provide meaningful indications of effectiveness.

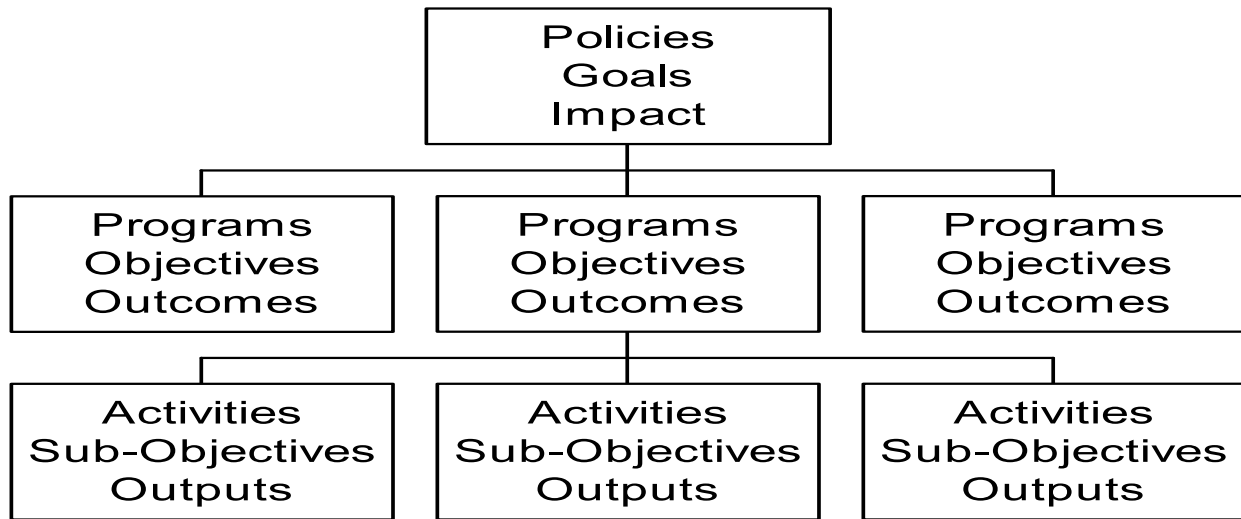
Although The United Kingdom, New Zealand and, more recently, Australia have moved a long way in separating service delivery from the policy function, there is little evidence to suggest that the notion and, indeed, the practice of ministerial responsibility has been altered. In fact, the case of Her Majesty's Prisons cited earlier resulted in the new Home Secretary making it clear that he was responsible to Parliament for the actions of all executive agencies that reported to him.

There is some evidence to support the notion that in the initial phases of the development of performance monitoring the focus was on outputs. Evaluation concerned itself largely with operational issues in many jurisdictions. Over time, however, there has been a remarkable convergence of thinking regarding performance monitoring. The transition has been from outputs to program outcomes linked to government priorities.

From this perspective, the evidence would appear to demonstrate that the potential challenges to ministerial responsibility have not had a significant effect on either the practice or the principle. This does not mean, however, that the survival of ministerial responsibility has not had an effect on performance monitoring or evaluation in government.

The second concern that partial accountability would result from performance monitoring and evaluation practice is supported only partially by the evidence. In effect, one might argue that the five jurisdictions have adopted an approach that reflects Talbot's Public Service Excellence Model. They are increasingly measuring activities, outputs and program outcomes. In some cases they are making the distinction between immediate, intermediate and ultimate outcomes. There is a logical problem here that takes us back to the 1960s and 1970s. At that time, rationalist models assumed the following:

Policy, Programs, Activities



The fact that programs are producing desired outcomes with no negative unintended consequences does not necessarily mean, on its own, that policy is achieving the goals for which it was established. Thus far, performance monitoring and, to a large extent, evaluation have not addressed this issue. The result is partial coverage of the policy world of government and consequently only partial accountability. This has been explained in **Modernising Government** as a result of structural barriers that inhibit horizontal thinking and action.

The most recent British, New Zealand and Australian reforms responded to this concern. Program objectives and outcomes are linked to explicit government goals and desired policy impacts.

The supply-demand question does not appear to be a common one in the literature, at least expressed in this fashion. Pollitt (1995) has discussed this issue,

but ultimately the question is who wants this type of information to be used for accountability purposes. Apart from Auditors-General, it is difficult to find great demand. The Auditor General of Canada's Report and the material from the Public Policy Forum suggest that Parliament is not particularly interested in the Canadian case. In the New Zealand case, Norman (2002, p.623) argues that "a large amount of time was spent managing risks to ensure that Ministers got 'no surprises'". In his final report to the House of Commons, Mr. Desautels raises this issue. He notes that (2001, p.34) despite his view that managerial and political accountability are different, "political accountability and management accountability merge at the top of the system" He states that (p.36) "public servants...are not inclined to produce information that could embarrass their minister". It may well be that performance monitoring information will not serve the needs and/or interests of parliamentarians and the public. In other words, the same fate will result for performance monitoring for public accountability purposes as happened to evaluation.

It is clear that for Ontario and Canada, in particular, there remain serious problems insofar as successful and complete implementation of a meaningful performance monitoring reporting system is concerned. There is no doubt that this is a difficult task; however, both jurisdictions have been at it for almost as long as the other three and have far less to show for their efforts.

In the case of Ontario, there is room for considerable change if this government wishes to adopt the British, New Zealand, and Australian approach. First, an explicit statement of the government policy goals over time is required. Second, ministries will have to identify those policy goals to which they will contribute and they will have to specify the means by which they intend to assist the government in achieving its policy goals. Third, clear performance targets for ministries and other agencies/service providers will have to be established annually. Finally, a revised reporting regime is recommended. At the beginning of the Estimates cycle, a ministry document that outlines departmental plan, targets and the performance measures to be used should be published for each ministry and associated service delivery partners and agencies. At the end of the Estimates cycle, these ministries should publish annual reports or performance reports that describe what they have done, what the performance targets were and how the results compare to the targets.

Another issue that has emerged is the evaluation versus performance measurement debate. The little evidence that exists seems to suggest that even in Australia, where evaluation played a significant policy role in the 1980's and early 1990's, it has been replaced largely by performance monitoring to provide government, parliament and the citizens with effectiveness information. This is a serious shortcoming, in my opinion. Surely citizens deserve to know that the

results achieved are the product of government action and that government programs are not producing detrimental, unintended consequences for some, if all, of the population. Where there is uncertainty regarding program theory, evaluations would assist in either verifying the appropriateness of government action or recommending changes or termination of the program in question. Where government is not achieving its targeted results, an evaluation study would help to determine why the desired performance is not being realised and to provide recommendations for more cost-effective remedies to the problem.

CONCLUSION

Performance monitoring systems are becoming more robust in many jurisdictions. Ontario and Ottawa are lagging behind. Evaluation does not appear to have a particularly high priority in the five jurisdictions examined. If evaluation and performance monitoring are to serve public accountability well, then the two functions must be implemented in a comprehensive, consistent manner.

The British and New Zealand approaches in particular, provide a basis to assist Ontario in developing a more comprehensive performance monitoring and reporting system that would enhance contemporary notions of public sector accountability considerably. This should be supplemented by rigorous evaluation

studies in at least two circumstances – when there is uncertainty regarding the program theory upon which programs and activities are based and when programs fail to achieve the desired results.

REFERENCES

Aitken J. (1997). New Zealand as an Experimenting Society: Are there any Institutional Preconditions for Effective Evaluation. Cited in C. Pollitt. Evaluation and the New Public Management: An International Perspective. **Evaluation Journal of Australia**. 8 (1&2) 7-15.

Aucoin, P. (1995). **The New Public Management: Canada in Comparative Perspective**. Montreal: Institute for Research in Public Policy.

Auditor General of Canada (2002) **Report to the House of Commons**. Chapter 6. A Model for Rating Departmental Performance Reports. Ottawa: Public Works and Government Services Canada.

Auditor General of Canada (2002) **Report to the House of Commons**. Chapter 9. Modernizing Accountability in the Public Sector. Ottawa: Public Works and Government Services Canada.

Auditor General of Canada (2001). **Report to the House of Commons. Reflections on a Decade of Service to Parliament**. Ottawa: Public Works and Government Services Canada.

Auditor General of Canada (2002). **Report to the House of Commons**. Chapter 7. Strategies to Implement Modern Comptrollership. Ottawa: Public Works and Government Services Canada.

Australia Department of Finance and Administration (2000). **The Outcomes and Outputs Framework Guidance Document**. Canberra: Department of Finance and Administration.

Australia Department of Finance and Administration (2003). **Performance Management Principles**. Canberra: Department of Finance and Administration.

Australia Department of Finance and Administration (2003). **Performance Reporting under Outcomes and Outputs**. Canberra: Department of Finance and Administration.

Barberis, A. (1998). The New Public Management and a New Accountability. **Public Administration**. 76 (3).

Barker, A. (1998). Political Responsibility for U.K. Prison Security – Ministers Escape Again. **Public Administration**. 76(1). 1-24

Bouckaert, G. and C. Pollitt (2000). **Public Management Reform: A Comparative Analysis**. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Canada (1986). **An Introduction to the Process of Program Review**. Ottawa: supply and Services.

Canada (1994). Study on Accountability for Grant, Contribution and Other Transfer Payments Delivered Through Third Parties. **Final Report**. www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rma/account

Comptroller and Auditor General (2000). **Good Practice in Performance Reporting in Executive Agencies and Non-Departmental Bodies**. London: Stationery Office.

Contoller and Auditor General of New Zealand (2000). **First Report for 2000: Health, School Board of Trustees, Impact Evaluation**. www.oag.govt.nz

Cooper, P. J. (1995). Accountability and Administrative Reforms: Towards Convergence and Beyond. In B. G. Peters and D. J. Savoie eds. **Governance in a Changing Environment**. Montreal: Queen's-McGill Press.

Defence Procurement Agency (1999). **Framework Document**. www.mod.uk/dpa/corporate/framework.htm

Delacourt, S. and D. Lenihan (1999). **Collaborative Government: Is There a Canadian Way**. New Directions # 6. Toronto: Institute of Public Administration of Canada.

Department for Education and Skills (2002) **Spending Review Public Service Agreement Targets.**

Dobell, R. and D. Zussman (1981). An Evaluation Strategy for Government: If Politics is Theatre, then Evaluation is (Mostly) Art. **Canadian Public Administration.** 24 (3).

Dunn, W. N. (1994). **Public Policy Analysis: An Introduction.** 2nd edition. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Farrell, C. M. and J. Law (1999). Changing form of Accountability in Education? A Case Study of LEAs in Wales. **Public Administration.** 77 (1) 293-310.

Friedrich, C. J. (1940). Public Policy and the Nature of Administrative Responsibility. In C. J. Friedrich and E.S. Mason eds. **Public Policy.** Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 3-24.

Finer, H. (1941). Administrative Responsibility in Democratic Government. **Public Administration Review.** 1. 335-350.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (2002). **Performance Report for the Period Ended March 31,2002.** Ottawa: Canadian Government Publishing.

Gray, A. and B. Jenkins (2002). Policy and Program Evaluation in the U.K.: A Reflective State? In J.-E. Furubo, R. C. Rist and R.Sandahl eds., **International Atlas of Evaluation.** New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers. 129-153.

Hartle, D. (1990). Increasing Government Accountability: A Proposal that the Senate Assume Responsibility for Program Evaluation. In Senate of Canada, **Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance,** Issue No.23, Appendix NF-2A, May 3. Ottawa: Queen's Printer.

Hendricks, M (2001). Attribution: Can we Soothe the Achilles Heel of Performance Measurement. Cited in K. Newcomer and M. Scheirer. **Using Evaluation to Support Performance Management: A Guide for Federal Executives.** Arlington, VA: Pricewaterhousecooper Endowment for the Business of Government.

Hodgetts, J. (1991). **Public Management: Emblem of Reform for the Canadian Public Service**. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Management Development.

Jenkins, B. and A. Gray (1990). Policy Evaluation in British Government: From Idealism to Realism. In R. C. Rist ed. **Program Evaluation and the Management of Government**. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers. 53-70.

Jenkins, B. and A. Gray (1993). Reshaping the Management of Government: The Next Steps Initiative in the U.K. in L. Seidle ed. **Rethinking Government: Reform or Reinvention**. Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy. 71-118.

Kernaghan, K. and J. Langford (1990). **The Responsible Public Servant**. Halifax: Institute for Research on Public Policy.

Kernaghan, K. and D. Siegel (1995). **Public Administration in Canada**. Toronto: Nelson.

Mackay, K. (1994). The Australian Government's Evaluation Strategy: A Perspective from the Centre. **Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation**. 9 (2). 15-30.

Mackay, K. (2002). The Australian Government: Success with a Central Directed Approach. In J-E. Furubo, R. C. Rist and R. Sandahl eds. op.cit.

Management Board Secretariat (2001). **2001-2002 Business Plan**. Toronto: Queen's Printer.

Management Board Secretariat (2002). **2002-03 Business Plan**. Toronto: Queen's Printer.

Management Board Secretariat (1999). **Alternative Service Delivery Framework**. Toronto: Queen's Printer.

Management Board Secretariat (1997). **Directive on Accountability**. Toronto: Management Board Secretariat.

Mayne, J. (2001). Addressing Attribution through Contribution Analysis: Using Performance Measures Sensibly. **Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation**. 16 (1). 1-24.

McQueen, C. (192). Program Evaluation in the Canadian Federal Government. In J.Hudson, J. Mayne and R. Thomlinson eds. **Action-Oriented Evaluation in Organizations: Canadian Practices**. Toronto: Emerson and Wall. 28-47.

Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services (2002). **2002-03 Business Plan**. Toronto: Queen's Printer.

Ministry of Defence (2002). **The Government's Expenditure Plans 2002-03 to 2003-04**. London: Stationery Office.

Ministry of Defence (2002). **Performance Report**. London: Stationery Office.

Ministry of Transport (2001). **Department Forecast Report for the Year Ending 30 June 2002**. Wellington: Ministry of Transport.

Ministry of Transport (2002). **Report of the Ministry of Transport for the Year Ended 30 June 2002**. Wellington: Ministry of Transport.

Mosher, F. (1968). **Democracy and the Public Service**. New York: Oxford University Press.

Mulgar, R. (2002). Public Accountability of Provider Agencies: The Case of the Australian Centrelink. **International Review of Administrative Sciences**. 68 (1). 45-60.

National Audit Office (2001). **Measuring the Performance of Government Departments**. London: The Stationery Office.

New Zealand Cabinet Office (nd). **Cabinet Manual 2**. Ministers of the Crown: Appointment, Roles and Responsibilities.

New Zealand Ministry of Transport (2001). **Strategic Plan 2001-2006**. www.transport.govt.nz

Norman, R. (2002). Managing Through Measurement or Meaning: Lessons from Experience with New Zealand's Public Sector Performance Management systems. **International Review of Administrative Sciences**. 68 (4). 619-628.

OECD (1997). **Managing Across Levels of Government**. Paris: OECD.

Office of the Auditor General and Treasury Board Secretariat (1998). **Modernizing Accountability Practices in the Public Sector**: Discussion Draft. www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rma/account

Office of Public Service Reform (2002). **Better Government Services: Executive Agencies I the 21st Century**. London: Stationery Office.

Paquet, G. (1999). Tectonic Changes in Canadian Governance. In L. Pal ed. **How Ottawa Spends 1999-2000**. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Pathfinder (2003). **Mission**. www.io.ssc.govt.nz/pathfinder

Pollitt, C. (1995). Management Techniques for the Public Sector: Pulpit and Practice. In B. G. Peters and D. J. Savoie. op cit. 203-238.

President of the Treasury Board (2000). **Managing for Results 2000**. www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rma

Program Management and Estimates Division (2000). **Business Planning and Allocations Directive Draft**. Toronto: Management Board Secretariat.

Program Management and Estimates Division (2000). **Business Planning in the Ontario Public Service**. Toronto: Management Board Secretariat.

Public Policy Forum (1998). **Synthesis Report. Performance Management: Linking Results to Public Debate**. Ottawa: Public Management Research Centre.

Rae, D. (2002). **Next Steps for Public Spending in New Zealand: The Pursuit of Effectiveness**. OECD Economics Department Working Paper No.337.www.oecd.org/eco

Savoie, D. (1990). **The Politics of Public Spending in Canada**. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Segsworth, R. 2002). Evaluation in the 21st Century: Two Perspectives on the Canadian Experience. In J-E.Furubo, R. C. Rist and R. Sandahl.eds. op.cit. 175-190.

Segsworth, R. V. (2001). Evaluation Policy and Practice in Ontario. **Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation**. Special Issue.

Segsworth, R. V. (1992). Government Activity Review in Ontario. In J. Hudson, J. Mayne and R. Thomlinson eds. op cit. 64-77.

Segsworth, R. V. (1990). Policy and Program Evaluation in the Government of Canada. In R. C. Rist ed. op cit. 21-36.

Segsworth, R. V. (1992). Public Access to Evaluation in Canada. In J. Mayne, M-L. Bemelmans-Videc, J. Hudson and R. Connor eds. **Advancing Public Policy Evaluation: Learning from International Experiences**. Amsterdam: North-Holland. 301-312.

State Services Commission (1998). **New Zealand's State Sector Reforms: A Decade of Change**. www.ssc.govt.nz/decade-of-change

Sutherland, S. (1991). The Al-Mashat Affair: Administrative Responsibility in Parliamentary Institutions. **Canadian Public Administration**. 34 (4) 573-603.

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (2000). **Accountability Expectations and Approaches**. www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rma/account

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (2001). **Evaluation Policy**. Ottawa: Treasury Board Secretariat.

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (nd) **Introduction to Modern Comptrollership**. www.tbs-sct.gc.ca

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (2001). **Performance Report for the Period Ending March 31, 2001**. www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rma/dpr/oo-01

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (2000). **Results for Canadians: a Management Framework for the Government of Canada**. www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/res_can

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (2002). **2002-03 Estimates: a Report on Plans and Priorities**. www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/est-pre/20022003

Turner, D. and S. Washington (2002). Evaluation in the New Zealand Public Management System. In J-E. Furubo, R. C. Rist and R. Sandahl eds. op. cit. 357-373.

van den Noord, P. (2002). **Managing Public Expenditure: The UK Approach.** Economics Department Working Paper No. 341. Paris: OECD.