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LE GROUPE DE RECHERCHES SUR LES TRANSPORTS AU CANADA

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## DEVELOPMENT OF AN INFORMATION SYSTEM ON THE TAXI INDUSTRY

by

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In 1984, The Research departement of the Ministry of Transport received a mandate to develop an information system on the taxi industry in Quebec.

We, therefore, set our objective, on the one hand, to obtain the most comprehensive picture of the industry, and on the other hand, to request only the strict minimum of information from the industry.

To meet this double objective, we decided to do two things: first, to undertake a complete survey of calls to taxi companies and second, to make a sample survey among taxi drivers.

The greatest problem we encountered in the survey was the non-availability of the most important data: the number of calls. In fact, many companies keep no statistics on this point. This being the case, it was impossible to obtain a complete picture, nor even a partial one that was large enough to be worthwhile. At this point we were obliged to intervene.

We decided to adapt our request to the industry, convincing them to give us statistics that would be analyzed and suited to their needs. With this approach it was later possible to organize a complete survey of calls to the taxi companies.

Then, we had to organize a sample survey among taxi drivers to discover other necessary data in order to obtain a complete picture of supply and demand. For this survey we used a one-of-a-kind method developed by the BSQ (Bureau de la statistique du Québec) in 1979. This method permits us to contact the driver directly in his taxi while he is working and without disturbing him at his work. The driver gives a brief description of the trips he makes over a two-hour period, the period following his meeting with the observer.

The combination of the call survey and the taxi driver survey provides us with an exhaustive knowledge of taxi supply and demand. As a result, it is now possible to estimate the overall taxi service and supply demand at any given moment during an average week.