

relating to the merit principle. We hope to extend this coverage to the 40,000 exempt employees who are appointed under various forms of recruitment.

Already we have streamlined the Commission's own organization with a view to providing a specialized and comprehensive staffing service to all departments and agencies. Further, we stand ready to delegate our staffing authority to departments to the fullest extent possible and practicable. By possible and practicable I mean:

- (a) a department's capacity to absorb this responsibility in a way that ensures preservation of the merit principle, (External Affairs has been to the forefront in administering its own staffing function and I am confident it will continue to operate with managerial courage and integrity.)
- (b) the Commission's own capacity to establish effective and useful guidelines for those to whom this authority is delegated, (It would be irresponsible of us to delegate authority without providing comprehensive guidance.)
- (c) the continuing need of the Public Service for central co-ordination of staffing in the case of certain short supply occupational groups or common service groups such as personnel administration, financial administrators and management analysts. We want to avoid competition between departments for staff in such groups and ensure instead that there is an adequate supply of talent to meet all needs. (We also want to see that specialists in these groups enjoy adequate career opportunities through rotation from one department to another.)

Let me restate, however, that we are serious about our intentions to delegate and decentralize the staffing function. Our ultimate objective is to have staffing decisions made as close to the place where the need exists as it is possible and practical to have them. This can be done only by delegation and decentralization. The great bulk of the work will be handled by departmental management. This is one way in which we can overcome the problem of the delay that has often been involved in recruitment into the Public Service; many good candidates have become disenchanted with delay and bureaucratic control from the very start.

Perhaps I should take a minute to outline what I mean by the staffing function. I am referring to the whole spectrum of activities that are required, or are going to be required, if we are to have an efficient and dynamic Public Service capable of meeting not only today's tasks but those