

### Supply

On an interdepartmental basis, the working groups, chaired by the co-ordinator, have submitted a number of papers and recommendations on diplomatic status, privileges and immunities, passports, equity of treatment, security and personal safety, education, recreation and availability of information on current Canadian affairs to foreign service families abroad. In that latter connection, I am sure that the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich (Mr. Munro) who I see in the House this evening will recall well the feeling that many of us had abroad of being isolated from events in Canada.

When he and I had the honour of serving in posts abroad, we often encountered difficulty in being kept up to date on information concerning Canadian events and public policy. I am sure that any improvement made in that area will be of great benefit to the effectiveness of our foreign service.

Those issues which I have touched upon, all of which were identified in the royal commission report, are now being considered by senior management in the Department of External Affairs. Questions of the foreign service environment are also being addressed with recommendations on the report's many spouse related issues, including the conditions and circumstances of life abroad which spouses are likely to encounter. As well, the report deals with questions on housing, health care, the concerns of single employees and a variety of other matters. Our expectation that recommendations for senior management and, as appropriate, for government consideration, will be available by the end of this month.

I might say, Mr. Speaker, that whatever positions are initially taken by the department, some have significant financial implications which will require consultation with Treasury Board and in some cases with other departments and agencies of government.

In short, within the Department of External Affairs, work is underway on a variety of organizational, personnel administration and foreign service management changes which flow directly from the report of the royal commission. Accordingly, the government has decided to seek an amendment to the Department of External Affairs Act with the aim, among other things, of giving responsibility to the Secretary of State for External Affairs for the administration of the foreign service and of recognizing the foreign service as an integral but unique component of the public service. In its application, the new act will make it possible to make, in the commissioner's words, "Occasional exceptions to domestically oriented policies and programs in the personnel and financial administration fields, where foreign service requirements dictate such acceptance."

The concept of a broader foreign service act, not recommended by the royal commission but proposed by a staff association, is also being studied. It is hoped that the new act will be presented to the House for consideration in the near future.

In providing for special legislation governing circumstances of foreign service, we are not in fact engaging in any radical departure from Canadian practice or, indeed, from British practice where circumstances of the foreign service, circumstances differing from those which obtain in the public service generally, have traditionally been embodied in separate

legislation. Foreign service should be, to a degree, regarded as a separate and identifiable entity within the total public service.

Separately, a study is under way into the extent to which there can be a greater delegation of decision making authority to heads of posts abroad. You may recall, Mr. Speaker, that one of the commissioner's recommendations was "Let managers manage and make them manage." The government, sympathetic to this point of view, is examining the best means of putting this broad recommendation into effect.

Mobility was also encouraged in the report between the foreign and domestic services. A task force with a mandate to include the development of a plan to increase two-way secondments has been established under the chairmanship of a senior public service employee. Action is also being taken to improve the administrative capability of foreign service personnel through the reintroduction of the administrative services employee group. This group disappeared in past reorganizations.

During the last two years, competitions have been held to staff 33 such positions, with 27 of the successful candidates drawn from the rotational support staff ranks. In addition, it is expected that during the next two years about 50 administrative trainees will be recruited, of whom no less than one-half will be drawn from within the department.

In summary, a wide range of activities are under way both within the department and interdepartmentally to examine the recommendations of the royal commission. Careful consideration is being given to all the issues addressed in its report. Steps are already being taken in a number of areas directly relevant to its recommendations and observations.

I shall conclude by quoting an observation of the commissioner. She said:

The foreign service I have described still attracts and retains a high calibre of employee—one who responds to challenge, is stimulated by change and adjusts extraordinarily well to a variety of living and working conditions. I met such people everywhere I went and at every level. They work hard, they give their best and they enjoy the service.

Canada can be proud of such a foreign Service, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Bob Ogle (Saskatoon East):** Mr. Speaker, in Saskatoon last Sunday I joined a group of people in the park near the Bessborough Hotel for an ecumenical service protesting the Cruise missile and asking for peace in general throughout the world. We had very bad weather last Friday and Saturday in Saskatoon. There were dark clouds, rain and snow of all things on the second to last day of May. However, as the service was taking place at about 3.00 to 3.30 on Sunday afternoon, the clouds suddenly broke and a glorious spring came to Saskatoon.

● (2030)

This event is something that I would like to see take place in the world. Then we would be able to find fresh sunlight of hope breaking through the dark clouds of despair which in a