

INTRODUCTION

The following report is submitted to senior personnel management in the Department of External Affairs in an effort to improve the system of promotion and the career opportunities of rotational secretaries in the Canadian foreign service. The need for such a report is evident because of wide-spread discontent among rotational secretaries, as reflected in a petition to the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs dated March 4, 1977 which sought to eliminate the inequities in the Department's appraisal and promotion system as it relates to secretaries. A Committee was given a mandate to deal with these issues (see Annex 'A').

The need to take immediate and appropriate action to raise the morale of the SCY group cannot be overly stressed. Rotational secretaries see themselves as being in a ghetto from which there is little chance of escape. With the elimination some years ago of the rotational AS stream, there now exists no stream beyond the SCY 4 level to which secretaries can aspire, unless they agree to become non-rotational. The problem created by the lack of advancement opportunity in the rotational field is compounded by the fact that advancement within the SCY stream itself is very slow and, at times, capricious. Something is seriously wrong with a promotion system that takes a good secretary an average of ten years to be promoted to SCY 2. When one considers that all promotions have been delayed for two years since the reclassification of the secretarial group in January 1976, it is understandable that morale among FS secretaries has reached a record low.

This report deals mainly with the appraisal and promotion system per se and a number of changes are recommended, particularly with respect to the Statements of Qualifications and the appraisal form itself. It should be recognized, however, that reform of the promotion system itself only partially meets the concerns of rotational secretaries. Reform of the system will have little impact unless there is a corresponding significant increase in opportunities for advancement, both within the SCY group and beyond it. Most of the problems encountered by the secretarial group stem