

For the second list of the marginal missions, the Department could programme a minimum assignment of staff and resources. There must be some criteria as to the size, shape and bulk of investment in the various offices abroad. This kind of decision is part of the process of management.

#### Formulation of Policy

Policy formation in its broadest sense is still a matter for Cabinet decision on the basis of recommendations made by departments. However, the reference to policies and guidelines in the speaker's main presentation related to the policy to be followed in the management process. The central agencies have a responsibility to ensure consistency and to provide a framework of policy within which departments can operate. This must be flexible enough to give meaningful alternatives to departments in the decision-making process. Directives must be built up on the experience of managers in individual departments.

#### Final Responsibility

While final responsibility rested with Cabinet, this did not relieve civil servants from the duty of providing a full and factual basis on which decision could be made. We must put to Ministers an objective assessment of the situation. If they ignore the objective assessment and make politically-based decisions we cannot help it, but at least we have done our duty.

#### Implications of a Wrong Decision

It was recognized that in some circumstances an individual might come in for criticism for a decision which he had made in the light of the then existing circumstances but which had proven in retrospect to be wrong. The speaker said that it was inconceivable that there would not be some kind of monitoring system or management audit from outside. However, the central agency realized also that for the good of the government service, it must get away from the excessively cautious attitude that results from trying to achieve perfection and trying to avoid sin. The question to be asked was whether a particular decision was made within the framework of policy laid down or made outside that policy. If a local manager consistently made decisions which conflicted with the policy instructions that had been provided by the central agency, then a process of correction would have to be taken to avoid repetition of the same mistakes. If he resisted correction, some form of accountability and sanctions would have to be applied. It was, however, unrealistic to start