

## *External Affairs Inspection Service*

ONE of the main problems confronting the Department of External Affairs, with its decentralized and far-flung operations, is how to maintain effective liaison between headquarters in Ottawa and missions abroad. Even with modern means of communication, the distances separating missions from the policy-making centre tend to interfere with the implementation of both political and administrative objectives. Members of the service at posts abroad may feel, after periods of absence from Canada, that they are getting out of touch with developments affecting Canadian foreign policy and with decisions and immediate requirements that may have an influence on departmental administration. In Ottawa, it is difficult to assess a mission's operations objectively without first-hand knowledge of the local situation, and it is not always possible to evolve the most efficient and the fairest administrative regulations on the basis of limited knowledge of the wide variety of conditions obtaining at each of the Department's 63 offices abroad. The morale of the personnel of the Department is also an important element in the efficiency of its operations, yet problems of this nature are particularly difficult to solve at long distances.

### **Postwar Problems**

The need to expand the opportunities for close liaison between posts and headquarters became particularly apparent during the Department's postwar period of accelerated expansion, when informal methods, appropriate to a small service, became outdated. As a result of this expansion, there were, on the one hand, an ever-increasing volume of economic, political and consular reporting from missions and, on the other, a corresponding need for direction from Ottawa to ensure that such reports would be edited to meet departmental requirements. The expansion in the number and variety of posts was accompanied by a corresponding increase in the number of foreign service personnel at home and abroad and in the volume and variety of administrative problems to be handled.

As early as 1947 the Department instituted an *ad hoc* system of visits to certain posts by senior officers, who were asked to study local problems and to give advice as to possible solutions. Later, liaison teams made up of departmental personnel temporarily seconded for the purpose and experts from other government departments were sent to visit posts in different geographical areas. It was not until 1956, however, that availability of staff permitted the establishment of a permanent Inspection Service, with continuing responsibility for liaison visits. The work of this Service can be outlined in general terms as follows:

- (a) To arrange for periodic visits to posts abroad of liaison teams so that the work and performance of each post in all its aspects — political,