

III Foreign Policy Co-ordination

Interdepartmental Committee on External Relations

The Interdepartmental Committee on External Relations (ICER) consists of the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs (as chairman), the deputy ministers of the departments of Industry, Trade and Commerce, Manpower and Immigration, and Public Works, the President of the Canadian International Development Agency, the Secretary to the Cabinet and the Secretary of the Treasury Board. The Committee was established in May 1970 to advise the Government, through the Secretary of State for External Affairs, on such matters as the formulation of broad policy for foreign operations, the harmonization of departmental and agency "country plans", the allocation of resources for the conduct of programs abroad, program implementation, the recommendation of heads-of-post appointments and personnel policies for foreign operations. ICER has a small Secretariat staffed by personnel on loan from the departments and agencies responsible for major foreign-operations programs. It is assisted by several subcommittees, including an *ad hoc* subcommittee, a personnel management committee and an information subcommittee.

During 1976, ICER and its subsidiary bodies concentrated on developing measures to improve the effectiveness of Canada's foreign operations. In response to the Government's program of restraint, ICER used its "country-programming" system to undertake a special review of the extent and nature of Canadian representation abroad in relation to Canada's foreign-policy objectives and programs. This comprehensive review included a critical examination of the 13 foreign-operations programs that were being carried out by the 126 Canadian posts (embassies, high commissions, consulates, permanent delegations, offices, etc.) located in 79 foreign countries. One of the major aims of the review was to ensure that Canada's pattern of representation abroad adequately reflected the Government's priorities and the changing nature of its relations with these countries. As a result of this review, a number of reductions and redeployments were made in Canadian representation abroad.

The ICER *ad hoc* subcommittee focused its attention in 1976 on introducing methods of streamlining the country-programming system. The information subcommittee devoted considerable attention to improving the extent and nature of technical co-operation among the departments and agencies having information programs abroad.

Table I (below) provides a summary of the location of the 126 Canadian posts in existence in 1976 and the 4,884 personnel engaged in carrying out the Government's 13 foreign-operations programs in some 140 countries and 39 major international institutions. Table II indicates the relative number of man-years devoted to the major foreign-operations programs abroad by program personnel. For example, approximately 4 per cent (or 62 man-years) of the 1,532 program personnel abroad were engaged, in the fiscal year beginning April 1, 1976, in providing consular services to Canadian visitors, residents and corporations abroad. Table III breaks down the number of program staff abroad by department or agency — which differ considerably from the 13 agreed foreign-operations programs.