

officers as I collected autographs for my memos. By flattering an officer's stenographer, I found, she might be induced to keep my memo on the top of his in-basket until he signed it in sheer despair, in order to get at the work piled beneath it. A series of enquiries from a registry clerk might do more than a rainbow of tags and stickers to convince a man that someone was waiting for the file he had before him. A straight finesse might be attempted, once enough experience had been gained; pretending that I thought he had already seen my memo and sent it on, I could casually ask which division he expected it to have reached by now.

Gradually I found my attitude towards some parts of the work changing. At first, I read avidly all the secret documents I could find, and jealously hid them from the sight of non-official passers-by. Then sophistication set in, and I tossed them about in a more blasé manner. A series of breathless escapes from the domestic spies of D.L.2, though, showed that respect, if no longer breathless interest, would be advisable for the secret tags and the lobster-colored folders.

I was quickly fascinated by the Department's social order. The Under-Secretary might greet one as a friend; a man who had joined the Department a year ago was likely to exploit to the full his almost microscopic superiority in being an F.S.O.1 temporary instead of an F.S.O.1 probationary. I joined in the rejoicing when an F.S.O.1 temporary was publicly humiliated; while he was standing secure in his superiority at a reception, an Asian diplomat asked him if he was a student at Ottawa university.

If the Department had become a little too large to be one big happy family, I realized that the homey touch was still there. There were all the clubs, for instance, starting in the morning with the breakfast club, for those with no stoves or with erratic alarm clocks. In the sketching club, a fellow worker might draw a sketch of Picasso-like complexity to adorn your previously blank wall. I understood that there were assorted athletic clubs for those with healthy-minds-in healthy-body complexes left over from school. Undoubtedly the most popular departmental sport, unorganized by any club, was Please Pass the Postings Rumor--a parlor game for innumerable contestants with rules adapted from Button, Button, Who's got the Button, and Pin the Tail on the Donkey.

Perhaps the first few months have not been quite what I expected when I emerged from my university library. No one has asked me what to do about Asia; only in the Film board can there be so few hair-cuts per person. With patience, though, I may become a suave diplomat, wielding immense power. After all, I may reach the rank of F.S.O.2.

F.S.O.1 Probationary.

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### PLENTY BACKWARD NATION

(The following letter was received in the Information Division)

To the: .....B.C.,  
Department of External Affairs, October 14, 1954.

About 20 years ago I took up a Homesite Land Lease near....  
.....B.C. about one mile from the Highway. I have occupied this Lease and paid yearly Rentals and Taxes ever since. The road to this property is horrible.

Last year I tried again to get some help from the P.W.D. but again No funds said he the Maintenance Engineer at Victoria, B.C.

Would there be a little left over out of the 25 Millions Canada had earmarked for Aid for Backward Nations to put the Maintainer a few hours on this Road as this is plenty Backward Nation around here.