

THE POSTING CYCLE AND YOU

Are you one of those people whose lives are affected by the posting cycle? If you are, you might find this article enlightening. If you are not, you are either working in APT non-rotational, or you should consider having your name removed from our circulation list. In any case, Jean-Marc Duval, the Director of APT, has shared some valuable information with me, which I am anxious to pass on to you.

In order to illustrate the posting cycle, we shall consider the case of Officer X. Let's not get bogged down in the fine points of gender neutrality/political correctness—we'll just say that Officer X is a female, and leave it at that.

The cycle begins one fine September morning when our heroine finds the administrative circular informing her of the possible openings for the next two years. In a high pitch of excitement, although knowing full well that this is not necessarily the way things will turn out, X ponders at great length over her selection of five favourite postings for the coming year; finally, the completed questionnaire is ready to be sent to APT.

In the meantime, APT has been popping questions at senior management and the heads of missions—Will their be any extensions? Does the position require any special experience? What about employment opportunities for spouses? Quality of the educational system? and so on.

APT receives a plethora of completed questionnaires and carefully prepares lists of officers interested in each posting. It immediately removes the names of those whose time to leave has not yet come, but who decided to try their luck any-

way—can we blame them?

X is spending a good deal of time scurrying around the halls of the Pearson Building visiting the geographical divisions in an effort to "sell" herself.

Meanwhile, back at APT, they are meeting with the divisions concerned at the deputy director, director and director-general levels to discuss the merits of each candidate in terms of knowledge of the

*...an interview with Jean-Marc Duval,
Director APT by Jean-Dominique Ieraci*

local language, professional experience, family situation, etc. They finally agree on three or four names whose strengths and weaknesses they will be discussing in greater depth. Sometimes, a given candidate emerges as an obvious first choice. At other times, more discussion is needed.

One grey afternoon, X learns that her name has been taken off the list of candidates for her favourite posting. Others had more of the desired characteristics for the position than she did. Of course, she tastes disappointment with a capital D, even though she might eventually get back on the list. However, it is better to find out early so one can concentrate on other choices.

All is not lost. X put down four other choices, and the wheels are still turning at APT. For city XYZ, she is selected as the top candidate. APT has discussed the matter with the divisions involved and with the head of mission; everything looks good. Only one thing remains to be done: send a telex to the head of mission officially introducing the officer.

The final decision actually lies with APT, after consultation with the people involved. A head of mission might voice an objection, but must have a solid argument to overrule an appointment.

X, then, is looking forward to going out. Unless, of course, the spectre of operational requirements changes the picture from bright to gloomy. Better to keep our minds in a positive frame, though. APT

takes no pleasure in letting its clients down. As Jean-Marc Duval has said, "The worst part about this job is when you have to be the bearer of bad tidings. It's never easy to be the one to have to put a look of dis-

appointment on someone's face. We'd rather make them happy."

Have You Thought About the ITC Option?

You have been posted abroad and must now return to put in a few years in Canada. This means you must move to Ottawa, right?

Not necessarily. Actually you can travel to any province if you are interested in working in one of the ten International Trade Centres.

You may wish to consider the ITC option if you enjoy being in regular contact with businesses, if you wish to get away from the bureaucracy, and have no other compelling reason to be in Ottawa. Trade Commissioners in ITCs are generally project managers who remain in constant touch with their clients. They get a first-hand look at just how much they are benefitting the client, a degree of feedback not easy to find in Ottawa.

If interested in the ITC option, Michael Spencer's number is 996-1430. Do not hesitate to call him. He suggested that we include his number in our article with just that in mind.