

The Committee appreciates the fact that allocation of accommodation should remain the responsibility of the post concerned and that posts are often compelled to initiate a game of "musical chairs" with accommodation. While no secretary could be absolutely guaranteed a specific accommodation unit before arriving at a post, an improved information effort could nonetheless be made to let all employees know of the type of accommodation available at a post.

This information should be retained in the post briefing centre where employees can browse through information folders without disturbing other busy employees in the Department's accommodation section. Each folder would contain a listing of all housing units available at a specific post, and exterior and interior photographs of each unit could be filed away as well as up-to-date comments by each occupant on the advantages and disadvantages of living in the unit, i.e., the sizes of the rooms, heating or air-conditioning problems, the type of neighbourhood, distance from the office, etc. Comments could be filled in on a card by each occupant, towards the end of her/his posting.

While such a system would not be able to tell the employee beforehand which unit she/he will occupy, it would give the employee a good idea of the type of accommodation generally available before the employee has to make a decision on whether to accept a particular posting. Prior knowledge, even of difficult accommodation, makes acceptance of the situation easier once the employee is at the post.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT

1. *Information about housing units be improved and be provided before the posting confirmation rather than after.*
2. *Overall housing policy for SCYs be reviewed to raise the minimum standards to two-bedroom units.*