

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 and of Manpower and Immigration; the President of the Canadian International Development Agency; the Secretary of the Cabinet; the Secretary of the Treasury Board; and the Deputy Minister of the Department of Public Works. The Committee was established in 1970 to advise the Government, through the Secretary of State for External Affairs, on such matters as the formulation of foreign policy, the development and harmonization of country plans, allocation of resources for the conduct of programs abroad, implementation of external operations, the recommendation of heads-of-post appointments, the management of support services at posts abroad and policy matters for foreign service personnel. The Committee is serviced by a Secretariat staffed by representatives of all major foreign service departments and CIDA. It operates in close liaison with ICER departments, and particularly with External Affairs as the department responsible for overall co-ordination of foreign operations.

During 1974 the ICER continued to exercise the mandate entrusted to it by the Government, and to examine other means of carrying out Cabinet directives on the co-ordination of foreign policy operations to improve their effectiveness and efficiency. To assist the parent committee in dealing with a wide range of problems, an *ad hoc* sub-committee of senior officials of member departments, under the chairmanship of the Assistant Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs (Administration), was formed. This sub-committee was active throughout the year in considering and instituting action on various ICER-related projects. The sub-committee proved of significant value in relieving members of the senior committee

of many functions which they would otherwise have had to perform during periods of heavy activity in other sectors of their normal responsibilities.

Among ICER activities where progress was most evident was the further development and refinement of the country-programming system as a means of examining foreign operations priorities and assisting in resource allocations. These activities also included the initiation of a series of country policy studies, the development of global foreign policy objectives, the promotion of existing measures to improve interdepartmental co-ordination and the development and introduction of new measures to achieve this end. The Secretariat also endeavoured to familiarize posts abroad with on-going ICER activities and to provide posts with improved instructions and guidelines for the continued development of the country-program system.

The Personnel Management Committee (PMC), the ICER's sub-committee for personnel questions, has continued to pursue measures toward co-ordinated and, eventually, common personnel policies for all foreign service staff. The PMC established a working group, the Personnel Policy Co-ordinating Group (PPCG), which introduced a number of proposals designed to improve personnel management of the foreign service departments and agencies. The PPCG also carried out studies of the relationship between departments and agencies whose focus is overseas and those which are primarily or exclusively concerned with domestic programs. It examined as well the desirability and feasibility of increasing the mobility of personnel between departments and agencies. During the year a significant number of foreign service officers served temporarily in other departments as well as in non-governmental institutions.

Toward the end of the year, the ICER lost its first chairman when A. E. Ritchie was replaced as Under-Secretary of State