

outside the Public Service are also appointed. As the international affairs environment becomes more complex and important to Canadian interests, great care must be taken when appointing Heads of Post to put the right person in the right place. Some of our Head of Post positions are among the most important and demanding positions in the Public Service today. Those representing Canada in key industrial states and major international organizations have responsibilities equal, in my view, to those of a deputy minister.

This is why I believe that of all the responsibilities that are placed on the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, the most important is that of making recommendations to the Secretary of State for External Affairs and the Prime Minister for appointments by Order-in-Council to the post of Ambassador. There are procedures laid down within ICER, recently revised and strengthened, for soliciting suggestions from other foreign service departments for persons qualified to be considered, among others, for particular positions of Head of Post. These procedures must be followed carefully and fairly. But the responsibility falls on the Under-Secretary to ensure that the persons he alone recommends are of outstanding quality and worthy of the special trust and responsibility to be conferred upon them by their high appointment.

I cannot overemphasize that the central agency concept ultimately stands or falls on the quality of foreign service personnel. As government and international affairs become more specialized and technical, the Department runs the risk of being left behind if it is unable to adapt. It is essential that departmental personnel deepen their knowledge of government and acquire special skills which are not at present fully developed within the foreign service. The efforts the Department is now making in personnel management are, in my opinion, perhaps the most important steps towards achieving the central agency concept.

Before discussing these efforts, however, I would like to underline the difficulties of personnel management in the foreign service. We are always faced with the possibility of entirely new, and often unforeseen, demands on the collective talents and expertise of the foreign service; and these demands can play havoc with attempts at rational career planning.

I can illustrate this point by recalling our participation in the Indochina Commissions. In July, 1954 we had no one serving in Indochina, very little knowledge of Indochina, no plans to send anyone there, and no direct interests. By July, 1955 the political staff of the Canadian delegation to one of the three Commissions was roughly as large as the equivalent staff of the Embassy in Washington. After a few years, the Department had more officers with experience in Indochina and knowledge about that part of the world than it had in any other single area of political work. And all this where, just a few years before, we had neither interests nor knowledge!

It is to the great credit of departmental managers and personnel that the foreign service coped with this kind of situation as well as it did. Although the unexpected could happen again, it seems more likely now that we can envisage a period of relative

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