

9.5. ACCOMMODATION ABROAD

THE PROBLEM

Although not part of this Committee's mandate, the problem of accommodation abroad was raised by many secretaries because they felt accommodation greatly affected job performance.

DISCUSSION

The question of accommodation abroad is a very important and sensitive issue. The type of accommodation to which an employee is assigned plays a large role in the employee's morale while abroad. This is especially true of support staff who are usually assigned the less desirable housing units on the basis that their function at the post is not representational in nature. With increased mobility of Canadians generally, service abroad, particularly at hardship posts, is becoming less attractive than it once was. Fewer secretaries are willing to make the sacrifice of spending two years in accommodation of lower standards than they would expect to have at home.

As a long-term measure, better housing should be obtained for support staff at many of our missions abroad. As a short-term measure, an effort should be made to provide secretaries with better and prior information about accommodation at all posts. The decision of many secretaries whether to accept a posting often rests on the type of accommodation available at a post. Assignment officers are invariably asked about this matter. Since accommodation, however, is the responsibility of another division, assignment officers are able to provide only sparse information. The accommodation section itself is generally unwilling to talk with secretaries and other employees about accommodation until after it has received a posting confirmation rather than before.