

DIPLOMATIC ATTITUDES

One of the features that separates diplomats in the higher ranks from others in the communities in which they live is their housing. This has always been a sensitive question for Canadians.

Some critics would like the style of life of Canadian representatives abroad to reflect that of the average Canadian middle-class home. In practice, in most countries, ambassadors are housed in conditions quite different from anything that could be afforded by the local inhabitants. This dates back to the days when there were plenty of large private houses staffed by many servants, and the ambassador's residence was one of many, instead of standing out as an exception. One justification for maintaining these mansions is the necessity for entertaining. How much is diplomatic entertaining justified? Sometimes its value is greatly exaggerated, yet it still goes on all over the world.

Perhaps finally this whole way of life will disappear for one very simple reason — there will no longer be servants available — and ambassadors will have to retreat to modest flats and mount their dinners and receptions at the local hotels. They will then (though) be faced by the great and growing problem of physical security.

Women diplomats in the higher ranks are still something of a rarity in all Foreign Services. In our own Foreign Service we have had a handful of distinguished women diplomats — too few and too far between. The unsung heroines of the Foreign Service are the women in its administrative and secretarial ranks, without whom the whole operation would speedily collapse. The attractions for Canadians of representing their country abroad are less than they once were. With the opening up of missions in so many new countries, the ratio of unhealthy, remote, and boring posts has increased. Then, too, some wives of foreign service officers — and this is increasingly the case — have interesting, remunerative jobs at home and do not look forward to the prospect of giving them up in order to accompany their husbands to a foreign post. Yet the wife of a foreign service officer can make all the difference to the success or failure of her husband's posting abroad. If she enjoys the stimulus of meeting a variety of people, if she finds an interest in getting to know other countries and cultures, the husband and wife make a doubly effective team. I do not know how effective Sylvia and I have been as a team — I do know that without her I could not have carried on.

A HARDSHIP RATING FOR QUEBEC CITY?

Our posts abroad have hardship indexes from I to IV, yet did you realize that so do our fair cities here at home. A climate severity index is prepared by the federal government to help determine the "isolation" bonuses that should be paid to the 8,000 civil servants who are transferred across Canada.

Which of Canada's 10 largest cities would you think has the most depressing climate? Which has the most hazardous? Which the most immobilizing?

Vancouver, with all its spectacular beauty, is considered the most depressing. Quebec, with its European charm, the most hazardous and immobilizing. When all the factors were considered (psychological, hazard and mobility), Quebec City came out with the highest severity index, 52; followed closely by Winnipeg with 51, then Ottawa with 44 and Montreal 43. Vancouver, despite its high psychological rating, ranks the lowest in the severity index because its climate, although depressing, is neither hazardous nor immobilizing.

Looking at all the cities in Canada, St. John's, Newfoundland received the honors of being the "worst" capital city. Its gloomy, rainy weather, coupled with its fog that often closes the airport and doesn't allow you to escape, earned it its last place finish.

The "absolute worst climate in all of Canada" title went to the tiny post of Isachsen on Queen Elizabeth Island in the Arctic. Given a severity index of 99, all other places were compared to that.

At the other end of the spectrum, the most pleasant places to live, it appears, are in western Alberta, Vancouver Island and the southern interior of B.C. Alberta's sunshine enabled Medicine Hat and Lethbridge to be rated as the places with the lowest psychological stress factors.

Now that you know the facts(?), are you, or are you not, glad you are, where you are?

MURPHY'S LAWS

- The love letter you finally got the courage to send will be delayed in the mail long enough for you to make a fool of yourself in person.
- The secret of success is sincerity. Once you can fake that, you've got it made.
- The person not here is the one working on the problem.

Dip Doodles by Vic Lotto



Are you sure that the FSD's will cover this trip?