

ground supervisor was "unilingual in her lack of dynamism." One man wanted help in sending his son to a summer camp to learn English. There are numerous requests for money for French-language schools, especially from British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario.

Mr. Spicer's office replies to these letters and tells the writers where to take their problems—whether it is to be the Montreal recreation department, a camps association or the provincial department of education.

Mr. Spicer calls this working outside the law but not against it: although this is not part of his mandate under the act, it can encourage civilized dialogue.

Perhaps his proudest accomplishment along this line was to help arrange an exchange of high school students from Burlington and Ste.-Anne-de-la-Pocatiere after he broached the idea in a speech to the Burlington students.

The office started off slowly, in what Mr. Spicer calls an orange-crate situation. When he arrived the first day he did not even know how to order pencils and already the Treasury Board was asking him for a five-year spending forecast. There were also a dozen complaints, including one that could not wait. "It was like leading a cavalry charge into a swamp," he said.

The routine has now been smoothed out, although there are still some bugs like pictures that slide down the walls because the sticky patches that are supposed to hold them up do not cling to the walls.

The staff is, in Mr. Spicer's words, a mirror of Canada. There are even two unilingual Anglophones who will join civil servants from other departments in language classes learning French. Among officials, excluding clerical workers, there is one of Ukrainian ethnic origin, one Turkish, one black Jamaican, one East Indian and one Romanian.

At the top there is a nice balance between Mr. Spicer, who calls his background WASP, the Director-General, former Quebec Associate Education Minister Jean-Marie Morin. Mr. Blais, who heads the complaints service, is of French background and Lloyd Stanford, who heads the Special Studies Service, is of English-language background.

The staff now stands at a little over 40, including clerical workers. Mr. Spicer expects to go up to about 55. After a few years it might decline as fewer special studies are required and a momentum has developed that makes federal agencies consciously try to avoid pitfalls.

"What we want, in a nutshell, is no complaints," Mr. Spicer said.



Students at language training school.