

5. PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION

5.1. PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENTS

THE PROBLEMS

1. Foreign Service Officers' assignments last two years (approximately) with the Personnel Bureau. Secretaries consider that assignment period to be too short to provide continuity.
2. Considering that there are more than a hundred establishments abroad, and that Headquarters is here in Ottawa, there is a lack of continuity and of communication on a great number of aspects concerning personnel matters.

DISCUSSION

It is common practice within the Department of External Affairs that FS Officers assigned to the Personnel Bureau do not stay for a period longer than two years. This turnover of FS Officers who are not familiar with personnel policies, procedures, practices, programs and philosophy creates a perpetual state of uncertainty and lack of continuity within a bureau which must provide this form of continuity and certainty to the highest degree. Due to this turnover, it is quite evident that planning and organizing programs and policies are not a number one priority since a year of service is required before an officer is operational.

Again, before he/she is able to see any results of programs and policies that he/she might have instigated, he/she is re-assigned to another position outside the bureau. Consequently, his/her replacement might very well disagree with those policies and programs or not fully understand them and, therefore, put a temporary freeze on them or suspend them indefinitely. There is a need for assignment officers to develop a better