

I do not propose to go into detail, but in essence a system of "country programming" has been established with the head of post, the ambassador, designated as the manager of Canadian operations in a particular country. This may all sound pretty obvious, but the tenacity of Government departments in holding on to their own personnel and in regarding members of their departments serving abroad as representatives of their respective departments and not of the Government as a whole should not be underestimated. In essence, we are in the process of instituting a system of programming in which each post abroad has clearly-defined objectives (which it has a part in establishing) and is provided with the personnel and resources to achieve them. The difficulty of programming foreign relations is, of course, accepted (unforeseen events, changes in policy or emphasis, can require rapid shifts in priorities and in how personnel and resources will be employed), but for day-to-day operations the development of clearly-understood objectives is desirable, not only from the point of view of providing a basis for judging how scarce government resources are being used but also as a means of appraising the performance of personnel in meeting the objectives. This attempt to develop a policy-programming system in the foreign service is proceeding pragmatically, with no preconceived ideas as to its absolute utility to foreign affairs operations, which are often more qualitative than quantitative.

A fourth factor of significance to the development of the Canadian foreign service is that we now have collective bargaining. As a result of legislation adopted in 1967, collective bargaining was instituted throughout the public service. Foreign service officers, accustomed to negotiating on behalf of their Government, suddenly found themselves involved in negotiations with the Government on the terms and conditions of their employment. There was a good deal of soul-searching about how to adapt to the collective-bargaining situation. Ultimately, it was decided to establish a professional association, which, in accordance with the legislation, was recognized by the employer (the Government) as the sole bargaining agent for the foreign service officers of the Department of External Affairs and the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce. It was not an easy time, since many FSOs considered themselves to be members of a dedicated profession prepared to work 24 hours a day, if necessary, to achieve whatever results were required either at home or abroad. The idea of working a precise number of hours and in certain circumstances being paid for overtime required some getting used to.

The fact that the service is so small caused other difficulties. For example, the legislation required the exclusion from the collective-bargaining process of those designated by the Government as managers. This resulted in the exclusion of a large number of officers, generally the more senior ones, serving as heads of post abroad or as supervisors at home. A number of anomalies occurred and still do. For example, many Canadian missions abroad are very small, with an ambassador and perhaps only one or two other officers and support staff. When the ambassador is away from the post, an officer, often relatively junior, takes over as manager and then reverts to his normal role when the ambassador returns. Within the Department in Ottawa, responsibilities tend to go very far down the line on the many complex issues with which foreign service officers deal. It is really not practicable to have rigid and, in fact, artificial distinctions between management and non-management.