

learn work and project management techniques, and study relations with the news media. Participants also complete courses specifically relevant to their career streams. For example, political/economic officers take a course called "International Law," exploring the legal environment in which international relations are conducted and the specifics of international law that have particular importance for Canada and for the work of the foreign service. Similarly, trade commissioners complete a course named, "Canada's Trade and Industrial Structure," which reviews the country's economic sectors, looking at regional differences and emphasizing Canada's international competitiveness. Administrative officers examine "Resource Allocation, Management and Budgeting," studying financial and human resource planning both in Ottawa and at missions abroad. Social affairs officers study Canada's immigration laws and regulations, as well as issues concerning international migration and refugees.

Participants in the Institute's entry-level career program also benefit from various activities outside the classroom, such as visits and briefings, that allow them to learn first-hand about Canada's government institutions. Similarly, a visit to a foreign mission in Ottawa provides the opportunity to observe how an embassy functions. After finishing their classroom training, the new officers go on to apply their new skills and knowledge in the workplace, where they receive structured on-the-job training for approximately eight months. In addition, some new officers participate in a cross-Canada tour to broaden their knowledge of the country they represent. This carries on a tradition dating from 1916, when the Trade Commissioner Service (now part of EAITC) started sending new commissioners on tours of Canadian farms and businesses before they were posted overseas.



"I grew up in Renfrew, Ontario, and moved to Ottawa to study commerce at Carleton University. Circumstances interrupted my education after two years. I then joined the federal government where I worked as an office clerk.

"I received language training during this period and it felt good to become part of the region's bilingual character. My wife is from Quebec and we are raising our family in Hull, Quebec, across the river from Ottawa.

"I joined the Department of External Affairs in 1983 as an accounting and administration clerk. Presently, I am a senior finance clerk in the Office of Protocol, working on the logistical arrangements for visits to Canada of foreign heads of state.

"Recently, I participated in a two-day course organized by the Canadian Foreign Service Institute which improved my interpersonal communication skills. The course's emphasis on the importance of non-verbal communication was particularly interesting.

"I work hard and enjoy my present work. I know that effective training improves job satisfaction, which in turn helps increase self-esteem – so important in life."

*Brian Skerkowski
Senior Finance Clerk*