

March 12, 1980

Dept. of External Affairs
Min. des Affaires extérieures
MAR 12 1980
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Background Paper on
Foreign Service Consolidation

There are approximately 1,450 public servants doing foreign service work of whom 1,300 are classified as Foreign Service officers (FS). They are divided among External Affairs (750), the Trade Commissioner Service of ITC (300) and the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission (250). The balance is made up of 55 non-rotational officers of CIDA and a similar number of employees of the Canadian Government Office of Tourism plus a handful of officers of such departments as Finance, Labour, National Health and Welfare and Agriculture who serve abroad on the basis of single assignments. None of these enjoy the same status or career opportunities as Foreign Service officers

As a consequence of a 1970 Cabinet decision to move toward gradual integration of the foreign service, technical, clerical and stenographic support at posts abroad has been integrated and is now provided by employees of the Department of External Affairs.

The general policy which guides the management of the various foreign services abroad is coordinated in Ottawa through various interdepartmental mechanisms presided over by the Department of External Affairs. The principal such mechanism is the Interdepartmental Committee on External Relations (ICER).

Among the problems with which foreign service reorganization is designed to cope are the following:

- a) while the demands on our foreign service by all levels of government and by the public are ever increasing, the resources which are available for all of the government's foreign operations are limited, with no prospect of significant increase;
- b) the management of our foreign service resources is fragmented and, consequently, they cannot be deployed or utilized with the required degree of effectiveness and efficiency;

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