



**From the
Foreign Service
Community Association**

125 Sussex Drive, Ottawa, K1A 0G2 (613) 993-5729



FROM THE SPOUSAL EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

"The times they are a-changin' " sang Bob Dylan, and nowhere is this more evident than in today's employment scene. One of the most noticeable trends is the increased percentage of women in the labour force, and the increased responsibility of the positions which they occupy. For various reasons, which include both the desire for self-fulfillment and economic necessity, the two-career family is now the norm. And, as more women join External Affairs, male spouses are also starting to pack-up for the posting season.

However, rotational foreign service life can have a serious negative impact on the employment and career prospects of spouses. This was one of the key findings of the Royal Commission on Conditions of Foreign Service (the McDougall Commission), which reported in 1981. Specific examples of the hardships faced are numerous, and

some are documented in "Not A Bed Of Roses: The 'New' Foreign Service Spouse" (*Liaison*, Vol. 4, No. 4).

Some spouses do not see why they should have to put their careers on hold, and have formed the Spousal Employment Committee as part of the Foreign Service Community Association. The aim of the Committee is to eliminate employment barriers at home and abroad, and much of our work consists of lobbying to change policies and attitudes at the Department.

In 1985, the Committee was instrumental in shaping the Employment Policy for Spouses and Dependents. (Admin. No. 38/87. Don't leave home without it.) We succeeded in turning what started out as a guideline to signing personal service contracts into an actual policy, in which a firm commitment is made by the Department "to facilitate employment oppor-

tunities for spouses and dependants". Since then, we have been actively involved in monitoring the effect of the Policy, which has been uneven at best. The Policy exists, but many attitudes remain to be changed before it will be implemented successfully.

During the past year, the Committee met with the Assistant Deputy Minister (Personnel) to discuss briefings on the policy for heads of mission. Other issues, such as increased efforts to obtain more reciprocal employment arrangements and security clearances for spouses, were also raised. We met with personnel officials at National Defence, who are supportive of proposing changes to the unemployment insurance legislation.

The Committee would like to hear about your experiences with spousal employment matters, and is keen to enlist the support of new members. For further information, please contact the chairperson, Clara Hirsch, at 237-5615. You are all welcome to attend the next Committee meetings, which will be at 7:30 p.m. on August 15 and September 19 in the Foreign Service Community Association office, Room B1-108 at the Pearson Building

FOREIGN SERVICE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
125 Sussex Drive, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2

- Membership Application
- Fee: \$15.00 per year
\$20.00 per family

Name:

Postal address:

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Telephone No.: Home Office

Name of Spouse (if married):

Memberships are due in January of each year.

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