

The mainstay of the Department, the desk officer, male or female, carries out a variety of tasks that include the development of policy for consideration by senior officials and by the Minister. Shrewdly selected for their work, the women desk officers have shouldered their share of the load and have been given, and performed, work equal in value to that of their male colleagues.

The present Under-Secretary, Mr. H. B. Robinson, joined the Department in 1945, so that he has had some opportunity to become familiar with the work

of the women in the Department. He has paid tribute to their important contribution and their achievements: "While the number of women who have gained prominence in our ranks may be small thus far," he says, "it has included some quite striking personalities as well as women who have played a very substantial part in the development of foreign policy and in the carrying-out of foreign operations on behalf of the Canadian Government." "Those who join us in future," he adds, "will carry on and further enrich the tradition which this article describes."

Parliamentary associations — useful but little-known forums

By Gary Levy

Members of Parliament wishing to increase their knowledge of international affairs may sit on the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence, but more and more legislators interested in this subject are also participating in meetings of international parliamentary associations. Some parliamentary associations are affiliated with bodies established by international agreement, as, for example, the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe, the Western European Union or the European Parliament. Other associations are unofficial and not based on formal treaties. These are essentially private organizations and parliamentarians participate in them as individuals, not as representatives of their parties or governments. Parliamentary associations discuss parliamentary problems, and some of them adopt resolutions, although they are incapable of implementing any recommendations since such power rests with governments or intergovernmental institutions.

The origin of Canadian participation goes back to 1900, when Prime Minister

Laurier sent Senator Raoul Dandurand to Paris to represent Canada at the World Exhibition of that year. Numerous international meetings were held that summer in the French capital, and in August Senator Dandurand and a colleague, Senator William Hingston, happened to attend the tenth conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. There is no record of their participating in the formal proceedings and they made no official report upon their return to Canada. From this humble beginning, however, Canadian involvement in parliamentary associations has evolved to the point where, in 1975 alone, more than 100 Senators and Members of the House of Commons were delegates to some 30 plenary conferences, regional meetings, committee meetings, seminars and visits in connection with four international parliamentary associations — the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Commonwealth (formerly Empire) Parliamentary Association, the North Atlantic Assembly (formerly NATO Parliamentarians' Conference), and the Association internationale des parlementaires de langue française — as well as two bilateral bodies, the Canada-United States Interparliamentary Group and the Canada-France Inter-Parliamentary Association. In 1964, the Speaker of the House of Commons appointed Ian Imrie as Co-ordinating Secretary for Parliamentary Associations; under his direction, an Inter-Parliamentary Relations Branch was developed as a permanent staff unit of Parliament re-

*Associations
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