

There have been criticisms that there is too much turnover in our Information Division personnel. It is true that over the years many officers have been assigned to information work and then, shortly afterwards, transferred to other tasks. The quick rotation of personnel is not limited to the information field. This phenomenon affects all divisions of the Department.

The reasons for these transfers are, first, that, under our present Civil Service system, promotion is linked with increased responsibilities. It is easier very often for an officer to get advancement as a result of posting to a new job involving clearly higher responsibilities than as a result of a demonstration that the duties of his particular job have increased since the last establishment survey. It must be recalled, and this is a second reason for our policy, that ours is and must be a rotational service. Many of our posts abroad are difficult. The proportion of difficult posts is, in fact, increasing. Our officers cannot be left at these posts indefinitely. After a few years they must come out and be replaced. As they come out of these posts, they must be assigned elsewhere, either at some other mission or in the Department. You will also appreciate that certain postings, in tropical countries for instance, cannot be extended. The third factor is that rotation may, in fact, have to be accelerated if, as is the case with us, the Department is expanding. As new posts are opened and additional commitments must be met, we draw on our experienced personnel. But, if you move a third secretary to Yaoundé or Dar-es-Salaam, you may end up with a chain reaction involving staff at headquarters and at half a dozen missions. Again, in respect of these moves, we have little choice.

As you can see, promotions, expansion and rotation combine to explain why our turnover in information, as in other work, is so large. We hope that, in time, we shall be able to settle down and provide more continuity in a number of key positions in the Department. This is a requirement we fully accept; but, so far, try as we may, we have been compelled to subordinate continuity to other more urgent requirements.

I should be the first to admit that I should be delighted if we had more officers on information work, and if we had more money to do information and cultural activities. Let me emphasize that those who are concerned with information work in the Department have not been shy in making representation to Government and to Treasury to obtain more staff and more money. It is not possible for Civil Servants to shout these representations from rooftops, of course, but, because they are not made publicly, it is not to be presumed that they have not been made or that what we have to work with represents all we want. In this connection, may I say how very helpful we have found the representations made to us by this gathering in past years. We are all agreed, I am sure (all of us here, Civil Servants and businessmen alike), in hoping that eventually a higher priority will be given to information work.

However, it must be understood that, as far as Civil Servants are concerned, we are operating within a framework of government policy. We must do the best we can with what the Government is prepared to give us. It will be clear that, having made our case for more, as best we can, we must loyally accept the final government decision, which must balance competing claims against available resources, and do our best to implement it effectively. The ultimate decision as to the allocation of resources is a matter of high policy; and Information Officers, Foreign Service Officers, and Civil Servants generally, may I remind