

□ INTERVIEW □

The Department's Personnel Branch has gone through many changes including the appointment of a new ADM, Mr. Jacques S. Roy. He was recently interviewed for Liaison.

Sylvie Gauvin: *Tell me about your background and how it ties in with your new position of Assistant Deputy Minister, Personnel.*

Jacques S. Roy: I have had various postings in the Department. Before returning to Ottawa last August, I had spent five and a half years abroad: a year and a half as ambassador in Saudi Arabia, and four years as Minister (Economic) in Washington. I had previously spent two years in the Personnel Branch, from 1968 to 1970. My work since that time has been quite different, but I did have some experience in personnel matters, and this is probably why I was selected.

S. G.: *What is your role in terms of the overall administration of the Department and the discharge of its mandate?*

J. Roy: The Personnel Branch is responsible for allocating the manpower required for the sound administration of the Department, for making sure that everything runs smoothly. Departmental priorities are determined by the Management Committee and the Executive Committee; then it becomes the responsibility of the Personnel Branch to make sure that the personnel needs of the various sectors of the Department are met, and that officers with the necessary qualifications are assigned to the appropriate positions.

S. G.: *In your opinion, what are the main issues that you will have to deal with?*

J. Roy: We are in a period of budgetary constraints and the Department will have to consider very carefully what it must do to operate within those constraints. The government has decided to reduce the Public Service by 15 000 person/years over the next five years;

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so this department too will be affected and we will be losing a fair number of person/years. We lost some last year (4%) and will be losing more in the future (1.5% for the next two years). Our job is to make sure that the decrease in person/years is properly administered, that the Department is able to continue to operate smoothly, and that no group of employees is affected significantly more than any other.

S. G.: *But is it not a little unrealistic to expect that the Department will continue to function smoothly despite the reduction in personnel?*

J. Roy: In the Department of External Affairs, as in any other organization, surely it is possible to do the same job with a slightly smaller staff. One and a half percent is a lot, but it can be done. That being said, of course it is becoming increasingly difficult, and it is possible that we will reach a point where we can no longer handle the same workload, where we will have to drop some sectors of responsibility because the necessary staff will not be available. We have not yet reached that point, but it is possible that we will reach it in the next few years.

S. G.: *If the budget cuts result in a decrease in staff, how do you justify the recruitment of new officers for the Department of External Affairs that will be taking place in October?*

J. Roy: We have a given number of person/years at the officer level. Every year, there are people who retire or who find employment outside the Department. I do not believe there is any question of laying officers off. It is extremely important in a service staffed by career officers to recruit new people each year, because otherwise we would develop gaps that would be hard to fill afterwards.

S. G.: *Well then, where will you find the 1.5% personnel that must be cut? Among the support staff?*

J. Roy: If we have 30 positions to fill in one category or another, and we fill only 15, we have reduced our strength by 15 person/years without laying anyone off. We want to avoid layoffs and