

The telecommunications network was further developed with arrangements that allowed better service within existing budget levels. The new financial system, FINEX, was implemented at headquarters and at six missions. Savings by bulk mailings of various publications was achieved. New scheduling techniques permitted mail operations to cope with a 10 per cent volume increase.

The number of microcomputers in use increased to 1 145, while mini- and mainframe computer systems totalled twelve, six of which were at major missions. Records Information Management staff processed over 1.1 million records and responded to 32 000 requests for information. Mail operations handled 4.5 million items. Almost nine million telecommunications messages were processed, totalling more than one billion words. The printing plant generated over 60 million impressions.

Personnel

The Personnel Branch is a service-oriented unit responsible for the recruitment, assignment, remuneration and working conditions of employees. Its services vary according to whether personnel are part of the rotational foreign service, in which there are 2 896 employees, are non-rotational and work only in Canada (1 210 employees), or are among the 3 871 employees engaged locally at missions abroad. The Branch also administers a large secondment program with other government departments and agencies. In 1987/88, 317 employees from other government departments and agencies and the private sector were seconded into External Affairs, while 117 External Affairs employees were working in other departments or agencies or in the private sector.

A total of 998 transfers of foreign service personnel and their families to and from Canada, or from one mission to another, were effected during the year.

The Personnel Branch continued to carry out the government-wide policy of decreasing the size of the public service while minimizing the adverse consequences for employees. Simultaneously, it sought to recruit and retain members of target groups and young Canadians to increase their representation in all occupational categories.

Priority continued to be assigned to foreign language training to ensure that foreign service personnel possess the language skills required for their positions. Reciprocal arrangements allowing dependents of departmental employees serving abroad to obtain employment in the receiving state were negotiated with Brazil, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Ghana and Morocco.

The personnel implications of the Canadian On-Line Secure Information and Communications System and of CIDA decentralization, the implementation of both of which are to commence in 1988/89, were the focus of considerable attention and planning. Health-related issues, among them smoking in the workplace, AIDS and the foreign service, and the establishment of Occupational Safety and Health Committees at missions abroad, also were prominent.

The Department implemented both a scheme for planned leave without pay for the Foreign Service Officer group and a revised policy on lengths of postings for employees serving abroad.

Protocol services and diplomatic, consular and other representatives in Canada

Canada has diplomatic relations with 145 countries. In Ottawa there are 77 resident embassies and 23 resident high commissions. Outside Canada there are 29 non-resident embassies and 16 non-resident high commissions accredited to this country. Other offices in Canada are the International Civil Aviation Organization with representatives from 50 countries, the Delegation of the Commission for the European Communities, the Inter-American Institute for Co-operation on Agriculture, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the International Labour Organization, the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, the International North Pacific Fisheries Commission, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

During the year under review the Office of Protocol was responsible for maintaining liaison between the foreign missions and the RCMP concerning the physical protection of diplomatic and consular representatives and their premises. It also provided services and advice to all foreign missions in accordance with Canada's obligations under the Vienna Conventions, and other international agreements and Canadian laws and regulations. These included the accreditation arrangements for foreign heads of missions in Canada and Canadian heads of missions abroad. The Office is also responsible for the arrangement of the ceremonial events associated with visits of foreign heads of state to Canada.

Canada's international obligations pertaining to privileges and immunities are set forth in the Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic and Consular Relations and in several conventions concluded within international organizations. The Office of Protocol is responsible for interpreting and applying the international obligations in Canada in relation to diplomatic and consular missions and international organizations. The Office administers and monitors the privileges and immunities accorded to some 8 500 members of diplomatic and consular missions in Canada, including their dependents and domestic servants. During the year Protocol continued its efforts to see that the privileges and immunities were used not to the advantage of individuals, but to permit the efficient performance here of the functions of the diplomatic and consular missions and international organizations. Similarly, the conventions grant reciprocal privileges and immunities to the diplomatic and consular missions of Canada abroad, and to its missions to international organizations. The Department made considerable effort to ensure that foreign states fulfilled their international obligations toward Canada, and that the members of Canadian missions abroad were not less favourably treated than the members of foreign missions in Canada.

The Office of Protocol organized the logistic and administrative support for a large number of official visitors to Canada including heads of state, heads of government, ministers of foreign affairs and other personalities invited by the Canadian government. Aside from the large number of official visitors who came to Canada for the Francophone Summit in Quebec City, the Commonwealth meeting in Vancouver and the Winter Olympics in Calgary, official visitors to Canada during the year included Pope John