

conclude reciprocal agreements with more than ten countries enabling spouses of foreign service personnel to work and are actively seeking to make similar agreements with several other countries. This step will not resolve the problem completely for all those affected but it is in the right direction.

It is against this background that we must examine the old charge that the Department is a closed shop, an elite which does not admit outsiders. People have often suggested to me that we should recruit many more persons from outside the Department on a "one-time-only" special assignment basis. I understand this attitude and, indeed, we assign people on this basis, consistent with our open attitude towards secondments. At best, however, this policy has its limits.

Our personnel take up difficult postings for different reasons, including professional pride, interest in the particular country or region, and a spirit of adventure. But they also do so because they view the foreign service as a career in which difficult postings will be alternated with physically easier ones. Many people from outside the Department who volunteer their services are happy to go to London or Paris or New York; when some of our other posts are mentioned, their enthusiasm quickly evaporates. If a large number were sent on a single-assignment basis to our easier posts, these posts would become closed to our own personnel. This is unacceptable. It would make our own professionals second-class citizens. A policy of large-scale recruitment of people from outside — even if exceptionally well-qualified — for postings to attractive and easy posts would destroy the morale and, ultimately, the quality of Canada's foreign service. It is thus especially important that those recruited through lateral entry fully accept the conditions and range of postings long accepted by those already in the service.

Despite the difficulties, we still manage every year, after terrible struggles and agonizing decisions, to fill all positions at headquarters and abroad. For one brief glorious hour or day, seldom longer, everyone is in place and the system is in equilibrium. We all take a deep, collective breath and then the whole process of reassignment and posting begins again.

The Department's effectiveness as a central agency will be severely tested in the years ahead. How well we do will depend first of all on the quality and timeliness of our collective judgement, expression, expertise and leadership. One constant remains: the foreign service provides an unparalleled opportunity for the development of excellence. The management innovations I have described are all designed to exploit and develop to the fullest the talent of all our personnel and to encourage excellence.

The fragile interdependence of domestic and international realities and policies requires astute management if Canada is to meet its national objectives in the 1980s. A professional foreign service, for its part, must be seen as an essential vehicle of statecraft. The Government recognizes this and has demanded the very best from the Department of External Affairs; we must ensure that we offer to Government the leadership and service which are expected of us.