

GENERAL COMMENTS

The 3,125 employees in this Department as at September 1977, 1,896 men and 1,229 women, are divided among 43 classifications. The number of employees in these classifications range from a total of 1 to 794. Even though in Exhibit 1, any numbers under 5 have been considered too small to calculate, there remain a significant number of classifications where relatively large percentages represent relatively few people in Exhibits 1 and 2.

There are factors which operate against the attraction to and employment of women, especially at the officer level, in the foreign service. The Department is attempting to identify those problems or "special constraints" which militate against the greater participation of women at higher levels in the foreign service.

Foremost among the points to be made is that the foreign service is more than a profession. Because all employees in the foreign service are rotational, it is a combination of a profession and a lifestyle, which spans a career. Periodic relocations mean separation from family and friends and the necessity of establishing new links in both the working and social environments in societies often drastically different from the Canadian scene. This operates counter to any needs for stability in one's life and establishing lasting relationships. Foreign service employees (and indeed those accompanying them) must constantly adapt to new faces, places and different cultures. Marriage seems still to be one of the major constraints on women taking on fully rotational careers, insofar as husbands tend, in the majority of cases, still not to be mobile as dependent spouses; career conflicts within couples also tend, by and large, still to be resolved in favour of continuity on the husband's side.

The Department has for a number of years been attempting to accommodate the concerns of its female population. Since their package of