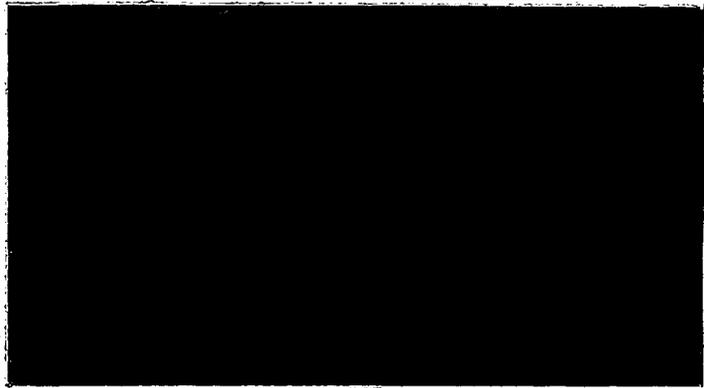
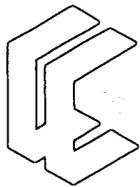


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ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW
BUREAU OF CONSULAR AFFAIRS

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BUREAU DES CONSEILLERS EN GESTION

Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0T5

4 March, 1974

Mr. J. Maybee,
Director General,
Bureau of Consular Affairs,
External Affairs Department,
Lester B. Pearson Building,
Sussex Drive, Ottawa
K1A 0G2

Dear Mr. Maybee:

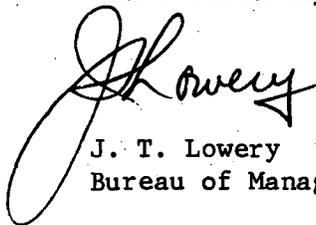
We are pleased to submit our report in the discussion paper format requested by you during our review meeting of February 18, 1974.

Upon request, we will be happy to be involved in further Bureau discussions of this report with your associates and yourself.

We do wish to acknowledge the complete cooperation of your entire staff during the course of this assignment.

It has been a privilege to be of assistance to you on this occasion and we will look forward to an opportunity of providing additional service in the future.

Yours sincerely,



J. T. Lowery
Bureau of Management Consulting.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Bureau of Consular Affairs

INTRODUCTION

This report is intended to be used as a discussion paper and, as such, will not conform with the traditional format of recommendations, summaries and conclusions. Information pertinent to the review of the organization structure and functional responsibilities was gathered through interviews with all employees except those engaged in secretarial and stenographic duties.

The retirement of the Head of Section, Assistance to Canadians Abroad, which took place after commencement of the study resulted in subsequent operational changes instituted by the Director. The need for some of these changes had been identified prior to the retirement and will appear later in the report even though some action has been initiated.

ROLE OF THE BUREAU

The Bureau is charged with providing a staff service to facilitate the activities of all posts abroad. The two divisions of the Bureau, Consular Policy and Research and Consular Operations, appear to be, from an organization standpoint, compatible with and complementary to one another while providing vastly different services which we will refer to as "Staff" and "Line" respectively.

To bring this staff-line role into focus perhaps it would be expedient to define consular responsibilities. Broadly speaking the consular functions,

as we understand them, comprise a full range of comprehensive measures designed specifically for the welfare of Canadians abroad, either visitors or in-residence, and to provide the fullest measure of assistance and protection within the laws of the country within which posts are located.

The Consular Policy and Research Division provides guidance and direction by formulating new policy or revising existing policy, keeps posts informed of new Acts and Regulations and interpretation of same, conducts research into drawing up consular understandings and analyze statistical data to be used as a guide in reviewing Country Programs.

The Consular Operations Division, on the other hand, is engaged in operational activities that are, for the most part, an extension of work being done in the consulates. The employees of the Division are involved in the day-to-day welfare of Canadians acting as catalysts in a support role to the "posts" necessitated primarily by geographical and communication difficulties. In contrast to the work handled by the Policy and Research Division the Operations people deal with a high volume of self-terminating situations that can usually be handled in relatively short periods of time.

THE CURRENT ORGANIZATION

Structure

During all of our discussions with employees we made a point of discussing the structure and components of the Bureau. The majority of those who volunteered could offer no suggestions that they felt would lead to a more effective or efficient operation. Those few who did offer suggestions did

so with no real conviction or with any concrete reasons why or how improvements could result.

With a current staff complement of:

- 1 Director General
- 2 Directors
- 6 Section Heads
- 9 Officers, and
- 4 Clerks

excluding personal secretaries and the stenographic pool, it would be extremely difficult to create another Directorship or Section Head if, in fact, such a recommendation was being contemplated. Only the "Assistance to Canadians Abroad" Section is nearing the stage where additional staff could become a supervisory burden to the Section Head.

Manpower

The effective utilization of human resources is a concern of all organizations and the Bureau should not be an exception. There are four areas toward which the Director General could focus some attention with a view to consolidation or redistribution of duties. These areas are:

a) Policy and Procedure Section - Clerical Assistant

Position description estimates that 70% of allotted time will be spent despatching instruments of office and consular forms to new posts (initial supplies only) and recommending establishment of "designated" posts for merchant shipping purposes. These assignments do not appear to be challenging the incumbent to the limits of her capacity.

b) Training Section -

Perhaps the best example of inefficient utilization, although perhaps beyond the control of the Division, is found in the Training Section. This has been vacant for several months but when there was a "Head" we understand

a complete lack of coordination and cooperation with the Personnel Training Division of the Department was evident. There was insufficient notice or lead time given when a course was required which made it difficult to design a program suitable to the needs of the participants. The overall planning was also ill-conceived as there were interruptions for medicals and other briefings.

This situation exists despite the fact that the report, 'Consular Services in the Seventies', refers to the need for training on page 21, paragraph 71 c) iv) and again on page 34, paragraph 114.

In addition, the urgent need to establish a consular training section, as made evident by the current expansion in consular activities and services abroad, was used as one of the criteria in the rationale to reorganize the Bureau in 1972.

c) Regulations and Research Section - Assistant

The primary function of this position is to collect, convert to a different format and publish statistical data submitted from all foreign posts on a bi-monthly basis. It would appear there is a lack of ample volume to both satisfy and justify a full time incumbent in this position. However, one of the dangers in preparing data of this nature is the sudden requests for information to satisfy burgeoning curiosities; the question then becomes is the information essential for some particular purpose or "nice" to have. If this does occur and the reasons for the requests not identified, the job will quickly grow into a full time position, a luxury the Division may not be able to afford. To control release and potential misuse of this data, all requests for information should be made through the Section Head.

Consideration could be given to expanding this activity by assigning to it the responsibility for up-dating the publication "Information to Canadians Travelling Abroad".

d) Contingency Planning and General Services Section - Clerk

Without possessing intimate knowledge of all of the ramifications involved in the Registration of Canadians Living Abroad we came away from the interview with the feeling that the current incumbent could handle more work.

Staffing efficiency is not to be confined only to the negative aspect of under-utilization but should also include provision for planning future needs.

This proposal should not be construed as casting an unfavourable reflection upon the Director but will serve to emphasize the importance of the Training function. This reporting relationship will also permit the Director General to become actively involved with the Department and exert more influence in the planning of a continuing program of training and education. Additionally it will introduce an element of flexibility that will permit using personnel from both Divisions, as the need arises, without creating conflict between the two Directors who may feel their own priorities must be served first.

OBSERVATIONS

The relatively small size of the Sections necessitates protecting the confidentiality of the interviewees therefore, rather than speak to specific Sections, all pertinent data will be discussed under the umbrella of the general headings.

- A. Objectives can best be described as the establishment of achievable goals within established timeframes and designed to improve performance. Within this context we could find limited evidence of concrete objectives. Not surprising and all too often we were told "there is not sufficient time." For example the following was offered as evidence: "not sufficient time to - conduct analysis, spend with subordinates, determine what is a policy guideline, be an efficient administrator or discuss various aspects of the job." The reason there is not sufficient time is that everyone is so busy putting out fires that preventive measures are not being developed. One is left with the impression that the Bureau was re-organized, position

descriptions written, incumbents assigned to positions and then everyone went about their jobs without clear-cut objectives or priorities as to what they were to achieve. The majority of activities currently being conducted within the Bureau are response oriented, employees responding to situations, as opposed to initiated programs, employees planning their activities and responsible for making things happens.

The lack of initiated programs are more evident in the Consular Policy and Research Division because of the nature of their assignments. However, the user, primarily posts abroad, should normally expect the kind of assistance that would emanate from initiated activities. Aside from those functional services outlined in position descriptions the Bureau must not only determine what is expected of them, the role to be played, the services to be provided and programs to be offered but must develop plans to achieve these things that will assist the posts to be more effective in their dealings with Canadians abroad.

We refer to the report 'Consular Services in the Seventies' where on page 21, paragraph 71 c) (v) and again on page 34, paragraph 116 reference is made to the need to complete the Manual of Consular Instruction. It is our understanding that a great deal of effort is still being expended to complete the Manual. Without having access to background information we might logically ask "what have been the causes for the delay?" Is it the lack of objective setting or is there a more basic management deficiency in the role of planning, organizing,

directing and controlling.

The Consular Operations Division exists in a response oriented environment. Questions and requests requiring specific action are channelled into the Division from both posts abroad and within the Country itself. Therefore, objectives for this Division must be developed to best meet the needs of a service function. Consideration should be given to the development of guidelines or objectives covering the following general headings:

1) Turn-around Time

- a) Letters and telegrams from posts; this is a volume situation and thus an uncontrollable factor, however, speed is of the essence and the establishment of realistic guidelines is practical.
- b) Ministerial Correspondence; a more sensitive task but if the Division is to be accountable for preparing these letters commitments should be made regarding their disposition.
- c) Refund of Deposits; Those people who have deposited money and for one reason or another are entitled to a refund are expected to wait an "unreasonable" length of time for their money. The extreme case cited was a delay of eight months.

2) Define Services Performed:

To what extent and degree should the Division be expected to carry out their service function in attempting to resolve the needs of Canadians requiring assistance. This can be examined in terms of what is currently being done as opposed to what the Bureau or the Department feels should be done. An example cited was the degree of involvement in handling bank drafts where Desk Officers are following through from beginning to end. Should the role be merely to notify the bank, provide pertinent information and withdraw?

3) Internal Training:

It is incumbent upon the Director to insure that all employees are adequately trained to handle the wide range of situations they are required to deal with. Provision should be made to insure a planned training program is available to all employees. There are currently three employees in the Division who have had little or no experience in consular work and as one employee so aptly stated "posts only ask for advice and assistance when they cannot handle the situation themselves and therefore expect the experience level of the Desk Officer to be as greater or greater than their own." There is also reference in Timmerman's Report for the need to strengthen posts with better trained and qualified Canada-based employees in the face of growing and more insistent and critical demand for consular services.

The Bureau, as a viable organization, must also establish objectives. Following on these overall objectives or goals the objectives of the two Divisions will be clarified and all efforts can be directed toward the same end. Prior to the commencement of this exercise the Bureau should not only establish internally what its role is, or should be, but clearly identify what is expected of it by the posts and those other bureaux and divisions (of the Department) with whom it deals.

B. Communications

Responses to the question of communications as pertaining to all areas of the Bureau's operations, both internal and external, ranged from "not good or not enough to improving, getting progressively better and good." The answers appeared to be based primarily on the individuals own experiences and their own personal needs and desires. However, after analyzing the replies and comments and relating these to our own observations of interactions within the Bureau we would conclude there is a definite need to establish clearer and more effective lines of

communications.

For the most part the flow of information between sections and particularly between the two Divisions is irregular. Employees have had to rely on their own informal system and personal initiatives to keep informed. In early January, 1974 one Section within the Bureau held a formal meeting, chaired by the Director, which for one employee with eight months' service in Bureau was the first meeting she had attended. Other could not recall ever having attended a previous Section or Division meeting.

To build a vibrant organization the Director General will have to create an environment to facilitate harmonious interrelationships. The initial step in this process could take the form of regularly scheduled meetings, on a monthly basis, with the Division Directors to discuss the activities of the Bureau and of each Division. This would not only promote a better spirit of cooperation between the two Directors but would insure that each was not working in isolation or perhaps even duplicating efforts. Consideration could also be given to the formation of a Management Committee, made up of the same group and chaired by the Director General. A beneficial off-shoot of these meetings would hopefully be Division and Section meetings, on a less frequent basis, to keep all employees apprised of activities within the Divisions and Bureau. The Director General should consider the impact his presence would have on the unity of the Bureau if he saw fit to periodically attend and participate in Division meetings. Establishing a strong communications network is one of the essential

elements needed to build a well co-ordinated, smooth-running organization.

There were one or two examples cited that would suggest external communications are also less than desirable. References applied to the situations follows:

- a) lack of sufficient liaison with other divisions on jurisdictional coverage;
- b) the need to eliminate "grey areas" that ultimately become consular problems;
- c) a regional meeting of heads of posts to discuss problems of mutual concern with no representation from the Bureau.

The Director General is perhaps in the best position to remedy this type of situation by insuring that the presence of the Bureau is recognized and accepted within the Department. This could be accomplished through a series of visits to other Directors General, through periodic trips to selected posts, by inviting other Divisions' representatives to Bureau meetings, by insisting the Bureau not only be invited but actively participate in meetings where consular policy or planning is involved.

C. Staffing

"Resource allocation in External Affairs had always been a difficult problem."¹ From our observations this continues to be a problem within both Divisions of the Bureau and if it is an accepted "way of life"

1 External Affairs Headquarters: Relationships and Responsibilities. Bureau of Management Consulting, March, 1971.

provisions should be made accordingly. This may be construed as an irrational statement but if any degree of continuity is to be maintained safeguards must be built into the system. As the Bureau continues to grow in stature and more of the user departments come to accept the services provided, the lack of staff will not be accepted as a justifiable reason for not offering a training course or updating a manual.

We must also look at the adequacy of resources. Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary describes adequate as "equal to or sufficient for some (specific) requirement."

Thus consideration must be given two aspects of resource allocation, replacements and experience levels. When operating in an 'unstable' environment, created by a system of continuous rotation of human resources, it may not be feasible to leave a position vacant until an ideal candidate can be acquired. This situation will undoubtedly put more pressure on supervisory personnel who may then be required to spend an abnormal portion of their time in staff development. The Bureau of Management Consulting may not be perceiving this situation with complete accuracy but there are enough indicators to justify, in the over-all operational plans of the Bureau, provision for these eventualities.

Serious consideration should, in our opinion, be given to identifying those positions within the Bureau that could be difficult to staff without adequate notice. Non-rotational positions may not be acceptable within the Department's operational philosophy, however we can

see no logical objections to assignments covering a time period of not less than two years. Three positions that come to mind immediately, and fall into the above category are:

1) Head, Policy and Procedure Section.

It is our understanding that it would be desirable for the incumbent of the position to have a legal background and therefore may be difficult to replace.

2) Head, Training Section.

Provided the training function achieves the status envisioned by the Director and considering the specialized nature of the work, this position could be filled by an experienced Foreign Service Officer as a career development assignment.

3) Desk Officer, Assistance to Canadians Abroad Section.

A minimum of one well qualified, senior level employee to provide stability and back-up to the Section Head.

Consideration should also be given to:

- 1) Cross-training within Sections and Divisions to facilitate internal movement of skills to off-set vacancies and low levels of experience.
- 2) Develop a "country profile" containing essential background data, guidelines and examples of situations that the desk officer will be required to deal with. This will provide a smoother transition and will allow the new incumbent to quickly become assimilated into the geographic and political environment of the position.
- 3) Establish minimum levels of experience that would be acceptable, within each Section, to insure quality and quantity of outputs are maintained. In conjunction with this, particularly in those areas where there are only one or two employees, attempt to insure a minimum overlap period between the employee being posted and the employee being assigned.
- 4) Prevail upon the Personnel Planning and Development Division to prepare and circulate a list of all employees coming off rotational assignments and their dates of availability. This will allow Section Heads and Directors, from all areas of the Department, to play an active role in the selection

of candidates to fill current and projected vacancies. Currently, it would appear Section Heads and Directors are left to their own resources to locate candidates or accept those that are assigned to them.

In the same view, the Personnel Planning and Development Division should be asked to provide, up to six months in advance, a list of those employees who are eligible for foreign posting and who currently occupy sensitive positions. All bureaux in the Department could identify these jobs in their respective areas.

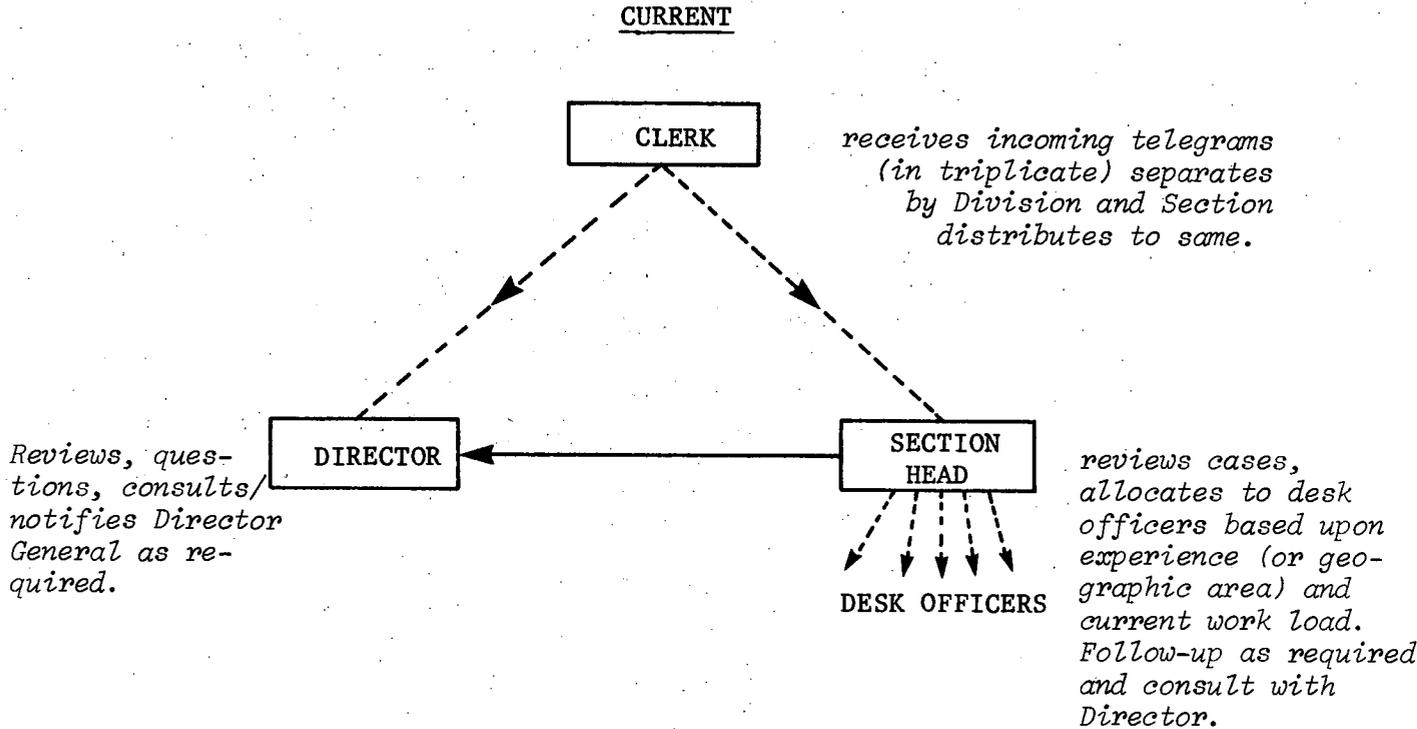
The over-all experience level of the Bureau, at the present time, appears to be adequate although there are one or two incumbents who may not be suitably placed in their present positions.

D. Allocation of Work

These comments are directed specifically to the Assistance to Canadian Abroad Section. At the outset of this study we considered the method used to allocate or assign work to desk officers, and to monitor its progress, was extremely inefficient. During the interim period when the position of Section Head was vacant, the Director instituted a few changes and delegated much more authority to the desk officers than they had previously been allowed to exercise. The response from the majority of the officers was extremely positive which, when one considers the positions held by some of the incumbents in post abroad, should not be too surprising.

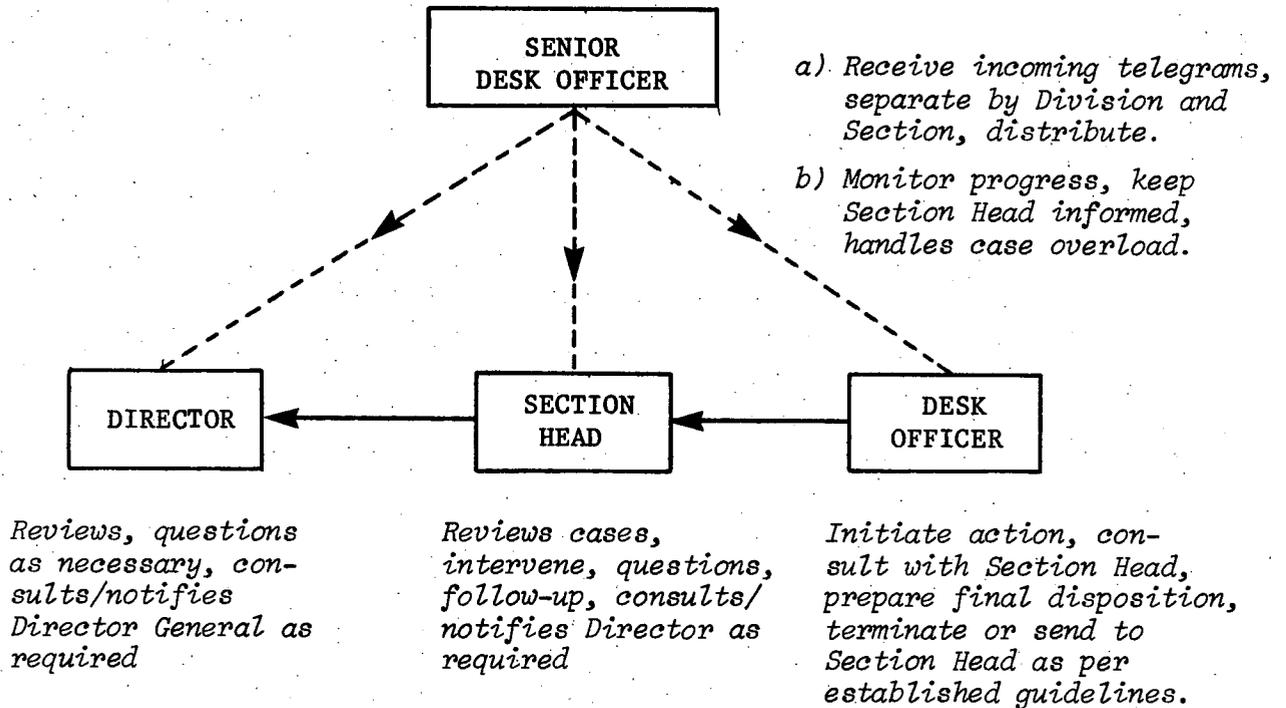
The problems associated with the assignment of work has, in our opinion, still not been completely resolved in a manner that will result in maximum utilization of the Section's resources. The Director plans to introduce a geographic or regional desk concept which we feel is a very practical move but should only be done in concert with other changes.

The current case load is approximately three hundred and twenty (320) items per month, with the majority of communications with the posts handled by telegram. The method of distribution, as we understand it, is as follows:



The weakness with this system is the time the Section Head must spend sorting, distributing, preparing distribution list for follow-up and insuring case load of desk officers is not becoming too heavy. Due to the high volume and the usually urgency to complete each case time is of the essence, a feature for which this method makes no provision.

We would suggest the following as an alternative:



This procedure will free the Section Head from the routine task of sorting and distributing, yet keeps the Head informed through copies of telegram and continuous contact with Senior Desk Officer. Permits the Head time for administrative duties, staff development, involvement in sensitive cases, dealing with the press and various other individuals seeking information on specific situations or incidents. The Senior Desk Officer could also maintain some form of 'Case Record' that would provide the Section Head or Director with a running record of stage of progress or settlement of each case, thus providing a synopsis, in a central location, which would be sufficient to answer routine questions. Desk officers are currently maintaining similar progress notes for their own use therefore the introduction of a formal procedure would not represent additional work. The Senior Desk Officer would be in a position

to provide a continuing analysis of geographical volume, seasonal fluctuations and changes in pattern of cases handled by posts abroad, to name but a few and additional benefits that could be derived from the above proposal.

The Stenographic Pool, currently under the administration of the Director, Consular Operations, continues to be a source of concern to the two Directors. Due to the continuous volume of work generated by Consular Operations and previous administrative problems associated with this function, Mr. Agnes arranged to have the Stenographic group report to him. While he recognizes this could be construed as an extreme measure, and realizes the "Pool" should not report to a Director, he is fearful of a recurrence of the previous situation. The Consular Policy and Research Division has provision for two man years in the "Pool" and the Director has been assured that work from his Division will be handled promptly and efficiently. Despite the fact that things appear to be operating smoothly this situation should be reviewed by the Director General and the two Directors to arrive at some form of common understanding.

E. Delegation

For the most part delegation, or the lack thereof, does not appear to be a problem within the Bureau. Until recently however, this was a definite problem in the 'Assistance to Canadians Abroad Section' where Desk Officers were given very little authority and all cases flowed from and back through the Section Head.

The subject of effective delegation is a continuing managerial concern under the best of conditions and can become even more critical in an environment where experience levels are continuously fluctuating. We therefore draw your attention to the following excerpts taken from pages 24 and 25 of the March, 1971 Bureau of Management Consulting report entitled - External Affairs Headquarters: Relationships and Responsibilities. For the context of our example, "Directors" can be substituted for "Directors General" where appropriate.

"While there has been much talk in the department about 'management', there does not appear to be a universal appreciation of the implication of the word. Management is generally defined as an activity involving planning, organizing, directing, motivating, and monitoring. These functions, it will be perceived, include forward planning, allocating resources, providing guidance, setting priorities, reviewing performance, training, promoting, and if necessary, dismissing. The more senior a person is in the management structure, the more he is expected to be involved in the first activities listed - that is, planning, organizing and directing."

"the Director General who spends much time rewriting drafts himself, who reviews all outgoing correspondence, who reads all incoming communications for his bureau,

. . . is acting not as a manager but as a desk officer."

"Just as Directors General have been given the authority to exercise their own judgment in relation to which issues they refer to the Under-Secretary for direction, so too it would seem logical that parallel arrangements should be worked out between Directors General and Divisional Heads, so that Divisional Heads too will be required to exercise some judgment as to what issues they and their Desk Officer can handle directly, and what issues have to be referred to the Director General for further guidance."

The Director General may, for his own satisfaction, wish to review the level of delegation being practised within the Bureau.

F. Files and Records

This is a perennial problem in many organizations. It is not our intention to get into considerable detail but to draw this to your attention and relay some of the more pertinent comments on the subject. The problem seems to be isolated to the 'Assistance to Canadians Abroad Section'.

It would appear the present system of chronological filing by country is less than desirable. Cases that have been rather lengthy and drawn out are time consuming to reconstruct, the same situation is also experienced when searching for an isolated piece of information without

some knowledge of the date. Consideration could be given to isolating the type of case by subject (Drug, Death, Repatriation) to reduce the time spend gathering background data. An alternative would be to cross-index by subject and country against subject only. This would serve to provide a ready reference of disposition of similar cases, thus ensuring some degree of uniformity and also provide historical data on the subject. Another form of cross-indexing that could be implemented is cases and names associated with these cases. Names would be filed alphabetically with reference to a specific country or file.

There is some suggestion that many of the Desk Officers are keeping their own files as a hedge against the weaknesses of the current system. This is time consuming and does not provide sufficient detail.

The above commentary represents a composite of employee views and inputs as well as observations made by the authors.

The format is consistent with the discussion paper approach often used by the Bureau of Management Consulting. There are no final conclusions and the implied recommendations are designed to present alternate approaches that can be used to induce further internal deliberation.

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