

Passport Office

The development of a Passport Bureau as a branch of the Department of External Affairs, after the year 1920, has been described in Part I of this survey. Before 1925 the number of Canadian passports issued, or renewals granted, had attained some 25,000 passports annually; and this average number continued during the next ten or fifteen years.*

In addition, Canada began to require visiting or immigrating foreigners to possess entry visas; and several of the Canadian Missions, such as those in London, Washington, Paris and Tokyo, were authorized, under special consular powers, to grant such visas for Canada. These visas came to average between 300 and 500 a year; British subjects entering Canada were exempt, and also United States citizens. Under the Canadian-Japanese Immigration Agreement, re-negotiated in 1929, Japanese immigrant visas to a maximum of 150 per year were authorized to be granted, under careful selection, by the Canadian Legation in Tokyo. A more limited number of visas for Chinese immigrants was authorized to be granted, by a Canadian Immigration and Visa Office in Hongkong, responsible directly to the Department of Immigration in Ottawa.

A general conference on the passport regime was summoned by the Council of the League of Nations and met in Geneva on May 12, 1926, in which Canada was represented

* "In the Department of External Affairs we issue each year 30,000 new passports to Canadians going overseas, besides renewals of old passports still in force. If the number of Canadians going to the United States without passports were included, the total would be many times as great." (Dr. O.D. Skelton: Minutes of Select Standing Committee on Industrial and International Relations, March 25, 1930, p.4.)