

Legal Assistance

Settlement of claims

During 1973, an agreement between the Canadian and Czechoslovak Governments came into force, providing for the eventual full and final settlement of Canadian claims against Czechoslovakia arising before June 22, 1973. Various claims against the People's Republic of China were discussed with the Chinese authorities, leading to the settlement of the Ming Sung Ships claim and of the Nanking Embassy property claim. Approximately two-thirds of the known Canadian claims against Yugoslavia were presented to the Yugoslav authorities in order to obtain documentary evidence on each claim so that the Department might be able to initiate formal negotiations. A list of claims presented to the Cuban authorities was under review throughout the year.

Various individual and corporate Canadian citizens were also assisted in seeking full and fair compensation for various claims against foreign governments, including Mr. David McTaggart's claim against France arising out of the 1972 collision between his vessel, the *Greenpeace III*, and a French naval ship and the 1973 boarding and seizure of his vessel by French naval personnel.

Private international law

The section of the Bureau of Legal Affairs dealing with private international law is responsible for legal proceedings between Canada and foreign countries, either on the basis of conventions or by arranged procedures. Private lawyers in Canada generate a

large volume of requests to serve legal documents such as divorce petitions and writs of summons on persons residing abroad, in cases where civil suits have been commenced in Canada. Evidence must often be obtained from witnesses abroad.

With the increasing mobility of individuals, it is inevitable that questions of social security, enforcement of maintenance orders and judgments and other related issues should become the subject of international dialogue between states. As most of these subjects fall within areas of provincial jurisdiction, considerable liaison between this Department and provincial attorney-general departments is required in order to establish and administer the necessary reciprocal arrangements.

Another area where co-operation between states is required is the enforcement of criminal law. In order to facilitate extradition of persons to and from Canada, and of fugitive offenders in Commonwealth countries, the section is in contact with police forces at all levels, and with provincial and federal departments of government, as well as with Canadian and foreign missions. The section also represents the Department on the Canada-U.S.-Mexico Tripartite Narcotics Control Talks, and acts as departmental adviser in the law-making activities of international organizations such as UNIDROIT and the Hague Conference on Private International Law.

During 1973, officers of the section participated in the Diplomatic Conference on the Standard Form of International Will held at Washington, D.C., in the talks with the Zambian authorities at Lusaka concerning the *ex gratia* payment arising out of the deaths of two Canadian girls on the Zambia-Rhodesia border, and in the United Nations Conference on the Convention on Prescription (Limitations) in the International Sale of Goods.

Passport Office

As more Canadians travel abroad, the Passport Office becomes increasingly busy. The year 1972 was a peak period, during which some 500,000 passports were issued. This was an increase of 17 per cent over 1971, which showed a mere 6 per cent increase over the year before. The 1972 increase was the largest since the bumper 26 per cent in 1968.

In 1973, the rate of increase slowed to 8 per cent over 1972 — 567,202 ordinary and businessmen's passports were issued. In addition, 4,083 diplomatic and special passports were issued.

In all, there are 2,355,296 valid Canadian passports in current use. Of these, 2,200,256 were issued in Canada and 154,940 were issued abroad.

As part of its comprehensive policy to improve passport services to the Canadian traveller, additional regional passport offices were opened in 1972 in Edmonton and Halifax, and in 1973 an office was opened in Winnipeg, making a total of six