In recognition of their humanitarian purpose, the protocols provide for entry into force upon the deposit of two instruments of ratification of accession. The Canadian Government, in consultation with its NATO allies, has been engaged in an examination of the texts in order to determine its official position before ratifying with respect to some of the more controversial aspects of the instruments.

Treaty law

The Department's Treaty Section provides legal advice both to the Department of External Affairs and to other government departments on Canadian treaty procedure, on the drafting of treaty texts and on the interpretation of Canadian treaty obligations.

The Treaty Section is responsible for ensuring that the form of international agreements concluded by Canada conforms to international usage and Canadian practice. It prepares all formal instruments related to Canadian acceptance of treaty obligations, such as the treaty texts themselves, if signed in Canada, and instruments of ratification, accession, acceptance and approval.

The section maintains up-to-date records on the status of all treaties affecting Canada. The *Canada Treaty Register* contains particulars of the date and place of signature of a treaty and the dates of tabling in, or approval by, Parliament, together with ratifications and accessions, if applicable, and information on entry into force, reservations, related agreements, subsequent amendments and termination.

During 1977, Canada signed 36 bilateral agreements. During the year, 23 such agreements entered into force for Canada upon signature and ten by ratification. In the same period, action was taken in connection with 15 multilateral agreements. (See "International Agreements to which Canada is a Party: 1977 Developments".) A general index to the *Canada Treaty Series*, covering the years 1965 to 1974, was published in 1977.

Privileges and immunities

The Department has general responsibility for the interpretation and application, in Canada and abroad, of the principles contained in different international agreements on privileges and immunities affecting diplomatic and consular missions and international organizations. The main development in this field during 1977 was the adoption by Parliament of the Diplomatic and Consular Privileges and Immunities Act. This act constituted a landmark on the subject, as it integrated into Canada's statutory law the main provisions of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, ratified by Canada in 1966, and the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, ratified by Canada in 1974. The new legislation clearly established the authority of the Secretary of State for External Affairs to grant and deny privileges and immunities to foreign representatives in Canada on the basis of the reciprocal treatment extended to Canadian diplomatic and consular staff abroad. The Act also set out the authority of the Secretary of State for External Affairs to issue certificates for use in court to establish a person's entitlement to a privilege or an immunity. Finally, the new legislation repealed the Diplomatic Immunities (Commonwealth Countries) Act, thus putting the diplomatic and consular personnel of the Commonwealth on the same footing as those of non-Commonwealth countries.

Private international law

In the area of private international law, the Department, through the Bureau of Legal Affairs, offers a variety of services intended to facilitate legal proceedings involving Canadian and foreign jurisdictions on the basis of conventions or by arranged procedures. Private lawyers in Canada submit a large number of requests for the serving of legal documents, such as divorce petitions and writs of summons, addressed to persons living abroad, in connection with civil suits in Canada. Evidence is obtained from witnesses abroad either by private arrangements or by rogatory commissions when the co-operation of foreign courts is required. Through Canadian posts, the Bureau helps in the transmission of documents for such purposes. It also assists in serving foreign legal