

Consular Activity

The promotion and protection abroad of the interests of individual Canadian citizens and of corporations and associations are the particular concern of the consular service.

The increase in the number of Canadians travelling outside the country, which has been a feature for the last several years, continued into 1973. A record number of 567,202 persons obtained passport services during the year, and it is estimated that some 1,360,000 Canadians travelled outside Canada to countries other than the United States of America

The Canadian Government provides services for Canadians travelling and resident abroad at 104 diplomatic and consular posts and separately-located delegations. At these various locations some 211 officers and 286 clerical personnel were engaged in consular work during the year, mostly on a part-time basis. The total time all these employees spent on consular work amounted to approximately 56 officer man-years and 124 clerical man-years. It is estimated that approximately 204,000 consular services were rendered to Canadians abroad during 1973.

The majority of these consular services involved requests for information or guidance. Assis-

tance was also provided to several thousand Canadians who lost their passports, their money or traveller's cheques, or their airline tickets home — or sometimes all three. Assistance was also provided to Canadians who became ill, were injured in accidents, were in trouble with the law, became destitute or were affected by the illness or death of a family member either at home or abroad. Consular services in these situations often included liaison between the Canadian in difficulties abroad and his family, friends, bank or lawyer in Canada, through the diplomatic or consular post abroad and the Department in Ottawa.

One of the most important types of service provided by Canadian posts abroad is made available during times of crisis. In such situations, the diplomatic or consular post endeavours to inform Canadian citizens about significant local developments that may affect their well-being, gives advice about the desirability of leaving the crisis area, and helps Canadians find the means to get out of the area if regular facilities are not available. These services were provided during 1973 at the time of the military coup in Chile in September, the outbreak of war in the Middle East in October and the tensions on the Caribbean island of Grenada in December, just prior to its proclamation as an independent state.

In these situations, the Department helped Canadians to leave the affected areas if they wished to do so. It also tried to keep the relatives in Canada informed on the well-being of persons caught in the crisis. In the case of Canadians stranded in Egypt during the Yom Kippur war, the Canadian

Government collaborated with other governments in chartering a special vessel to remove nationals to safe havens nearby. To enable missions to carry out these tasks effectively and to assist in the location of missing persons, the Department encourages visitors other than transients and Canadian residents in countries abroad (other than the U.S.A. and Britain) to register with the nearest diplomatic or consular post.

Both the Department in Ottawa and posts abroad deal with enquiries about conditions in foreign countries that might affect the traveller, and provide general information for the travelling Canadian about developments in Canada. At some posts this is an extensive operation; in 1973, over 160,000 people visited the reception centre at Canada House in London. As a service to travellers, the Department issues a booklet entitled *Information for Canadians Travelling Abroad*, which is handed to all recipients of new passports and is available from the Department on request.

As part of departmental policy of negotiating consular understandings with other countries and thereby facilitating the task of diplomatic or consular posts in dealing with local authorities on consular cases, Canada reached an understanding with Mexico in April and with the People's Republic of China in October 1973.