

Passport Office

provincial and federal departments of government, particularly with the Department of Justice, as well as with Canadian and foreign missions. The Legal Bureau also represents the Department in the Canadian-U.S.-Mexico Tripartite Narcotics Control Talks, and performs an advisory function in the lawmaking activities of international organizations such as UNIDROIT and the Hague Conference on Private International Law.

During 1975, officers of the Bureau and of the Department of Justice held talks with the authorities of the Federal Republic of Germany, Sweden and Italy concerning the conclusion of new extradition treaties. In addition, they assisted in the preparations for the fifth UN Conference on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders, held at Geneva, and took part in the Organization of American States Specialized Conference on Private International Law, held at Panama.

The Passport Office provides passport services to Canadian citizens, issues certificates of identity and UN Refugee Convention travel documents to legally-landed non-Canadians currently residing in Canada, and also provides consular and passport services for citizens of certain newly-independent Commonwealth countries that are not represented in Canada.

After a decline in the issuing of passports in 1974, there was an upsurge in 1975 to 581,419 passports — an increase over 1974 of 7.1 per cent. Of these, 36,612 were issued at posts abroad.

The Passport Office also issued 1,911 certificates of identity and refugee travel documents (United Nations Convention on Refugees 1951) to non-Canadians residing in Canada who were unable to obtain national passports and were eligible for these documents. This was a drop of 7.6 per cent below the 1974 figure of 2,068.

The number of valid passports in current use in December was estimated to be approximately 2,650,000. In addition, there were 11,700 certificates of identity and refugee travel documents.

The postal strike in November again tested the capacity and facilities of the six regional offices (in Edmonton, Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver), which were able to respond efficiently to the crisis. The public is becoming increasingly aware of the regional offices, which are absorbing a larger share of applications. While regional-office activity increased 21 per cent in 1975 (300,206 passports issued), Ottawa activity decreased 6.4 per cent (243,566 passports), and the trend shows signs of continuing. The Toronto office's production alone exceeded 100,000 passports, a record for a calendar year. All regional offices, in addition to their regular activities and response to urgent travel situations, were involved in public information programs throughout the year dealing with passport matters and consular assistance abroad through talks at schools and service clubs and appearances on television.

During the year a computer was installed to handle more efficiently and securely the indexing of passport-holders and of applications being processed.