

## Consular Activity

The Bureau of Consular Services has several main objectives related to the protection of Canadian citizens and interests abroad. These include:

- a) Extending consular protection to Canadian citizens and interests in foreign countries, and providing every assistance possible to Canadians travelling and residing abroad.
- b) Improving the ability to respond to general emergencies which may affect Canadians anywhere in the world.
- c) Developing a series of bilateral agreements and improving the international environment affecting Canadian consular responsibilities abroad.
- d) Conducting and expanding a consular publicity program through various public information channels in Canada and abroad in order to familiarize Canadians with existing and potential problems they may encounter in foreign countries, and make travellers aware of the consular services they may expect from their representatives abroad.

Several consular objectives which are shared with other federal departments (and through them with provincial governments) are the following:

- a) Ensuring that Canadian Government policies on immigrant and non-immigrant entry into Canada are well understood and implemented abroad, and that the international implications of such policies are understood by the Canadian public. This responsibility is shared with the Department of Manpower and Immigration.
- b) Participating in the development of programs of other federal departments, i.e.: the new Citizenship Act of the Department of the Secretary of State; the new Immigration Act of the Department of Manpower and Immigration; and, with the Department of National Health and Welfare, a co-ordinated policy on adoption of foreign children.

The Bureau of Consular Services consists of two divisions: Consular Operations and Consular Policy. Both are

involved, either individually or mutually, in reaching the objectives noted above.

## Consular Operations Division

The primary responsibility of the Consular Operations Division is to respond as quickly and as effectively as possible, within the limits of its capacity under international law and custom, to the needs of Canadian citizens for assistance. In 1974 Canada's posts abroad handled close to a quarter of a million consular inquiries from travelling Canadians. Although the number of serious problems such as illness or arrest and detention was a relatively small percentage of this total, the demands on the consular staff were significantly higher than in 1973. The main contributing factors to this upward trend appear to be Canada's expanding business activity abroad, a more affluent overseas society and the lower cost of overseas travel, a higher number of inexperienced travellers who are particularly hazard-prone, increasingly severe official campaigns in a number of countries against drug abuse and trafficking, and in some cases a higher expectation and reliance by Canadians abroad on the availability of consular assistance.

Nearly 2.1 million Canadian citizens held valid passports in 1974, and it is estimated that approximately 1.6 million travelled abroad during the year. As noted, while only some of the travellers required consular services, the number who do appears to be expanding. Complex consular cases involving imprisonment, death abroad and repatriation of Canadians are time-consuming duties. In 1974 our embassies and consular offices in all parts of the world handled 1,476 cases of arrest and detention, 2,840 cases of financial assistance, 570 cases of illness and hospitalization, 292 cases of death, 54,000 cases of passport and other document problems, and approximately 188,000 cases of general assistance. It should be noted that 62 per cent of the Canadians in jail were there for drug offences. This