

Consular Activities

Although there was an apparent levelling-off in foreign travel by Canadians during 1978, there was a general increase in demand for consular services at 110 Canadian diplomatic posts abroad.

In Ottawa, the Bureau of Consular Services co-ordinated the consular activities of these posts to provide a wide range of assistance to Canadians living or travelling abroad. Its responsibilities included: analysis of consular reports and statistics; development of consular policy; the negotiation of consular conventions and multi-lateral and bilateral agreements; management of consular training and evaluation programs; monitoring of relevant legislative developments; liaison with the travel industry; and provision of advice to the public on questions about consular services. At diplomatic and consular posts, consular work ranged from the issuing of passports, the providing of notarial services and the relief of Canadian travellers who were ill, penniless or in legal difficulties, to emergency evacuations from troubled countries.

Consular Assistance

In 1978, Canadian posts reported over 540,000 cases of consular services, the large majority of which were routine matters involving the issuing of passports and the provision of notarial services, or assistance with citizenship questions. In the more serious categories of consular assistance, there was a slight decrease in the number of Canadians requiring financial help. Canadian posts assisted 2,744 persons (compared to 2,800 in 1977) in obtaining funds from relatives or friends in Canada or provided other forms of emergency relief. The number of Canadians repatriated on a cost-recovery basis increased significantly to 375 cases from a previous average level of 250 persons a year.

Canadian posts also provided assistance and advice to next-of-kin in dealing with the deaths abroad of 417 Canadians. During 1978, the number of Canadians arrested or detained by foreign authorities increased slightly; consular officers assisted 864 Canadians in obtaining legal counsel and in communicating with their families. In addition to ensuring that Canadians had the full benefit of due process of law in the countries concerned, consular officers endeavoured to ensure fair and non-discriminatory treatment of Canadian prisoners and detainees, and maintained regular contact with them. In 1978, 255 persons were detained or imprisoned on drug charges, compared to 275 in 1977; 588 Canadians encountered emergency medical problems abroad last year and required assistance from Canadian posts.

With the outbreak of civil disorder and political unrest in Iran in the late autumn, contingency plans for the protection of Canadians were implemented and led to one of the few full-scale