

parents must be registered with the Registrar of Canadian Citizenship within two years, if they are to have the status of Canadian citizens. Such registrations of births are carried out at Canadian diplomatic and consular posts abroad.

Legal Matters

There are numerous legal problems, also, with which consular officers abroad must deal, particularly such matters as the authentication of legal documents and the protection of the interests of Canadian citizens in an estate opened abroad. The consular officer may be required, when he learns that there are Canadian beneficiaries to an estate opened within his district, to get in touch with the next-of-kin in Canada so that they may assert their claim. He may advise them of lawyers to represent them and in due course may transmit the proceeds of the estate to the Canadian beneficiaries. A Canadian citizen who dies abroad also may have an estate to which next-of-kin in Canada have a claim. If he dies intestate and without known kin, the consular officer may accept the proceeds of the estate and request the Department to locate and notify the heirs or creditors in Canada. Such heirs or creditors are often traced with the assistance of the Canadian Red Cross Society or the city police. According to circumstances, a consular officer may also be obliged to look after the burial arrangements for a Canadian citizen who dies abroad.

Finally, among the many other services rendered by consular officers to Canadian citizens may be mentioned the forwarding of pension cheques to Canadian pensioners residing abroad, assistance to Canadian seamen who have been left behind by their ships, and putting persons who are looking for missing relatives or friends in touch with agencies able to help them.

In general, the consular officer abroad must be a jack-of-all-trades, always willing to lend an ear to the troubles of Canadian citizens, always ready to help them to the limit of his powers, but at the same time always bearing in mind that there are practical limits to the help he can give, as expressed in the rules under which he must operate. These rules indeed are sometimes irksome to Canadian citizens wishing a speedy — and sometimes magical — resolution of their troubles or an immediate fulfilment of their wishes after the manner of the immigrants in Menotti's light opera "The Consul", who were unable to understand why the Consul could not simply admit the immigrants to his country, seeing that the cases were so deserving from the humanitarian point of view. All things considered, the Consul's task is the rewarding but delicate one of reconciling the claims of Canadian citizens in trouble or distress with the rules and regulations of his service. But he is helped by the knowledge that the rules of his service, despite their impersonality, do take humanitarian considerations into account.