

the children involved and, where possible, has helped arrange for their return to Canada in cases where Canadian courts have already ruled on custody. In part because of the acute personal distress caused by such disputes, there has been considerable public interest in the role of the federal and provincial governments. Eight of the ten provinces have adopted model legislation on reciprocal enforcement of provincial custody orders since 1975, and the two remaining provinces are contemplating similar action. Internationally, Canada played a role in the completion, in 1980, of the Convention on the civil aspects of international child abduction at the fourteenth session of The Hague Conference on Private International Law. Canada signed this convention on October 25, 1980 and is in the process of discussing it with the provincial authorities prior to ratification. The main purpose of the convention is to ensure judicial co-operation in achieving the prompt return of the child wrongfully removed from the custodial parent to the country from which he or she was abducted.

Passport services

Demand for passport services declined marginally in 1981, owing in part to economic conditions at home and abroad, fluctuations in foreign exchange rates, and the government's policy of encouraging travel within Canada.

New regional passport offices were opened in 1981 in Windsor, London, Victoria and Fredericton to expand the decentralization of passport services to Canadians. These new offices produced 5.6 per cent of the passports issued by regional passport offices in Canada during the year. There are now 15 regional offices outside Ottawa providing over-the-counter passport services to 68.4 per cent of passport applicants in Canada - a 7.1 per cent increase over the 1980 figure - while assisting with travel and consular-related problems of Canadians in difficulties abroad.

In addition to management of the passport program in Canada, and issuance of passports, the Passport Office in Ottawa continued to provide instruction, training and other support services to staff issuing passports at posts abroad.

In 1981, a total of 632,704 Canadian passports, Certificates of Identity and UN refugee convention travel documents were issued. Of these, 587,158 (93 per cent) were issued in Canada and 45,546 (7 per cent) were issued at posts. These figures compare with the 1980 figures of 616,581 issued in Canada and 44,531 at posts and indicate a decrease of 4.8 per cent in passports issued in Canada and a 2.3 per cent increase in those issued at posts abroad.

Under government refugee programs, special travel documents were required and in the year under review 3,396 Certificates of Identity and 272 refugee travel documents were issued to entitled individuals. This represents a further 59.3 per cent increase from the already substantial 1980 volume of Certificates of Identity and a decrease in the number of refugee travel documents issued.