

The Passport Office moved quickly to carry out the Commission's recommendations to tighten up the issuing of passports. The new regulations were effective in reducing abuse of the system but they also created a more complicated application process. Many people had difficulty understanding the new application requirements and, because no Passport Office representatives were available locally, they turned to their Members of Parliament for help in answering the questions. This quickly added to growing public pressure to establish local offices. In response, the Passport Office management set up three regional offices. They were located in the three largest cities in the country — Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver.



Left to right: Bernice Goulding, Susan Kelly, Helena Silwanowicz, Jean-Paul Magazzinich
Toronto Office



Lucy Ramos, Jinous Ghalanoi, Examiners
Vancouver Office

The regional offices were originally intended to assist passport applicants having difficulty completing the application form. They were to issue passports only in emergency cases. Very quickly, however, the regional offices established themselves as important links for the travelling public. Shortly after the commencement of operations, the regional offices began issuing passports on-site. In its first year of operation, the Montreal office issued approximately 48,000 passports, the Toronto office approximately 45,000 and Vancouver approximately 25,000.

The opening of regional offices benefited both the public and the Government. Passport Office clients were given personalized service, resulting in fewer errors and faster processing time. Applicants' personal appearance enhanced the security of the Canadian travel document and reduced time and costs of passport production. The overwhelming success of the first three regional offices eventually led to offices being opened across Canada. Today the Passport Office operates 31 points of service, including 28 regional issuing offices. The latter accounts for the issuance of over 85 per cent of all passports annually.

In 1995, the three regional offices celebrated 25 years of service to the Canadian public. As we look to the next 25 years, the Passport Office will continue to strive for excellence in serving the people of Canada. To better meet the needs of Canadian travellers, the Passport Office is modernizing the issuing process of Canadian travel documents.

The international reputation of the Canadian passport is maintained through the integrity not only of the passport book itself but also of the issuing process. Crucial to the integrity of the issuing process is the effectiveness and efficiency of the regional offices. The success of the Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver offices over the last 25 years attests to the excellent international reputation of Canadian travel documents.