

on Passport Office employees anticipated through the introduction of new technology. Issues to be addressed include retraining, staffing, classification, official languages strategy, employment equity and employee assistance provisions during the period of transition.

The past year saw continued implementation of the five-year audit plan drawn up in 1992-93 to ensure effective internal controls and administrative processes. This year's audit encompassed evaluations of activities in regional offices and as well as in corporate divisions.

The Security and Foreign Operations Division was restructured to enable it to better support technological change in Passport Office operations. The division is now called Security, Policy and Entitlement and includes an advisory group on secure documents. This group will review the process of manufacturing Canadian passports and will be involved in developing the next generation of products.

The Passport Office set out to develop and implement new automated systems to improve the working life of employees, the quality of service and the security of our systems. Achievements over the year included the introduction of Windows and PerfectOffice software throughout the organization.

Work continued apace on the Technology Enhancement Plan launched in 1993 to usher in a new era of travel document production and services based on state-of-the-art information technology. The plan encompasses four phases:

- 1 definition of project and user requirements
- 2 research and development of alternative solutions
- 3 pilot installation and evaluation
- 4 full operational implementation.

The first two phases were completed by the end of fiscal year 1994-95. Phase III, accomplished during

1995-96, included identifying the final architecture requirements and equipment specifications for the various new systems, testing systems and drafting a strategy for full implementation.

A major objective for the year was to improve quality of service through the following initiatives:

1) The Passport Office studied the feasibility of the use of debit and credit cards instead of cash for services provided to the public. The findings were positive and led to the next step—a plan to implement such cards in pilot sites.

2) The Passport Office investigated ways to improve efficiency through greater sharing of resources and coordination of activities among other government departments involved in issuing identity or travel documents. The CANPASS pilot at Vancouver International Airport is a good demonstration of three federal departments/agencies working together to improve service to the public.

3) Finally, the Office continued to work and support the training of consular staff involved in passport production.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

To measure its success, the Passport Office uses the following indicators of efficiency: volume, productivity, revenue and expenditures.

VOLUME

In 1995-96, the Passport Office issued a total of 1,505,417 travel documents, a gain of 7.8 per cent over last year and the third consecutive annual increase of more than 5 per cent.

This performance was 14.21 per cent higher than forecast. In fact, the 1995-96 Business Plan had predicted a 5.6 per cent decline because of a new fee for consular services—it was expected to have a dampening effect on passport demand. So far, the opposite appears to have happened. Many people rushed to obtain travel documents before the rumoured new fee could be implemented.