

Other Responsibilities

The second broad classification of consular responsibilities abroad is the performance of duties in the general public interest and the extension of particular services to individual Canadian citizens.

Among the duties in the general public interest, such matters as trade and tourist promotion and the general representational and information responsibilities of consular officers are of special importance. Indeed, one of the primary duties of consular officers abroad, whether they are members of the Department of External Affairs or of the Department of Trade and Commerce, is to promote the expansion of Canada's export trade and to foster good commercial relations with foreign countries. The work done in the promotion of tourism is also of great benefit because it is an important source of foreign exchange for Canada, and particularly of hard currency. The representational duties of consular officers involve their attending various functions within their consular district and thereby making Canada better known. Information work too is an important part of the duties of a consular officer. By public speeches to various clubs and associations, by the showing of films, and by various other means, it is a consular officer's responsibility to make Canada well known in his consular district, to make it in addition well liked, and to present the Canadian viewpoint on matters affecting the relations between Canada and the country concerned.

Services to Canadian Citizens

Services to individual Canadian citizens involve safeguarding their rights and interests. One of the most important of the services rendered to Canadian citizens is their protection in time of emergency, riot or insurrection, in the event of their arrest for some offence, or in the event they fall into general distress or difficulty. For the purpose of such protection, particularly in time of emergency or war, Canadian citizens planning to remain in a foreign country (other than the United States) for more than three months are advised to register at a Canadian diplomatic or consular post. They are asked to complete a registration card giving their vital statistics and citizenship, whether they are also citizens of any other country besides Canada, and the names and addresses of the members of their family and their close relatives. Registration of Canadian citizens by consular officers gives the Government the information necessary to enable it to advise and protect Canadian citizens in any emergency that may arise in the country concerned, or internationally. Occasions also arise when Canadian citizens are arrested abroad for a criminal offence and appeal to Canadian posts for advice, assistance and sometimes protection. In such cases, the consular officer abroad must decide, in consultation with the Department at Ottawa if necessary, whether there is evidence of discrimination or denial of justice such as would warrant Governmental intervention. If formal representations are not considered justified, other informal measures are sometimes taken to help the petitioner. The consular officer may help the person accused to obtain proper legal aid, especially when he does not have money to pay for it; if he has been sentenced already, the consular officer may ascertain whether and when he will be eligible for parole and deportation; and eventually the consular officer may assist with arrangements for release of the prisoner and his transportation to Canada. In the same way, aid of