

But consular and immigration work is more than just volume. While dealing with sometimes frightened, often frustrated and occasionally angry clients, officers must be able to think quickly, act decisively and make decisions which are legally defensible. Immigration work is a complex job for which immigration officers spend six weeks in the classroom alone learning legislation, procedures and conducting practice interviews. They are then sent to immigration offices across Canada and visa offices around the world to reinforce the practical application of all that classroom time. All this before they venture overseas on their first formal posting.

Immigration and consular staff have a varied workload. Immigration officers are responsible for reporting on Social Affairs issues, issues like employment, citizenship, customs, passport or immigration legislation in the host country, and, in many missions, refugee affairs. In addition, you will see your immigration colleagues at international airports or at the local police station. Some of the work they are responsible for is enforcement and control and this means being up on the latest techniques for detecting fraudulent passports and travel documents. This is another area in which they receive training from the RCMP and other enforcement agencies.

Consular officers also have a variety of challenges. These range from handling the deaths of Canadians abroad, to medical evacuations, to arrests and detentions. Did you know that our biggest consular office is London with only 1 Canada-based officer, 1 locally-engaged program officer and 8 locally-engaged staff members? This office last year issued over 42,000 passports, handled over 13,094 citizenship applications, 126 Canadians incarcerated and 65 deaths. I wonder what they do in their spare time?

The Corporate Review decision to create a new Branch by integrating Consular and Immigration Affairs with the Passport Office brings us more in line with the way other countries do things. At the same time, it makes the way we do things overseas more efficient. Making integration workable takes time, but here are some of the developments taking place in the O Branch:

Implementation updates

- With the creation of the O Branch on September 4, 1990, 435 employees including those from 21 Regional Passport Offices from Fredericton to Victoria are now reporting to the new Branch.
- By the end of March we will have integrated Immigration and Consular programmes in 62 of our 105 missions abroad. While many missions have already been amalgamated for years, the Corporate Review decision brings the two programmes together around the world. The remaining missions will integrate as soon as physical location and resources permit. Decisions on timetables for mission integration will be communicated to each mission individually.
- For those immigration officers abroad who have been concerned that they will be expected to take on additional work without getting the resources to do so, you can take heart in knowing that there will be a transfer of approximately 24 dedicated consular person-years from the Political/Economic to the Social Affairs stream effective April 1, 1991. Did you also know that a significant number of Political/Economic officers have indicated their interest in transferring into the Social Affairs stream on a permanent basis?
- Even though Immigration and Consular work will be integrated, there are many, many employees out there who have no experience in consular work. That's where the new emphasis on training comes in. In support of the integration process, the Program Management Board has approved funding of \$ 130,000 for consular training this FY and \$ 300,000 for FY 91/92. Senior management's commitment to improved and increased training continues to be a priority when resource decisions are made.

- Thanks to the hard work of the staff in the Immigration Management Services Division, Training and Development Section (OSMT), a wide range of consular training from basic introductory to refresher to intensive courses are now available. OSMT is hoping to provide training to over 400 staff annually as opposed to the less than 100 annually now. For those of you unable to come to Headquarters for training during or between postings, Consular Policy Division (OSC) staff are coming to you. Some staff abroad have already received consular training on the spot from the OSC Travelling Band.
 - Training is a great idea, but what about those missions that just need more ROOM? Funding will also be available in the new fiscal year to missions which have indicated that they will need to renovate or expand their facilities in order to effectively integrate their Consular and Immigration services. As these kinds of projects take time, not all missions can be taken care of immediately, but over the next few years the working conditions for overseas staff should improve.
 - Programmes like immigration and consular, because of the volume of cases they deal with, can certainly benefit from improvements in technology. In order to take advantage of the opportunities provided by Consular/Immigration integration, an EDP consultant has been engaged to review the requirements of the existing Consular data base, to revise the system and to bring it in line with the Computer Assisted Immigration Program system which is now in 13 missions abroad but will be available globally within four years.
 - One of the common complaints heard from consular staff is that travelling Canadians don't seem to have any idea what Embassy officials can and more importantly, CAN'T do for them. Yes, we can try to ensure that a Canadian receives treatment by local courts equal to the standards applied to nationals of that country and yes, we can ensure access to legal representation and make regular visits if asked to do so. But we CANNOT intervene in civil legal cases and we CANNOT provide legal advice. So for those travelling Canadians that don't "just say no", often all we can do is visit them in jail.
- In order to get the CAN/CANNOT message across to the travel industry and the travelling Canadian public, a Consular Awareness campaign has been launched with the production in December of an anti-drug video which is now available to the media and video outlets.
- In January a national media campaign will commence with OSC staff using Regional Passport Offices throughout Canada as bases to conduct appearances on local telephone and television programs to raise the profile of consular services abroad (a star is born perhaps?). By the end of this fiscal year, we hope to have established a toll-free line for consular enquiries, produced a quarterly bulletin on consular statistics and activities for the media and the travel industry, and produced a video clip for in-flight use by Canadian airlines (among other things).
 - You may all remember that one of the themes of Corporate Review was studying how we could transfer a higher proportion of the costs of the services we deliver to the users of those services. Both immigration and consular services abroad are expensive and moves are underway to increase our fees for service in both these programs.
 - On the immigration side, missions have been provided recently with instructions and incremental funds to purchase the equipment they will need, such as cash registers, to implement these initiatives.
 - The most important aspect of the consular and immigration programmes is that they show the "human face" of the Department abroad. Quality of service, the personalized approach, is as important as efficiency and it is in many ways the standard by which our representation abroad is judged. For this reason, a Quality of Service Working Group has been formed to look at