

country of Canadian parents, and who are therefore dual nationals, are liable under United States law to register for universal military service immediately upon attaining the age of 18, whether or not they are present in that country. Where such dual United States-Canadian citizens neglect to comply with such procedure, they are liable to prosecution upon re-entering the United States. The same requirement for registration at age 18 and liability to prosecution for non-compliance apply to all Canadian male children who are permanent residents of the U.S.A.

There are, of course, also other difficulties that can befall Canadians travelling or living abroad, which do not involve infractions of local laws and regulations but are no less distressing. Deaths and illnesses occur while Canadians are abroad, they become injured, they lose money or passports or are victims of robberies. Because of international conflict or local tensions, they may require urgent assistance and possibly evacuation from the area. In such cases, Canadian representatives abroad are prepared to assist whenever possible, notifying next-of-kin, arranging for medical attention, providing emergency financial assistance, emergency evacuation, and so on. From time to time, misunderstandings arise or a mistake is made, but in the vast majority of cases these situations have happy endings, and I receive many letters testifying to this. During the past year, our embassies and consulates abroad provided 204,600 consular services to Canadians in difficulties for one reason or another who asked for assistance; in only an exceedingly small percentage of these cases was there any complaint on the part of the person concerned or the next-of-kin. Unfortunately, as I pointed out earlier, it is these few instances that come to public attention and criticism. While I welcome such criticism if it concerns errors of omission or commission on our part, I think it is unfair if it relates to these few situations beyond our control or if it ignores the fact that such situations represent only a very small proportion of the many, many consular cases that are resolved quietly and successfully. The Government and my Department attach very great importance to the protection of Canadian interests abroad and to the quality of assistance available to Canadians travelling or residing abroad, and we shall continue to exert our best efforts to maintain and improve the excellent consular service they already enjoy.

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