

The Royal Commission on Security in 1969 recommended much more stringent application requirements. It also supported plans to open regional passport offices across Canada for better service to the public. Three regional offices opened in 1970, in Montréal, Toronto and Vancouver, to accept and process applications submitted in person. There are now 28 offices across Canada which process more than 80 percent of the million and a quarter Canadian passports issued each year.

Machine-readable passports, introduced in Canada in 1985, followed the standard set by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). The new format was smaller, and the bearer's personal information, photograph and passport details were laminated to prevent tampering. In the special machine-readable zone, passport details were repeated in a format that could be scanned at checkpoints.

In 1991, additional security features were built into the Canadian passport and more stringent processing requirements were put in place. By 1993, a new style passport was introduced with unique features to prevent replication or alteration.

As a regular participant at ICAO conferences, Canada leads in technological developments in passport design and processing systems with the goal of protecting the integrity of the travel document and of remaining current with international security technology.

*I*NTO THE FUTURE

The Passport Office has embarked on an even more ambitious program to modernize its operations – the Technology Enhancement Project (TEP).

The project includes: a new passport design with the bearer's photo scanned into the booklet, more accurate data and