



Consular Services

Canadians are travelling more year after year and are venturing to farther and riskier regions of the world. Thus it is not surprising that the numbers of those who find themselves in delicate or dangerous situations are increasing, along with the number who are turning for help to the 144 Canadian diplomatic and consular missions around the world.

Through its Consular Program, the Department provides assistance and protection to Canadians in distress abroad. In 1987, Canadian missions abroad extended assistance to Canadian citizens on 827 860 occasions. Among the services provided were issuing passports; assisting in the transfer of funds or the return to Canada of destitute or incapacitated Canadians; ensuring that Canadians detained or imprisoned abroad were treated fairly under the laws and customs of the host countries; helping detainees to communicate with their families and friends in Canada and, in some cases, assisting in their transfer to Canadian prisons (in accordance with Canada's bilateral treaties on the transfer of offenders with the United States, Mexico, Peru, Bolivia and France, or under the European Convention on the transfer of Sentenced Persons, to which Canada is now party, along with Cyprus, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Britain, the Netherlands, Austria, Denmark, Finland, Luxembourg, Sweden and Switzerland, among others).

The missions abroad also provided information on citizenship, provided advice or assisted Canadians in distress as a result of a serious illness, an accident, death, theft, litigation over the custody or disappearance of a child, etc.

Major crises of 1987, such as earthquakes in El Salvador, Ecuador and the United States and the crises in the Philippines, Haiti and Fiji, placed heavy demands on consular services overseas and at headquarters. Such events always involve physical danger and emotional distress to large numbers of Canadians, and the Department must intervene rapidly in order to determine whether friends, parents or relatives are involved.

The Department has developed emergency procedures to determine where Canadians abroad are living, in order to come to their assistance when they are facing crisis situations. Registration procedures for Canadians are constantly being revised and computerized, thus making it possible to contact them in an orderly and rapid manner.

In the face of increased demands on its consular services, the Department continued to give a high priority to consular training. During 1987, courses were given to 83 employees posted abroad and in Canada. Through special presentations, case studies, group discussions and simulation exercises,

departmental personnel were familiarized with consular policy and its application.

Another service provided by the Department is a public awareness program, the purpose of which is to inform Canadians of the potential problems of travelling abroad and of the consular services available at Canadian missions. This type of information is contained in the booklet entitled *Bon voyage, but....* About one million copies of the booklet, which is revised and updated annually, are distributed each year to travellers at passport offices and travel agencies.

The Department also provides, on request, information about the advisability of travelling to specific countries or regions. A handbook on the services provided to Canadians detained or imprisoned abroad was also published, along with a brochure and a poster containing warnings about drugs. Talks by departmental officers were given on radio, and articles were published and interviews given to journalists, in order to keep the public better informed about problems that might arise while travelling abroad.

Table 15
SELECTED CONSULAR STATISTICS

Canadians registered abroad with Canadian consular or diplomatic missions	54 856
Canadians residing abroad, including dual nationals (estimated number)	3 million
Passports (1987/88 fiscal year)	
Valid passports in circulation	4 823 000
Total issued in Canada	995 390
Issued by missions abroad	65 000
Increase in total passports issued by missions abroad over the previous year	8.3 per cent
Travel (Calendar year 1987)	
Total visits abroad	49 193 160
United States (of which 12 244 929 Canadians stayed at least one night)	44 693 160
Countries other than the United States	4 500 000