

of passport possession and use, and to prevent fraud. Despite the many security features now built in to passports in accordance with ICAO standards and special safeguards used by each country, there nevertheless have been serious concerns again raised recently regarding the growth of the illicit trade in fraudulent passport applications and possession¹. These developments can be expected to increase focus on the passport and Passport Office operations, subjects that will be dealt with further in this report.

2.2 Primary Products and Services

The primary function of the Passport Office involves the issuance of a number of official travel documents, including regular (blue) passports, special (green) and diplomatic (red) passports, Certificates of Identity and Refugee Travel Documents.

Passports are issued to Canadian citizens who can demonstrate that they meet the qualifications by submitting applications at any of a number of offices within Canada or at missions abroad. The current application system is based very much on the principle of self recognizance to avoid fraudulent application, since although guarantors are required along with "official records" of birth certificates, etc, it is not possible presently to verify each application with the original source reference.

Applications for passports may be made by mail or in person both in the National Capital Region (NCR) or at various regional Offices. The main NCR office is in Hull, Quebec, while regional offices are located in Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal with local offices at approximately 23 locations across Canada. These regional and local offices provide a walk-in service for applicants. Applications received via mail or from the House of Commons are processed in the NCR.

The Passport Office has successfully concentrated on processing the majority of walk-in applications within 5 working days, and mailed-in applications within 14 days. External Affairs provides a passport replacement service through the facilities

¹ pg 1, *The Gazette*, September 18, 1991