

B. IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEES

The conduct of Canada's immigration program abroad has been the responsibility of the Department since 1981. During the past year, the trend toward higher visa issuance continued with 186,788 immigrant visas being issued, an increase of 18.2 per cent over the previous year.

In addition, Canada experienced the largest volume of visitors, students and temporary workers since the turn of the century, with 750,000 persons processed in 1989. This was an increase of more than 200,000 in one year. To accommodate this rise in issuance of visitor and other types of visas, the Department hired 60 new Foreign Service Officers.

With an evolving program such as immigration, ongoing career development training is essential. To this end, training in 1989/90 placed an increased emphasis on litigation and legal issues. In addition to training courses on refugee and entrepreneur issues, a new training program in Immigration Control was developed for officers involved in the increasingly important control function abroad.

During the year, Canada took a leading role in the International Conference for Indochinese Refugees. Canada agreed to accept 16,000 Indochinese over three years, contributing to a comprehensive plan of action which will bring the alarming refugee situation in Indochina to a satisfactory conclusion.

In 1989/90, Canada met target levels for government-sponsored refugees for the fifth consecutive year. With the arrival of 13,462 government-sponsored refugees and another 21,212 privately sponsored arrivals, the refugee component of the annual immigration level was comfortably met.

To control the flow of illegal migrants, ten new Immigration Control Officers were placed at strategic transit points abroad.

In the year under review, the volume of passports issued in Canada was 1,122,989, a 9 per cent increase over the previous year. At present, there are over 5.3 million passports in circulation.