

facilities for the transmission of items such as personal mail and parcels. The subject is governed by the relevant provisions of the *Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations*, the departmental Manual of Security and more specific guidelines and instructions. Any other use of these costly services constitutes an abuse of personal mailing privileges which are determined as fairly as possible on the basis of considerations such as security and need. Instances of abuse to avoid customs examination or to transmit contraband will continue to be brought to the attention of customs and police officials and such offences, on conviction, could result in fines and imprisonment. It should be noted that use of these facilities as a free freight service to ship personnel documents and possessions without a good reason or proper authority is also to be regarded as abuse. Any question regarding use of the diplomatic bag and related facilities should be addressed to Mail Management Section of Records Management Division, Department of External Affairs. Abuses and attempts to circumvent relevant instructions will be brought to the attention of Heads of Post, responsible officials in the department concerned and, when necessary, the Customs and Excise and RCMP.

DISPOSAL OF PERSONALLY OWNED GOODS

Although conventions governing privileges and immunities make no specific reference to the right to dispose of items imported or purchased free from taxes, most countries, as a courtesy, permit the sale of such goods at the termination of postings or after a specified period of ownership. This privilege is primarily designed to permit persons to sell personal possessions that are unlikely to be of use to them on their next assignment.

It is the employee's responsibility, in the first instance, to observe closely any local laws that might control the sale of goods purchased under privilege and, in situations where host governments levy taxes on the sale of such goods, to ensure that any taxes are fully paid before departure from the post. It will, of course, be the responsibility of the Head of Post to monitor such activity.