

Many of these travellers have come to know their way about the world, and especially their way about the many administrative and legal requirements of foreign travel. At the same time, there are a great many young people and others who, every year, set out to discover for themselves the world they live in. This is a very important phenomenon. I have often spoken about Canadian dependence on world trade and on our knowledge of events and changing circumstances in other countries. These very often have direct consequences for our own well-being and security. I think it natural, therefore, for Canadians to want to see something of this world, every corner of which becomes ever more accessible through the development of newer and more rapid forms of transportation.

Canada's businessmen also travel abroad in ever greater numbers, to seek and develop new markets and to strengthen and diversify traditional ones. It is one of the most fundamental jobs of Canada's representatives abroad to protect the interests of Canadian citizens in foreign countries and to assist them in their dealings with the commercial, the sporting, the academic, the cultural communities and other interests, of other countries.

The need to protect foreign travellers and foreign communities established in other countries has been recognized since earliest times. The Greeks and other Eastern Mediterranean peoples developed in the centuries before Christ a system which is not unlike modern consular representation. These early consuls were to a greater or a lesser degree the focal point of the foreign communities in other countries. They settled disputes, they witnessed contracts, they performed a wide range of activities which we would today consider as consular legal assistance. In view of the nature of the foreign communities which they served, their orientation was largely commercial, with the law of contracts playing an important part.

This consular function was quite apart from the diplomatic role of Ambassadors, who represented the Head of one state directly in the capital of another. In recent times the diplomatic and consular functions have come together somewhat, although differences remain. But their origins are essentially the same. Their functions sprang from the basic need of different communities and cultures to enter into a dialogue with one another. Early writers on diplomatic and consular practice maintained that the foreign envoy was the direct descendant of the angels, the original messengers between heaven and earth. I am sure my officials console themselves with that thought in the more difficult and discouraging moments of their careers.

My purpose is not to give you a history lesson, but, rather, to describe conditions today. The many Canadians who travel abroad have every reason to expect good service from Canadian representatives abroad. At the same time it is important that there is an understanding of the limits of what our representatives can do.

In an earlier era of strong-willed imperial powers, these would frequently back up their consular and other demands by a show of force -- by gunboat diplomacy. But in the world of today, these tactics are really no longer acceptable.