

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, announced today that a Regional Passport Office will be opened in Winnipeg in 1973. While the precise date of the opening has not yet been set, it is expected that the office will be functioning before the busy summer season.

The intention to open an office in Winnipeg extends to the province of Manitoba the Regional Passport Office concept, which is designed to provide faster, more convenient and more personalized service to the Canadian travelling public.

With the rather remarkable growth in international travel in recent years, the demand for passport services has increased at a rate of 10% per annum. In 1961, some 160,000 passports were issued and it is expected that just short of 500,000 will be produced this year. This means that passport facilities will have been provided to one in every fifty Canadians this year and at the end of 1972 it is estimated that two million passports will be in circulation.

To respond to this growing and highly seasonal demand for services, Regional Offices were opened in 1970 in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver, and in Halifax and Edmonton in 1972. They have been an unqualified success. The opening of the office in Winnipeg will provide citizens of that city and the surrounding area with passport facilities similar to those enjoyed by the residents of other major cities in Canada.

The Passport Office points out that applicants should apply for their passports well in advance of departure dates. Before mailing their applications to the Passport Office, Ottawa, they should check their application carefully to ensure that there is no delay due to errors or omissions. Among the most common errors which cause delays are lack of evidence of citizenship, missed questions, unqualified guarantors, the wrong kind of photographs and failure to enclose the required \$10.00 passport fee. Errors of this kind occur in more than a third of all the applications received by the Passport Office.