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OPENING OF REGIONAL PASSPORT OFFICES

Secretary of State for External Affairs Don Jamieson announced today that five new regional passport offices will be opened at Calgary, Saskatoon, Hamilton, Ont., Quebec City and St. John's.

The extension of personalized passport service to these five additional cities with a combined population of approximately 2,000,000, brings to twelve the number of regional passport offices across the country. It is estimated that the five new offices will provide over-the-counter service to 70,000 Canadian travellers during their first year of operation. This is in line with the government's policy of emphasizing increased and improved sensitivity and responsiveness to the Canadian public.

"Regional offices provide fast and personalized counselling and passport issuing service, independent of interruptions in transport or postal services, and also make available emergency passport service and improved security," Mr. Jamieson said.

Applications presented at the counter at regional passport offices are normally processed and the passport issued within seventy-two hours. In addition, the regional offices can give emergency service to Canadians who must travel on short notice due to unforeseen circumstances, assist applicants in difficult cases and provide general advice on passport requirements and related travel problems.