

Regional Passport Offices. In preliminary discussions, weighing the factors outlined, three options have emerged for the role of the branch offices.

Option 1

THE BRANCH PASSPORT OFFICES WILL PROCESS ONLY URGENT APPLICATIONS FOR PASSPORTS; ALL OTHERS PRESENTED WILL BE PROCESSED AT HEAD-QUARTERS AND PASSPORTS MAILED FROM OTTAWA.

Implications

a) Although a relatively small examining and processing staff would be required, administrative support staff would be necessary to transfer applications to Ottawa and field inquiries from applicants

b) It would be essential to establish effective criteria for the separation of genuine urgent from non-urgent cases. Where these criteria are not met, application for locally processing should be refused. Unless such criteria are applied consistently, notwithstanding public pressure, they will become valueless, and the branch will find itself being forced to issue passports on request. It might prove difficult for the Department to maintain such standards in the face of public pressure.

c) A possible method of discouraging the misuse of "urgent" is to establish a deterrent fee similar to the "walk through fee" charged by the U.S. Passport Office. In this way, applicants could be told that Branch offices can only deal with urgent applications that are accompanied by the supplementary fee for emergency service. This may not be politically feasible because of the recent doubling of the fee for passport services but nevertheless necessary to control the requests for priority service.

d) Less expensive passport writing equipment could be utilized.