

PASSPORT SERVICES

Canadian citizens living in Canada and in countries abroad look for the co-ordination of their passport and visa requirements to the *Passport Office*. In addition to ordinary passports, the Passport Office issues special and diplomatic passports to members of government departments and agencies travelling on official business and performs visa services for officials as required. The Office also issues certificates of identity to stateless persons. In addition, on June 4, 1969, Canada acceded to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, to the 1965 Protocol to that Convention, and to the 1957 Hague Agreement on Refugee Seamen. These instruments impose an obligation on Canada to issue distinctive travel documents to "Convention refugees", and the Passport Office began issuing such documents in 1970. The Office also performs passport and visa services on behalf of certain Commonwealth countries that have not yet established resident missions in Ottawa.

Policy

There were no major changes in policy in 1971 governing passport requirements. However, a number of studies are under way aimed at bringing passport requirements further into line with the constantly accelerating speed of travel and more mechanized office procedures.

Organization and Personnel

Following the establishment of a new organizational structure in harmony with the current requirements of the Passport Office, most positions thus established were classified and filled in 1971.

Operations

The volume of passports issued during 1971 increased by approximately 5.5 per cent over last year. The seasonal pattern of passport activity changed somewhat from previous years. While the first six months of the year has generally been the peak period, the first six months of 1971 showed a decrease of 2.5 per cent over the corresponding period of 1970.

The volume during this period represented 63.5 per cent of the total annual volume. However, to the end of August, there was an increase of .6 per cent over the first eight months of 1970.

Regional Offices

The regional passport offices opened in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver early in 1970 have continued to provide excellent service to persons living in