

Adjournment Debate

place where the Liberal government was very liberal with the taxpayers' money. I am informed that the Lester B. Pearson building cost about \$40 million. Of course it was not built for the sole purpose of issuing passports. Therefore the passport office should be left to perform its duties without increasing fees.

Getting back to increased costs, if costs have increased they must have been included in this year's estimates. A further increase in the fees to citizens requiring passports is a dual levy or double taxation. The taxpayers of Canada have paid increased costs, and now those requiring passports are not only paying their share of increased costs in the budget but a 20 per cent increase in fees for passports as well. How reckless can the government get with other people's money?

There is another point I must make too. This week we are currently debating Bill C-20, the citizenship bill. Bill C-20 is not a good bill. It is liberalizing our immigration policy in many ways to would-be immigrants to this country, making it easier to obtain citizenship at a time when this legislation would not be good for the economic and social well being of our troubled country. The point I make is one that shows the inconsistencies of Liberal policy. This current citizenship legislation favours the immigrant, but the policies of the government in increasing the cost of passports penalizes the full-fledged Canadian citizen, whether he be a citizen by birth or by immigration, to the extent of 20 per cent in additional costs, grossly exceeding the guidelines laid down by the recent controls.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, the majority of Canadians all across our country today are asking who is in control. In today's *Ottawa Journal* we see the headline: "Canadians in favor of Controls—Survey". It states that support for controls is growing, along with discontent. If we are to have control of retail consumer prices and control of the price of services, we must have control rigidly practised in government, yes, right down to the price of passports.

Another point, Mr. Speaker, is that each year there is a greater ratio of our passports issued to students travelling in groups, through schools and universities, on tours of other countries. This is the youth segment of our society, least able to afford increased fees for government documents. But at the same time they are the segment most in need of building their experiences and developing their education. Therefore why penalize them another 20 per cent increase in the cost of their passports?

This is a timely topic tonight. This question has exposed the government's hypocrisy and duplicity. The government is saying to the people who administer the controls, "We'll tell you what to do, and what you can or cannot do, but we, the government, will do what we like".

Well, Mr. Speaker, the government will not get away with this arrogant and cavalier policy. Controls can be made to work, and the first place the government should start is right here in Ottawa. I say to the Prime Minister and whoever is answering for him and/or the Department of External Affairs tonight on this question—cut out your contempt for your guidelines. Let us start by holding the price of passports issued to Canadian citizens at the present satisfactory price of \$10, and show the Canadian people that the government can practise what it preaches in its doctrine of monetary restraints.

[Mr. Alkenbrack.]

Miss Monique Bégin (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I have a certain difficulty in understanding the line of reasoning in the speech made by the honourable gentleman. He spoke at the same time of the Taj Mahal and the arrogance of the policy in Bill C-20. Let me put the honourable member straight in respect of Bill C-20 first of all. It is a good bill, and if I had been the minister responsible I venture to say I would have submitted to the House a reduction to two years from five years for the obtaining of citizenship.

Returning to the problem raised concerning the increased cost of passports may I say that the passport office is a non-profit agency operating on a revolving fund basis, and required to meeting operating expenses from the revenue generated from passport fees. When it became evident early this year that current passport fees would not be sufficient to cover future operating costs beginning with 1975-76—and I do not think I need go into the detail for the honourable gentleman—the passport office sought and received Treasury Board authority to increase the fee to \$15 beginning January 1, 1976.

The objective was to develop a fee structure that would recover costs averaged over at least five years to avoid annual or more regular increases that bring substantial new fee introductory costs, estimated at \$140,000, and delays and service inconvenience to the public.

When the fee was last increased in 1969 a large majority of the public were either not aware of or ignored the new price and submitted applications with the old fee. This necessitated correspondence with applicants, which in turn delayed passport issuance and created serious public inconvenience to the point that normal passport service was seriously disrupted for a period of months. I do not think my colleague opposite would like to see that happen again. To avoid a recurrence of this situation the objective is to stabilize the fee for as long a period of time as possible and to advertise extensively any changes.

When the anti-inflation guidelines were announced by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Macdonald) on October 14, 1975, it was agreed to scale the fee change down to \$12 beginning March 1, 1976, to conform with the government's policy, notwithstanding the additional costs and public inconvenience that would be created unfortunately by having to increase the fee again in less than two years. I think that is enough to say, Mr. Speaker.

● (2210)

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS—SUGGESTED RELOCATION OF PROPOSED PIGGYBACK TERMINAL IN WINNIPEG

Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour once again to rise to debate with the parliamentary secretary, the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Goodale), who always promises he will check into my queries and provide an answer, but from whom so far I have never received any answers.

On December 3 I put a question with regard to the CNR locating a piggyback terminal on Wilkes Avenue in south west Winnipeg. This subject has been debated at length at the municipal level for over a year, and the local Community committee and residents are thoroughly opposed to a