

24 MAY 67

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## PASSPORTS 250

WASHINGTON (AP)--THE U.S. PASSPORT OFFICE APPEALED TODAY FOR CHANGES IN THE LAW TO HELP IT COPE WITH A SKYROCKETING NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS FROM CITIZENS WANTING TO TRAVEL ABROAD.

FRANCES G. KNIGHT, DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE, TOLD THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE "THERE IS NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT TO GET READY FOR WHAT CAN BE DESCRIBED AS NOTHING LESS THAN A TRAVEL EXPLOSION."

THE COMMITTEE IS CONSIDERING A BILL TO:

--PROVIDE FOR A FIVE-YEAR VALIDITY PERIOD FOR ALL PASSPORTS, REPLACING THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF ISSUING A THREE-YEAR DOCUMENT WITH A PROVISION FOR A TWO-YEAR RENEWAL.

--PERMIT A PERSON WHO HAS ONCE BEEN ISSUED A PASSPORT TO OBTAIN A NEW ONE BY MAIL, ELIMINATING A REQUIREMENT THAT THE APPLICANT APPEAR BEFORE A PASSPORT AGENT OR COURT CLERK TO SWEAR TO THE TRUTH OF STATEMENTS MADE IN SEEKING THE NEW DOCUMENT.

MISS KNIGHT SAID HER OFFICE HAD ISSUED 305,871 PASSPORTS IN 1950 AND EXPECTED THE NUMBER TO REACH 1,900,000 IN THE 1967-68 FISCAL YEAR.

ON APRIL 10, SHE SAID, THE OFFICE RECEIVED A ONE-DAY RECORD OF 12,409 APPLICATIONS.

"WE MUST FIND WAYS AND MEANS OF ISSUING PASSPORTS PROMPTLY AND ELIMINATING, INsofar AS POSSIBLE THE PHYSICAL LOGJAM WE ARE PRESENTLY EXPERIENCING," SHE SAID.

EB109

IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS FROM SEN. BOURKE B. HICKENLOOPER, R-IOWA, RANKING MINORITY MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE, MISS KNIGHT SAID DECISIONS ON ISSUING PASSPORTS FOR TRAVEL IN NORTH VIETNAM, RED CHINA AND CUBA WERE MADE AT THE POLICY LEVELS OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND HER OFFICE WAS ADVISED OF WHAT COURSE TO TAKE.

SHE SAID THAT MANY APPLICATIONS FOR PERMISSION FOR TRAVEL IN NORTH VIETNAM AND RED CHINA CAME FROM NEWSMEN.

EVEN IF A U.S. PASSPORT WERE ISSUED, SHE COMMENTED, THERE STILL REMAINS THE PROBLEM OF OBTAINING PERMISSION FROM THOSE COUNTRIES TO ENTER.

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