

NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL OF CANADA
CONSEIL NATIONAL DE RECHERCHES DU CANADA

FILE NO 1-6-3-5
DOSSIER NO

DATE September 6, 1972.

TO Dr. G. Herzberg:
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Following receipt of your memorandum of 10 August, I looked into the circumstances of the release of your special passport prior to your departure on August 11. I also consulted the Passport Office.

Because you were going to Czechoslovakia, it was necessary to obtain a visa through the Czech Embassy. This procedure requires a minimum of 21 days for all communist countries because it involves communications between the embassy and its home Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In practice however the embassy does not release a visa until a few days prior to departure regardless of how much more earlier than 21 days prior to departure the visa application was made. I imagine that this is in order to avoid the likely changes of dates that would be requested if visas were issued much earlier but whatever the reasons, the issue of visas is out of our hands. The Passport Office will exert pressure to get faster action or earlier release but only when absolutely necessary.

There is no need for you to release your personal passport much prior to the time when your special passport is ready. (We are considering amending our Standard Operating Procedure accordingly.) When no visas are requested for your official travel, the special passport can be released about seven to ten days prior to departure. If visas are required you would need to apply for them personally if you were to use your personal passport and apart from the inconvenience you would not receive faster service and would have - or at least the ordinary individual would have - little leverage to exert on the embassies concerned.

Your latest experience was made worse by the fact that you advanced your date of departure from August 13 to the afternoon of August 11.

I assure you that the staff of this office and of the Passport Office are aware of the problems of late deliverance of special passports when the issue of visas is delayed and that they do what they can to prevent it.

R. Martineau
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RM/lt

c.c. Dr. D.W.R. McKinley
Mr. B.D. Leddy