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Meeting of Experts on Passports  
and Frontier Formalities

Statement by the French Delegation  
on possible improvements to the  
"international type" passport.

The French Delegation has agreed to the United States suggestion that "the international type of passport, recommended by the Conferences of 1920 and 1926, or an improved version thereof... should be generally used".

It may be useful at this stage to make some explicit suggestions regarding possible improvements to the passport.

(1) The maximum age of children eligible for inclusion on an adult's passport should be mentioned and should be standardised in order to avoid difficulties at the frontiers. One country might quite well allow all children under age to be included on their parents' passport, while another might restrict the privilege to children under fifteen or sixteen. It is easy to see that in these circumstances a passport inspection officer might adhere to his own national regulations and that this attitude might be a source of inconvenience to travellers.

(2) The information regarding identity should be separate from the description of the holder.

(3) The details of the description might with advantage be made complementary to the means of identification obtainable from the photograph.

The model passport adopted by the 1920 and 1926 Conferences contains only the following details: face, colour of eyes, colour of hair, distinguishing marks. It would be advisable to add such information as height, complexion and other facial characteristics (forehead, nose, mouth, ears, chin) which may be a valuable aid to the immediate identification of the bearer. A uniform vocabulary should be adopted.

(4) Experience has shown that a photograph in profile, with the ear showing, is the best means of identifying the bearer of the passport with the person in the photograph attached. This position also gives the photograph a more permanent value as a means of identification, an important consideration, since the passport may be valid for a period of up to ten years.

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A considerable advance could be made in this direction if all countries agreed to make this type of photograph compulsory. The right profile seems the more suitable.

(5) The headings designed to identify the children (Name, Age, Sex) could with advantage be replaced by Surname, Christian Names, and Date of Birth. The Christian Names would help in the identification of the children, and any mention of sex could be dispensed with. Date of Birth is obviously more precise than the mere age.

These, in the view of the French Delegation, are the improvements that might usefully be made in the 1920 and 1926 Model for an International-Type Passport. They have, in our opinion, a practical value at least as great as the questions of binding and number of pages which have so far been the main subjects of the discussion.