ES. to the NEWS

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FRANCES KNIGHT

The impression most Americans have of the Federal Government is that of gross inefficiency -- bogged down in red ink, red tape, and people doing "busy work" writing memos to one another. For 22 **years** the U.S. Passport Office under Frances Knight's capable direction was one shining exception.

Miss Knight made the Passport Office increasingly efficient in the face of a spiraling workload. The Office processed only 350,000 passports in the year she became director. Now more than two million are issued each year.

Miss Knight cut the time for obtaining a passport from six weeks to three days or less. She simplified the applications from three legal-size pages to one letter-size page. She slimmed the passport itself from 48 pages to 24. Represent atives from scores of nations have come to America to study and adopt her techniques. Dozens of cities and travel and transportation agencies have awarded her commendations.

Part of Miss Knight's philosophy of life surfaced when she once told a reporter, "In this business, you've got to choose between popularity and efficient management. You know where I stand." Because she ran her bureau efficiently, profitably, and on merit , she:,earned the praise of five Presidents and the respect of high officials and Congressmen of both political parties.

She is not popular with the big spenders, with the befuddled bureaucrats trying to make their own jobs look important, or with the assorted leftists who want to dismantle all security safeguards. One Senator derisively called her a "super-duper patriot."

The reason the leftists have been gunning for Frances Knight for years is that she has been a stickler for obeying the law and safeguarding national security. She told Congress that in the 1970s there is an average of more than 17,000 U.S.

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passports reported lost or stolen annually which are never accounted for. Some, of course, are destroyed accidentally, But Miss Knight estimates that more than half of these documents remain outstanding and probably find their way into i 11i cit hands.

She continually alerted Congress to the national security dangers from persons obtaining passports by fraud. They fall into several basic categories: (l) Communists, (2) drug traffickers, (3) militant groups, (4) confidence men or swindlers, (5) illegal aliens in the United States, (6) fugitives from justice, and (7) imposters.

Frances Knight treaded that narrow line of being always forthright but ever feminine, efficient but not bossy, determined in pursuit of her objectives but gracious to all, independent of judgment but wise in walking the labyrinths of the bureaucracy.

President Carter has made a serious mistake in terminating Frances Knight as Director of the Passport Office without even giving her the courtesy of a personal interview. Maybe he was afraid that if he talked with her, he too, like his five Presidential predecessors, would have been so impressed with her com petence and dedication that he would have found it impossible to let her go.

President Carter's excuse that it is his policy to abide by the decision of his department head (in this case, Cyrus Vance) is patently untrue. Carter's General Services Administrator, Jack Eckard, resigned precisely because Carter insisted on the President's right to make GSA appointments over the objections of the department chief.

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