

ted this request to the Soviet Embassy, and attach a copy of my note, No. 21 of December 16th, 1948.† As the Soviet authorities are neither noted for speed nor generosity in matters of this kind (especially when it concerns information on the Arctic), I doubt if we shall know their reply for quite some time. Nevertheless, I shall do my best to obtain from the Soviet Embassy the material requested.

The direct approach made by the Representative of the Soviet Commercial Counsellor to your Department raises a number of further problems pertaining to the channelling of communications to the Soviet authorities, which I discussed in general terms in paragraph 7 of my letter of April 9th, 1948.† In this letter, I mentioned the desirability of directing communications to the Soviet authorities in the U.S.S.R. through this Department so that we could judge the amount of information which government departments were supplying to the Soviet authorities in connection with the general policy concerning the exchange of information with the Soviet Union.

Experience in exchanging information with the Soviet Union has shown that the Soviet authorities, although anxious to get as much information as possible from Canadian government departments, try to supply as little as possible — if anything — of value in return. In view of the increasingly strained political situation, this Soviet attitude is likely to harden even more as time goes on. It is therefore our suggestion that government departments might consider adopting the policy of making the supply of information conditional on prior agreement being reached with the Soviet authorities for the receipt of some material of corresponding value in return. If this policy is agreed to, it could be made fully effective only if government departments which are approached, either verbally or in writing, with requests for material by the representatives of the Soviet Embassy in Ottawa, consult with the Department of External Affairs before meeting the requests. We propose that the departments approached should inform us of the request and signify what material they are willing to supply and what material they would like to receive from the Soviet authorities in return. This Department will then communicate with the Soviet Embassy and will offer the Canadian material in exchange for the Soviet material. If the Soviet authorities agree to supply this material, we shall forward to the Embassy the material supplied by the government departments. This will enable us to maintain control over the exchange of information with the Soviet Union and to ensure that Canadian government departments receive fully reciprocal treatment.

We propose that a similar procedure be adopted with regard to requests for Soviet material originating with Canadian government departments. These requests might be submitted to this Department with a list of material which can be given to the Soviet authorities in return. We shall pass this information to the Canadian Embassy in Moscow which will approach the Soviet Government regarding the mutual exchange of this material. If the Soviet authorities supply the information requested, the Embassy in Moscow will transmit the material supplied by the Canadian government departments.

I should be grateful if you would inform me whether you agree with the policy suggested and with the procedure proposed for its implementation. I am requesting