

decisions often do not correspond with what is available, what is considered a legitimate artistic creation in a free world where the artist's imagination finds its own unfettered and anguished way, which sometimes shocks and offends our conventional sensibilities but is nonetheless valid and worthy of international consideration and criticism.

The differing approaches among the participating states to organizational and administrative practices in the field of culture lead me to the third order of obstacles concerned with what might be called "technical problems". I am encouraged that delegations have stated their authorities are studying these problems and searching for solutions. For instance, the high rate of insuring artistic exhibitions abroad is surely an impediment to the co-operation we are seeking . . . .

The preference of some countries for conducting cultural exchanges through bilateral agreements, as opposed to the direct, case-by-case approach, favoured by others, creates obstacles related to the natural lethargy and unimaginativeness of any bureaucracy. There are delays created while unwieldy committees manned by unqualified bureaucrats — unqualified in the sense that they are often not practitioners, or only conformists to the ruling wisdom — decide what is acceptable — what foreign cultural manifestations can be let in and who can be let out to make contacts abroad.

Canada has cultural agreements with France, Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany and Italy, and a comprehensive general exchanges agreement with the U.S.S.R. which covers exchanges in many fields, including culture and education. It is not the policy of the Canadian Government to increase the number of formal cultural agreements, as cultural exchanges, whether based on strict reciprocity or not, can in many cases be carried out without an intergovernmental agreement. The absence of a formal agreement with a cultural partner in no way indicates any intention on the part of either to depreciate such relations. Rather, it can be a mutual recognition that, because resources are never unlimited, each must retain some flexibility and avoid commitments that may later no longer reflect the same priorities. It can also mean that the general state of relations is so little hampered by any major political or other difficulties that an agreement becomes superfluous. It should be noted that Canada does not have cultural agreements with two of its most important CSCE partners (Britain and the United States) but nevertheless has developed important cultural programs in those countries.

The problem of non-convertability of currencies poses severe impediments. Other considerations aside, it means, for instance, that, in the international commerce of books, Eastern European countries buy from Canada less than one-third of what we purchase from those countries. In the impor-