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*Le sous-secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures
au secrétaire, Gouverneur général*

*Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs
to Secretary to Governor General*

Ottawa, July 24, 1939

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Mr. Redfern,

The Prime Minister has asked me to acknowledge your letter of July 7th, regarding communications on international affairs.

I am not quite clear as to the bearing on this subject of some of the general considerations advanced in your letter, but as regards the specific point of the transmission of communications from Canadian offices abroad, I entirely agree with your statement that copies of these despatches have not been transmitted to the Governor-General's Office in recent months.

In view of the difference in subject matter of the great bulk of reports from Canadian offices abroad compared with those sent by United Kingdom representatives abroad, and of other factors into which I need not enter, including the continuous pressure on the Department, it has not been an easy matter to comply with the arrangement made some time ago. We recognize, however, the essential importance of communications dealing with developments of international interest being transmitted, as far as possible. The Prime Minister has given instructions that every effort should be made to carry out this practice in future.

You enquire if the Prime Minister would agree to the suggestion that Canadian representatives abroad should be empowered to send to you direct copies of despatches which in their opinion should be read by the Governor General. The Prime Minister is of the opinion that this procedure could not be adopted without delegating to the Ministers abroad the responsibility which should rest on the Government itself, and which it could not appropriately delegate. It would not appear that a Canadian Minister or other official abroad should undertake to report to the Governor General as well as to his own Minister any more than the British Legations should report to the King as well as to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

I have no doubt, however, that without adopting the procedure you suggested arrangements can be made for a more adequate transmission of communications of interest.

Yours sincerely,

O. D. SKELTON