

[PIÈCE JOINTE/ENCLOSURE]

*Le ministre en Suède
au secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures*

*Minister in Sweden
to Secretary of State for External Affairs*

DESPATCH 15

Stockholm, March 1, 1951

CONFIDENTIAL

OFFICE IN HELSINKI, FINLAND

1. The purpose of this despatch is to enquire whether any thought has been given in the Department to the question of opening an office in Finland with a Secretary who would act as Chargé d'Affaires except when I am actually visiting that country. This officer would in the circumstances probably have to be at least F.S.O. 2 — somewhat higher rank would perhaps be desirable.

2. You will recall that at the time of the appointment of the Assistant Military Attaché to this mission, the Department of National Defence suggested that he might reverse our present procedure by residing in Helsinki and visiting Stockholm from time to time. To this suggestion I replied that in my view it would not be wise to have a Service attaché open an office in Finland without the presence there also of a political officer. I am still of this view.

3. There seems now, however, to be a definite possibility that a second department of the government, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, will have to consider opening an office in Finland. Certainly the increase in interest in emigrating to Canada in Finland during the past months has been so great as almost to frighten us here. On one day this week some 400 letters came from Finland and it looks as if the daily average might soon reach this figure. It is, of course, quite impossible for the visa section here to deal with these and at the same time cope with the local customers to whom some 80 visas per day are being issued.

4. I would not be inclined to take the same deep objection to the opening of a visa office by itself in Helsinki as I took in the case of the proposal to send a Service attaché there by himself. I cannot say, however, that I would be altogether happy were we to send visa officers to that country unaccompanied by a political officer of our own Service. It might be argued that there is a precedent for this in the establishment of visa offices in Austria where we have no political officers, but it seems to me that the situation in Finland is not really comparable. First and foremost there is the deep desire on the part of the Finns that we should as soon as possible open a permanent legation in their capital and I think, although I have no basis in fact for the thought, that they would be unhappy were we to send officials of the Canadian Government of, if I may dare to put it this way, not quite so exalted status as diplomatic officers, in the first instance. In the second place, in our experience here there have been many occasions when in my view political advice to the visa officers has been useful. This would, I am sure, be even more the case in Finland.