

6. Please don't assume that we have made up our minds here that we should definitely stop this one-sided cultural exchange. We think, however, that it is time to review our policy. I hope to discuss the subject with John Watkins who will probably have taken over by the time you have a chance to reply to this letter.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN [HOLMES]

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*Le secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures  
au chargé d'affaires en Union soviétique*

*Secretary of State for External Affairs  
to Chargé d'Affaires in Soviet Union*

DESPATCH 851

Ottawa, October 29, 1948

SECRET

Sir,

For the past year or more we have been reviewing in the Department the question of the exchange of information with the Soviet Union with a view to finding out whether it would be feasible to expand such exchanges on a reciprocal basis. Our research into the operation of the exchanges from 1941 to 1947 revealed that:

(a) there was little hope that cultural material (films, art exhibits, etc.) would be given the necessary publicity and distribution in the Soviet Union to make such exchanges profitable;

(b) up to 1947, exchanges of scientific and social material were from 33-50% successful. While the Soviet authorities did not meet a number of requests submitted by us, Canadian government departments in turn did not reply to quite a few Soviet requests. Had the exchanges been efficiently carried out in all cases, the degree of success would have been greater;

(c) such scientific and social exchanges might prove reasonably successful in the future if vigorously and thoroughly carried out, provided the growing political tension and the Soviet decree on state secrets did not adversely affect the situation.

2. These conclusions were reached in November, 1947. Since then, political tension has developed to a point where it is highly doubtful whether any approaches which we might now make would have any chance of success. The present would appear to be a bad time to try to reach any agreement with the Soviet Union on expanding the exchange of information.

3. There still remains the problem of how to deal with the occasional exchanges with which we shall be faced from time to time. It is these exchanges which, I believe, Mr. Holmes has in mind in his letter of August 11th to Mr. Rae. In this letter, Mr. Holmes suggests that there are three alternative courses of action:

(a) to continue the present policy of sending Canadian material without making it conditional on the receipt of something in return;