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COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND
CULTURAL RELATIONS

NATO TOUR OF JOURNALISTS

Memorandum by the Canadian Delegation

In order to increase, if possible, the value of NATO-sponsored Journalists Tours, the Canadian Delegation wishes to submit some observations which are based on past experience with these visits.

Size of Journalists Party

2. Although it is realised that under certain circumstances, it might be advantageous to have a smaller number of journalists, or even individual journalists, making tours of NATO countries, in practice Canadian participation is limited to the amount of free transportation that the Royal Canadian Air Force is able to provide across the Atlantic and in Canada. The R.C.A.F. naturally prefers to carry a single party to Canada annually in a four-engine aircraft reserved for this purpose, and a group in Canada of not more than fourteen in order that a twin-engine aircraft may be used. A larger number of journalists could be carried on trans-atlantic crossings provided some journalists were to leave the party on arrival for special programmes, which might be arranged, but they would have to rejoin the party for the return journey.

3. The R.C.A.F. could accommodate two Canadian journalists each month on its service to the United Kingdom provided they are reporting on the Canadian Air Division and Brigade stationed in Europe in addition to their other coverage. This service, of course, is of no use to European journalists coming to Canada.

Selection of Journalists

4. The continued success of the programme depends on having competent journalists participate in these tours. There was some dissatisfaction with the calibre of journalists selected for the two last Canadian tours and with the limited effectiveness and influence of some of the media represented. While the number of experienced journalists is limited, we feel that the supply has not yet been exhausted. We consider the present selection method unsatisfactory and that host governments should have active participation in this selection if they so desire. In our case, we would propose to ask Canadian Diplomatic Missions to recommend names. Similarly, we would be glad to receive the advice of the NATO Missions in Ottawa as to the Canadians selected for specific tours.

Scope of the Programme

5. We would see no objection to widening the selection

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provided the journalists share much the same interests by virtue of their experience and work. For example, political contributors and commentators, parliamentary correspondents, editorial writers and editors-in-chief would form an excellent group, to which might be added one or two government information officers. It might be useful, also, to organize a tour for executives from the management side, but we do not propose to mix them with creative personnel.

Special Canadian Tour

6. NATIS might wish to consider a Canadian tour for the foreign correspondents resident in the United States who represent national publications in NATO countries provided, of course, they were acceptable to their own governments.

Length of Tour

7. Longer tours, up to a full month, would be preferable with more leisurely and flexible programmes, but the size of the groups would have to be scaled down so that our financial commitments are not increased.

Palais de Chaillot,
Paris, XVIc.

Note: This document will be discussed under Item IV (see Agenda AC/52-A/36).