

Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers, 1941, General, The Soviet Union, Volume I

660D.6131/50: Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

Helsinki, January 21, 1941—1 p.m.
[Received January 22—1:50 a.m.]

17. Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me today that there had been considerable trouble with the Russians lately in carrying out commodity exchanges under trade and clearing agreement[s] of last June¹¹ due to their very unreasonable attitude. He described issues in some detail but substance was that since conclusion of new Soviet-German trade agreement,¹² Russians seemed both unable and unwilling to comply with engagements and release quantities of supplies promised to Finland, basing refusal on alleged Finnish shortcomings.¹³ There were apparently elements both of deliberate policy and of typical inefficiency in the Russian attitude but it naturally caused serious inconvenience here. Finnish Legation, Moscow, was being instructed to endeavor to clarify situation as Soviet Minister here¹⁴ left Helsinki 3 days ago without notice and it was understood he might be absent for some time.

Meanwhile Henrik Ramsay, member of Board of Petsamo Nickel Company, had arrived in London January 17th to continue discussion of nickel question, status of which seems little different from that already reported except that Russians declined suggestion that Soviet Ambassador at London¹⁵ cooperate with Ramsay in finding solution.

Witting said in confidence that British are making some difficulties for Finland in connection with execution of pre-war contract with the Germans for delivery of molybdenum from Finnish mine and also with regard to British desire to time charter substantial tonnage of Finnish shipping badly needed for Finland's carrying trade. Doubtless Ramsay who is head of largest Finnish shipping company will also discuss latter question during London visit.

SCHOENFELD

11. The signature of these agreements in Moscow on June 28, 1940, was reported by the Chargé in the Soviet Union in telegram No. 772, June 29, 1940, 11. *Foreign Relations, 1940*, vol. i, p. 331.
12. Comments upon this economic agreement of January 10, 1941, were received from the Ambassador in the Soviet Union in telegrams No. 51 and No. 53 of January 11, 12. pp. 118 and 12. 121, respectively.
13. Some Finnish criticisms and statistics are printed in *Finland Reveals Her Secret Documents on Soviet Policy, March 1940-June 1941*, pp. 29-30.
14. Ivan S. Zotov.
15. Ivan Mikhailovich Maisky.

Source: <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1941v01/d6>