

U.S. Protests Russian False Reports on Mott

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From News Dispatches

MOSCOW, Jan. 28—The United States registered an official protest with the Soviet government today, charging that Russian news media carried false reports on the death of Newcomb Mott. The latest press claim said the young American took drugs before allegedly committing suicide aboard a train carrying him to a prison camp in Siberia.

"What pills they were and what effect they could have had on his state of mind will be brought out by the results of expert examination," the Novosti press agency said in a statement distributed to American correspondents here. "The final expert examination is being completed."

The protest was lodged by John Guthrie, the Minister-Counsellor of the U.S. Embassy, with the Soviet Foreign Ministry. He objected to two errors in Russian press reports.

The first was a Moscow radio report that the U.S. Government and Mott's parents had abandoned the 27-year-old tourist from Sheffield, Mass., before his trial in Murmansk on charges of entering the Soviet Union illegally. He was sentenced to 18 months in a labor camp.

Guthrie reminded Georgy Kornienko, acting chief of the American section of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, that Mott's parents had attended his trial. He also said the Embassy had made 30 attempts to obtain Mott's release.

The second error was the claim carried by the Moscow radio and Novosti that U.S. officials never requested that Mott be released on bail.

Guthrie told Kornienko that an Embassy official had specifically made such a request to the Murmansk prosecutor Sept. 14 and had been turned down.

Guthrie also requested "as expeditious a report as possible" on the circumstances surrounding Mott's death. An Embassy spokesman said Kornienko agreed it would be best to supply the report as soon as possible. He added that this was the first time the Russians had explicitly agreed to make such a report available.

The United States has neither accepted nor rejected the official Russian claim that Mott took his own life. The Moscow radio and Novosti said he cut his throat with a razor blade that was included in a parcel forwarded to him from his parents. An autopsy performed in the presence of American officials last Monday revealed only that Mott had died of a 5-inch gash in his neck.

Mott's body was being flown home tonight. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Mott, have arranged for a second autopsy to be performed by an expert in Massachusetts. They have denied that their son could have committed suicide, and charged that he was murdered.

Kuwait Fighter Deal

CAIRO, Jan. 28 (AP)—Arab sources in Cairo reported Kuwait is trying to buy 14 French Mirage fighters for its air force and a French delegation is expected there in early February to make the deal. Kuwaiti Embassy officials declined to comment.