

First Proposals

Professor Skilling has related the early advocacy in Canada for a special consular system which might give greater status to existing Trade Commissioners, which might take over the work performed by British Consuls on behalf of Canadian interests, and which might be substitutes for, or forerunners of, Canadian diplomatic Legations or Embassies. He points out that "as early as 1904 a suggestion was made in the House of Commons by a French-Canadian Member, Honoré Gervais, for the establishment of a consular service. No debate followed, and no action was taken by the Government."⁽¹⁾

Christie's Suggestion for a Consular Service.

In a lengthy memorandum on Canadian representation in the United States, prepared by L.C. Christie for Mr. Meighen, Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs, dated October 27, 1920, he said, inter alia:

7. The suggestion has been made at different times in the past that the Canadian Government should participate in some way in the British Consular Service. Doubtless it would be impracticable for a long time to do this in an extensive way; but the suggestion certainly seems worthy of consideration so far as New York is concerned. A consular officer is a member of an institution well recognized in international law and practice; his rank and status have certain definite implications which are understood and respected both by the official and business world in every country. Such an officer undoubtedly has greater powers of usefulness than one without

(1) Skilling: Canadian Representation Abroad, p.257. H. of C. Debates, August 6, 1904, pp.8753-6.