

prominent Finnish-Canadian business leader was appointed as the Finnish Honorary Vice-Consul at Port Arthur.¹⁷ Three years after the Finnish Consulate was opened in Montréal, with Akseli Rauanheimo as the Consul General *de carrière*. In 1924 further honorary consular appointments were made in places with substantial Finnish communities such as Vancouver, Toronto, and Québec, with Winnipeg and Copper Cliff added later.¹⁸ On the other hand, Canada did not have any pressing interests in Finland. Due to a limited budget and a small diplomatic corps, Canadian interests in Finland would be represented by the British minister in Helsinki until the late 1940s.

From the recognition of Finnish independence normal relations existed with Finland. During the interwar period there were numerous treaties, agreements, conventions, and protocols, both bilateral and multilateral, to which both Canada and Finland were a party. Among the first policy decisions were arrangements to send letters and parcels to Finland. Other agreements included the extradition of criminals, legal proceedings regarding civil matters, agreement on the measurement of ship tonnage, and so on.

Trade was another area of contact between Canada and Finland. From the early nineteenth century, Finland was seen as a source of competition for Canadian forest products, especially in the British market, where the lower shipping costs made "Baltic timber" more attractive.¹⁹ When it came to promoting trade, Canadian Trade Commissioners were posted to various locations with the task of attracting markets for Canadian products. During the first half of the twentieth century the person assigned to look after Finland was typically headquartered in Norway or the Netherlands, with a large area of responsibility which included Belgium, the Netherlands, Scandinavia, Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, the Baltic States, and Russia. Finland was simply included in the area of Scandinavia or the "Baltic States."²⁰ Though they had no diplomatic

functions or privileges, both immigration agents and trade commissioners were a precursor to the eventual establishment of the Canadian diplomatic service in Finland.²¹

The first trade agreement between the two countries was made in 1925 with an exchange of notes. Britain had signed a trade treaty with Finland in 1923, containing a provision for Canada to accede to the most favoured nation (MFN) treatment clause. The Canadian government agreed to this in 1925, in the hopes of gaining a wider market for Canada's wheat. Notwithstanding the trade agreement there was therefore comparatively little in the way of commercial or business contacts between Canada and Finland. As a report by the Department of Trade and Commerce put it, "Canada's trade with Finland has traditionally been small and of an inconsistent pattern."²² For the most part Canada had a trade surplus with Finland. For example, in the 1930s the value of Finnish exports to Canada never exceeds \$100,000, while Canadian exports to Finland ranged from 4–15 times that value.²³ The eclectic list of products imported from Finland included cheese, wooden furniture, paper, engines, boilers, farm implements, and granite, whereas Canada sold to Finland rubber tires and inner tubes, various metals, leather, and farm implements, but above all else wheat and flour. Trade with Finland was therefore more important as a symbolic gesture toward achieving the broader foreign policy objective of the liberalization of international trade.

Canadians reacted with horror during the Second World War when Finland was attacked by the Soviet Union at the end of November 1939. Already committed to the Allied cause in the war, there was little Canada could do directly to aid Finland in the Winter War, but the Canadian people showed great sympathy. The Canadian government offered a \$100,000 gift which could be used to purchase and ship food aid to Finland. Ultimately it was used to buy rye flour. Various

17 Canada, "Report of the Secretary of State for External Affairs, 1921," *Sessional Paper No. 34* (Ottawa, Thomas Mulvey King's Printer, 1921), 15.

18 Canada, "Report of the Secretary of State for External Affairs, 1923," *Sessional Paper No. 25* (Ottawa, Thomas Mulvey King's Printer, 1923), 16.

19 A.R.M. Lower, *The North American Assault on the Canadian Forest: A History of the Lumber Trade between Canada and the United States* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1938), 80, 188.

20 L.D. Wigress, *Trade Possibilities of the Baltic States* (Ottawa: Department of Trade and Commerce, Commercial Intelligence Service, 1929).

21 H.G. Skilling, *Canada's Representation Abroad: From Agency to Embassy* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1945), 47.

22 "Canada's Trade with Finland," 5 July 1956, LAC, RG25 G2, Vol. 6252, File 9559-40.

23 A.J. Jalkanen, Consul General for Finland to O.D. Skelton, 11 February 1938, LAC, RG20, Vol. 701, File A-F1-3.