

12. *Memorandum from Under-Secretary of State
for External Affairs to Prime Minister*

Ottawa, October 27, 1911

Mr. Hector Fabre, having been selected by the Government of the Province of Quebec to reside in Paris in order to promote the financial, commercial, and other interests of the Province, the Government of Canada availed themselves of Mr. Fabre's presence in Paris to utilize his services.

12th July 1882. By a Minute of Council he was authorized to act as agent on behalf of the Dominion in a similar capacity.

3rd October 1882. On the 3rd October following, instructions were issued to Mr. Fabre defining his duties, which were to spread information respecting Canada in France and on the continent. He was directed to conform to any instructions he might receive from the Canadian High Commissioner in London in regard to any duties to be discharged, or assistance to be rendered in connection with efforts to bring about more favourable commercial relations between Canada and France.

He was further directed to report monthly to the Secretary of State.

It is clear from the foregoing that the office was at that time regarded as purely an emigration and commercial agency, subordinate as regards the latter function, to the High Commissioner in London, and possessing no quasi-diplomatic character. Mr. Fabre's reports to the Secretary of State show that he so understood the nature of his office. There is no statutory creation of the position, but in Minutes of Council of the period he is styled "Agent of the Canadian Government in France".

29th August 1902. So matters went on. In August 1902 the Minister of Trade and Commerce appointed Mr. Poindron as Canadian "Trade Commissioner" in Paris, and in the following year¹ Mr. Wiallard was appointed by the Minister of the Interior "General Emigration Agent for France". Apparently they acted as assistants to Mr. Fabre.

2nd September 1910. On Mr. Fabre's death, both Mr. Poindron and Mr. Wiallard claimed to act as Canadian Commissioner General *ad interim*, to the evident annoyance of His Majesty's Ambassador at Paris, who wrote to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs² asking that Mr. Wiallard's position might be defined. In accordance with Sir Wilfrid Laurier's verbal instructions, the Ambassador was informed that "Mr. Wiallard is at present temporarily filling the position made vacant by the death of Monsieur Fabre, and that he should be addressed as 'Acting Canadian Commissioner in Paris'".

22nd May 1911. On the 22nd May 1911 Mr. Philippe Roy was appointed *Commissaire général du Canada* in France, and the appointing Minute of Council goes on to say that "the Canadian Government will be glad if

¹ 1st September 1903.

² 4th January 1911.