

22. *Le Haut commissaire par intérim au Premier ministre*

CONFIDENTIAL

My dear Borden,

London, August 15, 1914

In view of this terrible war and the fact that it is likely to delay for some time my departure from here I think it best to try and put down a few things in writing regarding this office and the position of High Commissioner.¹ When I left home at your request it was for the purpose of spending a few months here, to try and administer the office in the meantime and in that way to get an insight into conditions here so that on my return I might report to you regarding same. I should much prefer to have done this verbally and it would take far too long at the present juncture to go into such a big question in detail in a letter, as we are busy here every day for long hours. Then the problems and conditions occasioned by this war dwarf all our other ordinary matters and I would not raise the question at the moment at all except that you are having a session of parliament.

I find that the relations of the High Commissioner's office to the branches of the various departments here have altered very much of late years. I understand that in Sir Charles Tupper's time, and in fact he tells me so himself, this office exercised real control over every civil servant and branch of the service in Europe and really represented Canada in all ways, great and small. This condition of affairs seems to have altered very much during the last eighteen years until the connection of the various branches of the service with this office varies very much and in some cases has become almost nominal. I do not know that I could give a thorough explanation of how this has happened nor do I think it is necessary for me to try and do so at this time. You will readily realize that this situation is not conducive to good business and often produces overlapping and is very awkward, as for instance if someone enquires for information from this office regarding some purchase or transaction which has been going on in one of the branches and of which this office has to acknowledge that it is entirely ignorant.

The Emigration branch is the largest one in Great Britain and it is managed under instructions from Ottawa. Copies of all important letters are sent to this office but for some years now no acts of control seem to have been exercised from here although such work comes definitely under the High Commissioner by Act of Parliament. The cheques for payment of the emigration work are issued from this office without any control over

¹ La loi de 1880 nommant un «Représentant et agent du Canada résident au Royaume-Uni», appelé «Haut commissaire du Canada» décrit comme suit les fonctions du titulaire:

- (1) Agir comme représentant et agent du Dominion au Royaume-Uni, et, en cette qualité, exercer les pouvoirs et remplir les devoirs qui de temps en temps lui seront conférés et assignés par le Gouverneur en conseil.
- (2) Être responsable, sous la direction du ministre de l'Agriculture, de la surveillance et du contrôle des bureaux et agences d'immigration établis au Royaume-Uni.
- (3) Exécuter les instructions qu'il recevra, à l'occasion, du Gouverneur en conseil et portant sur les intérêts commerciaux, financiers et généraux du Dominion au Royaume-Uni et ailleurs. (*Statuts du Canada*, 43 Vict., c.11, 1880).