

14. GEORGE V, A. 1924

This arrangement to be effective should be done on a large scale; I mean that we should buy one of the best corners on the Boulevard des Capucines and arrange it so that the public would be attracted by our display.

There is a corner to be sold at this moment which would be an ideal one. It will be expensive, no doubt, but there is none better in Paris. You remember the "Grand Café," with the "Jockey Club," and the Hotel Scribe upstairs. The whole building is announced for sale. It would be too large for our requirements, but a part of it could be easily rented and bring in a very large revenue.

The amount to be paid for that property may discourage the Minister of Finance and frighten Parliament. I know that the Canadian Government is prepared to spend a very large sum of money to acquire a property in London for Canadian offices. I would like to see our people do the same thing in Paris.

At all events, if you are counting on tourists from Europe to develop your national railway business in Canada, you must have a first class agent and attracting offices in Paris. This city is the centre of Europe and as soon as the franc has recovered something like its normal value, you could, with proper propaganda, draw French capital and French energy to Canada. Our men during the war by their gallantry and personal behaviour to the French people have won fame for Canada and touched the heart of the French nation. The people here are anxious to deal with us, and come into closer contact with our country as soon as the circumstances will permit. France is busy at this moment cleaning house, and repairing damages. Believe me, she is doing this work as well as she has done the other, although she is doing it practically alone. Germany will be down on her knees shortly, and will have to repair damages. Then peace will be re-established in the world, and prosperity will gradually come back to industrious and peaceful nations: France is one of these.

I would like to see Canada make an immense bid for French business. The South American countries are all doing it. By our territory, population, and certainly by our resources, we are just as entitled as they are to international attention.

As I said before, as soon as conditions are better and peace and security granted to France, it would be the easiest thing to get the French people to interest themselves to Canada. Large French parties could be arranged to visit our country and practical results obtained thereof.

Mr. Aronovici tells me that you have asked him to take charge of your office in Paris. I know that he is a man of large experience and unbounded activity.

No one, my dear Sir Henry, is wishing you more success than I do, and I feel confident you will succeed.

Circumstances and probably war conditions have forced Canada to make the experiment of "states ownership" which has proved to be a difficult business to handle in all countries. If, through your ability and energy, you can show to the world that such a state enterprise can be made successful, then we could pass a resolution in Parliament to declare that "Vous avez bien merite de la Patrie".

I hope to go to Canada during the summer when I will probably visit the West. I have still some interest in this part of the country. You probably don't know that Edmonton has been my home during fifteen years and that five out of my six children were born in Alberta. So I know the western provinces as well as I know the province of Quebec.

Mr. Aronovici will give you all the European news. I apologize for this long letter and more so for my English which is a poor specimen of your beautiful language.

SESSIONAL PAPER No. 237

I would be pleased to hear from you, from time to time, but I know that you will be too busy to write. Aronovici will tell me all about you and your projects. Some day soon I will pay you a visit myself.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) PHILIPPE ROY,
Commissioner General for
Canada in France.

Sir HENRY THORNTON, K.B.E.,
Chairman of the Board of Directors and
President of the Canadian National Railways,
Ottawa, Ont.

PARIS, February 22, 1923.

Cablegram.

To Sir HENRY THORNTON,
Ottawa.

Letter received. Entirely in accord with you. Am writing.
ROY.

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

OFFICE OF CHAIRMAN AND PRESIDENT,
OTTAWA, February 3, 1923.

Personal.

DEAR MR. ROY.—It is with pleasure that I venture to recall to you our previous acquaintance, when I was connected with the British Army in Paris; and, as you doubtless know, I am now engaged in an effort to administer the Canadian National Railway System. I had hoped to have an opportunity of seeing you in Paris before I left England to take up my duties here, but unfortunately I was so busy, and the pressure on me to come to Canada as quickly as possible was so severe, that I was unable to do so.

I am anxious to provide the Canadian National Railways with adequate office accommodation and a proper representation in Paris, apart from purely traffic matters. We are already well represented there from that point of view. I want a well-located office where our literature, time-tables, and, in general, the allurements of Canada, can be exposed to the public. I do not know quite how you are situated with respect to office accommodation; but it occurred to me that perhaps there might be an opportunity for co-operation between the Government and ourselves to our mutual advantage. I would suggest the acquisition of a suitable building, properly located, and preferably on the Boulevard des Capucines, somewhere not far from the intersection of that boulevard with the Rue Edouard VII.

The ground floor could be occupied by the railway company with exhibits and literature of various sorts, in charge of a competent staff; and the upper floors, which no doubt would be more suitable to your requirements, could be

237-2

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