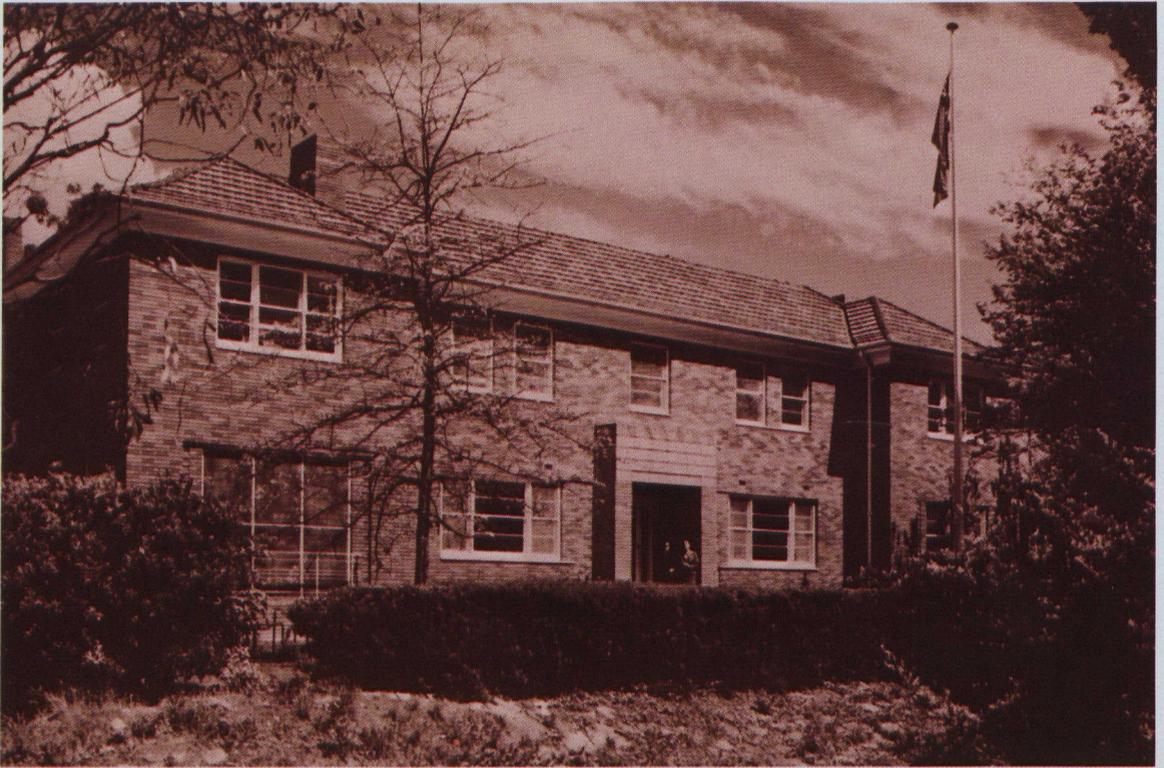


CANADA'S REPRESENTATION IN AUSTRALIA



Casey House, the Canadian High Commission building 1940-1963. When the High Commission was first established, only the first floor was rented.

“Received warmest welcome and delighted with place, people and climate.” That was part of the first telegram sent to Ottawa by the first High Commissioner appointed to Australia, Charles J. Burchell, on December 30, 1940, after sailing to Australia on “the Mariposa.” There have been thirteen Canadian High Commissioners appointed to Australia since then and most would have echoed the remarks of Mr. Burchell.

Canadian representation in Australia, however, commenced long before 1940, with the appointment of John Short Larke in 1895. The Honourable M. Bowell, Minister for Trade and Commerce in recommending Mr. Larke said, “In order to make our venture in establishing the Australian line a success, it is absolutely necessary to have a resident agent in Sydney, at least for some little time, in order to supply the information for which I am almost daily asked by those who contemplate doing business in Australia. I know of no man in Canada so well fitted for this position as Larke, he having a thorough knowledge of the manufacturing and other resources of the country, and what is of equal or greater importance, he is an enthusiast on the extension of Canadian trade.

On his arrival in Australia in January 1895, Larke told the press, “My mission if you like to call it such, is a very simple one; it is simply to promote trade between Canada and Australia, and I am interested in assisting, if I can, the Australian people in finding markets in Canada.” It is a lot less simple today, but Larke’s statement certainly sums up what two-way trade is all about. John Larke did not confine himself to selling Canadian goods but also worked for the

improvement of the climate in which those goods had to be sold.

Larke covered Australia and New Zealand alone until 1903 when a second commercial agent was appointed. D.H. Ross opened an office in Melbourne which had become the temporary seat of government of the Australian Commonwealth in 1901. Ross looked after Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania, while Larke’s territory was Queensland, New South Wales and New Zealand. D.H. Ross became a partner in an agency in Brisbane, which gradually grew into a large wholesale drug business, and before his appointment as commercial agent, had established a branch in Sydney, so he possessed an excellent knowledge of Australia, its business methods and commercial conditions. Larke and Ross continued to be diligent reporters throughout the first decade of the 1900’s and the department’s monthly report and later the weekly report carried their contributions regularly. John Larke died in 1910 and his family stayed on to pioneer a major automotive dealership in Australia — but that’s another story.

D.H. Ross represented Canada as a commercial agent and later, when the title was changed, as Trade Commissioner until 1934 and retired in Australia.

The posts in Sydney and Melbourne were designated Consulates General in April 1973.

The High Commission as previously mentioned opened in 1940 in Canberra in rented premises and moved to its own building in 1963.

Why then a new Consulate General in the West? Canada has become an important source of foreign