

History of Consulates in the U.S.A.

By W.R. Young

INTRODUCTION

The absence of direction in the approach of the Canadian Government to the question of establishing its offices in the United States has been a notable feature of Canadian representation. Until 1947, no system set up in accordance with an enunciated policy regulated the opening of Canadian bureaus in the United States, as government departments, actual and proposed, opened offices in response to various pressures without attempting to coordinate their efforts. New offices which existed to serve only the immediate needs of their respective Ottawa departments frequently were closed soon after opening. A paucity of long-run planning characterized the appearance and disappearance of these unrelated and restricted operations.

Apart from the Canadian Legation (The Canadian Embassy after 1943) which was established in Washington in 1927, the first Canadian representatives were immigration officers who were maintained by various departments (Agriculture, Interior, Immigration and Colonization, and latterly Mines and Resources). During the flood tide of migration into Canada in the early decades of this century, there were twenty-two such offices in the U.S.A. The Department of Mines and Resources, however, under the impact of the Depression reduced its immigration offices to four (New York City; Fairfield, Maine; Malone, New York; and Seattle, Washington) by the late 1930's. The war in 1939 furthered this attrition to the extent that the sole remaining representatives of the oldest Canadian service in the United States in 1943 were the two officers staffing an office in Seattle, Washington. It was expected that when offices re-opened in the post-war period, their functions would be assimilated by a comprehensive consular and diplomatic system.¹