

Canada's First Trade Commissioner

Bowell wanted a "thorough businessman," (Hill, 45) and chose John Short Larke, a one-time newspaper editor and later president of a stove company and inventor of a stove used country-wide. Larke, who was also active in municipal politics, an excellent speaker and a close friend of Sir John A. Macdonald, served as Canada's commissioner at the World's Columbian Exposition on Chicago in 1893.

This is how Bowell recommended Larke's appointment to the prime minister: "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." And as Bowell noted, "He has also a happy aptitude for public speaking and could do much good in addressing Boards of Trade and other bodies." (Hill, 45)

It was in 1894 that an order-in-council authorized the Department of Trade and Commerce to appoint "Commercial Agents in Foreign Countries, as well as in various Colonies, for the purpose of collecting