

Channels of CommunicationDecline of Governor General's Role in External Affairs

In Chapter III of Part I it was indicated that the constitutional role of the Governor General as the official channel of communication between the Canadian Government and the Imperial Government or sister Dominions or foreign states was carefully respected and preserved throughout the period of the External Affairs Department covered by the lifetime of Sir Joseph Pope. In the very year of his death, in 1926, a great transformation took place in the relationship of the Dominions and the Mother Country within the Commonwealth and in the position of the Governor General, who ceased to be the channel of official correspondence.

Although the formal system had been carefully protected from Confederation until 1926, there had been nevertheless steady forces leading to an impairment of that recognized system.

It has been shown how the pressure had gradually developed for more independent diplomatic representation abroad, without the intermediation of the British Colonial and Foreign Offices, in consequence of which more direct communication from Canadian representatives would by-pass the slow and cumbrous conduit pipe through London. It has been suggested that the laying of the cable between Canada and England in 1868 resulted in the loss by the Governor General of much of the personal initiative which in the older days of Colonial rule and relative remoteness had been made possible by the length of time it had taken to receive an answer from the Colonial Office to a despatch of the Governor's. Furthermore, the Canadian Government