

The Governor General

The position of the Governor General was a complex one. He personified the Crown in its relation to the territory: he was appointed, on advice of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, by, and held office at the pleasure of, the Sovereign. He acted as the Sovereign's representative in ceremonial matters. In certain prescribed matters he exercised the constitutional functions and prerogatives of the Crown, with respect to Parliament, to the Privy Council, and assent to legislation. These prerogatives in the domestic field of Canadian government need not be examined here. But in addition, he was the nominated representative and agent of the British imperial government of the day, through its organ the Colonial Office; he was responsible to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and was the latter's "ambassador" overseas. In a third capacity, the Governor General was subject to the advice of the Dominion Government, and was its link with the Imperial Government.

In relating to external affairs matters, the Dominion Government could express its wishes to the Imperial Government, and these would be transmitted through the Governor General and the Colonial Office; if they concerned matters relating to foreign countries, the Colonial Office passed them on to the Foreign Office. Vice versa, the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office, through the Governor General, could inform, consult or advise the Canadian Government on matters of external concern. In each case, the Governor General was constitutionally and normally the sole channel of external