

~~Context~~

No further reference to this problem appears to have been made, and the Act under which the Department operates still retains the disputed phrase. Joseph Pope commented on this in a contribution on the Department of External Affairs to the sixth volume of Canada and its Provinces (pp. 271-372) published in 1910: "The initiation of this reform gave rise at first to some misapprehension. When the Bill creating the Department of External Affairs was before Parliament, the report went abroad that the Canadian Government intended thereby to take into its own hands the conduct of its foreign relations. The Prime Minister and the Secretary of State, however, made it clear to the House of Commons that no constitutional change was intended by the measure, which merely aimed at an improvement in departmental procedure, and that Canada's official communications extending beyond the bounds of the Dominion would continue to be made through His Excellency the Governor General as before."

It may be noted in this discussion of the phraseology of the two Acts, that the phrase in dispute was "the conduct of official communications" concerning external matters, and not the "conduct of external affairs". The Governor General was concerned, as was the Colonial Office, as to his traditional prerogative of the channel of communication, which he did not wish to see by-passed. No issue was raised as to whether the Department of External Affairs would "conduct" external affairs any differently than the manner in which the Government, i. e. the Prime Minister, the Privy Council, the Secretary of State, or the Departments had heretofore conducted these policies and relationships, - normally through the Colonial Office.