

## INTRODUCTION

This document is the first product of a review of the role of the Department of External Affairs in the Government of Canada which was undertaken by the Department in mid-1975. It seeks to answer the question: "What do the scriptures say?" i.e. How is the role of the Department defined and described in legislation, statutory instruments, cabinet decisions, studies and reports, etc?

The sharp-eyed reader will note that some of the material included in this report does not, strictly-speaking, constitute "scriptures". Section I, for example, illustrates how the Department describes its functions for the information of the public and for the purposes of financial authorization by Parliament. Section IV on the Royal Prerogative enumerates some important functions of the Department of External Affairs that are founded upon an unwritten part of the Canadian constitution. Section V is concerned with reports of Commissions of Inquiry that have been implemented in varying degrees. The common factor in this mixed collection is that each item has been identified as contributing, in practice, to defining the role of the Department of External Affairs.

The same sharp-eyed reader will also note that this report is not exhaustive of the subject. It does not, for example, attempt to identify all Cabinet decisions that relate to External Affairs but selects only some of the more important ones of recent years that have explicitly defined some aspect of the role of the Department. The report also does not attempt to identify all the legislation, Cabinet decisions, etc. that allocate some responsibility for Canada's international activities to another agency or department of the Government and which thus, indirectly, affect the role of the Department of External Affairs. There are many such acts and decisions.

This document is intended to provide a concise survey of a field where no such compilation had apparently been made before. No attempt is made here to draw conclusions about the adequacy or inadequacy of the mandate of the Department of External Affairs. That cannot be done on the basis of the texts alone but must take into account what kind of role the Department is expected to perform and what role it is actually performing now; and on those questions, enquiry is still proceeding.

If any errors of fact are detected by recipients of this report, it would be much appreciated if they could be communicated to the editor so that a correction sheet can be issued.

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