

Canada is a constitutional monarchy whose monarch is not in permanent residence. Queen Elizabeth II lives in Britain. Her Majesty's title as Queen of Canada is not the same as her title in her other realms, and the fact that the same person is the monarch of several countries in no way implies that any of them is subservient to any other; all are equal in law and practice.

In Canada the Queen's personal representative is the governor general, whose salary and expenses are paid exclusively by Canada. The office has evolved from colonial days, when he genuinely governed, to its present status, which is analogous to that of the constitutional monarch he represents. The governor general is the head of state; in the Queen's absence, he performs all the formal and ceremonial functions which the Queen would perform if she were present, and he remains aloof from the partisan politics that are a necessary accompaniment of the government of a liberal democracy.

The landmark that defined the modern status of the governor general was the Imperial Conference of 1926. Before that, the governor general was not only the representative of the monarch but also, in law, the agent of the government of the United Kingdom. His functions as a representative of British interests had been declining since Canada was created in 1867, but,

even so, for a quarter of a century after 1926 the governor general continued to be appointed, though on Canadian advice, from among citizens of the United Kingdom who had British titles. Since 1952, the governor general has been appointed from among Canadians, and a convention has developed whereby the office is filled alternately by bilingual persons from English- and French-speaking backgrounds. Most, so far, have come to the position from distinguished careers in Canada.

#### *Constitutional duties*

The governor general's constitutional duties derive both from custom and the British North America Act, which says in part: "The Executive Government and Authority of and over Canada is hereby declared to continue and be vested in the Queen"; and "There shall be One Parliament for Canada, consisting of the Queen, an Upper House styled the Senate, and the House of Commons". As the representative of the Crown, the governor general is thus part of both the executive and legislative branches of the government and has important roles to play in both, for major executive and legislative acts are not legal without his participation.

Thus, though he acts on the advice of the prime minister, the governor general summons, prorogues and