

DUCTION

Modern Canada owes much to its diplomats. Although Britain handled most of Canada's international responsibilities in the first few decades after Confederation, in 1867, the Canadian government subsequently recognized the need for its own foreign ministry and established the Department of External Affairs in 1909. Following the Department's merger with the Trade Commissioner Service in 1982, its operations and mandate expanded in new directions, changes reflected in its current name, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. The transformation of the Department over the last century from little more than a glorified post office into a modern foreign and-trade ministry has mirrored Canada's own evolving role in the global community.

As Canada shed its colonial legacy and adopted a more independent foreign policy, the Department of External Affairs grew apace, periodically transforming itself to reflect the changing international context and the country's evolving foreign-policy priorities. By the 1930s, Canada had its own diplomatic posts in London, Paris, Washington, Tokyo, and Geneva, and had begun to develop a distinct approach to international affairs. After the Second World War, Canada's reach was almost global, reflecting its postwar commitment to an active and responsible internationalism. Since then, the men and women of the Department have continued to work at creating a mature and sophisticated foreign service that is capable, in the words of Canada's most famous diplomat, Lester B. Pearson, of "*punching above [its] weight.*"