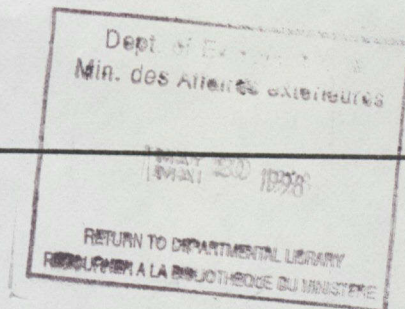




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# Reference Papers

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THE GOVERNOR GENERAL OF CANADA

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Canada is a constitutional monarchy which, like the other monarchies in the Commonwealth except for Britain, has no monarch in permanent residence. Queen Elizabeth II, by ancient custom, lives in Britain, and the Government of that country pays for the full support of the royal household. 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 analagous to that of the constitutional monarch he represents. The Governor General, that is, 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 men from English- and French-speaking backgrounds. All, so far, have come to the position from distinguished careers in the Canadian diplomatic service.

## 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