

It also distributes advance texts of statements and speeches by the Minister and assists Canadian journalists on assignments to foreign countries. It holds weekly press briefings on foreign affairs and deals with a continuing flow of requests for facts, comment, background briefings and interviews.

The Press Office provides posts abroad with timely reports of Canadian news and government policy to assist them in their dealings with the local press.

Posts Abroad

Canada's diplomatic missions and consular offices abroad form an integral part of the Department. Heads of diplomatic and consular posts report to the Secretary of State for External Affairs and receive their instructions from him.

The diplomatic staff of an embassy consists of the ambassador, assisted by one or more foreign service officers, who are also assigned consular duties to the extent required by the volume of consular work. Where separate consular offices exist, they operate under the general supervision of the head of the diplomatic mission in the country, while receiving instructions in matters of detail from the appropriate division in the Department.

Part of the work of a post is to distribute information about Canada. In a few places this is done by full-time information officers; elsewhere it is undertaken by other officers. Where there are no diplomatic or consular representatives, the trade commissioners or other Canadian Government officials stationed in the country do this work.

In some cases officers of other departments of the Canadian Government -- commercial, immigration, military, naval, air or others -- are attached to missions. Though responsible to their departmental heads in Ottawa, they also work under the general supervision and direction of the head of the mission.

The work of a mission abroad is:

- (a) to conduct negotiations with the government to which it is accredited;
- (b) to keep the home government fully informed of political and other developments of significance in the country in which it is serving;
- (c) to watch over Canada's interests in the country;
- (d) to serve Canadians in the country;
- (e) to make information about Canada available.

A constant flow of communications keeps the missions and the Department in Ottawa in close touch on all such matters.

Qualifications for the Service

Those entering the external service of Canada do so on a career basis under the merit system. Only Canadian citizens who have resided at least ten years in Canada are eligible for admission.

