

Honourable Louis St. Laurent as the first separate Secretary of State for External Affairs.

Early years

The Department began with a small staff consisting of the Under-Secretary (Joseph Pope), two chief clerks and four clerks. In 1912 an Assistant Under-Secretary was added and in 1913 a Legal Adviser.

The gradual recognition of Canadian autonomy in international affairs and the growth of Canadian responsibilities abroad made expansion inevitable. After 1920, it became increasingly evident that Canada's interests could no longer be conveniently handled by the British diplomatic and consular authorities. The new Department began to develop into an agency for the direct administration of Canada's external affairs.

In 1921, the Office of the High Commissioner in London was placed under the control of the Department. In 1925, a Canadian Advisory Officer (subsequently called Permanent Representative) was appointed to represent Canada in Geneva as various conferences and assemblies of the League of Nations and to keep the Canadian Government informed of the activities of the League and of the International Labour Office.

An advance of the first importance in the Department's development came as the result of an agreement reached at the Imperial Conference of 1926 by which the Governor General ceased to represent the British Government and became solely the personal representative of the Sovereign. This brought about two changes: (1) As the British Government was now without a representative in Canada, it appointed, in 1928, a High Commissioner to represent it at Ottawa; (2) after July 1, 1927, correspondence from the Dominions Office in London and from foreign governments was directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs instead of to the Governor General.

Representation abroad

Before the establishment of the Department, a high commissioner had been appointed to represent Canada in London (in 1880) and a representative in Paris (in 1882), neither of whom had diplomatic status. In addition, Canada was represented abroad in the closing years of the nineteenth century by trade commissioners and immi-