

Governor General's CorrespondenceIncoming Despatches

As has been explained, the Colonial Office, maintaining the established system toward the self-governing Colonies, regarded only the Governor General as the Imperial Government's agent and representative, and communicated solely with him. It appointed him, and sent him its Letters of Instructions; it instructed him how to advise and guide the Colonial Government in policy-making matters having any imperial or foreign implications. By secret, non-secret, confidential, and private despatches, letters and telegrams, the Governor General received advice from the Colonial Office, and then, according to the classification or at his discretion or on instructions, he communicated this to the Prime Minister or to the Privy Council for the use of the Ministers and Departments concerned.

Despatches from London, having been prepared generally by the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, or his assistants, but sometimes personally written by the Secretary of State, would, after signature by the latter, with a duplicate copy attached, be sealed and registered in the despatching room and placed in a diplomatic bag. Under the Instructions to the Governor General relating to correspondence, a schedule of the contents of each bag was also enclosed.

The volume of official correspondence received in Ottawa from London, emanating either from British Missions in foreign countries including the United States, or from sister Dominions, or from the British Government,