

British Columbia. In 1967, the government of British Columbia instituted regional government in the province and by January 1, 1972, 28 regional districts had been established. These regional districts are developing and are assuming responsibility for certain services from municipalities within their boundaries as well as providing services to previously unorganized areas. There are 31 cities, 14 towns, 59 villages and 39 districts. Districts are mostly rural although some adjacent to the principal cities of Vancouver and Victoria are largely urban in character. Municipalities are supervised by the Department of Municipal Affairs. In addition, there are unincorporated local districts supervised by the Department of Lands, Forests, and Water Resources that have been set up to provide certain municipal services such as protection, waterworks, irrigation, etc.

Yukon Territory and Northwest Territories. In the Yukon Territory, there are two cities, one village and three local improvement districts; the Northwest Territories includes one city, three towns and three hamlets. The local improvement districts in the Yukon and the hamlets in the Northwest Territories, although incorporated, are developmental forms of local government. Supervision of these municipalities is provided by the respective territorial governments.

3.6 External relations

3.6.1 Canada's international status

The growth of Canada's international status is reflected in the development of the Department of External Affairs. Until the 20th century Canadian negotiations with foreign countries were conducted through the British Foreign Office and dealings with other parts of the Empire through the Colonial Office; Canadian interests abroad were handled by British diplomatic and consular authorities and all Canadian communications to other governments went through the Governor General. The gradual recognition of Canadian autonomy in international affairs and increased Canadian responsibilities abroad made expansion of services and representation after 1920 not only inevitable but imperative. British diplomatic and consular authorities could no longer conveniently look after all Canadian interests. An important step in the evolution of the Department of External Affairs as the foreign service arm of the Canadian government resulted from an agreement reached at the 1926 Imperial Conference which changed the Governor General's role from that of representative of the British government to that of personal representative of the Sovereign. Britain, no longer officially represented here, appointed a High Commissioner to Canada in 1928; after July 1, 1927 correspondence from foreign governments, including that from the Dominions Office in London, was directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs (a portfolio held by the Prime Minister until 1946) instead of to the Governor General.

In the 1920s and 1930s Canada established diplomatic relations with Australia, Belgium, France, Ireland, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, South Africa and the United States and during the 1940s, with the wartime governments of Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Greece, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Yugoslavia functioning in London or Cairo, and with the Argentine Republic, Brazil, Chile, China, Cuba, Mexico, Newfoundland, Peru and the USSR. High Commissioners were accredited to India, Pakistan and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and subsequently to other countries as they became independent and joined the Commonwealth. In the 1960s, Canada also developed its diplomatic relations in the French-speaking world, particularly with the newly independent francophone states of Africa. Relying on a system of multiple accreditation, Canada now has ambassadorial links with all of the 21 francophone African countries. Diplomatic relations were established with the Holy See in 1969 and with the People's Republic of China in 1970. Today, Canada maintains formal diplomatic relations with all 20 countries in Latin America and has diplomatic, consular or trade representation in 127 countries.

Membership in international organizations has entailed establishment of other offices outside Canada. A Permanent Canadian Delegation to the United Nations in New York was set up in 1948; a year later a Canadian office was opened at the organization's European headquarters in Geneva. Now called Permanent Missions, these offices have since been expanded. As one of the founding members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949 Canada remains active in the Organization. When the NATO Permanent Council was established in 1952 a Canadian Permanent Delegation was set up in Paris (transferred to Brussels in