

REPORT OF THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, OTTAWA

The Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING, M.P.,
Secretary of State for External Affairs,
Ottawa.

SIR,—I have the honour to submit the customary Annual Report of the activities of the Department for the calendar year 1940.

OFFICES ABROAD

The following is a short review of the work of the offices abroad which are under the direction of the Secretary of State for External Affairs:—

Office of the High Commissioner for Canada, London

During 1940, largely as a result of the war, the work of the Office developed in many new directions. Existing conditions—especially those resulting from the bombing of London—imposed exceptional burdens on personnel and organization and made it necessary to take precautionary steps to meet war emergencies of various kinds. Among these was the maintenance of full A.R.P. services at Canada House. This meant the posting of roof-spotters during day “alerts”, while fire guards were on duty day and night.

For a time, enemy day bombing threatened to obstruct the work of the office, as “alerts” were so numerous. But this difficulty was overcome. When enemy planes were seen by the roof-spotter to be approaching the immediate area of Canada House, and only then, employees went to the Shelter—otherwise they remained at their work during “alerts”. As a result, very little working time was lost during air raids.

Canada House itself received some superficial damage as a result of bomb explosions near by, but it was singularly fortunate that this damage was not greater. A number of employees of the Office lost their homes, and in some cases their possessions also, as a result of enemy action. There were, however, no casualties.

Provision was made for the possibility of evacuating the Office from London if United Kingdom Government offices were forced to leave. All arrangements were made to carry on from a location in the country, which was furnished for that purpose. Suitable alternative office accommodation was also secured in London in case Canada House should be made uninhabitable by bombing.

The Office was in continuous touch throughout the year with the Department of External Affairs and other Departments regarding a large number of important questions directly connected with Canada's participation in the war. Many of these also involved close co-operation with the interested departments of the Government of the United Kingdom. The Office was in close, and indeed daily, co-operation with Canadian Military Headquarters and the Royal Canadian Air Force Headquarters in London, as well as with the representatives in London of the Department of Munitions and Supply who were installed at Canada House.