

Lester B. Pearson, Norman Robertson and Hume Wrong, who liked to discuss policy orally and consequently put less down on paper than they might otherwise have done. The reopening of posts and the establishment of new ones have added an additional reservoir of material and a wider exchange of views.

I joined the Department in September 1945 and left Ottawa for the Canadian Embassy in Rio de Janeiro in mid-December. Nonetheless, distant though I was from the scene of the main events of 1946 and modest as my position then was, the reading of Volume 12 has made me feel that I have been a participant in living history. A 30-year period of "confidentiality" having replaced the original 50-year period, all those who were in the Department in 1946 can now be participants. Probably this is why Volume 12 is of more interest to me than the other eight volumes I have looked through, even though earlier letters or memoranda have occasionally caught my attention.

The editor of the 1946 material states in his introduction, as had previous editors, that the selection of material has been entirely his own responsibility. Selection is a subjective process, commented the editor of Volume 5. It probably is but, to a simple reader like myself, the result is quite happy. Mackenzie King had referred to Canada on July 1, 1943, as a world power. It is as a rising middle power that Canada is shown in this postwar year - anxious to re-establish its international commercial and trade relations, so important to the Canadian economy, but uncertain whether it really wished to take action on issues in international forums that really did not concern it. Many of Canada's actions on those that *did* were taken multilaterally, particularly where its resources could help other countries. Canada's ascent to the status of middle power may have been caused partly by its participation, with the great powers, in the establishment of a United Nations commission on atomic questions.

As in previous volumes, each chapter in Volume 12 opens a new subject, starting chronologically as early in 1946 as necessary. As this was a year when there were transfers of the top officials, the reader may be a bit confused. Lester B. Pearson, who had been Canadian Ambassador to the United States, returned in October to replace Norman Robertson as Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs. Robertson went to London as Canadian High Commissioner, replacing Vincent Massey, who had returned to Canada in May. Also in October, Hume Wrong, who had been the Associate Under-Secretary of State for External Af-

fairs, left for Washington as Canadian Ambassador. Fortunately, the editor has included two charts, one on the organization and personnel at headquarters and the other on posts and personnel abroad. A selection of photographs is also included as part of the historical record.

There was one other major change in 1946. In 1912, three years after the beginning of External Affairs, the Prime Minister of the day, Sir Robert Borden, assumed the additional portfolio of External Affairs. It was only in September 1946 that a separate head of the Department was appointed - Louis St Laurent, then Minister of Justice.

There are several memoranda in Volume 12 about the pros and cons of appointing a separate Minister for the Department. There is much discussion today of the "right" of the Canadian public to access to government information. In 1976, Canada acceded to the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. This covenant provides for the right of everyone "to receive and impart information". It also adds that the exercise of these rights carries with it special duties and responsibilities. Policy memoranda that put, in the dictionary definition, "a summary of the grounds for or against an action" - often ending up with advice for or against the various alternatives - would lose their value if they had to become instantly accessible to the general public. Premature disclosure, before policy can be decided upon, can be hampering to the most astute official. The confidential nature of many of the External Affairs memoranda adds to their value.

It is probably the policy memoranda in the various volumes that will have the most interest for me, enabling me to note the influences that bear on the proposed alternatives or on the final decisions. We are only one of several countries that publish a series of foreign policy documents, and it would be an interesting study to read the 1946 material from the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office or the U.S. State Department.

In May 1969, Prime Minister Trudeau announced in the House of Commons a policy of transferring to the Public Archives from the Cabinet Secretariat and from departments and agencies of government records that were more than 30 years old, so that they could be made available to the public under the normal rules of access in force in the Public Archives. Annual transfers were to be made in subsequent years. The Prime Minister also suggested that, for records less than 30 years old in the custody of departments and agencies, controlled access might be permitted in special cases.