

1896  
—  
1909

## “A SORT OF FOREIGN OFFICE”

It soon became apparent that these arrangements were hopelessly inadequate. Although most diplomatic correspondence passed through the hands of Under-Secretary of State Joseph Pope, who took office in 1896, it was quickly scattered among various government departments in Ottawa. The shortcomings of this ad hoc system were painfully revealed during a dispute with the United States over the Alaska boundary: important documents sent to the Department of the Interior could not be found, and Pope had to



<sup>4</sup> Frustrated by the backlog of Canada–United States issues that occupied much of his time, the British ambassador to Washington, James Bryce, suggested in 1908 that Canada needed “a sort of Foreign Office.” He is seated here with Goldwin Smith (left), a journalist and historian who questioned Canada’s viability as a nation. (Source: Library and Archives Canada, PA-029197)