

of this volume these despatches remain unintelligible unless read in conjunction with the official minutes, submissions and records of trade-offs. When taken in total they do provide the record of Canadian policy-making but such a record cannot be produced within the confines of a single volume. Ultimately it is the historian who must discover the way through this labyrinth when all international documentation is made available. Undoubtedly he will discover that there are differences of opinion or different versions of what the Government wanted communicated, what the Ambassador did communicate, and what the foreign government thought the Canadian Ambassador communicated.

The preparation of briefing papers and final reports on international conferences had always been very dependent upon the time available to the authors thereof. In 1946, conference agendas overwhelmed the Department. The files are replete with half-finished and draft commentaries that never reached the delegation in the form intended. The writing of the lengthy background sections of the briefing papers was assigned to junior officers who offered little indication of Canadian policy. In some instances this was because there simply was none but more often those senior officers responsible for policy initiatives carried them in their own heads. From the few available briefing papers, extracts dealing only with Canadian policy have been reproduced here. As for reports on international conferences, some of the more general reports of delegations to the various conferences held under the auspices of the United Nations have already been published. Only extracts from previously unpublished reports have been included in this volume. The standard format for the unpublished reports included an assessment of the leading personalities at the conference, a description of the issues under review, and an assessment of the impact of the results on the future of the organization. In this format the contents of the delegation report differed little from a good newspaper account. In vain one looks for some indication of how the delegation assessed the impact of the proceedings on Canadian policy objectives. These reports are more useful for understanding international rather than Canadian external relations as part of the wider scene. Although these conference briefings and reports can be located in various collections and files, the most comprehensive set is located in the Conference Report Series maintained by the Historical Division of the Department of External Affairs.

The dismantling of the war-oriented records management system and the designing of a new system would have caused little difficulty if it had not coincided with an enormous increase in the number of new subject files. During a similar period of expansion at the beginning of the war the Department's Records Section had found it impossible to maintain its yearly filing system. Therefore, in 1940, a new system was created and all subsequent documentation and new subject files were added to it. In time, these files collectively became known as the "40" series with, as adjuncts,