

Preface

June 1, 2009 marked the hundredth anniversary of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada. We have come a long way since our modest beginnings above a barber shop in downtown Ottawa. The department's emergence as a modern, dynamic foreign and trade ministry is a tale of accomplishment that we wish to share with all Canadians.

When the four colonies of British North America united to create Canada on July 1, 1867, the new country's future was by no means secure. Though Canada was independent in domestic matters, Britain retained control over its foreign policy. But during the half century after the Department of External Affairs was created, Canada's leaders and its people quietly but steadily took control of their foreign policy and their destiny.

As Canada shed its colonial legacy, the department grew apace. By the 1930s, Canada had its own diplomatic missions in London, Paris, Washington, Tokyo, and Geneva, and it had begun to develop a distinctive approach to international affairs. After the Second World War, the men and women of the department created a mature and sophisticated foreign service that was capable, in Lester Pearson's words, of punching above its weight. Following the department's merger with the Trade Commissioner Service in 1982, its operations and mandate expanded in new directions. These changes are reflected in its current name.

The growth of the department over the last century has mirrored Canada's own evolving role in the global community. Ours is a history of adapting to new realities in our country and around the world. The documents in this book tell a story of transformation which we are proud to celebrate.

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