

While the first Bill creating the Department was under discussion, as has been indicated, Pope and Walker raised objections to the requirement of submitting an annual departmental report, for the reasons, first, that this was not a revenue earning Department, and second, because external affairs were matters often confidential, and the progress-reports on diplomatic negotiations should not be made public. The objections, however, were overborne, and reports, though reticent and brief, were regularly issued.

They very tersely summarized the subjects of external negotiations during the previous fiscal year; made no comments on problems of departmental administration; included as annexed schedules lists of all foreign consuls or consular agents in Canada, with their ranks, dates of appointment, and location; full passport regulations and a list of all persons issued with Canadian passports during the year; and a list - each year slightly longer - of the staff of the Department; (this latter list was discontinued in 1914, but remained in the Auditor General's annual reports).

Note: According to traditional government practice, these annual reports were issued in blue paper covers, the customary "blue books", which is still characteristic of most of the Canadian Government reports. In the nineteen-forties, however, when Mr. L.B. Pearson was Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, an innovation was introduced of issuing these reports in multi-coloured covers, doubtless with the object of making them more attractive to the reader, both at home and abroad. An effort also was made to brighten their style and readability without sacrificing succinctness and economy.