
PREFACE

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"Although the foreign policy of any country must from time to time be adapted to changing circumstances, there are in it continuing threads which represent the ideals, as well as the interests, of a people. A knowledge of past policy is therefore of value not only to scholars who study and interpret Canadian history but also to those who seek a broader understanding than a knowledge of current events can provide."

Paul Martin, Secretary of State for External Affairs,
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This book, and the conference that gave rise to it, underline concretely the value that we attach to our past and the inspiration that we draw from it. Initially established in 1909 as little more than a mailbox for diplomatic correspondence, the Department of External Affairs quickly came to occupy a prominent place in the machinery of government in Canada. Between its creation and 1945, it played an important role in the country's transformation from a small, colonial state on the periphery of world affairs into a confident middle power ready to shoulder its international responsibilities.

The people who oversaw this transformation were a remarkable group of men and women, who helped determine the values and traditions that define the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade today. One of the most important early influences on the Department was O.D. Skelton, a former dean of arts at Queen's University, who served as under-secretary of state for external affairs from 1925 until his death in 1941. During his 16 years with the Department, he established a tradition of rigorous recruitment standards that emphasized a distinguished scholarly