

Historical Division

In addition to tasks involving historical research and selection of materials for publication, the Historical Division incorporates Library Services, an Archives Section, and the Departmental Press Clipping Service.

The Division has been engaged for some time in the selection, compilation, editing and publication of documents illustrating Canada's external relations. A series of volumes is projected, beginning chronologically with the establishment of the Department in 1909; the first volume, covering the period from 1909 to the end of the First World War, is nearing completion. A second volume will deal exclusively with the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, with subsequent volumes illustrating succeeding periods in the history of Canada's external relations.

In addition to this "state papers" project, the Division undertakes historical research as required in support of the activities of the Department. Assistance is given to scholars working on official research projects for other government departments, and, as facilities permit, to private scholars to the degree permitted by current restrictions on access to official documents. This assistance occasionally takes the form of the reading of manuscripts, the correction of factual errors, and the provision of pertinent background information.

The main function of the Archives Section is the preservation and appropriate disposition of material permanently required for historical and other purposes. This includes an examination of Departmental records valuable for research work and the correlation of source materials. Many of these have been systematically indexed and made available to the Department for reference and research purposes. Responsibility for the systematic retirement of large quantities of obsolete files, both in Ottawa and at posts abroad, was transferred during the year to the Registry Division.

The Press Clipping Service reads, clips and distributes press items of topical interest to the Department, to the office of the Secretary of State for External Affairs and to certain other officials upon request. It examines a wide and representative selection of Canadian and other newspapers and periodicals for the purpose.

Library Services

The Departmental libraries hold for circulation to members of the Department valuable collections of some 15,000 books in Ottawa, about 60,000 in posts abroad, and many thousands of periodicals and pamphlets on international affairs. One major responsibility of Library Services is the provision of periodical literature, newspapers, reviews and specialized publications to foreign service officers and other members of the Department in Ottawa and at the posts abroad. Including air-mail editions of newspapers and periodicals for circulation in Ottawa and overseas, the cost of subscriptions absorbs three-quarters of the library budget.

The Departmental Library in Ottawa also supervises the establishment and growth of library units varying in size and importance in all posts abroad. When a new mission is opened, a basic library of *Canadiana* (some 450 books) is provided, with subscriptions to newspapers and periodicals relevant to departmental work. In addition to books and periodicals provided by the Department in Ottawa, the missions are at liberty to purchase locally, within a fixed budget, books, newspapers and periodicals essential to their work. Publications of the Queen's Printer are also forwarded on a generous scale.