

17. Personal
Character

Certain facets of Sir Joseph Pope's interests and character have been given above, at some length, because they help to portray the man who, from 1909 to 1925, directed the Department of External Affairs.

He had his human faults and foibles, and a sensitive and prickly side to his nature. In another chapter, dealing with his frustrations and discontents in office, some of these characteristics are indicated, but many of his provocations came from circumstances outside of himself. To some degree they induced an irascibility which was difficult to temper. Possibly his long and wide experience in his own special fields had developed an ego which made him sometimes dogmatic and in some directions bigoted. He was so sure of his own views that he took umbrage at any crossing of them. He was also so keen as regards the duties and efficient operation of his office that any inefficiency or delay - even in respect to the location of documents in the files - frustrated and irritated him.

At times these displays of petulance or impatience made him appear to his staff autocratic and domineering; Lord Curzon in the Foreign Office was noted for the same defect. Both were perfectionists and meticulous in their offices, and impatient when things did not go smoothly and expeditiously. This mannerism of Pope tended to intimidate his staff somewhat. W.H. Walker, whom he evidently appreciated and respected, was a very calm, quiet and gentle subordinate; and F.M. Baker, often