



Witnesses to History

By Janice Cavell

What Was Said: Departmental historian Janice Cavell, assisted by researcher Mark Eaton, spent the last year sifting through historical records and choosing 120 key documents that tell DFAIT's centennial story. These official telegrams, diplomatic notes, personal letters and other items (including a poem addressed by a disgruntled diplomat to Lester B. Pearson) have been put together in a book, which will soon be printed. They document everything from the founding of the department and the rise of Canada's foreign service to famous world events observed at close range. *Our World* excerpts a few highlights, as they were written.



Joseph Pope

Marcel Cadieux

Ottawa, March 23, 1908

Governor General Earl Grey writes to Colonial Secretary Lord Elgin about establishing a small department of external affairs, headed by Under-Secretary of State Joseph Pope:

"We have only three men in the Government Service who have any knowledge of details connected with Canada's foreign relations. One drinks at times, the other has a difficulty in expressing his thoughts, and conversation with him is as difficult as it is to extract an extra tight cork, and the third is the Under Secretary of State, Pope, a really first-class official. Not a day should be lost in putting him in charge of a Department of External Affairs under Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and in a short time he would be able to train one or two young men who would take up his work after he has gone."

Paris, April 10, 1934

Thomas Stone, second secretary in Paris, sends Under-Secretary O.D. Skelton one of the few first-hand accounts of the rise of Nazi Germany written by a Canadian diplomat:

"Nazi Germany is the only Germany I have seen. To say the least, it is an incredible country. The organization, the disciplinary measures, the slogans, the uniforms, the rules and regulations which are being imposed upon a people who are showing themselves more and more each day completely susceptible to a unanimous acceptance of fanatically nationalistic and selfish ideas, leave one gasping."



Hitler Youth drummers at a Nuremberg rally in 1934

Montreal, 1949

Marcel Cadieux, then head of personnel, offers advice to young Quebecers aspiring to diplomatic careers:

"Diplomats... are specialists in negotiation, in examining foreign conditions and in protecting Canadian interests abroad. They leave behind their families, their friends and their homeland to go where duty calls. French Canadians tend to be homebodies. They are very devoted to family life. The requirements of service often force them to make significant sacrifices."

Beirut, November 9, 1954

A communiqué from Elizabeth MacCallum, Canada's first female head of post, following her appointment as chargé d'affaires to Lebanon:

"The wives of two diplomats—two of the most charming women I have met here—suggested to me on separate occasions that, contrary to the local practice, I should make a point of calling on their husbands and themselves simultaneously on the occasion of my first official visits. Lady Chapman-



Elizabeth MacCallum