

XIII. Administration

THE rapid development of the Department in recent years is probably best shown by comparing its 174 employees and 8 missions abroad in 1939 with its present staff of 1,253 and its 44 offices. This general expansion has increased the administrative responsibilities in a corresponding measure. No longer can a small Administrative Division handle adequately the varied duties which must be undertaken.

During 1948 a major reorganization of the Records Branch of the Department had taken place. During 1949 a start has been made toward meeting the long apparent need for an orderly examination of the records of the Department, which had been accumulating undiminished since its establishment in 1909. An Archives Unit has been set up to examine and classify material in the Departmental records with a view to releasing space required for current records through a policy of systematic retirement of obsolete material. The general plan is to retain material of historical value and files for use in the Department largely by transfer to the Public Archives and, under suitable authority, to destroy purely routine and ephemeral material for which the Department has no further use. In addition to providing needed storage space in Ottawa for current material, it is hoped gradually to extend the scope of this work to records kept in posts abroad, particularly those which have been in operation for many years and have a large accumulation of obsolete records.

While the retirement of obsolete material is the most urgent task, the Department has begun to examine its records in the light of their use for research work and the preparation of important source material.

A reorganization of the administrative side of the work has continued during the year. Further progress in the re-alignment of duties between the Administrative and Personnel Divisions has been continued with the organization of the Personnel files into a separate Registry. Moreover, where possible and desirable in the interests of proper management, separate Sections in the Administrative Division have been created under officers who can give constant attention to the tasks specially assigned to them.

One section established during the year is that charged with the responsibility for the management and administration of the large number of properties in which the Department has an interest. This Properties and Supplies Section has the initial responsibility for problems of accommodation both at home and abroad, the study of plans and recommendations submitted in connection with buildings