

Historical Affairs

University professors under contract to the Department as resident historians have continued to edit the Government's basic diplomatic records for publication in *Documents on Canadian External Relations*. Six volumes have now appeared, bringing the story up to 1939. Work on the wartime and early postwar records is well-advanced.

Controlled access to the Department's records since the Second World War continues to be granted to researchers whenever possible. In addition, round-table discussions of current topics of interest to academics and other researchers are now being conducted on a regular basis with departmental officers. Such meetings have been of considerable benefit to scholars in making information available about recent events affecting Canadian foreign policy, while at the same time giving departmental officers access to the views of knowledgeable authorities from outside Government circles.

As a result of pilot projects conducted last year, academics and newspapermen are now regularly involved as interviewers in oral-history projects with former ministers and senior officers influential in the formulation and conduct of Canadian foreign policy. Planning is going ahead to broaden and deepen research facilities and publishing activities in the historical field for the benefit of academics and other scholars interested in the development and evolution of Canadian foreign policy.

Information

Through its Information Division, the Department is responsible for Canadian Government public information activities abroad. Such activities are intended to support all the main programs of the Government abroad, including trade and travel promotion and immigration, as well as the objectives of the Department of External Affairs itself. In essence, the aim of such information programs is to inform, realistically, foreign individuals, influential groups, and governments about Canada and Canadian Government policies on a wide range of questions of common concern. It is hoped that these audiences, having been so informed, will be better able to support or at least understand the country, its people and its aims.

Foreign public information activities, which are undertaken by all diplomatic and consular offices, include: the distribution of a wide range of specially-produced publications in both Canadian languages and a variety of foreign languages; the use of audio-visual materials such as films for public showings or television and radio production, as well as the creation and use of exhibits and displays on general or specialized Canadian themes or subjects. An active program of visits to Canada by "opinion-formers" (journalists, broadcasters, academics, and prominent citizens) has been developed, with considerable success, to study specific subjects of interest or to obtain a general background about Canada.

The Information Division is also responsible for a small but growing program of providing information within Canada about the foreign policy aims and objectives of the Government and about the work of the Department of External Affairs. Increasing numbers of interest groups and private inquirers have used this foreign policy information service.

During 1973, the Department completed an in-depth study of Canadian public information activities abroad. Widely-varying proposals for change were put forward and accepted by all departments and agencies concerned. A long-term plan based on known and anticipated needs was drawn up, calling for enhanced resource levels both at home and abroad. One of the principal changes proposed was the recruiting into the Department of a variety of specialist information officers. It is expected that these officers will provide the Department with communications professionalism, which is increasingly required in the modern world of public information programs.

The Department's long-term plan calls for the development of a capability to project and support Canadian policies abroad by multi-media means in both the short-term and long-term contexts. Canadian offices abroad will be better informed on Canadian happenings and Government policies and better equipped to disseminate such information. Because of the magnitude of the task and the limitations of the funds and staff resources immediately available, the "New Look" in information programs is to be phased over several years.