

departmental lists. Subject to these qualifications the departmental organization chart and the list of representatives abroad inside the back cover give as complete and as accurate a picture as possible.

The extent of the Department's expanded activities is illustrated in Table 1. Within the year the number of international agreements concluded had almost doubled, its budget had more than doubled, and its representation at international meetings and conferences had quadrupled. For these undertakings its staff was increased by twenty-two percent and demands were made for an even larger increase the following year. Each of these indices of growth caused unsettling adjustments that account for many of the shortcomings of the documentation presented in this volume, in addition to the indefinable gap left by the loss of fifty-nine potentially significant External Affairs files. Unfortunately the surviving records of other Departments involved in specific external operations seldom filled the vacuum.

More than the preceding volumes, this volume contains the memoranda of lesser officials. First because they throw light on the advice, whether followed or not, that was given to the principal actors. These memoranda allow for an appreciation of the stresses, assumptions and delusions under which the policy-makers laboured in the absence of their own record of decision-making. Secondly, they often contain the only statement on policy that was committed to paper by an official dashing off something for a departing delegation whose members had only recently learned of their appointment. Thus officers who only a few months before had received their initiation at the "University of the East Block" were liable to be asked for policy recommendations on subjects they knew little about and their superiors even less. One diarist at the time thus described his morning's work in the Department of External Affairs:

All morning a stream of interesting and informative telegrams and despatches from missions abroad comes pouring across my desk. I am tempted to read them all and to try to understand what is really happening, but if I do that I have not time to draft answers to the most immediate telegrams and despatches crying out for instructions. I must skim through everything with my mind concentrated on immediate practical implications. If I try to be objective and to comprehend all the issues I am lost. I draft telegrams and speeches under pressure, short-term considerations uppermost—"Will the Prime Minister sign this?"—"Are we not too short of personnel to be represented at this or that international meeting?" This is the way policy is made on a hand-to-mouth basis out of an overworked official by a tired politician with only half his mind on the subject.⁵

At the top, pyramids of memoranda and telegrams rose on the Under-Secretary's desk for weeks on end with only the most urgent being cleared off each day. A tradition of openness at the top meant that matters of immediate significance were settled orally among the senior echelon of officers. Paper work was too often tedious and superfluous. Robertson seldom committed his views to paper because he had easy access to the Prime Minister

⁵ Diary entry for September 7, 1945 in Charles Ritchie, *The Siren Years—A Canadian Diplomat Abroad, 1937-1945*. (Toronto: Macmillan, 1974), p. 208.