

PREFACE

On August 1, 1973, the Lester B. Pearson Building was declared open by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II of Canada. During the previous two months most of the Headquarters staff of the Department of External Affairs had slipped into the building on a scheduled series of smoothly executed weekend moves. This was a momentous event in the life of the Department which for many years since its establishment in 1909 had been dispersed in several buildings throughout downtown Ottawa, having elements of its operation in as many as 13 buildings at one time. It was a doubly memorable event for those who were able to exchange greetings with Her Majesty and express their joy and pride, however briefly, in their new building.

Many left behind their aging furniture and equipment. Some said goodbye to drafty corridors and dark offices to begin work in "landscaped" space. It was a new era for the Department; after years of effort and a decade of concentrated planning and construction, the building was ready to meet the ultimate test, that of occupancy.