

Introduction

It is now forty-two years since the first volume in the series *Documents on Canadian External Relations (DCER)* was published. To date, twenty-seven volumes have been completed, covering the period from the founding of the Department of External Affairs in 1909 up to 1960.¹ They amply document the political issues that occupied Canada's diplomats during those years, but inevitably, for reasons of space, many fascinating accounts showing the more human side of life in the department had to be excluded. This book combines some of the most vividly written and interesting documents from the published volumes, other more personal and colourful items selected from the wealth of material held at Library and Archives Canada, more recent records taken both from archival holdings and from the files still retained by Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, and a few articles that first appeared in the magazine *bout de papier*.

The task of selection was a challenging one. It would be impossible to include every significant event or person in the department's history in a single volume of publishable length. Moreover, so many Canadian diplomats have also been gifted writers that dozens of wonderful documents had to be reluctantly omitted. The material chosen is intended to illustrate as wide a range as possible of events, policy decisions, and personalities in Canadian diplomacy, along with a sense of what it was actually like to work both at headquarters and at posts abroad during the department's first century. As well, there are many eyewitness accounts of famous people and major turning points in world history. The documents are printed here in their original language, whether English or French.

For those who would like to know more about particular episodes, the published *DCER* volumes are widely available in university libraries, and many can also be found in electronic form on the department's website. The first two volumes of a history of the department, covering the periods 1909–1946 and 1946–1968, have been published in both English and French. The list of sources at the end of this book includes the primary and secondary works consulted when preparing the commentaries on the documents, a few other standard histories, and several memoirs from the earlier half of the department's first century. No effort has been made to provide a comprehensive list, since the literature on Canadian foreign policy is both rich and very extensive. Interested readers may wish to consult the chapter on "Foreign Relations and Defence Policy" in *Canadian History, A Reader's Guide, Vol. 2: Confederation to the Present* (University of Toronto Press, 1994), edited by Doug Owram. Readers should also be aware that many memoirs and other books of great interest have been published in recent years by former members of the department.