

Under the leadership of O.D. Skelton, Canada's foreign service grew in importance. As an academic, Dr. Skelton set the highest standards for recruitment. Many brilliant young Canadians tried External Affairs examinations in the 1920s and 1930s. Among his recruits were two future governors general, Georges Vanier and Jules Leger, one future Prime Minister, Lester Pearson, as well as many future distinguished diplomats. In 1991 the Department initiated the annual O.D. Skelton Memorial Lecture to mark his unique contribution to Canada's public life. Skelton is seen in the video with Mackenzie King on the verandah of the Prime Minister's Kingsmere Estate and with a young Lester Pearson.

With the outbreak of the Second World War, Canada sought more direct contact with its allies. Intelligence and censorship were added to the Department's mandate. This sequence shows Canada's first special recruits for the intelligence section. Note the increased number of women among the ranks.

A Growing Role for Canada

In this section of the video we see Canada emerging on the world stage. Mackenzie King is shown with Winston Churchill at a parade in Quebec City. Other shots show King, F.D. Roosevelt, and Winston Churchill at the Quebec Conference. We also see Canadian participation at the Atomic Bomb Conference in San Francisco in 1945. Canada often found itself in a crucial position between the various powers. The next series of shots begins with Lester Pearson being interviewed by reporter René Lévesque in London, Prime Minister John Diefenbaker with British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan at Oxford University; and Pearson conferring with Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nerhu.

Archival footage shows Pearson arriving in Norway prior to receiving the Nobel Prize.

The Lester B. Pearson Building, opened in 1973 by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, has received kings, queens, presidents and prime ministers from every corner of the world. In this sequence we hear part of The Queen's opening message. On the podium with her is Mrs. Pearson and Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau.