

of current events. This is particularly important in times of international crisis. From what you said in the House of Commons on April 24th, I know you are of the same opinion. Most of the official information on the rapidly changing international scene is communicated to the Canadian Government by telegram from the Dominions Office in London to the Department of External Affairs in Ottawa, and we cannot but admire the regularity and promptness with which these important and secret documents are sent to me for the Governor General's information.

These telegrams are, however, factual. They are of necessity curtailed in form, though remarkably explicit. They give a rapid and accurate survey of a situation as it exists at the time. They give no background against which that situation can be envisaged. They fulfil their purpose with unsurpassed lucidity and economy of utterance. On the other hand, they describe the situation as seen through the eyes of the United Kingdom Government only. They are a recital of what that Government is doing or going to do. They do not pretend to see the situation from any other point of view. They are supplemented, in due course, by printed copies of despatches which form a complete picture of the diplomatic relations between His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and other powers. These are also regularly sent to me for the Governor General's perusal. But I could wish that just as His Excellency is kept fully informed of the views and activities of His Majesty's United Kingdom Ambassadors and Ministers throughout the world, so also he should receive equally good information of the activities and opinions of His Majesty's Canadian representatives abroad.

In many respects despatches from these officials would be of greater interest and value to His Excellency than those from representatives of the United Kingdom Government, because they are more likely to express an independent opinion. They would be the views of trained diplomats who are not themselves often involved in the matters of which they write.

On this basis, the Minister in Tokyo might, for instance, quite legitimately disagree with the attitude of the British Ambassador on some question. The handling of a situation by the British Ambassador in Washington might in the opinion of the Canadian Minister be prejudicial to Canadian interests, and it would be his duty to inform the Government accordingly. Furthermore, there must be many matters which form the subject of general reports by Canadian Ministers, such, for instance, Their Majesties' recent visit and the situation in parts of China in which Canadian nationals are involved.

As long ago as December, 1936, I took up the question with Skelton, and you will remember that I wrote to you on the same subject in October, 1937, and it was agreed between us that important despatches would be sent to me. I fear that the stream has now completely dried up.

In 1938, we received five despatches from the High Commissioner in London, and no despatches from Washington, Paris, Tokyo, and Geneva.