

## INTRODUCTION

The pattern established in the first three volumes of *Documents on Canadian External Relations* is generally followed in this, the fourth volume. The criteria for selection set forth in the Introduction to Volume 1 have been adopted, except that a greater emphasis has been placed on the formulation of policy. To this end more memoranda and "personal" letters have been included. The Editor hopes that, as a by-product of the inclusion of these documents, something of the personality and character of the figures of the period will show through. The bilingual format introduced in Volume 3 has been continued, replacing the separate English and French editions of Volumes 1 and 2. The introductory pages, captions, footnotes and index are presented in both official languages, while the documents are presented in their language of origin. As in the preceding volumes, the vast majority of the documents are in English but the proportion of French documents has increased, reflecting the exchange of legations with France and the entrance of a number of French-Canadians into the Department's service. Document 504 represents probably the first time instructions on a major Canadian foreign policy decision were communicated in the French language.

During the years 1926-30 there were a number of important developments in Canadian external relations. The scheme to develop new forms and institutions which would permit the Empire to survive as an international unit had already suffered major reverses. The Imperial Conferences of 1926 and 1930 and the Conference on the Operation of Dominion Legislation, 1929, marked the final rejection of the project. These conferences hammered out the framework for the loose association of states that has become the Commonwealth of Nations, and they established the procedures whereby the Dominions could formulate and conduct their own foreign policy. The documents reflect a major shift in the Canadian role in this process. From her position in the vanguard in the establishment of Dominion rights, Canada had come to occupy a mediatory position between the Irish Free State and Britain, and to some extent the rest of the Dominions. The imperial relationship, nonetheless, remained the pivot of Canadian external relations and the crucial strategic consideration in the formulation of foreign policy.

Parallel to these changes in the imperial relationship was a growth in relations with the United States. The causal connection of these two features must remain a matter of conjecture and opinion but it appears that, as Canada came to handle her own diplomatic activities, she became more