

The Department of External Affairs announced today that it is transferring to the Public Archives of Canada the bulk of its records from 1909, the date of its foundation, to January 1, 1940. Its records from January 1, 1940, until January 1, 1942 are being readied and will be deposited in the Public Archives within the next few weeks. Subsequent periodical transfers are being planned in accordance with Government policy. Hitherto these records have been available to researchers from Departmental sources. These records complement the special collections of Departmental papers which have been deposited in the Public Archives from time to time.

The decision to transfer these historical records to the Public Archives is in keeping with the Department's desire to be of the greatest possible service to historians, researchers, and the Canadian public generally, who are interested in Canada's external relations and foreign policy.

In keeping with the Prime Minister's statement regarding access to governmental records in the House of Commons on May 1, 1969, the Department will continue to make its wartime records between 1942 and 1946 available for research. Owing to the bulk of these records (some 40,000 individual file folders) and since the Department's resident historians are themselves still using them for preparation of the series of Documents on Canadian External Relations, which the Department publishes regularly, requests for access to these records should be addressed to the Director, Historical Division, in order to ensure ease of reference and effective service.

As for its records since 1946, the Department will maintain the practice in effect since May 1, 1969, of permitting controlled access thereto so as to help to provide for the Canadian public, whenever possible, accurate and authoritative historical accounts of important aspects of Canada's external policy and its role in international affairs.

The Department will also continue to arrange for interested scholars, when possible, oral background briefings on policies and events having a bearing on Canada's external relations. Requests for such assistance should be addressed to the Director, Historical Division, as should all queries regarding access to Departmental records less than thirty years old.