

for submission to whoever happens to be minister for external affairs it takes a long time to read them, and one has to discuss them with his colleagues. It frequently happens that two or three matters all of first rate importance came to the attention of the minister in a single day. How on earth a man is going to be able to carry on the burden of first minister when he has at the same time to keep in mind everything affecting questions raised by cablegrams from various parts of the world, I do not know. . . It is true that the permanent officials of the department are excellently qualified for the positions which they occupy. One hesitates to say this in the presence of the Under-Secretary [Dr. O.D. Skelton], but he has had wide experience and an excellent training, and he brings to bear on all these questions an understanding which would not be that of the average man. Nevertheless the fact remains that he is overworked. . .

Compare conditions to-day with what they were not so very long ago. For instance, in Lord Salisbury's time he used to write very important dispatches with his own hand. It is recorded that the dispatch that was written on the Behring Sea matter to Mr. Blaine was written in Lord Salisbury's own hand. He used to write his dispatches at Hatfield over the week-end. Lord Curzon also wrote some of his dispatches. In these days the system is a very simple one. When a dispatch reaches the minister for foreign affairs it has passed through the hands of highly trained men; in fact, they know much more about the subject, apart altogether from questions of policy, than does their chief." (1)

Mr. Woodsworth added just a brief and final word before the proposed item was agreed to. He said:

I have sometimes thought that the Department of External Affairs, in the last year or two, has been called upon altogether too much to do all sorts of odd jobs, as for example on various commissions. We ought to have a very much larger number of men with wide economic training who would be capable of handling economic and international affairs. (1)

In a debate a few days later, on March 2, 1936, dealing with the League of Nations, Miss Agnes C. MacPhail said:

(1) H. of C. Debates, February 28, 1936, pp.654-658.