

Dr. Skelton was an extremely modest man, who preferred to work behind the scenes, and who was as self-effacing as he could be. He was also an indefatigable and conscientious worker, but lacked the propensity for delegating work to others, or the desire to build up a corps of assistants beyond what was absolutely necessary, preferring to deal, so far as physically possible, with all matters, both political and administrative, himself. In this he constantly over-worked himself. For the first year or two, therefore, with the exception of the appointment of Mr. Desy as Counsellor, he did not encourage expansion of the Department. How far he was also inhibited by the economically-minded and Parliamentary-sensitive Prime Minister, Mr. Mackenzie King, is difficult to assess.

However, with the beginning of full diplomatic representation abroad in 1927, it was found to be necessary to strengthen the headquarters staff at home; and from then on additional officers were gradually acquired, some for Departmental service at home, and several for training for the new posts abroad. A system of special Foreign Service examinations was introduced as a means of obtaining the most qualified men.

Examination System

Both senior appointments, over which the Prime Minister - Secretary of State for External Affairs would normally be consulted, and junior clerical appointments which may or may not have been referred to the Prime Minister, had to be made with the approval of and under the direction of the Civil Service Commission, and normally candidates for appointment - unless being transferred from another government department - had to pass Civil