

the secret "s" series and the top secret "50,000" series. This system did not lend itself to the new divisional structure introduced into the Department in 1944 but the Records Section held on in expectation of a respite at the conclusion of hostilities. Instead of a respite, the Section acquired an even greater volume of work. Whereas in the past a single subject could be confined to an easily identifiable group of files, such broad subjects as disarmament and atomic energy were scattered throughout many groupings. Because despatches were filed by subject, references to numerical sequences had little value and subsequent renumbering and dividing of files further complicated the dispersion of the numerical sequence. By 1948 the single centralized system gave way to decentralized sub-registries for each division. In the interval covered by these documents the user will encounter the deficiencies produced by this overstrained system. A researcher may now use the Department of External Affairs' key word index to uncover the most appropriate files.

In addition to the tradition of oral communication that detracted from the files, individual officers in seeking to speed their own work and make it more effective, circumvented the less efficient central registry by maintaining working files of their own. Officials were more interested in making history than in the records of history. The number of undated or unsigned pages in the files gives evidence of this. Whether these pages represent the idle thoughts of a junior officer or approved policy is seldom evident. Since both British and American officials were in the habit of informally passing unidentifiable typed drafts of statements on Canadian policy to Canadian officials, even the origin of the document is sometimes in doubt. Unfortunately these documents have had to be omitted because of their anonymity. The diplomat who once knew has either forgotten or died.

Another major deficiency in the Records Section that has a bearing on this volume was its inability to develop a successful means of integrating post and Ottawa files for the preservation of as complete a record as possible. From the preponderance of Departmental paperwork in the files the reader might conclude that the Ambassador or High Commissioner played an insignificant role in the carrying out of policy directives. A complete set of records might confirm this but it would be speculative without the confirmation of post files. The working files of Canadian missions in London and Washington alone have been preserved with any regularity and these have been partially integrated with the other files or deposited as separate collections in the Public Archives of Canada. The few fragmentary documents from Paris and Tokyo that have found their way into the files only lead one to wonder about the rest. Ottawa was kept informed of the successful diplomatic initiatives but what has happened to the working papers of unsuccessful, diplomatically inspired initiatives, and inter-post correspondence? Canadian delegations to international conferences often deposited their working papers with the closest Canadian post. The value