



PUNCHING ABOVE OUR WEIGHT

A History of the Department of Foreign
Affairs and International Trade

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PUNCHING ABOVE OUR WEIGHT

19-084-144

Dept. of Foreign Affairs
Min. des Affaires étrangères

DEC 3 2009

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Catalogue number: 978-1-100-10170-5
ISBN FR5-30/2008E
Also available in French

FRONT COVER PHOTOS, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:

Robert Borden, Winston Churchill, London, 1917
Norman Robertson, W.L. Mackenzie King, London, 1941
John Diefenbaker, Charles de Gaulle, Ottawa, 1959
Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Chou En-lai, China, 1973

BACK COVER PHOTOS, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:

Flora MacDonald, New York, 1979
Wendy Gilmour, Afghanistan, 2006
Susan Schwab, David Emerson, Ottawa, 2006
Stephen Harper, Hamid Karzai, Ottawa, 2006

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INTRO

DUCTION

Modern Canada owes much to its diplomats. Although Britain handled most of Canada's international responsibilities in the first few decades after Confederation, in 1867, the Canadian government subsequently recognized the need for its own foreign ministry and established the Department of External Affairs in 1909. Following the Department's merger with the Trade Commissioner Service in 1982, its operations and mandate expanded in new directions, changes reflected in its current name, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. The transformation of the Department over the last century from little more than a glorified post office into a modern foreign and-trade ministry has mirrored Canada's own evolving role in the global community.

As Canada shed its colonial legacy and adopted a more independent foreign policy, the Department of External Affairs grew apace, periodically transforming itself to reflect the changing international context and the country's evolving foreign-policy priorities. By the 1930s, Canada had its own diplomatic posts in London, Paris, Washington, Tokyo, and Geneva, and had begun to develop a distinct approach to international affairs. After the Second World War, Canada's reach was almost global, reflecting its postwar commitment to an active and responsible internationalism. Since then, the men and women of the Department have continued to work at creating a mature and sophisticated foreign service that is capable, in the words of Canada's most famous diplomat, Lester B. Pearson, of "*punching above [its] weight.*"



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¹ The British high commissioners for the Treaty of Washington, 1871. Seated left to right: Sir Stafford Northcote, Earl de Grey and Ripon, and Sir Edward Thornton; standing left to right: Lord Tenterden, Sir John A. Macdonald, and Montague Bernard. Macdonald's participation reflected the expectation that the new Dominion of Canada would be involved in treaty negotiations that affected it directly. (Source: Library and Archives Canada, C-002422)

1867

1896

DIPLOMATIC BEGINNINGS

The union of the four British North American colonies—Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick—into the new Dominion of Canada on July 1, 1867, created a country best described as a semi-autonomous member of the British Empire. Canada's founding constitution, the *British North America Act*, said nothing about the conduct of international relations except to affirm Canada's duty, "as Part of the British Empire," to fulfill the obligations incurred under treaties between the Empire and foreign countries.

However, as the country's first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, quickly discovered, advancing Canada's national interests required representation abroad, starting in Britain itself. Macdonald wanted an independent voice in London, since all correspondence between Canada and the "Motherland" passed through the hands of the governor general, who was at that time an official named by the British government. Consequently, in 1869, Macdonald appointed his former finance minister, Sir John Rose, who had become a London banker, to the informal position of a "gentleman . . . with whom Her Majesty's Government may properly communicate on Canadian affairs."

Rose promoted emigration to Canada, lobbied British officials on behalf of Canada, and reported on matters of interest to Ottawa. The Prime Minister wanted more. In 1878, Macdonald tried to appoint a "resident minister" in London, but the British objected to the quasi-diplomatic connotation of the title. Instead, the position of Canadian high commissioner was created in 1880, and Sir Alexander Galt appointed to the post.

Ottawa added a second overseas post in 1882, after the Province of Quebec appointed Hector Fabre as its representative in Paris. The federal government soon named him as its commissioner responsible for emigration and trade matters, even though the office in Paris spent a good deal of its time promoting cultural contacts between French-speaking Canadians and France.

Nevertheless, trade and immigration remained the main reasons for most Canadian diplomatic activity in the final years of the 19th century. The high commissioner in London took part in commercial negotiations with European countries and also represented Canada at international conferences, though without full diplomatic status. Trade was given even greater prominence with the creation of the Department of Trade and Commerce in 1892, followed by the appointment in 1894 of John Short Larke to Sydney, Australia, as Canada's first trade commissioner.



² Sir Alexander T. Galt served as Canada's first high commissioner to London from 1880 to 1883. (Source: Library and Archives Canada, PA-013008)

³ Though he served as the Province of Quebec's official representative in Paris, Hector Fabre also acted for the federal government on trade and emigration matters. (Source: Library and Archives Canada, PA-026613)

1896
—
1909

“A SORT OF FOREIGN OFFICE”

It soon became apparent that these arrangements were hopelessly inadequate. Although most diplomatic correspondence passed through the hands of Under-Secretary of State Joseph Pope, who took office in 1896, it was quickly scattered among various government departments in Ottawa. The shortcomings of this ad hoc system were painfully revealed during a dispute with the United States over the Alaska boundary: important documents sent to the Department of the Interior could not be found, and Pope had to

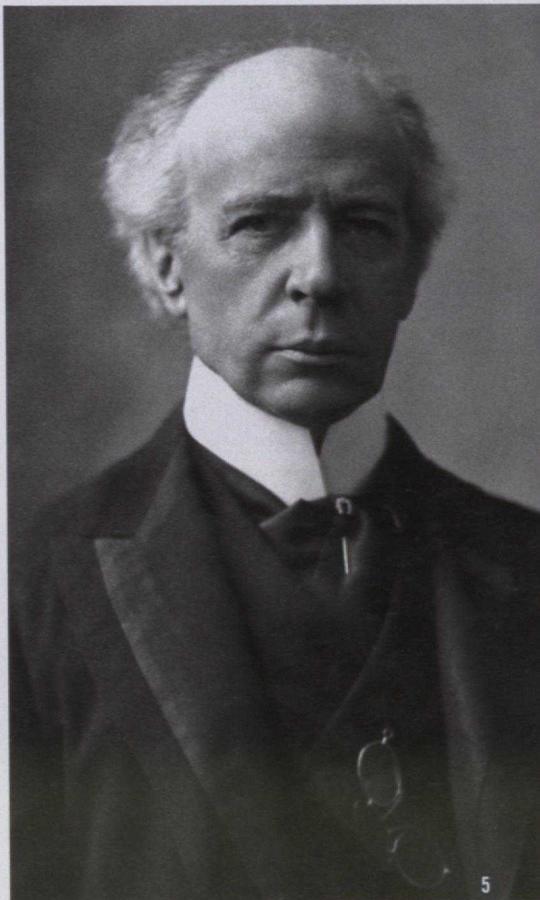


⁴ Frustrated by the backlog of Canada–United States issues that occupied much of his time, the British ambassador to Washington, James Bryce, suggested in 1908 that Canada needed “a sort of Foreign Office.” He is seated here with Goldwin Smith (left), a journalist and historian who questioned Canada’s viability as a nation. (Source: Library and Archives Canada, PA-029197)

request copies from the British. Embarrassed by this incident, Pope became an advocate of a separate department under the prime minister that would coordinate what he termed “the external affairs of the Dominion.”

Pope soon gained powerful allies. Both Governor General Earl Grey and the British ambassador in Washington, James Bryce, were appalled by the existing situation. Bryce was particularly anxious to clear up a backlog of Canadian–American cross-border issues, which occupied three-quarters of his embassy’s time. Canada, he felt, badly needed “a sort of Foreign Office” to handle such issues. Grey agreed, observing that such a department would make Canada “prompt and satisfactory to deal with, instead of the swollen impossible cork, the extraction of which almost bursts a blood vessel.”

Following the 1908 general election, and after much badgering, the Prime Minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, finally agreed to create the new department. The resulting legislation did not meet with universal approval from its principal proponents. Pope worried that the new department’s prestige would be hurt by placing it under the secretary of state rather than the prime minister. Grey was upset by a clause giving the new department the “conduct” of official communications with other countries. This, he felt, downgraded both the imperial connection and the position of the governor general. The legislation went forward as drafted, however, and, after a perfunctory parliamentary debate, the *External Affairs Act* came into effect on June 1, 1909.



⁵ Sir Wilfrid Laurier, prime minister from 1896 to 1911. (Source: Library and Archives Canada, PA-027977)

1909

1921

AN INAUSPICIOUS START

The new Department of External Affairs began life in poky offices above a barber shop at the corner of Queen and Bank streets in central Ottawa. Both Pope and Grey had wanted it in the East Block of the Parliament Buildings, the centre of power and the most convenient locale—"it might as well have been in Calcutta," Grey bitterly complained—but space could not be found. Nor was it needed. The tiny Department consisted of only six people: its first minister, Secretary of State Charles Murphy, his under-secretary, and four clerks. It functioned primarily as a document clearance centre.

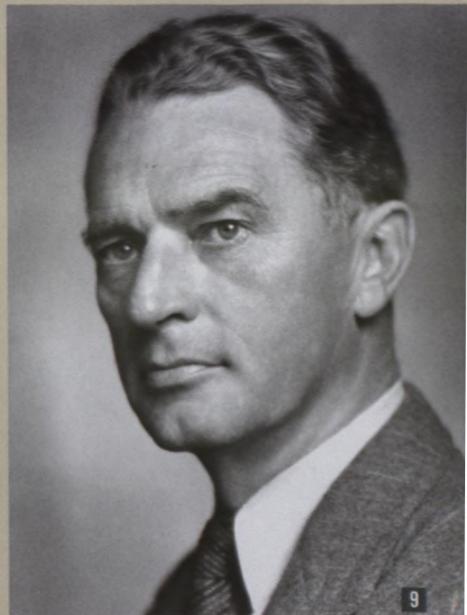


⁶ The Department began life in poky offices above a barber shop in the Trafalgar Building at the corner of Queen and Bank streets in central Ottawa. (Source: Library and Archives Canada, PA-008934)

⁷ In 1914, the Department moved to better quarters in the East Block of the Parliament Buildings, which remained its headquarters until 1973. (Source: Library and Archives Canada, PA-009423)

The Department's first under-secretary, Joseph Pope, was staunchly loyal to the British connection and had no desire to see Canada undertake its own foreign policy; if the *External Affairs Act* had any autonomist implications, Pope was not the man to assert them. Nor did he assume such a role when the Conservatives under Robert Borden assumed office in 1911. Even though the Department was placed directly under the prime minister in 1912 and transferred to the East Block two years later, Pope's limited role did not change. Instead, Borden, who was determined to play a greater role in imperial affairs, turned for advice to a brilliant young Canadian lawyer, Loring Christie.

In 1913, Christie was appointed the Department's first legal adviser, working directly with the Prime Minister and providing him with arguments to support his demand for a greater voice in imperial councils. This was especially true after the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914, when Borden increasingly insisted that Britain consult the Dominion prime ministers on the course of the conflict. Christie helped Borden attain his goal through membership in the Imperial War Cabinet and, in 1919, at the Paris Peace Conference, where Canada gained independent membership in the new League of Nations.



⁸ An early proponent of a separate ministry to coordinate Canada's "external affairs," Sir Joseph Pope served as the Department's first under-secretary, from 1909 until 1925. (Source: Library and Archives Canada, PA-110845)

⁹ Loring Christie, shown here in a 1939 photo, joined the Department as its first legal adviser in 1913, providing his minister with arguments to support Ottawa's demand for greater autonomy. (Source: Yousuf Karsh, Library and Archives Canada, PA-174532)

Nevertheless, while the war increased the Department's paperwork dramatically, its functions remained circumscribed as Ottawa hesitated to expand Canada's diplomatic presence. The Canadian War Mission in Washington, which had opened in 1918 to deal with supply matters, was unceremoniously

closed in 1921. While the government considered replacing the War Mission by appointing a Canadian minister to the British Embassy, Borden did not act, and his successor, the imperially minded Arthur Meighen, opposed the idea. Greater diplomatic activity would have to wait.



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¹⁰ Prime Minister Robert Borden (seated fourth from left) at the 1917 Imperial War Conference in London. Canadian sacrifices during the First World War drove Borden to seek greater control over Canada's foreign policy. (Source: Library and Archives Canada, C-000241)

1921

1930

KING AND SKELTON

The election of a Liberal government under William Lyon Mackenzie King in 1921 brought a change in the direction of Canadian foreign policy. Whereas Borden had sought to advance Canadian interests by playing an active role within the British Empire, King, alarmed by the domestic divisions created by the imperial connection during the First World War, was determined to obtain more room to manoeuvre and to seek greater autonomy for Canada.

Suspicious of Christie's close Conservative connections, King froze the legal adviser out of any substantive role in foreign policy

until he resigned in disgust in 1923. King also ignored the aging Joseph Pope, and cast about for someone who could build him a proper foreign ministry. He knew that he had found the right man as early as 1922 when he attended a lecture on "Canada and Foreign Policy" by O.D. Skelton, a political scientist (and Dean of Arts) at Queen's University. After serving as King's adviser at the Imperial Conference of 1923, and as a member of the Canadian delegation to the League of Nations in 1924, Skelton became under-secretary in 1925.

Skelton's first objective was to build a department that could function as a true foreign ministry and support the Prime Minister's priority to seek a more autonomous role for Canada abroad. As well, Skelton came to fill Christie's role as chief adviser on foreign affairs and, indeed, eventually became King's trusted confidant in all areas of government business. Both his capacity and his appetite for work were legendary.



¹¹ O.D. Skelton joined the Department in 1925 as its second under-secretary and set out to establish a professional foreign service. Here, Skelton (left) is shown en route to Europe in the early 1930s with one of his first recruits, the young Lester B. Pearson. (Source: Library and Archives Canada, PA-117595)

¹² Jean Désy and American George Warren at an International Labour Conference in Geneva, Switzerland. (Source: Library and Archives Canada, PA-182706)



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¹³ The Canadian delegation to the 1926 League of Nations General Assembly. Front row, seated from left to right: Sir George Foster, Sir Herbert Ames, Philippe Roy, and Walter Riddell. (Source: York University Archives)

Skelton began by appointing Jean Désy from the Université de Montréal as the first senior francophone officer at headquarters. In January 1925, King's government opened an office in Geneva under Walter Riddell to deal with the International Labour Office and the League of Nations. However, King's precarious position as head of a minority government made him unwilling to court criticism by expanding his own department too rapidly.

That constraint was removed when King's Liberal party won a majority in the September 1926 federal election. Later that fall, at the Imperial Conference in London, Canada and the other Dominions won the right, later enshrined in the *Statute of Westminster*, to establish diplomatic missions abroad. King quickly appointed Vincent Massey as the first Canadian minister in Washington. Following this appointment, the office in Paris was raised to legation status and a

legation was opened in Tokyo. Although the missions abroad were headed by political appointees, Skelton set about creating a modern foreign service based on merit.

From 1927, recruits entered the Department—with occasional exceptions—on the basis of competitive examination. Skelton wanted, and obtained, well-qualified officers with postgraduate degrees who could immediately undertake important duties. Among those who entered the Department in the late 1920s were such future luminaries as Lester Pearson, Norman Robertson, and Hugh Keenleyside.

By 1930, the Department's officer staff at home and abroad numbered 16, of whom a third were francophone, although the working language of the Department, like that of the civil service generally, was English. Too small to afford specialists, the Department favoured generalists, a preference that it was to sustain for many years. King was pleased with what he now considered "the most conspicuous and in some respects the most important department of government."



¹⁴ The Canadian delegation to the 1926 Imperial Conference in London helped secure the right of former British colonies to an independent foreign policy and their own missions abroad. Left to right: Minister of Justice and Attorney General Ernest Lapointe; Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs W.L. Mackenzie King; industrialist Vincent Massey; and Peter Larkin, high commissioner to the United Kingdom. (Source: Library and Archives Canada, C-001690)



15



16



17

15 Canada House. In the mid-1920s, Parliament approved the acquisition and renovation of a neoclassical building in London's Trafalgar Square, where the office of the Canadian High Commissioner moved in 1925. (Source: Library and Archives Canada, PA-127557)

16 Offices of the Canadian legation in Paris, circa 1925. (Source: Library and Archives Canada, PA-127556)

17 The north façade of the Canadian legation office in Tokyo, 1934. (Source: Library and Archives Canada, PA-120404)

1930
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1935

THE BENNETT YEARS

The election of a Conservative government under R.B. Bennett in 1930 might have spelled trouble for Skelton and his Department. The Conservatives remained more attached to Britain and notions of imperial unity than either Skelton or King. Indeed, Bennett had sharply criticized the opening of the new legations, which he believed weakened the diplomatic unity of the British Empire. What Canada needed abroad, the new Prime Minister declared as the Great Depression

of the 1930s set in, was trade commissioners, not diplomats. As fiercely partisan as King, Bennett entered office determined to get rid of Skelton. However, he soon discovered that Skelton was indispensable and retained him in his position, an outcome made possible by Skelton's impeccably non-partisan conduct.

Nevertheless, the Department could not escape the effects of the Depression. The government's priorities obviously had to be



¹⁸ Prime Minister Bennett drew on the Department's economists for help expanding Canada's external trade during the Depression of the 1930s. Bennett (middle) is shown here greeting Britain's Lord President of the Council, Stanley Baldwin (left), and Neville Chamberlain (right), chancellor of the exchequer. (Source: Library and Archives Canada, C-81448)



economic and trade-oriented. Fortunately, the Department, whose officers included several trained economists, was in a position to play a supportive role. This was particularly evident during the 1932 Ottawa Imperial Economic Conference, which tried to revive trade among the members of the British Empire, and in bilateral trade talks with the United States later in the decade.



¹⁹ Prime Minister Bennett, shown here with U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, visited Washington in April 1933 to discuss bilateral economic issues. (Source: Library and Archives Canada, C-000198)

²⁰ Prime Minister Bennett is pictured here in the Privy Council Chamber speaking on the telephone to Sir George Perley, who was attending the British Empire Trade Fair in Argentina. (Source: Library and Archives Canada, PA-188949)

1935

1939

THE RETURN OF KING

King and Skelton quickly re-established their harmonious relationship when the Liberals returned to office in 1935. Despite his loyal service to Bennett, Skelton's own views on international affairs were closer to King's, though the Prime Minister, ever attuned to public opinion and his own predilections, drew back from the more extreme neutralist and anti-imperialist attitude of his under-secretary. As the spectre of war in Europe loomed larger with each of Hitler's triumphs, King never doubted that if war came, Canada would again be "at Britain's side."

Within the Department, Skelton's neutralism was shared by some, though not all, of his officers. But the most important fact shaping Canadian foreign policy during the final few years of peace was King's determination that, though he would continue to rely on Skelton's advice, the Prime Minister would "lead and not be controlled."

As the Depression eased in the late 1930s, Skelton hoped to expand the Department's representation in Europe, across the emerging Commonwealth, and throughout Latin America. But King and his Cabinet were unenthusiastic about increased spending on diplomatic posts. As the threat of war stalked Europe and Asia, the Prime Minister worried too about being drawn into embarrassing situations abroad that might generate domestic divisions and endanger Canada's national unity. Although a minister was appointed to Belgium in 1938, with dual accreditation to the Netherlands, expansion remained slow.

Skelton was more successful on other fronts. He managed to secure the appointment of career foreign-service officers as heads of post, which was essential to his concept of a truly professional and modern foreign service. By 1939, only London and Washington continued to be headed by political appointees.

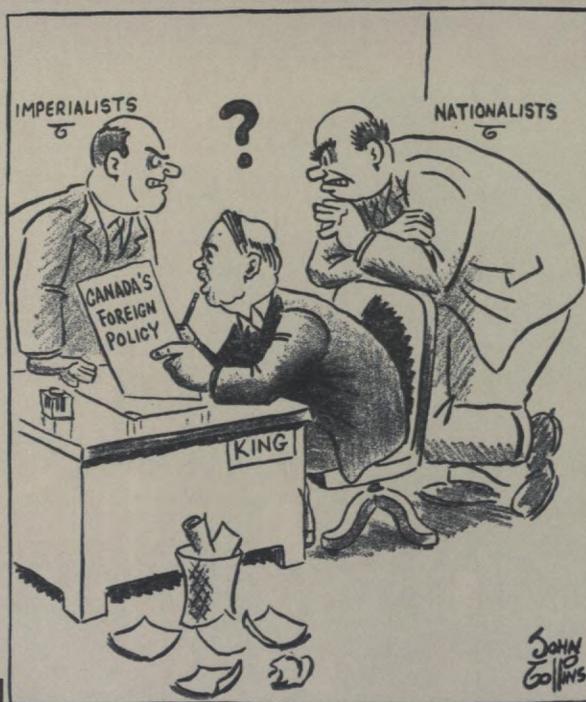


21 Prime Minister Mackenzie King, leaving the Chancellery in Berlin on June 29, 1937, during his unsuccessful peace mission to Nazi Germany. (Source: Presse Illustrationen Hoffman, Library and Archives Canada, PA-119008)

The under-secretary also convinced the Prime Minister to expand the Department in Ottawa during the late 1930s, when eight new officers joined, six of them by competitive examination. Unfortunately, the organization of the Department did not keep pace. All officers in Ottawa continued to report directly to Skelton, whose inability to delegate meant that he was overworked, while junior officers were often idle. "There wasn't all that [much] work," recalled Jack Pickersgill, who joined the Department in 1937. "When I went into External Affairs . . . after I read *The New York Times* through in the morning and decoded a couple of telegrams . . . I wondered what to do next. I gathered that there was a sort of ripening process that went on . . . but you didn't ripen much if you never saw anybody."



Admired for his policy advice, Skelton was castigated as an administrator by observers in Ottawa's small diplomatic community. In 1939, Lester Pearson declared the Department to be, "in one crude phrase . . . in a mess." The onset of war that September would place even greater strains on the Department's inadequate administrative structure and on the under-secretary.



TRYING TO PLEASE BOTH

²² Prime Minister Mackenzie King continued the Bennett policy of expanding trade relations with the United States. This photo shows the Prime Minister (right) and American representative Norman Armour signing the Canada-United States Trade Treaty in Ottawa on June 17, 1939. (Source: Library and Archives Canada, PA-188945)

²³ Prime Minister Mackenzie King faced the threat of war as fascism advanced across Europe and Asia. His cautious foreign policy, designed to avoid divisive debates within Canada, often frustrated the Department, which was anxious to expand Canada's diplomatic reach. (Source: John Collins, *The Gazette* [Montreal], April 24, 1939)

THE DEPARTMENT AT WAR

The outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939 transformed the Department at home and abroad. The government moved immediately to establish missions in Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, and South Africa, all close Commonwealth allies. A consulate, the first office of this type, was hurriedly opened in Greenland in 1940 to monitor the situation there in light of the importance of its cryolite mines to the Allied war effort. The following year, a high commissioner was sent to Newfoundland because of the strong American military presence there, and a consulate opened in the neighbouring French islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, which were of strategic importance.

Following the German blitzkrieg in Europe, the posts in Belgium, France, Switzerland,



²⁴ Major-General Georges P. Vanier in Algeria in 1944. (Source: Library and Archives Canada, PA-166092)

²⁵ The war encouraged closer Canada–U.S. cooperation on continental defence and led to the establishment of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence (PJBD). This picture was taken during a PJBD meeting in Ottawa on August 26, 1940. Prime Minister Mackenzie King is seated in the middle, with H.L. Keenleyside, secretary of the PJBD's Canadian section, standing at far left. (Source: Library and Archives Canada, C-005767)



and the Netherlands were closed and staff evacuated, often under harrowing circumstances. In 1942, a mission under Georges Vanier was established in London to the many European governments-in-exile, and new posts were opened in the Soviet Union and China, allies in the vast war against fascism. Finally, a consulate general was opened in New York in 1943, in part to provide accurate information to Americans about Canada's role in the war.

With access to Europe sharply curtailed, Latin America now assumed new importance as a market for Canadian exports and a source of supplies. Over the course of the war, Ottawa opened missions in Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Peru, Cuba, and Venezuela.

The outbreak of war also meant a great increase in the Department's responsibilities in Canada. It quickly became involved in a

26



27

²⁶ In October 1942, Dana Wilgress, a former deputy minister of trade and commerce, became Canada's first minister (and later ambassador) to the Soviet Union. He is shown here with Montreal businessman R.A. Davies (right) in front of the Canadian mission in Moscow in 1944. (Source: Library and Archives Canada, C-075254)

²⁷ Norman Robertson, who became under-secretary in 1941, is shown here with Prime Minister Mackenzie King (right) in 1944. Robertson reorganized the wartime Department, turning it into an arm of modern government for the first time. (Source: Library and Archives Canada, C-015134)

host of new problems, including the control of enemy and neutral aliens in Canada, the protection of Canadians in war zones, and questions of censorship and intelligence. The Department also played an important role in shaping policy on economic warfare and was deeply involved in monitoring contraband, overseeing trade in strategic goods, and supervising enemy ships in Canadian ports.

Fifteen additional officers, five of whom were francophone, were recruited in 1940–41 to handle these new priorities. Clerical staff increased more than fivefold. Unfortunately, the Department's rudimentary administrative structure failed to keep up and most work still flowed through the under-secretary's office. Overworked, Skelton suffered a heart attack and died at the wheel of his car in January 1941. "There is no question," King wrote in his diary, "that so far as I am personally concerned, it is the most serious loss thus far sustained in my public life and work."

Skelton's successor as under-secretary was Norman Robertson, who mirrored his mentor's strengths and weaknesses: a first-rate policy adviser, he was a poor administrator. When Pearson returned to the Department from London in 1941, he found it "a hive of unorganized activity."

Other officers, however, were more administratively minded. Both Hume Wrong and Hugh Keenleyside presented plans to reorganize the Department into an arm of modern government, capable of aligning its activities to address the country's new wartime priorities. Open to change, Robertson presided over a reorganization of the Department, with divisions based on geographic or functional specialty and a chain of command making possible the delegation of authority from above.



²⁸ The war led to a national labour shortage, forcing the Department to hire qualified women to do the work of junior officers. Women, however, remained ineligible to become foreign-service officers until 1947. Shown here is Agnes McCloskey (foreground) in the early 1940s. (Source: Yousof Karsh, Library and Archives Canada, PA-187411)

²⁹ H.L. Keenleyside (left), appointed Canadian ambassador to Mexico in 1944, is greeted by Mexican President Miguel Alemán. (Source: Library and Archives Canada, C-049402)

Although foreign-service recruitment was put on hold during the war, it became easier for staff to delegate as the Department's middle ranks were strengthened by the appointment of special wartime assistants, who were drawn mostly from the academic community, with a few coming from business and journalism. To make up for the lack of new recruits, the Department for the first time began to hire women, who were at that time ineligible to become foreign-service officers. Twelve women joined the Department in 1942–43. They did the work of junior officers, but were classified as clerks at 60 percent of the salary—a manifestly unfair situation.

All these changes—expanded representation abroad, the arrival of Robertson, and improved organization—produced a

Department that was open to new ideas and bolder action, the need for which became more apparent as the war progressed. This was especially true after the United States entered the war in December 1941 and Canada's relative importance declined. Led by Wrong and Robertson in Ottawa and Pearson in Washington, the Department provided the intellectual arguments for a stronger Canadian voice in world affairs. Advancing "functionalist" principles, which held that a country's contribution should be the basis for its role in leading international activity, Canadian diplomats successfully demanded an appropriate say for Canada in the Allied war effort and in shaping the world's new international organization, the United Nations.



³⁰ The Canadian delegation to the United Nations Conference, San Francisco, May 1945. From left to right: C.S.A. Ritchie, P.E. Renaud, Elizabeth MacCallum, Lucien Moraud, Escott Reid, W.F. Chipman, Lester B. Pearson, J.H. King, Louis St. Laurent, Prime Minister W.L. Mackenzie King, Gordon Graydon, M.J. Coldwell, Cora Casselman, Jean Désy, Hume Wrong, Louis Rasminsky, L.D. Wilgress, M.A. Pope, R. Chaput. (Source: Nicholas Morant, Library and Archives Canada, C-022719)

1946
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1957

EXPANSION AND RECRUITMENT

Canada emerged from the Second World War stronger and more united than ever, while much of war-ravaged Europe and Asia struggled to rebuild. Recalling the world's hesitant response to economic depression and the rise of fascism in the 1930s, Canadians and their leaders were determined in 1945 to participate in shaping the world in which they lived.

The new order was reflected in changes at the top. In September 1946, an aging Prime Minister King turned the Department of External Affairs over to his Quebec lieutenant and favoured successor, Louis St. Laurent. At the same time, Pearson returned from Washington, where he had been serving as ambassador, to become under-secretary. Two years later, when King at last retired, St. Laurent succeeded him as prime minister and Pearson, joining the Cabinet, took over as secretary of state for external affairs. This duo, who would dominate the Department and Canadian foreign policy until 1957, shared a passionate commitment to a responsible and active internationalism.

Under Pearson and St. Laurent, the Department grew by leaps and bounds as Canada shouldered the international obligations expected of a country of its size and wealth. Building a new world order spawned a host of international organizations, including the UN and its various bodies. In January 1948, General Andrew McNaughton was appointed Canada's first permanent delegate (later permanent representative) to the UN in New York. A resident mission to the UN's European office in Geneva was set up a few years later.

The UN's early promise, however, faded as the Communist Soviet Union and its East Bloc allies confronted the Western democracies in the burgeoning Cold War. The mounting tension gave Eastern Europe,



³¹ The UN proved an insufficient guardian of international security in the face of Communist aggression in the 1940s. One of the first democracies to seek a regional security agreement, Canada played a leading role negotiating the North Atlantic Pact. Hume Wrong, Canadian ambassador to the United States, signed the treaty for Canada in April 1949. (Source: Harris-Ewing, Library and Archives Canada, PA-124427)

³² Decolonization heralded the emergence of the multiracial Commonwealth and prompted Canada to extend its diplomatic reach to Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean. One of Canada's most important partners in the 1950s was India, where High Commissioner Escott Reid, shown here with Indian Foreign Minister Krishna Menon, worked hard to develop a "special relationship." (Source: Gopal Chitra Kuteer, Library and Archives Canada, PA-212088)

where Moscow was tightening its grip, new importance for Canada, and led Ottawa to open missions in Czechoslovakia and Poland in 1947, and in Yugoslavia a year later.

Also in 1947, Italy became the first of the former Axis countries to receive a Canadian mission, reflecting its growing importance as a potential Cold War ally. Two years later, the Department opened a mission in Bonn. In 1951, the mission was raised to full embassy status when Canadian troops on a mission for the recently created North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) arrived in West Germany to help deter a Soviet attack. The establishment of NATO's permanent headquarters in Paris the following year clearly required another new Canadian mission.

Decolonization, too, created a new set of related yet distinct global issues in the 1940s and 1950s that demanded a Canadian response. Shortly before India achieved independence in August 1947, John Kearney headed to New Delhi as Canada's first high commissioner in that country. This signalled Ottawa's commitment to the emerging nations of the Commonwealth and its evolving nature as a multiracial and multicultural organization. Missions to Pakistan, Ceylon (later Sri Lanka), and Indonesia followed over the next decade.

Canada was also busy elsewhere in Asia, where war erupted along the Korean peninsula in June 1950. As a result, Canada hastened to sign the Peace Treaty with Japan in 1951 and in 1952 raised its legation in Tokyo to an embassy in order to keep closer tabs on events in the Pacific. Two years later, at a conference in Geneva to address Cold War tensions in Asia, Canada was drawn still further into Pacific affairs. The invitation to join the three commissions established to supervise the uncertain peace in the former French colonies of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos soon placed enormous demands on the



³³ With the spread of the Cold War to Asia, relations with Japan became more important than ever. Herbert Norman, who opened a liaison mission in postwar Tokyo as the first step towards normalizing relations, is shown here with U.S. General Douglas MacArthur in 1947. (Source: Library and Archives Canada, PA-187690).

Department. Between 1954 and 1973, when the task finally ended, fully one-third of its staff served in Southeast Asia.

Retreating European empires created tensions and opportunities in the Middle East as well. In search of trade and an independent Canadian perspective in a corner of the world where decolonization and Cold War intrigue made for a deadly mix, External Affairs in 1954 opened offices in Egypt, Israel, and Lebanon.

While expanding into unfamiliar parts of the globe, the postwar Department was also active closer to home. Gaps in Canada's representation in Europe and Latin America were steadily filled during the late 1940s and 1950s. More important, working closely with the Department of Trade and Commerce, External Affairs embarked on a program of enhancing Canada's representation in the United States, which had clearly emerged as Canada's most important political and economic ally. By 1953, new consulates were opened in Boston, Chicago, Detroit, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Seattle.

Expansion was supported by a stepped-up recruitment program. When competitions favouring veterans ended in 1947, the Department again began to concentrate on the universities as a source of top-quality candidates. Women were finally admitted to the foreign service on the same basis as

their male colleagues. Five of the wartime women clerks became officers, while a sixth woman joined through the competition process. Although a few women were beginning to rise in the service—Elizabeth MacCallum became the first woman head of post in 1954 when she was sent to Beirut as *chargé d'affaires*—the prospects for women officers were not promising. The Department's long-standing expectation that women would resign once they married (on the grounds that they could no longer be posted abroad) only made the situation worse.

By 1956, the Department had 64 missions abroad, up from 26 only 10 years earlier. Its annual expenditures had increased from just over \$7 million in 1946–47 to \$60.3 million in 1956–57, and its total staff had grown from 770 to 1,701.

As the Department expanded abroad, it placed a new emphasis in Ottawa on developing the kind of strong organizational structure required by a ministry with an increasingly global reach. In selecting his successor as under-secretary in 1948, Pearson declined to choose a policy adviser; instead he recruited Arnold Heeney. Formerly clerk of the Privy Council, Heeney had earned a well-deserved reputation as a skilled administrator for his management of the Privy Council Office (PCO).

The new under-secretary quickly made his mark on the Department, adding new defence and security divisions to help respond to the pressures of the Cold War and beefing up the Department's information services. More important, Heeney's PCO experience gave him a broad understanding of government operations and the Department's place in them. He improved relations with the Treasury Board and the Civil Service Commission, encouraging the Department to adopt administrative and financial management reforms that were



³⁴ During the 1950s, changing social attitudes and the Department's expansion made it possible for women to move up the Department's ranks. Elizabeth MacCallum became Canada's first woman head of mission when she was appointed *chargé d'affaires* in Beirut in 1954. However, departmental policy excluded married women from serving as diplomats until the 1970s. (Source: Library and Archives Canada, PA-112766)

³⁵ A.D.P. Heeney, shown here with Lester B. Pearson in January 1949, was a skilled administrator who helped the Department modernize its operations in the early 1950s. (Source: Library and Archives Canada, PA-121702)

common elsewhere in Ottawa. He also insisted on closer relations with domestic departments. "Incredible as it may seem," Heeney later recalled, "there were some in External Affairs who conceived of the Department as something apart from the rest of the Civil Service, concerned with 'diplomatic' and 'political affairs' outside of Canada, rather than with trade or even economic policies."

After Heeney went to Washington as ambassador in 1952, he was succeeded by two short-term under-secretaries: L. Dana Wilgress, a former ambassador to the U.S.S.R. and high commissioner to Britain, who found he was not suited for the job, and Hume Wrong, who died of a heart attack shortly after assuming office. Pearson then appointed Jules Léger to the post in 1954. In selecting the 41-year-old Léger, Pearson hoped he had "a young and vigorous Under-Secretary, the

first from Quebec, and one who would normally be in the job for a long time, content, I take it, with the prospect of being a 'permanent' Under-Secretary and not a bird of passage to an Embassy."

The Department's success at implementing the government's foreign policy in the mid-1950s—most spectacularly during the Suez Crisis, when Pearson's peacemaking efforts resulted in his winning the Nobel Peace Prize—hid some disturbing trends. Canadians wondered about the growing American influence over Canada, and were alarmed when one of their diplomats, Herbert Norman, leaped to his death in 1957 following U.S. allegations that he was a communist. Many Anglo-Canadians worried too about the receding imperial connection, and they recoiled at St. Laurent's refusal to support Britain during the Suez Crisis. By the spring of 1957, there were signs that change was in the air.



36

³⁶ The Department's growth in the late 1940s and 1950s created an influential foreign ministry that punched above its weight, in the words of Lester B. Pearson. In this photo, Pearson holds a press conference during the Suez Crisis of 1956. Pearson was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1957 for his role in resolving the crisis. (Source: Duncan Cameron, Library and Archives Canada, PA-155557)

1957

1963

LEARNING
TO ADAPT

³⁷ This cartoon reflects the uneasiness felt in both the Department of External Affairs and the Diefenbaker government when the Liberal party's long hold on power ended in 1957. (Source: Les Callan Estate, Library and Archives Canada, e008443938)

In 1957, a tired Liberal government was defeated by the Progressive Conservatives under John Diefenbaker, who solidified his grip on power in the 1958 general election by winning a substantial majority of seats in Parliament. For the first time since 1930, the Department had to deal with a prime minister who was not sympathetic to its cause. Diefenbaker was deeply suspicious of External Affairs and its senior officers, whom he derided as “Pearsonalities.”

Although Diefenbaker had had some foreign affairs experience during his long parliamentary career, he (and his Cabinet colleagues) did not have Pearson's depth of knowledge and so faced a learning curve that the Department worked to accommodate. The Department had to adjust as well to the new Prime Minister's different priorities, such as his greater emphasis on the

Commonwealth and a fondness for harsh language on Cold War issues.

The process of adjustment was made easier when the clerk of the Privy Council, Robert Bryce, whom Diefenbaker came to trust, arranged for the first-ever appointment of a senior liaison officer to the Prime Minister's Office. Basil Robinson earned Diefenbaker's confidence, and was thus able to keep the Prime Minister aware of departmental thinking and keep the Department informed of what the Prime Minister wanted.

Diefenbaker himself took on the External Affairs portfolio until he could find a suitable minister. To do so he went outside his caucus, recruiting the president of the University of Toronto, Sidney Smith, a distinguished public figure.

When Jules Léger went abroad in 1958, Smith insisted on the return of Norman Robertson, whom he knew and respected, as under-secretary. Diefenbaker was wary of Robertson's long and close relationship with Pearson, who had become leader of the opposition, but eventually agreed in the face of Smith's persistent demands. Although he never won Diefenbaker's trust, Robertson was highly regarded by both Smith and by Smith's successor, Howard Green.

Sidney Smith died suddenly in 1959 before he had a chance to settle in, and Diefenbaker turned to his minister of public works, Howard Green, to replace him. Green, an experienced politician and prime ministerial confidant, had firm views on some aspects of foreign relations. He did not share Diefenbaker's suspicion of the bureaucracy, though he was by no means a captive to the views of his staff.

New priorities—some the result of changes in the international system and others reflecting the priorities of the minister and the Prime Minister—sparked a new round of

organizational changes in the Department in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

The growing importance of foreign aid and continuing problems with the administration of Canada's overseas programs, responsibility for which was divided among several departments, led to pressure for change in this realm. In 1960, Cabinet created the External Aid Office to administer Canadian aid programs more effectively and develop overall policy. Although the External Aid Office was independent of the Department, it did come under the authority of the secretary of state for external affairs, maintaining intact the link between foreign policy and foreign aid.

As decolonization advanced in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean in the early 1960s, it too had a direct impact on the Department's operations. Newly independent Commonwealth members almost automatically received Canadian missions—Ghana and Malaya (later Malaysia) in 1957, Nigeria in 1960, Jamaica, Tanganyika (later Tanzania), and Trinidad and Tobago in 1962.



³⁸ Jules Léger (left), who became the Department's first francophone under-secretary in 1954, with Sidney Smith, secretary of state for external affairs from 1957 to 1959. (Source: Library and Archives Canada, PA-214179)

³⁹ Howard Green, who served as secretary of state for external affairs from 1959 until 1963, became a passionate advocate of nuclear disarmament. He is shown here in November 1959 addressing the UN General Assembly on the effects of atomic radiation. (Source: UN Photo)

Green also thought it important that Canada be represented in francophone Africa, a region likely to interest French Canadians and one full of potential UN allies. The former Belgian Congo (later Zaire), where the UN sent a peacekeeping force with a large Canadian contingent in 1960, quickly became important, and a consulate general was opened in 1960, succeeded by an embassy in 1962. The number of ex-colonies was soon so great that the Department had to resort to the expedient of non-resident representation. A mission was opened in Cameroon in 1962, which covered off several states; posts in Ghana and Nigeria represented Canada in other countries.

The continuing instability of the Middle East in the wake of the 1956 Suez Crisis (when Canada sent a large peacekeeping force to Gaza and Sinai) kept that area in the forefront of departmental thinking. A mission was opened in Iran in 1958 and resident ambassadors were sent to Lebanon and Israel. Margaret Meagher, in Israel, became Canada's first woman ambassador in 1958.

The Conservative government was also interested in Latin America. Concern that a Latin American common market might harm Canadian trade interests in that quarter of the globe, combined with the region's heightened strategic significance following Fidel Castro's triumph in Cuba in 1959, meant that there were good reasons for Canada to increase its representation. As a result, an embassy was opened in Costa Rica in 1961 and accredited to Honduras, Panama, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. Beginning in September 1961, Guatemala was covered from Mexico City. As well, Ecuador was covered from Colombia, Bolivia from Peru, and Uruguay and Paraguay from Argentina.

The Department's experiences with multiple accreditation also proved attractive in Asia, where, in 1961, the government employed the high commissioner in Malaya to represent Canada in Thailand, an increasingly important recipient of Canadian aid.

Government restraint programs meant that the Department was at times short-staffed, even though the number of officers grew by 61 between 1957 and 1962. This placed a certain strain on the Department, even affecting the scheduled opening of some new missions. Recruitment of francophones continued to be a problem, and it was not until later in the 1960s that measures to increase the representation of francophones in the Department—and indeed, throughout the civil service—were implemented.



⁴⁰ Margaret Meagher became Canada's first female ambassador in 1958, when she was sent to Israel. She is shown here in 1958 inspecting troops in Jerusalem. (Source: Library and Archives Canada, PA-187692)

1963

1968

THE LIBERALS RETURN

The Liberals returned to power with a minority government in the spring of 1963. With Pearson as prime minister and Paul Martin, Sr. as the new secretary of state for external affairs, an experienced team was in charge of foreign relations. They maintained tight control over foreign policy, leaving the rest of the Cabinet with little opportunity to shape Canada's international relations. However, times had changed since Pearson led the Department in the 1940s and 1950s.

The broad domestic consensus on foreign policy had broken down by the early 1960s, and public opinion had become a much more important factor in shaping the government's foreign-policy agenda. This was especially apparent in the federal government's relations with Quebec, where Premier Jean Lesage's "Quiet Revolution" had brought national unity and Quebec's search for an increased international presence to the top of the policy agenda.

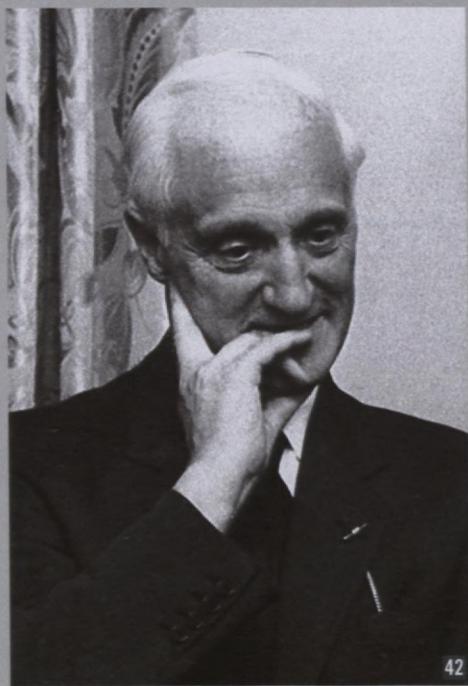


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⁴¹ In January 1965, the Canadian and U.S. economies were further integrated when Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson and President Lyndon Johnson signed the Canada-U.S. Auto Pact at the President's ranch in Texas. They are flanked by External Affairs Minister Paul Martin, Sr. (left) and U.S. Secretary of State Dean Rusk (right). (Source: AP Photo)

In 1964, Marcel Cadieux succeeded an ailing Norman Robertson as under-secretary. A staunch advocate of francophone rights and of a bilingual Canada, Cadieux was an uncompromising foe of separatism and of any attempt by the provinces, including Quebec, to usurp the federal government's role abroad. Both Martin and Cadieux made sure that the Department responded to French-Canadian aspirations for a foreign policy that reflected Canada's bilingual nature by pursuing closer relations with France and other francophone states, and by developing the Department's capacity to deliver cultural programs abroad.

Other changes in the Department reflected the conclusions of the extensive study of the federal government's operations undertaken by the Royal Commission on Government Organization (the Glassco



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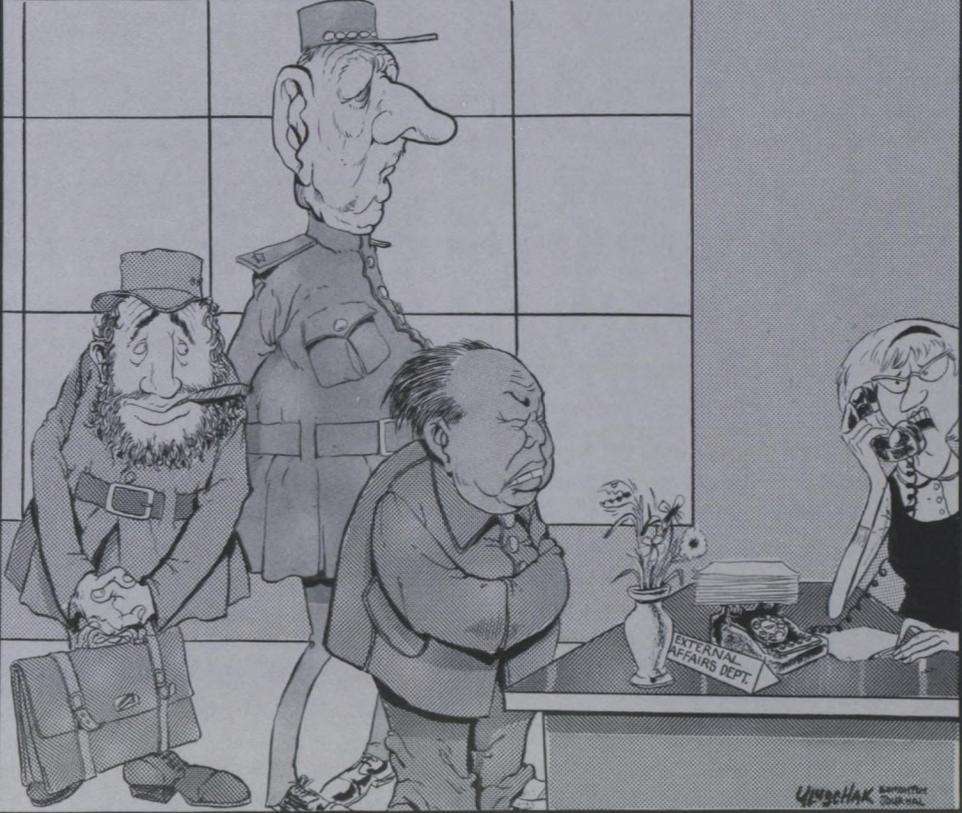


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⁴² Marcel Cadieux succeeded an ailing Norman Robertson as under-secretary in 1964 and held the post until 1970. (Source: Pauline Sabourin/Mike Kerr Photography)

⁴³ Cultural diplomacy became a more important element of Canada's overall external policies in the 1960s. Here, Canada's first resident high commissioner to Kenya, Margaret Meagher, presents a mini-bus to a school for the blind in Nairobi. (Source: *East African Standard* newspaper, Library and Archives Canada, e008440574)

CANADA SHOULD BRING IN OUTSIDE ADVISERS ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS — Stanfield



44

⁴⁴ The tough diplomatic challenges of the 1960s, which included Castro's Cuba, the unpopular American war in Vietnam, and trouble with France, prompted criticism and cries for reform from across the political spectrum. The caption reads: "Some gentlemen here volunteering their services as foreign affairs advisors. . . Also, a Mr. Allen Dulles called and intimated that he was available." (Source: Ed Ulschak, *Edmonton Journal*, April 26, 1968)

Commission). The Commission's study of the Department was very critical of its administrative structure and resulted in the most substantial reorganization since the Heeney reforms of the early 1950s. The reorganized Department placed a greater emphasis on forward planning, with a central planning unit established under a senior committee of assistant under-secretaries. At the same time, the Department began to group its various divisions into branches, beginning with the administrative side.

Under Martin and Pearson, Canadian representation abroad continued to grow at a dramatic pace. Diplomatic relations were established with 25 countries between 1963 and 1968, though many were of necessity covered by non-resident representatives. In the Middle East, Jordan and Syria were represented from Lebanon, and Kuwait from Iran. As the Cold War in Europe eased, Canada sought to normalize its relations with Eastern European countries, establishing relations with Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria.

In Asia, where the Cold War raged with new fervour as a result of the Vietnam War, a resident mission was opened in Thailand, with non-resident representation extended to South Korea, Nepal, and Afghanistan. Africa, too, remained an area of particularly rapid growth, with new posts opened in Ethiopia, Kenya, Senegal, and Tunisia, while numerous other countries received a non-resident representative. By 1968, Canada had 93 posts abroad and was represented

through non-resident accreditation in another 41 countries.

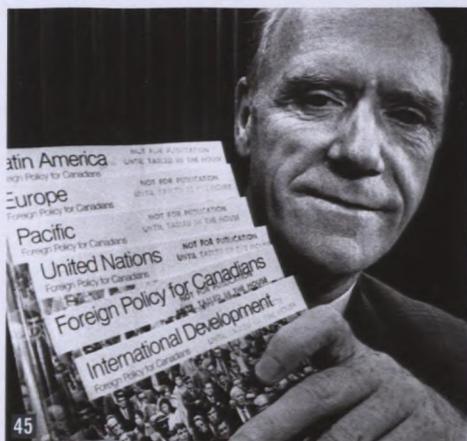
This steady growth, however, belied the trouble the Department faced at home. For the first time in its history, the Department faced severe criticism from Canadian journalists, pundits, and academics. A new generation of scholars was particularly hostile. Sympathetic to the left and increasingly politicized by such contentious issues as the war in Vietnam and growing U.S. investment in Canada, they challenged Canadian foreign policy and those who ran it. The Department responded with the tentative beginnings of an outreach program to universities, but budgetary constraints and scepticism on the part of senior officers reduced the effectiveness of the Department's public diplomacy.

Perturbed by the criticism, Pearson decided that a re-examination of Canadian policy was required, and pushed for a study in the face of opposition from Cadieux and Martin. In late 1967, Norman Robertson was appointed to head the inquiry. The Robertson Report, released in April 1968, supported the government's foreign policy and the Department's efforts. Robertson eschewed major changes, but cautiously concluded that there was a need for "a re-definition and perhaps some re-orientation of Canada's external policy." However, by the time the report was completed, Pearson had retired from politics. His successor was Pierre Elliott Trudeau, whose views on foreign policy were considerably more radical.

1968

1984

“NEW GUYS WITH NEW IDEAS”



“New guys with new ideas”—this was how Prime Minister Trudeau characterized his government. He came to office determined to question the assumptions of the past and take a fresh look at every government activity. He was not only critical of External Affairs, but he also openly mused that diplomacy as a career was outmoded: why were ambassadors necessary in an age of instant communications? Such views sent shock waves through the Department, which had difficulty understanding the enigmatic Trudeau. Over the next few years, the Department’s treasured status as one of the most important and influential departments in government was sharply diminished as Trudeau introduced new policy objectives and new ways of operating.

It came as no surprise that Trudeau rejected Robertson’s recommendations as nothing more than a defence of the status quo. He ordered another, more far-reaching review of foreign policy. This was met with deep scepticism in the Department and hostility from the traditionalist Cadieux. Because of time constraints, the first area studied was defence policy.

Departmental officials were appalled at the views of some Cabinet ministers, who favoured the withdrawal of Canadian troops from Europe and were even willing to consider pulling out of NATO. When it became obvious that maintaining the existing commitment was unacceptable to this element in the government—and to the Prime Minister himself—the Department and its allies fought a rearguard action to limit the damage, resulting in a decision to cut troop strength in Europe by half.



45 The election of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau in 1968 ushered in a period of reform. In June 1970, Mitchell Sharp, secretary of state for external affairs from 1968 until 1974, displays his department’s first foreign-policy review, entitled *Foreign Policy for Canadians*. (Source: The Canadian Press/Chuck Mitchell)

46 Among the first foreign-policy initiatives taken by Prime Minister Trudeau’s government was official recognition of the People’s Republic of China in 1970. Trudeau, who is pictured here touring the caves at Loyang with Chou En-lai in October 1973, became the first Canadian prime minister to visit China. (Source: CP Photo)

47 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, accompanied by Secretary of State for External Affairs Mitchell Sharp, opens the Department’s new headquarters, the Lester B. Pearson Building, on August 1, 1973. (Source: The Canadian Press/Staff)



48

⁴⁸ Allan Gotlieb served as under-secretary of state for external affairs from 1977 to 1981 and was a central figure in the consolidation of Canada's international activities under the Department of External Affairs. He is shown here in July 1981 outside the Lester B. Pearson Building in Ottawa with Prime Minister Trudeau. (Source: CP Photo/Fred Chartrand)

Trudeau's foreign-policy review produced in the end a slip-cased set of six colourful booklets, *Foreign Policy for Canadians*. Canada's national interest was considered paramount, with foreign policy defined as "the extension abroad of national policies," which were listed as social justice, economic growth, and quality of life. A general booklet was accompanied by separate studies on Europe, the Pacific, Latin America, the UN, and international development. Critics scorned the absence of a booklet on the most important subject of all, Canada's relations with the United States. The critics included Pearson himself, who was appalled by what he saw as the replacement of constructive international engagement by narrow national self-interest.

The Department also lost status in the world of bureaucratic Ottawa. Trudeau implemented an elaborate system of Cabinet committees, which brought foreign policy into a much more interdepartmental context. Interdepartmental consultation greatly increased, especially in areas that had important international dimensions but were also of great significance domestically, such as the environment. The Department found it difficult to adjust to this system, and annoyed the Prime Minister by being too slow and too wordy in the documentation it submitted to him.

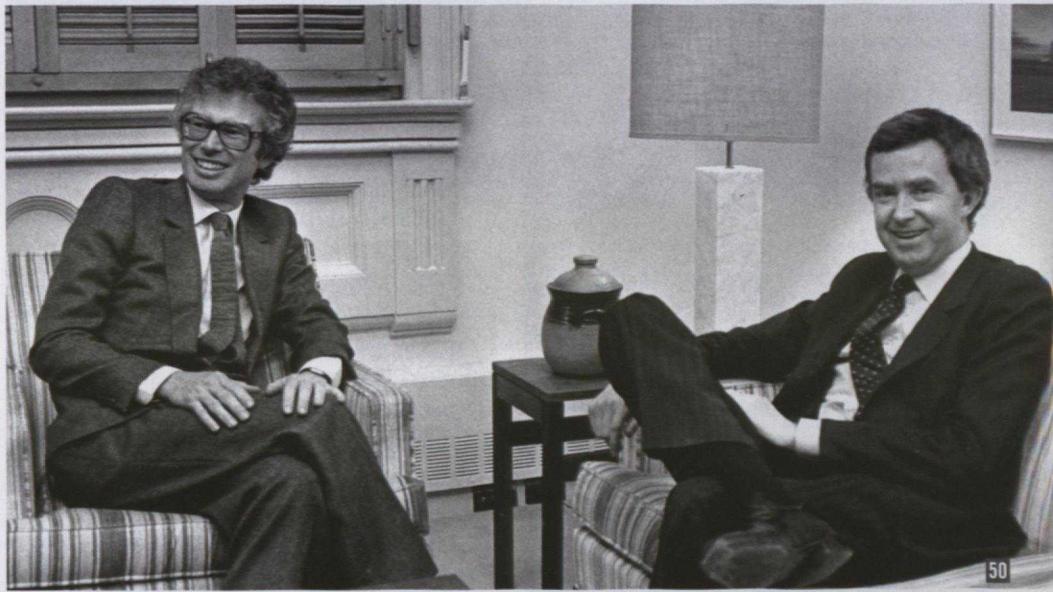
Trudeau at first relied far more heavily for foreign-policy advice on his legislative assistant, Ivan Head, than he did on the Department. A former foreign-service officer and academic, Head travelled abroad with Trudeau, briefed the Prime Minister before meetings with foreign leaders, and accompanied him to those meetings. He generally functioned as a source of advice and information that was independent of the Department and as Trudeau's agent outside the normal diplomatic channels. He had access to foreign leaders and their top aides, such as Henry Kissinger, adviser to

President Richard Nixon. Although Head kept the minister informed of his activities, the Department viewed him as a competing source of advice whose quality they could not assess.

Perhaps more important, the government was also determined to consolidate the foreign service. Michael Pitfield, the assistant secretary to the Cabinet, established a task force in 1969 to bring about the integration of foreign operations abroad. This in turn led to the creation of the Interdepartmental Committee on External Relations (ICER), chaired by the under-secretary, to shepherd the integration process. It was clear that in the government's eyes the promotion of trade was to be a very high priority abroad, and that officers from the Trade Commissioner Service, long treated as the poorer cousin to the foreign service, would now have a much-improved chance of becoming a head of post.

Although support services abroad were integrated, ICER accomplished little else. Any prospect that External Affairs might seize control of the coordination of foreign policy was obviated by the foot-dragging of the other departments involved. In fact, other departments and agencies, such as the successor to the External Aid Office, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and Energy, Mines and Resources in the increasingly important area of energy policy, strengthened their own roles perceptibly.

With the appointment of Allan Gotlieb as under-secretary in 1977, the Department became more aggressive. Gotlieb championed the concept of External Affairs as a central agency of government, one that should play the lead role in international relations. With the support of Trudeau and Pitfield, now clerk of the Privy Council, foreign-service integration was back on track. When the two men returned to power in 1980, after the brief interlude of a Progressive



⁴⁹ In June 1979, Prime Minister Joe Clark appointed Flora MacDonald as secretary of state for external affairs. The first woman to hold the post, she is shown here at a UN press conference in September 1979. (Source: UN Photo/Yutaka Nagata)

⁵⁰ Ambassador to Iran Ken Taylor and Prime Minister Joe Clark meet for a private talk in February 1980. Taylor had just returned from Tehran, where he had helped American embassy staff escape during the Iran hostage crisis. (Source: The Canadian Press/Drew Gragg)



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⁵¹ In January 1982, the Department of External Affairs and the Trade Commissioner Service were combined into a single trade and foreign policy ministry, with a broader mandate. Here, Secretary of State for External Affairs Allan J. MacEachen confronts the vexing challenge of multilateral trade. (Source: Ed Franklin, *The Globe and Mail*, November 26, 1982)

Conservative minority government under Prime Minister Joe Clark (which saw the appointment of Flora MacDonald as the first woman to serve as external affairs minister), they acted quickly. In March 1980, the process of consolidation began in earnest when the Department was given responsibility for delivering the country's foreign aid and immigration programs abroad. By April 1981, the foreign branch of Employment and Immigration Canada had become part of External Affairs; the following January, the government announced that all foreign-service officers from CIDA and Industry, Trade and Commerce (ITC), as well as the

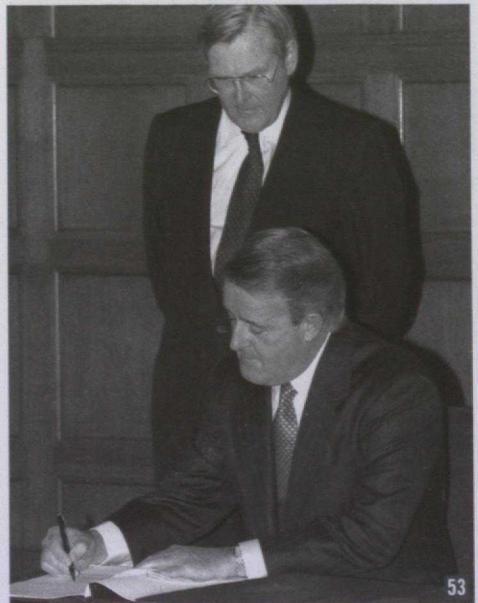
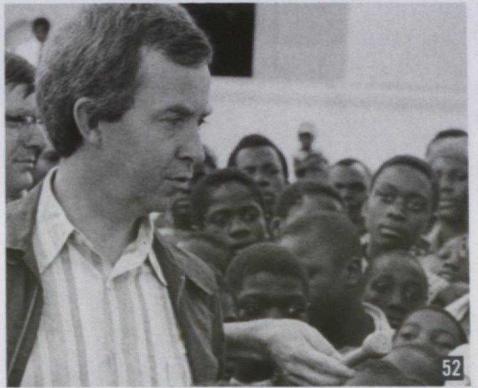
trade policy and promotion responsibilities of ITC, would follow. One department—eventually known as the Department of External Affairs and International Trade—would be in charge of trade, aid, and immigration, as well as the traditional foreign-policy functions. The minister was joined by two ministers of state: one for international trade, which was restored to full ministerial status in 1983, and another for external relations, whose responsibilities included CIDA. It marked the culmination, in the sphere of foreign affairs, of Trudeau and Pitfield's determination to rationalize the organization of government.

THE INTEGRATED DEPARTMENT

Elected in September 1984 with a commanding majority, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's Progressive Conservative government took office with a foreign-policy agenda concentrated on the United States. While in opposition, Mulroney had been sharply critical of the Liberal government's handling of relations with the United States, and during the election campaign he promised "good relations—super relations" with Washington. Like prime ministers before him, Mulroney kept relations with the U.S. and its Republican president, Ronald Reagan, largely for himself, leaving other issues to the ministers responsible. In a move to bind together his Progressive Conservative party, he appointed his one-time rival, former prime minister Joe Clark, as his secretary of state for external affairs.

Clark handled the relationship with the Prime Minister well and garnered widespread praise for his work in the portfolio. Described as a "pillar of consistency and small virtues," he was inclined to bypass the formal policy-making process and focus on where Canada could, in his words, "make a difference." A progressive thinker, Clark worked to dismantle the apartheid regime in South Africa (a file he shared with the Prime Minister), promoted human rights in Central America, and actively pursued a regional role in Asia-Pacific. Conscious of the Department's poor record in promoting women, he appointed a number of women to senior positions and as heads of mission before he left the Department in 1991 to serve as Mulroney's minister for constitutional affairs.

While the Conservative government did not make substantial administrative changes to the Department, external pressures altered the Department's centre of gravity during the 1980s. The prolonged recession in 1981–82 combined with growing protectionism in Europe, Japan, and the United States to bring economic and trade policy close to the heart of Canada's foreign policy. Indeed, this had already become clear by the last years of the Trudeau government, when Derek Burney, the able assistant deputy minister in charge of Canada–U.S. relations, spearheaded a trade policy review that put the question of Canada–U.S. free trade firmly on the policy



⁵² The elimination of apartheid in South Africa remained a priority for both Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and Secretary of State for External Affairs Joe Clark, who is shown here in 1987 taking a break during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Zambia. (Source: Commonwealth Secretariat)

⁵³ "Good relations—super relations" with the United States were close to Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's heart, and a closer trade relationship with the United States was Mulroney's crowning achievement. Following the conclusion of the Free Trade Agreement with the United States in 1988, Mulroney signs the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1992 as Michael Wilson, international trade minister, looks on. (Source: The Canadian Press/Frank Gunn)



54



55

⁵⁴ John Crosbie, minister for international trade from 1988 to 1991, played an important part in the establishment of the World Trade Organization. Here he meets with Park Pil Soo, South Korea's minister of trade and industry, at the Asia-Pacific trade ministers meeting in Vancouver on September 11, 1990. (Source: The Canadian Press/Robert Klein)

⁵⁵ Joe Clark's successor as secretary of state for external affairs, Barbara McDougall, held the post from 1991 to 1993. She is shown here with Nelson Mandela, then president of the African National Congress, at a meeting in South Africa on May 19, 1993. (Source: AP Photo/John Parkin)

agenda. When Mulroney decided to seek a free-trade deal with Washington in 1985, trade policy became even more closely integrated into the work of the Department.

The negotiation of the Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement, which kept a team of almost 100 officers busy until it came into force in January 1989, was followed by the successful conclusion of a North American Free Trade Agreement in 1992. At the same time, Canadian trade negotiators were particularly active on the international stage. With Trade Minister John Crosbie's support, they became key players in the effort to transform the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the set of rules that had governed world trade since 1947, into the modern and forward-looking World Trade Organization. The Department had helped oversee, in the words of trade analyst Michael Hart, a "revolution in trade policy."

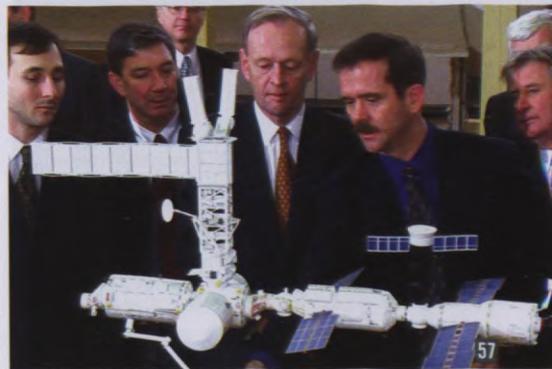
The impact of this revolution on the Department of External Affairs and International Trade was far-reaching.

Mulroney's ambitious trade initiatives convinced the Department to consult stakeholders across the country, encouraging it to become more open and transparent than ever before. By the late 1980s, it had created 15 Sectoral Advisory Groups on International Trade, had established an International Trade Advisory Committee with 40 members, and had a formal mechanism for consulting the provinces. And it was regularly making public reports and trade statistics, which would have remained classified just a few years earlier.

The trade agenda also brought the Department into closer touch with the country's domestic economic interests, strengthening its standing in official Ottawa. Moreover, under Mulroney, the trade minister's office assumed greater influence as senior ministers gravitated to the position. Mulroney first appointed the relatively junior minister James Kelleher to the position, and then, in July 1986, appointed economist Pat Carney, the first woman to hold the post. Carney was succeeded, in turn, by John Crosbie and Michael Wilson, heavy-hitters from the Conservative front benches.

The news for the Department was not all good. The government's willingness to use heads of mission appointments for political purposes, and the Al-Mashat affair, when senior officials were blamed for a controversial immigration decision made by ministers, gnawed at departmental morale. The end of the Cold War in 1989 added to the Department's burdens. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of new states in Eastern Europe generated pressures for additional missions from a Department whose budget was already stretched thin by the government's first salvos in its battle against Canada's growing deficit.

The end of the Cold War also heralded a much broader global agenda. Clark's successor as secretary of state for external affairs, Barbara McDougall, questioned traditional



56 Minister of Foreign Affairs Lloyd Axworthy talks with landmine survivor Tun Channareth of Cambodia on December 4, 1997, after the Ottawa conference that resulted in the Mine Ban Treaty. Delegates from 122 countries signed the treaty, also known as the Ottawa Convention, to ban the use of anti-personnel mines. (Source: AFP/Getty Images/Dave Chan)

57 During a Team Canada trade mission to Russia in February 2002, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and several premiers are shown a model of the International Space Station by Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield. Present from left to right are Bernard Lord, premier of New Brunswick, Pat Binns, premier of Prince Edward Island, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, astronaut Chris Hadfield, and Ralph Klein, premier of Alberta. (Source: CP Photo/Fred Chartrand)

notions of state sovereignty and called for a "new internationalism" to deal with such emerging issues as widespread environmental degradation, failed states, and global terrorism. As McDougall began to tackle these issues, another round of belt-tightening put the squeeze on the Department, whose senior managers responded by defining and protecting its "core functions." Following the February 1992 budget, the Department relinquished its responsibilities for immigration and aid, and began to focus instead on trade and diplomacy.



⁵⁸ Minister of Foreign Affairs John Manley (right) and U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge conclude a news conference after meeting in Ottawa on December 11, 2001. The strong Canada–U.S. partnership that emerged after the 9/11 terrorist attacks is considered essential for protecting North America against the threat of international terrorism. (Source: The Canadian Press/Fred Chartrand)

⁵⁹ Canadian diplomats are working closely with aid workers, soldiers, and police officers in support of the Government of Afghanistan's efforts to rebuild the war-torn country. On January 15, 2006, Canadian diplomat Glyn Berry was killed by a roadside bomb while serving as political director of the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan. (Source: Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada)

⁶⁰ Since the 1980s, the Department has spearheaded Canadian efforts to exploit the opportunities available in the new global economy. Here, in January 2008, International Trade Minister David Emerson and Swiss Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard sign a free-trade agreement between Canada and the four countries of the European Free Trade Association. (Source: Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada)

The Liberal government of Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, elected in October 1993, was equally determined to show Canadians that it could pursue an effective foreign policy during a period of fiscal restraint. In part, its decision on assuming office to change the Department's name to the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade reflected the new emphasis on “getting back to basics.”

Chrétien came to power with a domestic agenda in mind, and he was generally inclined to allow his foreign and trade ministers to run their own departments without interference. Even so, the Prime Minister soon came to rely on the Department for considerable help when he decided to address a flagging economy with a series of high-profile “Team Canada” trade missions, which crossed the globe in search of markets and investments. Chrétien was pleased with the support he received from the Department during his travels, but not enough to shield it from the massive cuts in government expenditures launched in 1994–95. Between 1988–89 and 1998–99, the Department's budget was cut 10 times, reducing it by a total of \$292 million.

The Department responded to this budgetary crisis with a handful of administrative reforms. In 1990, the Passport Office was spun off to create a special operating agency with a mandate to break even. The speedy adoption of new kinds of information technology gave the Department one of the world's more modern diplomatic communications systems. It was just as quick to exploit the Internet as a cost-effective communications tool, one put to good use in 1995 during Canada's high-profile battle with Madrid to halt Spanish overfishing and conserve the dwindling cod stocks in the North Atlantic. And for the first time in its history, the Department began to run missions abroad that were operated without any Canada-based personnel, relying entirely on locally engaged staff. The Department also experimented with sharing foreign-mission premises with such like-minded countries as Australia.



61

61 Canadian diplomat Philippe Kirsch helped establish the International Criminal Court at The Hague, where he is currently serving a six-year term as its president. He is pictured inside one of the courtrooms in The Hague in March 2005. (Source: AP Photo/Peter Dejong)



62

62 Young foreign-service officers help evacuate Canadians from war-torn Lebanon in July 2006. The Department is actively recruiting a new generation of foreign-service officers as it renews itself to confront the challenges of its next century. (Source: David Foxall)

The minister of foreign affairs for much of this period, Lloyd Axworthy, was obliged by the financial crisis to adjust both his foreign-policy objectives and his tactics. Adopting some of the outreach activities pioneered by the Department's trade side, Axworthy sought to mobilize public opinion and non-governmental organizations as well as departmental personnel and resources in support of a niche diplomacy that focused its efforts intensely on a limited but important set of goals. He concentrated the resources of the Department, which had been reduced by the government's restraint program, on his key priorities and placed Canada at the head of the international campaign to ban landmines and the effort to create an International Criminal Court. For many Canadians, however, Axworthy's success obscured the severe impact of the government's budget cuts on Canada's diplomatic effectiveness.

In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, Canada's international role and its diplomacy came under searching scrutiny. One of the sharpest critics of his country's diminished capacity to act internationally was Axworthy's successor, John Manley. A successful minister of industry, who preached the importance of good relations with Washington, Manley enjoyed a reputation for being honest and

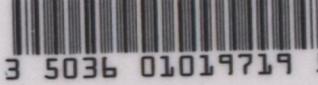
forthright. "You can't just sit at the G8 table and then, when the bill comes, go to the washroom," he observed bitingly two months after 9/11. Indeed, this was a perspective that Chrétien's two immediate successors as prime minister, Paul Martin and Stephen Harper, readily shared. In office, both men quickly discovered how important it was to have an effective foreign and trade policy ministry. And both acted to strengthen the Department's capacity to serve Canada and Canadians the world over.

Today, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade has begun to recover from the fiscal challenges of the 1990s. With 168 missions in 109 countries, including nine missions to multilateral organizations, with 13 regional offices across Canada, and with just over 9,700 employees (as of March 31, 2008), the Department's reach remains global. Perhaps more than ever before, it is focused on the key elements of its mandate: working for international peace and security; promoting trade and investment; advancing the rule of international law; and improving human rights. This is a broad and ambitious agenda that demands a foreign and trade ministry able to transform itself to meet new challenges and to realign itself with shifting priorities, something the men and women in the Department have done well for a century.

FURTHER READING

Those wishing to learn more about the history of the Department of External Affairs should consult John Hilliker, *Canada's Department of External Affairs, Volume I: The Early Years, 1909–1946* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990) and John Hilliker and Donald Barry, *Canada's Department of External Affairs, Volume II: Coming of Age, 1946–1968* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995). The early history of the former Department of Trade and Commerce, as well as the story of the Trade Commissioner Service, is recounted in O. Mary Hill, *Canada's Salesman to the World: The Department of Trade and Commerce, 1892–1939* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1977). All three volumes are part of the Institute of Public Administration of Canada's series on Canadian public administration.

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