

ROBERTSON CONFERENCE ROOM

The Skelton Lobby gives way to the handsome Robertson Conference Room, named in honour of former Under-Secretary Norman A. Robertson. It contains an oval United Nations-style table that accommodates up to 40 delegates, with seating for 125 more behind. The room has been the scene of many international meetings as well as Cabinet and First Ministers' (federal, provincial and territorial leaders) meetings. It can provide full audiovisual and simultaneous translation services in six languages.

Robertson was a brilliant economist who joined the Department in 1929. An excellent diplomat, he served twice as Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, twice as High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, and once as Ambassador to the United States. From 1949 to 1952, he held the position of Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet. Over the course of a long career, he advised five prime ministers and impressed generations of foreign service officers and other civil servants with his robust intellect.

Inside the Conference Room is a massive wall tapestry entitled *Manitoulin Canada*, by artist Joyce Lehto of Sudbury, Ontario. Lehto's work adds warmth and colour to the room through its use of the traditional Scandinavian *Ryijy* technique. Its blues, greens and earth tones evoke the landscape of Manitoulin Island, off the northern shores of Lake Huron, and perhaps also some of the mystery of the Manitou, revered by the indigenous Algonquian peoples as the unknown power of life and the universe.