

as well as on the face of the humblest intelligence operative. Norman Robertson could sometimes be inscrutable, but never in that repellent and dangerous way.

How variously he participated in the work of the Canadian Government is perhaps best indicated by a remark he once made to me in confidence, in secrecy really, but which I think I can now properly disclose. He told me that he didn't think there was a department in Ottawa of which he couldn't be the deputy. I think he may have been right, too. It has been said of Walter Bagehot, the Victorian essayist and economist, that he was so knowledgeable and adept in finance and government that at any time he could have taken over the Exchequer, the Treasury, and have run it effectively – and for that reason might be called “the spare Chancellor”. In the same vein Norman Robertson might perhaps be called “the spare deputy”. The commanding knowledge and expertise that that phrase calls up is part of the secret of his remarkable influence and ascendancy, is part of the secret of his strength. He knew this country

intimately. He knew the Government of this country even better. He could connect the formulation of foreign policy with internal, even local, interests with exceptional thoroughness and skill. That was a source of his strength, as I say. But in some quarters it may have been held against him that his gaze was so far-ranging and his influence so omnipresent. There may have been deputy ministers who didn't know, but who nevertheless sensed, that he thought he could take over their departments and run them at least as well as they could. They may have sensed that, and resented it. I think some of them did. And that was probably a source of weakness.

#### Faults

I have no zest for dwelling on his faults. But at least some notice of them is necessary to maintain a balance.

Sometimes his good ideas came too late. And, since timing can often be all-important in foreign policy, that can be as serious a fault as not to have any solution at all. Yet the idea that came too late for the crisis or problem in hand often remained

CHARLES RITCHIE: . . . If you were abroad and you sought instructions . . . you telephoned Norman, because that was really the only way to get into communication with him; you very seldom got any concrete instruction as to what you should do the next day, but you did get a most brilliant analysis. . . . When it was all over, and you tried to write down these ideas, and perhaps if you were going to the State Department, you still had not any direct instruction as to what to do on the concrete thing of the day – that was really up to you.

GORDON ROBERTSON: Norman's influence was profound on a number of areas of domestic policy. Among the more fruitful interventions when he was Secretary of the Cabinet [were those associated with] . . . the problems of stockpiling of various agricultural products at that time. I think he was as influential as anybody in Agriculture in devising policies to deal with the foot-and-mouth-disease problem that afflicted us. . . .

Norman said on one occasion to me that he thought the Department he would most like to be Deputy Minister of was Agriculture, because he thought the problems there were things in which he could really bring his mind and his interest and his training to bear.

He also had, in my recollection, very considerable influence on immigration

policy. He was much concerned about the very ungenerous quality of the prohibited categories in the immigration legislation, and he was a strong influence in bringing about a total revision of the immigration policy and the Immigration Act. So that there were a number of areas that . . . Norman had a great interest in and an influence on.

C. RITCHIE: On one occasion he said to another colleague: “I reproach myself most of all, the time that I was in the Department, that I didn't give more thought and attention to the question of Canadian unity. . . . This is the question of the future for Canada.”

M. CADIEUX: That is a point that he made to me very often . . . particularly in the later stages . . . and he added that he thought he should have encouraged the development of internal machinery to relate to the provincial governments. . . . Of all the senior people that I have dealt with here in Ottawa, I don't know of one who was more conscious of the implications of the problem of unity than Norman. In his own Department, I think, he was very clear that he wanted a larger measure of bilingualism and he wanted the Department to be a leader in this area. But then I think that he and Mackenzie King probably saw eye to eye, that keeping the country together was the Number One problem.