mental predisposition was one of sympathy. By nature and temperament he was not against any country. And that, in my opinion, is a quality almost as rare among diplomats as it is valuable.

More Canadian

It might be suggested that that quality in him was connected with a certain vein of cosmopolitanism. An essayist with more room for nuance at his disposal than I have might find some truth in that suggestion. But it seems to me of little importance. For he was far more profoundly a Canadian than he was a cosmopolitan. How many Canadian diplomats know almost from week to week what the prospects are for the Prairie wheat crop? Norman Robertson did. How many Canadian diplomats know from month to month what the carryover is? Norman Robertson did. How many Canadian diplomats can find fascination in reading the *Canadian Statistical Review*? Norman Robertson could. How many Canadian diplomats can guess fairly accurately from the bare figures to be found there what the economic situation is likely to be in Cape Breton or Prince Edward Island or Sorel or St Hyacinthe or Sudbury or Kelowna? Norman Robertson could. He knew this country intimately, and loved it in a way that is only possible for someone with such intimate knowledge of it, and, in my experience, never failed to relate his policy recommendations to what he believed its best interest to be. He was far from being immune to the attractions provided by allowances and servants and limousines, to the "spoils" provided by the diplomatic system to those serving abroad – particularly to those serving as heads of mission. He frankly welcomed his postings abroad as a relief from the daily servitude of being Under-Secretary for External Affairs or Secretary to the Cabinet. He was no O.D. Skelton, for whom absence from the centres of power in Ottawa would have seemed almost inconceivable. But he regarded service abroad as being merely another means of continuing his work to promote Canadian interests in a different setting and a different milieu. It always excited him, I remember, when an opportunity arose to serve those interests directly and tangibly. One such occasion occurred during his first term in London, when he was asked to help sell Canadian *North Stars* to the British Overseas Airways Corporation (as it was then) and so keep open the Canadair plant in Montreal. He threw himself into that effort as though his life depended on it.

I also remember very vividly the reply he would make to British ministers or officials whenever they attempted to inveigle Canada into the sterling area by dwelling on our economic problems, either real or apprehended. "I wouldn't exchange our problems for those of any other country in the world," he would say as he courteously showed his visitor to the door. So long as the spirit of Norman Robertson remains strong in the Department, there can never be any risk of its becoming a haven for those who dislike their own country or their own countrymen and want to escape from it into the company of such few other Canadians as they believe to have a sensibility as fastidious as their own.

It was a weakness in him, of course, that he spoke no French; and I do not intend to try to minimize it either by relating it to the very different circumstances that obtained in Ottawa when he first became a civil servant from those that prevail today or by explaining it in terms of a certain motor ineptness in his physical constitution that always prevented him from driving a car, for example. But I think it is fair to set beside that undoubted deficiency the equally undoubted fact that he was almost as widely read in French literature as he was in English. It is also fair to record that he did what he modestly could to promote bilingualism among younger officers in the Department and that few developments in the Department gave him more pleasure than the appointment of two French-speaking Canadians to the Under-Secretaryship, of Jules Léger first in 1954 and of Marcel Cadieux ten years later.

Robertson's language was economics

The language that Norman Robertson spoke best was economics. Columns of figures to him were avenues leading to human and social realities. Marshalling and interpreting and analyzing them were for him intensely human and vital tasks, of crucial importance not only in domestic affairs but in the conduct of foreign policy as well. That was why he valued his friendships with such well-known professional economists as J.R. Hicks, for example. That was why he was so close to many of the principal figures in the tightly-knit economic community in Ottawa, particularly in the Department of Finance and the Bank of Canada. So long as Norman Robertson was Under-Secretary, there was never any danger of External Affairs lacking influence in the formation of Canada's foreign economic policy. He respected the economic judgment and expertise of his colleagues in other departments and agencies; and they returned the compliment because he spoke the same language. He dirtied his hands almost every day of his life in the minutiae of economic problems and never thought that was beneath the dignity of a diplomat. Instead, he thought of it as an activity essential for a