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Some 15 years have passed since Allan Gotlieb, the former Under-Secretary and Ambassador to the United States, delivered the first of this series of lectures in honour of O.D. Skelton. Mr. Gotlieb observed then, like many of those who have followed him at the lectern since, that Dr. Skelton, "more than any other one individual," was "responsible for the creation of Canada's foreign ministry as we know it today." I therefore feel immensely privileged to have been asked to talk to you this evening in Dr. Skelton's memory, and to have been added – with no comparable record of accomplishment at all – to the list of extraordinary speakers who have preceded me.

Dr. Skelton, although apparently an agnostic for much of his life, was an associate of Presbyterians. He was married to an Anglican – an often agreeably flexible denomination – but his academic career was at Queen's, and the Prime Minister who recruited him to government, and with whom he worked so closely and for so long, was the very Presbyterian Mackenzie King. In his addiction to hard work, moreover, and to the principles of self-reliance and individual responsibility there could be found clear evidence of the austere dispositions of John Knox. The Presbyterian connection could be discerned as well in his attachment to the moderately egalitarian precepts of democratic liberalism as these were understood in the North America of his time. It could be found, too, in his keen sense of the value of thrift. Distrustful, for example, of the proposition that displays of opulent hospitality are good for diplomatic business, he initially opposed the purchase in 1927 of a moderately dignified property to house the new Canadian legation in Washington. He thought a more prosaic form of accommodation leased from a hotel would do just fine, although he eventually conceded, with a wry display of fatalistic resignation, that "if you are asked to dinner, presumably you must engage in reprisals."

Skelton's assumption, even as Under-Secretary, that he had an obligation to maintain a personal watch over almost everything was legendary, and its consequences were detected abroad. Philip Kerr, the Marquis of Lothian and British Ambassador to the United States, once pointedly observed to Vincent Massey that it "would be better if Skelton did not regard co-operation with anyone as a confession of inferiority." Massey reported later in his memoirs that he agreed with the assessment.

If there was a hint of injury in Kerr's remark, it may have resulted as much from Skelton's determination to free the pursuit of Canada's