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In 1998, the Lester B. Pearson Building was honoured by the Building Owners and Managers Association, which gave it the TOBY Award for "Best Government Building" in Canada, as well as the local (National Capital Region) award in the same category.



LESTER B. PEARSON

The building is named after former Prime Minister Lester Bowles Pearson, Canada's most distinguished statesman. One of the first recruits to the Foreign Service by competitive examination, Mr. Pearson served in diplomatic posts that included London and Washington. In 1946, he was named Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs. Two years later he entered political life when he was appointed Secretary of State for External Affairs, a portfolio he held until 1957. During that time, Mr. Pearson often led Canada's delegation to the General Assembly of the United Nations. His work at the United Nations to resolve the Suez Crisis of 1956 earned him the Nobel Prize for Peace. Mr. Pearson was Prime Minister of Canada from 1963 to 1968.

THE MAIN LOBBY

The northwest corner of the lobby evokes the memory of Lester B. Pearson and his career. Located there is a bronze statue of the former prime minister by Danek Mozdzanski, along with display cases containing the citation from the Nobel Prize Committee and the original medal presented to Mr. Pearson in Stockholm in 1957. These were generously donated to the Department in 1992 by Mr. Pearson's son, Geoffrey.

Nearby is the Lester B. Pearson Memorial Mural, painted by Charles Gagnon in 1975. The mural incorporates quotations from Mr. Pearson's speeches and writings, and replicates the font from the original typewritten text. On the wall opposite the mural is a plaque commemorating the centenary of the Trade Commissioner Service, which was celebrated in 1994.

And directly across the lobby from the Pearson statue is a large plaque commemorating the signing of the anti-landmines convention in December 1997.

As the home of Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), the Lester B. Pearson Building is the focal point for Canada's role in the community of nations.

Since its opening in 1973, the building has received kings, queens, presidents, prime ministers, foreign ministers, ambassadors and scores of dignitaries from every corner of the world. It has been the setting for important international meetings, as well as historic federal-provincial conferences and other gatherings. But it is more than just a showcase for Canada's international achievements: it is a place of constant activity, where more than 3 000 people work on behalf of Canadians and Canadian interests around the world.

THE SKELTON LOBBY

The Skelton Lobby, located in the southwest corner of the main floor, is named after Oscar Douglas Skelton, who served as Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs from 1925 until his death in 1941.

Dr. Skelton helped to define a distinct Canadian perspective and approach to international affairs. His remarkable list of recruits included two future governors general, Georges Vanier and Jules Léger, one future prime minister, Lester B. Pearson, as well as many distinguished diplomats and senior officials. In 1991,

the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade initiated an annual O.D. Skelton Memorial Lecture to mark his unique contribution to Canada's public life.

THE ROBERTSON CONFERENCE ROOM

Adjacent to and entered from the Skelton Lobby is the Robertson Conference Room, named after Norman A. Robertson. It contains an oval "United Nations-style" table, and accommodates 40 delegates and 125 observers. The room features full audio-visual and simultaneous interpretation facilities.

Mr. Robertson joined the Department in 1929. 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 was Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet.

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