

Gentleman and Diplomat

OF THE THOUSANDS of words of eulogy and regret which Mr. Murphy's retirement has evoked throughout the world, those of his successor as Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs most eloquently express the attitude of a grateful Service toward one of its great. Speaking at his swearing-in ceremony on December 4, Livingston T. Merchant said with appealing humility: "I can think of no role in the Service more difficult than that of following in the footsteps of Bob Murphy—a man of truly fabulous talents and character." We agree, while expressing pride that the Service has, in Mr. Merchant, risen to the challenge presented by Mr. Murphy's departure.

The nation's editorialists and columnists have without exception acknowledged Mr. Murphy's contributions to his country and have justly designated him as one of the most remarkable of a brilliant generation of career diplomats. There is no need to repeat what has already been said so

well and so fully by his admirers, including the President of the United States. There is value, however, in attempting to define and assess the uniqueness of Mr. Murphy's stature within the Service and his contribution to it.

Bob Murphy possesses the talents, the charm and the finesse which have traditionally been associated with the "old school tie" diplomatist, yet it would not be accurate to characterize him as one. Throughout his long career he never lost the common touch and he carried it as elegantly as a silver spoon. He is the shining exemplar of the career officer of modest origins who rose to the top on sheer merit. He added a new dimension to the Service's influence in international affairs by pioneering and perfecting the role of political adviser to the military component of national policy—a role now recognized as indispensably important in peace and war.

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Among the American diplomatists of his generation, he was perhaps the most successful practitioner of the Socratic method of diplomacy and he raised it, in fact, to the level of a great art. He became the first occupant of what he himself hoped would continue to be in the nature of a permanent career Under Secretaryship along the model of the British Foreign Office. He loved the Service and was devoted to the younger officers who streamed through his office in the course of a busy day. He did not belong to that category of the high and mighty who ration their store of personal warmth or let the weight of responsibility impede the full flow of personality when pressures close in.

In sum, Mr. Murphy is the embodiment of the American "success story" in the modern corridors of diplomacy—and much more. He now goes on to an important position in private business which will assure him a less-harried environment in which to work and live and a remuneration commensurate with his great talents. He richly deserves both and we wish him well. But we shall miss him. Meanwhile, the symbol he gave his last high office—M for Murphy—remains with us and will be preserved by his distinguished successor. We suggest that it should remain with us in the years ahead as a fitting tribute to Mr. Murphy's example as an FSO and his contribution as a public servant.