

1

A Window on the Orient

Dominion Day 1929 began abruptly for Mackenzie King. The clamour of his kitchen staff downstairs reminded him of the special breakfast he had planned for the occasion. He hastily dressed and hurried down to the entrance hall of Laurier House, where his chauffeur waited to drive him to meet his royal visitor. As the car sped through the sleepy streets of Ottawa, the prime minister looked forward to greeting Prince Henry, Duke of Gloucester. Unable to shake off his drowsiness, he regretted having stayed up until one o'clock that morning, poring over the details of the new Tokyo legation with Herbert Marler, his choice as Canada's first minister to Japan. The office was a good idea, he reflected, but perhaps he could have left many of Marler's questions for another time. King quickly dispelled such thoughts when he saw the prince, dressed in a brown lounge suit, emerge from his train car. Somewhat relieved by his guest's casual attire, he regained his alertness and joviality as they returned to his residence for an informal breakfast.

Though King did not learn of the Tokyo flag-raising event until later that month, his own celebration of Canada's sixty-second birthday began with a consideration of Asian affairs. As he soon discovered, the prolonged conversation with Marler about Far Eastern events had prepared him for the brief visit of the duke, fresh from his tour of the Orient. Despite King's fear he had done much of the talking, the breakfast was a success. He laughed approvingly as the duke regaled the other guests with stories of his travels to Ceylon, Hong Kong, and Japan. All were moved by the royal visitor's portrait of Asia as a land of promise and of Japan's emperor as particularly welcoming and inquisitive about the West. Many of those around the table would have a great impact on relations with East Asia. Marler would arrive in Japan in September, amid considerable pomp, with visions of Pacific harmony and prosperity. O.D. Skelton, the undersecretary of state for External Affairs, had endorsed the new legation and would guide Canadian foreign policy for the next decade. Major-General A.G.L. McNaughton, appointed

chief of the general staff in December 1928, brought to his new job a familiarity with Pacific matters, having investigated and planned for the defence of Canada's west coast. Sir William Clark, the British high commissioner, and Iwate Yoshio, the Japanese chargé d'affaires, were also there that morning and would send detailed reports to their home governments. Clark recognized the significance of this Dominion Day, even if most Canadians did not. He soon forwarded accounts of events in Ottawa and Tokyo to officials in London, predicting Canada's entry into Far Eastern affairs would have "a considerable effect upon British predominance in China and Japan."¹

The duke spent only the morning with the prime minister; King and Skelton soon returned to Laurier House to continue discussions with Marler. As the three considered the new legation, King felt satisfied with his choice of the prominent notary and former cabinet minister to represent Canada in the Far East. Marler's great personal wealth, as well as his flair for ceremony, would ensure that Canada's growing prestige in international affairs would be recognized in the Orient. Though he was not King's first choice – another Montreal businessman, George Stephens, had declined the appointment – Marler brought much enthusiasm to his new assignment. His ardent desire for trans-Pacific cooperation and prosperity would characterize his six years in Japan. Though somewhat humourless, he struck King as "exceedingly pleasant & agreeable & even tactful" during their meeting in Ottawa. As Dominion Day came to an end, the prime minister escorted Marler to the train station and wished him success in his mission to the Far East.²

Canada's choice of Tokyo for its third overseas office followed similar initiatives at Washington and Paris, reflecting greater dominion autonomy after the imperial conference of 1926. Canada's cautious arrival on the global scene was apparent in its use of terminology. Its offices abroad were designated legations, not embassies, under the direction of ministers plenipotentiary rather than ambassadors. The dominion advanced its interests abroad discreetly, without unduly antagonizing British officials. How such autonomy was consistent with imperial unity, notably on matters of war and peace, remained to be seen. Ottawa's appointment in early 1927 of Vincent Massey as its first minister to the United States made eminently good sense, given the longstanding economic and cultural ties with that country. Nine months later, as Ireland and South Africa made similar requests for overseas representation, Canada informed London of its desire to open legations at Paris and Tokyo. Upgrading the status of the *commissaire-général* at Paris was relatively simple and had obvious appeal in Quebec. But establishing an office at Tokyo seemed more surprising as East Asia remained *terra incognita* for many Canadians. Moreover, the move seemed poorly timed, amid growing tension in the region. The assassination in June 1928 of the Chinese commander in Manchuria, Marshal Chang Tso-lin, by members of

Japan's Kwantung army had ignited rivalries among Japanese, Chinese, and Russian interests in the area. Unable to punish those responsible or prevent a worsening of the situation, the Japanese government of Prime Minister Tanaka Giichi resigned on 1 July 1929, the same day as the flag-raising event noted above. In this light, Canada's arrival in the Far East seemed hardly propitious. Compared with their colleagues at Washington and Paris, Marler's staff would confront situations that were highly volatile and not easily understood.

Since 1902, Japan had been a British ally and this diplomatic reality was an important factor in Ottawa's decision. Britain had been among the first Western nations to recognize Japan's equal status by abolishing extraterritoriality – the application of foreign laws on Japanese soil – in 1894. As a member of the British empire, Canada had acceded in 1907 to the Anglo-Japanese alliance and treaties of commerce and navigation, provided these did not affect domestic immigration policy. The Laurier government also reserved the right to nullify Canada's inclusion in the pact in the event of war between Japan and the United States. As Ottawa realized, its role in Pacific affairs was circumscribed by British and American policies toward the region and, where these conflicted, Canada would defer increasingly to its southern neighbour. After the First World War, in which Canada and Japan had fought as allies, Prime Minister Arthur Meighen argued for the inclusion of the United States into a broader Pacific security system. This multilateral approach was discussed at the 1921 imperial conference and inaugurated at the Washington conference later that year. At Washington, the Pacific powers agreed to an "open door" of equal economic opportunity in China and the resolution of disputes through mediation rather than force. Sir Robert Borden signed one of the Washington treaties for Canada, though British delegates had already endorsed it on behalf of the entire empire.³ As such diplomatic mix-ups illustrated, the road to dominion autonomy would be a gradual one.

Japan was a great power, and to Canadian leaders mindful of the diplomatic context, this made all the difference. Meighen's successor, Mackenzie King, acted in the spirit of Laurier in restraining demands from British Columbian politicians for anti-Asian legislation. His knowledge of Asia was limited but undoubtedly greater than that of any national politician of his day. In his diary, he showed a deep affection for Japanese ministers to Canada, beginning with the first such envoy, Prince Tokugawa Iyemasa, whom he entertained at Laurier House and his Kingsmere estate. King had served on the royal commission investigating the 1907 anti-Oriental riot in Vancouver and had led the Canadian delegation to the 1909 opium conference in Shanghai. His brief tour of Asia had taken him to China and Japan, though he most likely did not visit Korea as he later intimated to cabinet prior to the Korean war.⁴ Later commentators would speculate on his reasons for open-

ing a legation at Tokyo. Some attributed the decision to King's foresight and global perspective, a view that is provocative but hard to substantiate. John Hilliker has emphasized the impact of practical trade and immigration concerns, echoing the prime minister's own views. In his public and private writings, King recognized the diplomatic value of the new office but stressed its role in enforcing immigration controls and promoting Canadian trade.⁵ Pragmatism and national interest, rather than internationalism, would govern his approach to external affairs.

As early correspondence with the legation indicates, immigration was the most immediate concern. In the summer of 1927, Ottawa began talks with Japan to renegotiate the Lemieux agreement in light of recent exclusionary legislation in the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. This "gentlemen's agreement," concluded in Japan by Rodolphe Lemieux after the Vancouver riot of 1907, limited Japanese immigration to 400 men per year. Tokyo administered the arrangement satisfactorily until the late 1920s, when concern over "picture brides" – women arriving in Canada after proxy marriages in Japan – prompted calls for more stringent measures. In November 1927, under instructions from Ottawa, Canadian senator Raoul Dandurand met with the British foreign secretary, Sir Austen Chamberlain, securing his approval of a revision of this policy and its implementation through a new legation in Japan. As King informed Dandurand, issuing visas through an office at Tokyo seemed the "only effective way to deal with the Japanese question," preferable to the "Tory policy of 'exclusion' which we can never consent to."⁶ Anxious to avoid a complete ban on such immigration, as had been imposed on the Chinese, Canada reached an understanding with Tokyo the following May. Under the terms of the agreement, the Japanese *gaimusho*, or foreign office, would issue 150 passports per year to which the new legation at Tokyo would assign visas. There was a tacit understanding the number of females would not exceed one-half of this quota. King announced the policy in June 1928, claiming it would resolve the picture bride problem, and it went into effect the following September. Rarely would the number of Japanese immigrants reach this quota during the 1930s. In fact, it averaged only 122 per year between 1929 and 1939.⁷ Nevertheless, such compliance, enforced by an efficient bureaucracy in Tokyo, did little to quell demands from exclusionists for an outright ban on such immigration.

Canada's growing trade with East Asia constituted a second important reason for the legation. By 1929, Japan had become Canada's fourth-largest customer, importing nearly \$38 million worth of goods, with a surplus of \$24 million in Canada's favour. While the value of these exports soon fell by 25 percent due to the global economic depression, Canada's trade surplus with Japan lasted throughout the interwar period. Exports of metal, lumber, foodstuffs, and other raw materials found a ready market in a



Due to anti-Asian sentiment at the time, Japanese Canadians would have great difficulty demonstrating their loyalty to the British empire. A group of Japanese and Okinawan families, Vancouver, 1924. *Art Tamayose collection, Library and Archives Canada, PA-117746*

rapidly developing empire. Not including its colonies of Taiwan and Korea and its sizable economic sphere in Manchuria, Japan proper had a population of over 63 million and was increasing at an annual rate of about one million people.⁸ With highly organized railway and communication systems, efficient urban infrastructure, and relative political stability, its empire seemed to offer lucrative prospects and a secure climate for investment. Canadian resource-based companies such as Aluminium Company of Canada (later known as Alcan), H.R. MacMillan, and Consolidated Mining and Smelting, as well as CPR Steamships and life insurance companies had already opened offices in Tokyo. They also benefited from the efforts of Canadian trade officials at Kobe and Yokohama. While breaking into the Japanese market was not always easy, Japan's currency was convertible, its populace highly literate, and the spirit of consumerism now firmly entrenched.

By contrast, Canada's relations with China – the other great power of the East – had been slow to develop. Apart from trade offices at Shanghai and Hong Kong, Canada lacked an official presence in China and relied on British diplomacy to represent its missionaries and other nationals. Though Chinese in Canada were deemed as inassimilable as their Japanese counter-

Table 1.1

Canadian trade with Japan, 1929-41

Year	Exports to Japan (\$)	Imports from Japan (\$)	Trade surplus (\$)	Ratio
1929	37,504,692	13,324,161	24,180,531	2.8 : 1
1930	23,422,432	10,171,852	13,250,580	2.3 : 1
1931	15,695,822	6,821,561	8,874,261	2.3 : 1
1932	11,995,887	4,551,059	7,444,828	2.6 : 1
1933	13,001,704	3,128,876	9,872,828	4.2 : 1
1934	16,475,829	4,424,721	12,051,108	3.7 : 1
1935	14,915,577	3,565,026	11,350,551	4.2 : 1
1936	19,750,132	4,296,558	15,453,574	4.6 : 1
1937	25,798,857	5,874,940	19,923,917	4.4 : 1
1938	20,770,130	4,642,762	16,127,368	4.5 : 1
1939	28,167,607	4,864,090	23,303,517	5.8 : 1
1940	11,366,892	5,887,330	5,479,562	1.9 : 1
1941	1,501,901	2,338,473	-836,572	0.6 : 1

Note: Figures are for the year ended 31 December and do not include indirect shipments.

Source: Canada, Department of Trade and Commerce, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Trade of Canada, 1941, vol. 1 (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1942), 37.

parts, they lacked the benefit of a diplomatically significant homeland. After the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway, restrictions were placed on Chinese immigrants, culminating in a \$500 head tax imposed in 1903. The Chinese Immigration Act of 1923 replaced this with an outright ban, much like American exclusionary legislation of the following year except that it was not extended to include the Japanese. Voluntary limits along the lines of the gentlemen's agreement had been discussed with China, most notably in 1909, but came to naught after the demise of the Manchu dynasty. With China's descent into civil war in the 1920s, Canadian officials realized there was no central government to enforce agreements on immigration and trade. As Chinese groups continued to reproach Ottawa for its exclusionary policy, Canadian business lamented the political chaos and financial instability in China. The establishment of the Tokyo legation affected this difference in approach toward China and Japan by firmly situating Canada's official presence in the latter.

The political value of the legations was not lost on King. He intended to announce them in the throne speech on 26 January 1928 and then open the Paris office himself during an upcoming visit to Europe. Aware of public opinion in Quebec, he preferred to establish a legation in France before Japan. With the January speech as a self-imposed deadline, King gained approval for the Tokyo legation in a flurry of dispatches in late 1927. In October, Skelton had met with Japanese consul-general Matsunaga to suggest the establishment of a legation at Tokyo to administer the revised gentlemen's

agreement. After Chamberlain endorsed the idea in early December, Skelton asked the dominions office to instruct Sir John Tilley, the British ambassador at Tokyo, to notify the Japanese government of Ottawa's desire for an exchange of ministers. Apparently Matsunaga had said little about it to *gaimusho* officials upon his return to Japan and it was feared their approval might not arrive by the 26 January deadline. Tilley approached the Japanese foreign ministry in early January on the understanding the new office "would deal with matters concerning Canada alone and not with matters generally concerning the Empire."⁹ By 17 January, Canada and Japan had agreed to an exchange of ministers, with funding and other details to be arranged later due to the recent dissolution of the Japanese Diet.

In Parliament, the announcement of the Tokyo legation met with protest from Conservatives on several grounds. First and foremost, the move seemed to threaten imperial unity. As veteran Conservative Sir George Perley pointed out, it was unclear what would happen in the event of a disagreement between British and Canadian diplomats. R.B. Bennett, the leader of the opposition, claimed the new legation would be misconstrued by an "Oriental mind" unfamiliar with legal nuances of dominion and imperial policy. Second, the legations were an important precedent and neither Parliament nor the Canadian people had been consulted beforehand. According to C.H. Cahan, insistence on dominion autonomy reflected only the prime minister's "sub-conscious sense of inferiority to British authority," an ironic remark given Cahan's own approach to imperial matters. Moreover, the Tokyo office seemed unnecessary for trade promotion due to the activity of commercial offices in Asia. In this regard, Bennett could not see how dressing someone up in "gold lace and a uniform" would advance Canadian interests "a single sou."¹⁰ Other critics dismissed the idea as yet another patronage scheme. T.L. Church, a prominent Toronto Conservative, derided the appointment of "a few favorite Canadians" at public expense when unemployment and trade were the real issues. He parodied the King government's "ambassador cure" for unemployment as a matter of disgrace, not national pride:

We have gained a seat at Tokyo, Japan, and when the nominee goes over there, would that Canada had a Gilbert and Sullivan to set to song and verse the burlesque of the sending of that so-called ambassador [sic] ... A government that has abandoned the Japanese alliance treaty for the protection of British interests in the Pacific, a government that has refused to give a dollar for the Singapore base, has the temerity now to come before parliament and continue a so-called ambassador cure for unemployment by sending an ambassador to Tokyo. Why not send ambassadors to Italy, China, Germany, Constantinople, Peking [sic] and all the capitals bordering on the seven seas?¹¹

If some rallied around imperial unity, others invoked the yellow peril. To many members, particularly those from British Columbia, the two issues were intertwined: Why open a legation in Japan at the very time when Canada should be restricting the entry of Japanese? Conservatives capitalized on such sentiment, having incorporated oriental exclusion into their party platform at a recent convention. According to this view, a total ban on Japanese immigration would make the legation unnecessary. Warning of an impending "Oriental occupation" of British Columbia, some claimed exclusionary policies in the United States, New Zealand, and Australia were effective and did not jeopardize Pacific trade. The most outspoken advocate of a "white Canada" in the house, A.W. Neill, the independent member for Comox-Alberni, condemned the King government for placing "the control of immigration into the hands of a foreign nation."¹² Other exclusionists cited high Japanese birthrates in British Columbia, the disproportionate number of Japanese females there, and a sudden rise in the number of Japanese children in public schools. They supported Neill's call for the abrogation of the gentlemen's agreement and Canada's accession to the Anglo-Japanese treaty of commerce and navigation. Some critics, aware of the diplomatic implications of this stance, took a more moderate position, viewing exclusion as necessary but not inherently anti-Japanese. Others tried to infuse a sense of justice into the debate with the curious assertion that it was unfair to exclude the Chinese without taking similar measures against the Japanese.¹³

Natural politician that he was, King incorporated such concerns into his defence of the legation. Representation abroad would not weaken imperial unity, he claimed, but would fulfill Canada's role within the empire as both an Atlantic and Pacific nation. Its new minister at Tokyo, as the sole Canadian representative in Asia, would have an authority that trade officials lacked, and King did not feel Chinese sensibilities would be offended by an office in Japan. The Far East was a region of increasing political and economic importance and Canada needed a listening post there. As to the dangers of the oriental mind misconstruing Canadian intentions, King warned of the "Tory mind" whose public utterances could "do more mischief in international affairs than anything else." Like his contemporaries, he openly preferred a racially based immigration policy due to his belief in the inassimilability of Asian races and their already excessive numbers in British Columbia. Yet he claimed the Tokyo office was essential in enforcing limits already agreed upon by Japan. Most important, King placed the issue within its diplomatic context, stressing the effects of imposing such a policy on a people for whom "there is no term more offensive ... than the word 'exclusion.'" As Laurier had shown, trade relations were predicated on goodwill and the immigration problem "could never be solved by a policy of exclusion, without offense to Japan."¹⁴ Others in Parliament echoed King's

views, highlighting the legation's role in promoting exports to Asia, particularly of Western grain. J.S. Woodsworth, the leader of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, lauded the government for opening relations with Japan but urged it to develop a policy toward the region.¹⁵ The Liberal majority in Parliament ensured smooth passage of the throne speech.

Press reaction to the decision divided along partisan lines, indicating the strong appeal of imperialism in certain quarters. The Montreal *Gazette* dismissed the legation as unnecessary due to the trade service and criticized the King government's preoccupation with "status mania." The Washington and Paris offices could be justified on business or cultural grounds, it argued, but a legation in Japan made as much sense as one in Patagonia. The *Financial Post* welcomed the diversification of trade with Asia but not at the expense of imperial trade. Even the Toronto *Globe*, a Liberal paper, criticized Ottawa for its expensive foray into foreign affairs when it could be doing more to promote imperial ties. In French Canada, *La Presse* praised Bennett for opposing this "aventure hasardeuse sinon dangereuse," claiming the office would duplicate the efforts of trade commissioners in Asia.¹⁶ Other papers expressed confidence in an emerging internationalism. The *Manitoba Free Press* commended Ottawa for its promotion of national interests and criticized Bennett's resistance to this. The *Vancouver Sun* praised the move as evidence of Canada's "international status." The *Toronto Daily Star* believed the legation, despite its cost, would lead to a boom in trade with the Far East. According to *Le Devoir*, Canada's presence in Japan would renew interest in "la situation internationale" and lead to "notre plein épanouissement national."¹⁷ The press in Japan, on the other hand, hoped the exchange of ministers would result in more open immigration to Canada and less of an "anti-Japanese attitude" there. A few nationalist dailies, such as the *Yamato*, went further in demanding a delay in the appointment of a Japanese minister until Canada revoked its discriminatory policies. It seemed public opinion in Canada and Japan expected very different things from the new legation and, as Skelton noted, this made any consideration of immigration controls unlikely in the near future.¹⁸

Canada's delay of almost a year in appointing a minister to Tokyo further tested Japanese forbearance. This was due as much to British confusion over the issue as to Ottawa's difficulty in arranging the exchange. In London, parliament debated the legations question in early March 1928, revealing similar concerns over the diplomatic unity of the empire. The dominions secretary, Leo Amery, viewed Canada's plan as consistent with the results of the 1928 imperial conference but did not present a definitive position on this until the following year. In May 1929, he sent a carefully worded explanation to foreign governments that the new offices did not mark a departure from the principle of imperial unity in matters of common interest.¹⁹

By this stage, according to Massey at Washington, the Japanese had become anxious about the delay, especially as Canada had taken the initiative in the matter. Japan's ambassador to the United States, Debuchi Katsuji, had warned him privately of possible embarrassment domestically if too much time elapsed between the appointment of a Japanese minister and the opening of the Canadian legation. Debuchi's remarks aside, Japan itself was partly responsible for the wait as the Diet had yet to approve estimates for its legation at Ottawa. Skelton doubted a minister could be appointed by the opening of Parliament in the new year, unless "very great expedition" was used. Appropriations would have to be voted on and British authorities would have to be consulted to issue letters of credence. The long delay fuelled speculations in the Canadian press about the identity of the new minister to Japan.²⁰

By early January 1929, King had found a worthy *chef de mission* in Herbert Marler. The prominent notary and politician, though not his first choice, seemed to have all the right credentials. A descendant of Quebec loyalist stock, Marler was a veritable scion of the Montreal elite through his prestigious law firm, his marriage to Isabel Allan (of Allan steamship fame), his English-style estate at Stanstead, and lavish home in the "golden mile." He had been elected to Parliament in 1921 and, like Massey, had been a member of King's cabinet before his defeat in the 1925 federal election. Surprised by the Tokyo appointment, Marler did not rule out a possible return to politics in accepting it. The new minister's rigidity soon became legendary. To King, Marler "lacks humour somewhat" but seemed "conscientious" and would "do well" in Japan. Keenleyside later claimed Marler was "almost devoid of a sense of humour" though perhaps he, like King, was hardly in a position to judge. Others, who were children at the time, would paint another portrait, recalling a certain playfulness and joviality with great affection. At times, Marler's penchant for ceremony seemed excessive, notably his hobby of displaying silver sake cups to indicate the number of dinners he had attended at the imperial palace.²¹ Yet his high regard for official protocol would serve him well in a culture that attached considerable importance to face. Marler's great personal wealth was surpassed only by his willingness to use it in promoting Canadian prestige abroad. Within weeks of his appointment, he began considering plans for a stately new legation building. He would remain in Japan until 1935, when he was knighted and appointed minister at Washington, where he served until shortly before his death in 1940.

Two highly capable officers were appointed to assist Marler, one from the department of External Affairs, the other from Trade and Commerce. Hugh Keenleyside had joined External after the entrance competition of May 1928 and, at the young age of thirty, was appointed first secretary (and sometime

chargé d'affaires) at the legation. A native of Vancouver educated at the University of British Columbia and Clark University, he entered the department after teaching stints at his alma mater, Penn State, Brown, and Syracuse universities. Recalled briefly in 1932 to help prepare for the imperial economic conference of that year, Keenleyside remained in Japan until 1936 and was noted for his meticulous reporting of Far Eastern affairs. He later admitted a certain frustration with Marler's overly formal style. King was so impressed by Keenleyside's sharp intellect, sound judgment, and tact, he wished he had hired him as his own private secretary. Socially, Keenleyside and his wife were lifelong teetotalers, serving only ginger ale in champagne glasses during their early years in Japan, earning him the epithet of "Canada Dry." Most of their guests, as one colleague later noted, seemed to be missionaries and social workers who scarcely minded.²² Keenleyside's many contacts in the United States, following his doctoral work there on Canadian-American relations, would make him more sympathetic than others at the legation to American views on international questions.

The inclusion of James Langley, Canada's trade commissioner to Japan, within the Tokyo legation was an experiment in cooperation between the two departments. It was the first time a Trade and Commerce official had been attached to a Canadian legation, conferring upon him the new title of commercial secretary. A native of Ottawa, Langley had joined the department in 1922 and was appointed trade commissioner at Kobe the following year. Langley's six years in Japan had been far from uneventful. He had been a tireless promoter of Canadian trade, informing Trade and Commerce of his activities through regular reports and contributions to its newsletter, *The Commercial Intelligence Journal*. His efforts in administering relief after the Tokyo earthquake of 1923 had earned him a decoration from the Japanese Red Cross Society. Langley's taste for things Japanese extended to the traditional housing he had chosen for his family, much to the dismay of visiting trade inspectors who urged him to buy a foreign-style home more suitable for entertaining. Regarded by his superiors as one of the best commissioners in the trade service, Langley received the rare honour of a private audience with the emperor and empress prior to his transfer to Rotterdam in 1937.²³

Langley's appointment was the result of careful negotiations between External Affairs and Trade and Commerce in early 1929. Though transferred to Tokyo, Langley would continue to be responsible for the Kobe office as trade commissioner, his salary paid by Trade and Commerce. Yet, as a full member of the legation staff (ranked with but after the first secretary), Langley would be subject to Marler's authority, his living expenses covered by External Affairs. It was a problematic but novel arrangement, assisted no doubt by Langley's reputation as a competent administrator. It remained to be seen how the cross-appointment would work in practice.



Early staff of the Tokyo legation, 1929. Left to right: Kenneth P. Kirkwood, third secretary; Hugh L. Keenleyside, second secretary; Herbert Marler, minister; and James A. Langley, trade commissioner. *Makita Kogabo, Library and Archives Canada, PA-120407*

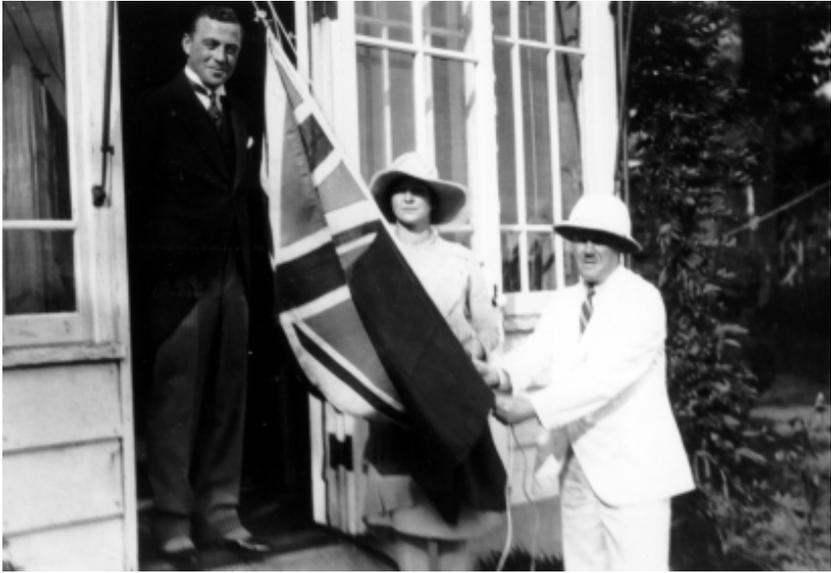
Langley would cooperate with Marler in matters involving commercial intelligence, while continuing to report directly to Trade and Commerce. King endorsed the idea but claimed the extent of Langley's attachment to the legation would require further consideration. The arrangement allayed the fears of officials at Trade and Commerce of losing an excellent man in the field. In the event of a serious dispute between the minister and the commercial secretary, External recommended, the latter should defer to the head of legation but report to Trade and Commerce. Seemingly oblivious to such concerns, Marler claimed there would not be "the slightest difficulty" working out a plan whereby "my instructions are to be observed and carried out." It was "only right" and "well understood," he argued, that Langley "is to look to me for final decisions."²⁴ Not surprisingly, this improvised scheme reflected the uniqueness of the Japanese situation and was not applied to the other legations.

A second contentious issue involving the two departments was whether China would be included in the legation's jurisdiction, potentially affecting the scope of Canadian trade offices at Shanghai and Hong Kong. Marler had raised the matter as early as January 1929, suggesting his accreditation to China as well as Japan would enhance Canadian prestige in the Far East. King immediately dismissed the idea, despite Marler's enthusiasm for it, as

he had done a proposal in 1927 for a legation in China. As Skelton explained to Marler, the prime minister had decided to defer such a move due to political uncertainties in China and the need to consolidate the Canadian presence at Tokyo. When Marler pressed the issue again in July, King flatly refused to consider it due to civil unrest in China, maintaining that representation in Italy, Germany, and Argentina were higher priorities.²⁵ Though urged to cooperate as closely as possible with the trade commissioners to avoid duplication, as we shall see, Marler would remain undeterred in his attempt to include China within his jurisdiction.

Meanwhile, planning for the legation began in earnest. In January, Marler decided to delay his departure to Japan until the fall. The Tokyo summers were unbearably stifling, according to Langley, and leaving for the countryside might create an unfavourable impression on his new hosts. Instead, he proposed travelling to Europe to purchase the necessary items for the legation before conducting a summer speaking tour of Western Canada. Marler's detailed list of expenses reached King in the midst of a heated budget debate in March. Though impressed by his thoroughness, King favoured a small staff at Tokyo and claimed cabinet had unanimously rejected the proposal of a new legation building until after the next election. He approved of Marler's trip to Europe – provided his purchases were within budgetary allocations – and advised that Keenleyside leave for Japan shortly to implement the immigration agreement. Marler received the news reluctantly, especially the response to his building project, and acknowledged the legation could function with few people as long as he could rely on Langley's services "to a considerable degree."²⁶ Keenleyside soon left for Montreal to meet with Marler, who was very satisfied with him, continuing on to Washington, where he observed operations at the new legation. In early April, he worked out final details with Marler and Skelton in Ottawa, learning he would proceed to Tokyo on 9 May to open the legation in advance of Marler's arrival in September. News of his imminent departure was leaked to an *Ottawa Citizen* reporter on 30 April, forcing Skelton to inform British and Japanese officials and release a press statement later that day. By this stage, Canada had accepted the appointment of Prince Tokugawa Iyemasa as the first Japanese minister to Ottawa.²⁷

Keenleyside arrived at Yokohama on 20 May, only to be welcomed by the British consul. Curiously, Langley had not been notified of his coming and was in Kobe attending an unveiling ceremony at the Canadian Academy, a school for missionaries' children. On advice from King and Skelton, Keenleyside declined an offer from Sir John Tilley to stay at the British embassy, despite warnings Sir John might be "touchy" on the issue, opting instead for a simple room at the Imperial Hotel.²⁸ From the outset, as Hilliker has noted, there was greater distancing from British officials in Tokyo than had been the case in Washington or Paris.²⁹ At the same time, Skelton had



Dominion Day, 1929. Only thirty years old at the time, Hugh Keenleyside, Canada's first chargé d'affaires at Tokyo, represented a diplomatic corps still in its infancy. His carefully orchestrated flag-raising ceremony – a first for the dominion ensign in Asia – marked the debut of Canada's third foreign mission. Keenleyside with Canadians Mrs. Hubert and C. Julian. *Library and Archives Canada, PA-202773*

no objection to Tilley's good offices in arranging a meeting between Keenleyside and Prime Minister Tanaka, a request Langley had been unable to fulfill. In the presence of the British ambassador, Keenleyside met Tanaka for an hour on 25 May. Four days earlier, he had opened a temporary chancellery at Nagai compound in Shibuya ward, just outside the city limits. With Langley's help, Keenleyside soon obtained office space on the seventh floor of the Teikoku Seimei (Imperial Life Insurance) building in the heart of Marunouchi, Tokyo's financial district. The site served as a legation until 1933 and was so near the imperial palace that, according to Keenleyside, staff often had to pull down the blinds during motorcades so as not to look down on the emperor.³⁰

Keenleyside made an excellent impression in Tokyo, quickly establishing contacts with diplomats, missionaries, and business leaders in the capital. An irrepressible extrovert, clean-cut and affable, he mixed well in a variety of circles. He displayed a sense of occasion, whether explaining the role of the new legation at official engagements or refereeing ice hockey and baseball matches among the diplomatic community. His staging of the Dominion Day flag raising was applauded by the local press and earned Skelton's praise. By all accounts, he adjusted remarkably well to his new surroundings. In a detailed report to Marler in early June, Keenleyside warned him of

substandard housing, health care, and sanitation in Japan but concluded on a positive note:

I trust that it will not be considered that I have unduly stressed the unsatisfactory features of life in Tokyo. It is quite true that I was disappointed, but there are compensations and many of the older residents enjoy life here ... I fancy that many of us come here impressed with the idea of Japan as a progressive modern community. And so, in many respects, it is. But in others its mediaevalism is impregnable. In comparison with other oriental cities I presume that Tokyo is very advanced; but in comparison with Montreal (for example), nine-tenths of it comprise a huge and filthy slum. The great redeeming feature is the cheerfulness of the people ... I can easily perceive how, after one has become accustomed to the discomforts and inadequacies of the life, this country and its people might gain a very real place in one's affections.³¹

The report reached Marler in London, where he had just arrived from a brief visit to France. Impressed by Philippe Roy and Jean Désy at the Paris legation, he felt confident in exceeding such standards in Japan. His visit to England, however, was disconcerting in one respect. Having arrived on the eve of a bitter election, Marler had great difficulty arranging meetings with Austen Chamberlain and the dominion secretary, Edward Harding, and was unable to meet the ailing King George V. His dismay was aggravated by the fact his appointment had yet to be made official, a matter that caused him considerable embarrassment in accepting invitations to public functions. On the other hand, the main purpose of his trip had been a success. He and his wife had purchased nearly five thousand dollars worth of gold-laced uniforms and attractive furnishings for the legation, as well as two thousand dollars worth of wine and cigars. Most important, he left Britain fully convinced of support for the legation, claiming Canada's advice and cooperation on commonwealth matters was both welcomed and eagerly sought by British officials. His meetings and farewell dinner with the Japanese ambassador indicated Tokyo's goodwill toward the legation as well. On the long voyage home, Marler reflected on the hopeful prospect of relations with Japan:

There is no question but that the Japanese welcome our advent to the East and want to be very friendly. They are also very friendly with the British Authorities. All this in my opinion is very much to the good and I believe that Canada will do well to cultivate the people of Japan. I am almost certain that some day she will be called on to play an important diplomatic part in the affairs of the Orient. She goes there with the best of reputations and will I am sure be a great influence in the future.³²

On Marler's return to Canada, he learned of Skelton's appointment of a second secretary for the legation. Though Marler had favoured other candidates, he accepted his superior's choice of Kenneth Kirkwood. His meeting with Kirkwood on 9 July at his corporate offices on St. James Street revealed the striking difference between the two men. With his gangly frame and dashing but aloof appearance, Kirkwood seemed out of place in the bastion of Montreal high finance. A scholar and poet, he was perhaps more at home in a university library. Kirkwood had distinguished himself at the London School of Economics, where he studied Near Eastern history, impressing the famous historian Arnold Toynbee, with whom he had worked in Turkey. He obtained his master's in public law at Columbia University in 1927 but joined External Affairs before finishing his doctorate, spending a year at Washington under Massey. He had ranked among the four highest candidates on the first entrance exam at the department and was, by far, the most eclectic member of the group. A confirmed bachelor until the age of sixty, Kirkwood was a born romantic with an innate distaste for politics, combined with a fascination for the sidelines of diplomatic life rather than diplomacy itself. His poetry hardly appears the work of a civil servant who would stay at External for thirty-one years. As Kirkwood expressed in a poem during his early years in Japan:

Now I am older grown, and wise,
No longer childhood's fool.
No Government will blind my eyes
And make me their damned tool.³³

Kirkwood brought to the Tokyo legation a unique and often critical perspective, apparent in his reports on Japanese politics and society – a refreshing change from Keenleyside's more matter-of-fact descriptions. He travelled widely throughout the Japanese empire, capturing his impressions in poetry and prose. By the time of his transfer to Holland in 1939, he had become nearly fluent in Japanese and had written extensively on the traditions, countryside, art, and literature of Japan. During these years, Kirkwood composed an insightful "diplomatic diary" and at least nine books of poetry, history, and travelogue. Such pursuits were an interesting aside to his legation duties, though perhaps a distraction too, as his preferred time for writing was between eleven o'clock at night and five in the morning.³⁴

Their personal differences aside, Marler and Kirkwood soon left together, en route to Japan, on a fact-finding tour of Western Canada. Marler had intended since March to make a survey of economic interests there though, as Skelton had informed him, Langley had made a similar trip the previous summer. He arranged meetings and speaking engagements through local boards of trade, Canadian clubs, and chambers of commerce, desiring to

meet the captains of industry at each place. His request for a private railway car fell on deaf ears in Ottawa and, despite his insistence on the point, was denied by King shortly before his departure. In cities and towns across the west, he spoke of his role in promoting exports to the Far East, particularly of Canadian wheat. In widely publicized speeches in Toronto and Winnipeg, Marler claimed the new legation would not duplicate the work of trade commissioners in the Orient. He spent three weeks in British Columbia, where he discussed trade issues with timber and fruit exporters, and immigration concerns with Randolph Bruce, the aged lieutenant governor who would succeed him as minister to Japan in 1936. The federal Conservative leader, R.B. Bennett, also in the province at the time, had a purely partisan reaction to the tour, dismissing it as nothing more than a publicity stunt.³⁵ The British high commissioner at Ottawa, on the other hand, took the longer view. The initiative was, according to Sir William Clark, yet another sign of Canada's coming of age in Pacific affairs. As he reported to London, Marler's efforts "naturally" aroused widespread interest in trade with Asia due to the "ingrained belief," received from the United States, that Europe had now "passed its zenith." Like their southern neighbours, Canadians, "at least in the western sections of the country," were turning toward the Pacific, as visions of trade expansion were "catching hold of the public imagination."³⁶ It was likely with such visions that Marler, accompanied by Kirkwood, Mrs. Keenleyside, and a retinue of personal attendants, left Vancouver for Japan on 29 August on board the *Empress of France*.

The twelve-day crossing allowed Marler to familiarize himself with other passengers on the Canadian Pacific liner. He first became acquainted with a lively group of French-Canadian nuns and soon discovered that missionaries were the largest contingent of Canadians on board. Given the scale of missionary involvement in East Asia, this was hardly surprising. The Far East had become the most active field for Canadian missionaries, now the second-largest foreign missionary presence in the region after the Americans. Marler undoubtedly knew more about their activities than most Canadians, whose knowledge was shaped by church affiliation, comments by individual missionaries, and best-selling novels by authors such as Pearl Buck and A.J. Cronin. These sources contributed to what James Reed has termed the "missionary mind," an outlook that perpetuated a series of myths, among them the idea of a Christian China. As Reed notes, the China missions invigorated American Christianity with a hopeful reflection of itself, though the more sophisticated mission field of Japan was harder to categorize. Shinto and other traditional beliefs remained strong there and it was often impossible to disentangle these from popular folklore and even political ideology.³⁷ If the American missionary mind saw China as the fulfillment of its own Christian identity, one wonders how its Canadian counterpart regarded Asia. As Marler soon realized, it was important to consider the

missionary mind, as it was the missionaries – not the diplomats or traders – who were the most numerous and best-known Canadians in the region.

The missionaries had their own stories to tell of the Orient, with a vantage point different from that of other Canadians. They generally stayed longer in the Far East than trade officials or diplomats and came from all parts of the dominion, including French Canada. By this stage, there were over 316 Canadian missionaries in the Japanese empire, of whom 250 were Protestant and 66 were Roman Catholic. This number would peak in the late 1930s to some 450 missionaries in Japanese territories stretching from Manchuria to Taiwan.³⁸ Like their colleagues in China, they tended to absorb the sentiments and loyalties of those among whom they lived and worked. In many cases, they depended on Japanese goodwill. Caroline Macdonald, the most famous Canadian in Japan due to her pioneering work with the YWCA, assisted Japanese officials with prison reform. In Taiwan, Dr. George Gushue-Taylor relied on funding from the imperial family, the Formosan governor general, and other Japanese philanthropists for his leper hospital and was commissioned by colonial authorities to investigate leprosy in Southeast Asia. Both were awarded medals by the emperor for their humanitarian work, along with other Canadians such as Emma Kaufman, also of the YWCA, and O.R. Avison, president of the Severance Union medical college hospital in Seoul.

The United Church of Canada accounted for nearly half of the Canadian missionaries in the empire, sponsoring ministers, doctors, and teachers in Japan, Korea, Manchuria, and Taiwan. Within Japan, its missionaries aided factory workers at the East Tokyo and Kameido missions and operated Kwansei Gakuin and the Canadian Academy at Kobe. The church fielded almost fifty missionaries in Korea, mainly in Seoul and Hamheung, and its large Honan mission in central China suffered much damage at the hands of Chinese nationalist troops in 1927. Its magazine, *New Outlook*, updated church members on missions and world events on a weekly basis. Presbyterians were the second-largest group of Canadian Protestants in the empire and were involved mainly in North Taiwan and Korea but also had established an important presence among the 500,000 Koreans living in Japan. This latter ministry gave them a unique perspective on discrimination against Korean residents. Canadian Anglicans were concentrated in the diocese of mid-Japan, where they ran several kindergartens, training schools, a school for the blind and were about to open a tuberculosis sanatorium in Nagano (in 1932). Finally, there were independent missionaries who established their own communities or became leading figures in the Japanese and Korean YMCA-YWCA movements, such as Macdonald, Kaufman, G.S. Patterson, and Gerald Birks.

Most missionaries tended to eschew politics, concentrating on their particular operations, though many made remarks during furloughs, in letters



The Keenleysides were particularly welcoming to Canadian missionaries in Japan. Hugh Keenleyside attends a cornerstone-laying ceremony in Tokyo for a new building of the Aiseikwan (Home of Love and Purity) for women workers. The settlement was established by a Canadian missionary, Annie Allen, and was largely funded by the Canadian Women's Missionary Society. *Keenleyside collection, Library and Archives Canada, C-002283102*

home, and in submissions to church journals that could be construed as political. Missionaries on furlough, as Reed observed, were not foreign service officers but could play to their audiences' sensibilities in their public remarks.³⁹ Canadian missionaries often spoke with remarkable candour during their visits home. For those returning from Korea, many endorsed the nationalist struggle against Japanese rule, even showing photographs of atrocities against Koreans. Others used their Asian experience to condemn racist attitudes at home, calling for more open immigration policies. Some, such as Frank Cassillis-Kennedy, an Anglican missionary in Japan, became ardent defenders of Japanese Canadians in British Columbia. Church journals reflected such views to varying degrees. The *New Outlook* was the most articulate and internationally minded of these, applying Christian teaching to an informed understanding of world events. *Le Brigand*, the journal of the French-Canadian Jesuits, seemed adept at jumping from China mission reports to features on Asian art to discussions of East-West dialogue. Others confined themselves to missionary accounts, generally avoiding any political commentary.

The missionary mind initially viewed Japan in a positive light, especially when swayed by domestic fears of communism. Canadians saw Japan as a check against communism in Asia. To many, Japan was a land of missionary promise, as represented by Kagawa Toyohiko's crusade of "one million souls for Christ." This campaign, launched by the prominent social reformer in late 1929, aimed to increase the number of Christians in Japan and provide a godly alternative to communism. Combined with recent interest in Mahatma Gandhi, it led some Canadian churchgoers to believe the East would restore to Christianity a simplicity and sense of justice corrupted by the West. At the same time, missionary bodies realized the churches in Asia were becoming nationally autonomous, requiring less direction from the West. With their civility, industriousness, and ethical code, the Japanese seemed ready to assume responsibility for their own brand of Christianity. While some missionaries perceived militarism or imperialism as a threat, many sympathized with Japanese efforts to suppress the "red menace" of bolshevism. To the latter group, Kagawa's approach to social reform made him a "beacon of hope" in a region increasingly seen as an ideological battleground. He seemed to respond to the urgent need "to combat the Marxian method," especially among industrial workers, whose poor working conditions might make such an ideology attractive.⁴⁰

This fear of bolshevism, combined with positive assessments of the Japanese more generally, led many to assume the best with regard to Japan's aspirations in the Far East. Escalating tension in Manchuria in the fall of 1929, for instance, prompted some to predict the Sino-Russian feud there would give way to Japanese control of the region. For many missionaries, this was not a bad thing. After developing an orderly infrastructure in Taiwan, Japan had much to offer a Manchuria plagued by warlord rule, lawlessness, and harassment by roving bandits. In September 1928, after the visit of Prince Takamatsu and Admiral Kobayashi to Australia raised suspicions there of Japan's ambitions, the *New Outlook* reassured readers of its peaceful intentions: "Japan may have been warlike, but at the present we do not see any reason why she should not be one of the great factors in preserving the peace of the world. She must have room for expansion, but surely this can be arranged without any attempt at an appeal to arms."⁴¹

Missionaries in Korea and China told a different story. Influenced by the anti-Japanese and nationalist sentiment of their hosts, they regarded Japanese aims in a more critical light. In Korea, Canadian missionaries had documented cases of Japanese atrocities during the 1919 nationalist uprising. Though the hermit kingdom of Korea was considered a successful mission field, outspoken missionaries there such as Duncan MacRae could embarrass mission boards with their vigorous opposition to Japanese interference in local education. Yet even the China missionaries admitted there was much

truth to reports of civil unrest, inefficiency, and corruption. As one missionary wrote, warlord rule had greatly impoverished the political life of China, infecting it with the dangerous practice of authority without responsibility, promising further disputes with other nations. Though they supported nationalist leaders, such as Chiang Kai-shek and the Christian General Feng, church journals criticized their tolerance of leftist agitators, their condemnation of foreign powers, and their inability to keep order in a climate of “confusion and anarchy.”⁴²

The majority of Canadian Catholic missionaries in the Far East, as Marler undoubtedly discovered, were French Canadian and their perspective was coloured by attitudes within Quebec. French Canada – though somewhat isolated from English-language popular culture – had its own way of learning about East Asia, indicating a more outward-looking society than is often depicted. In this sense, its missionaries fostered an early form of internationalism. Many French Canadians learned of Asia through letters from relatives in the field. Others read or listened to missionary travelogues presented in print, at public lectures, and over the new medium of radio. The well-informed watched documentaries on the Manchurian missions – despite Action Catholique’s view of cinema as *diabolique* – sponsored by the Académie des missions, which also organized conferences and public Chinese lessons. By 1926, the Ligue Missionnaire Étudiante, a Jesuit-sponsored student network of almost 800 groups across Quebec, and the Jeunesse Étudiante Catholique had been set up to generate interest in the missions. The average Quebecker discovered the exotic lands of the East through annual *foires* and *semaines missionnaires* in which missionary orders presented information and objects from around the world. Though some still confused the Japanese with Chinese, such public displays convinced at least one participant of “leur incontestable supériorité sur les Chinois.”⁴³ The most common way in which French Canadians learned of Asia was through the St. Enfant movement, a popular fundraising effort involving almost every Catholic school in Quebec in the 1930s. For a mere ten cents a year, Quebec homes received *Le messenger*, which described the China missions and included prayers for the deliverance of Chinese children from the wiles of godless communists. As Pierre Trudeau and Jacques Hébert later recalled,

As schoolboys, we learned from missionary propaganda that China was the natural home of all scourges: pagan religions, plagues, floods, famines, and ferocious beasts. The periodic collection taken up for “stamps of the Holy Childhood” was also an opportunity to remind us of the wretched and slightly devilish state of a people who threw their babies to the pigs. And adventure tales featuring pirates of the China Sea or Fu Man Chus of the Shanghai underworld completed the education of our young minds in the dangers that lurked in the Dragon Empire.⁴⁴

In a Quebec still deeply devout and highly anti-communist, Japan came to be seen as a bulwark against bolshevism in the Far East, one missionary praising the Japanese as “les adversaires” of communism.⁴⁵ French-Canadian Jesuits in Suchow – despite their wish to stay “en dehors de toute politique” – reported on the threat of communism in China to a public already wary of its dangerous tenets, notably atheism. As in English Canada, missionary societies increasingly saw Manchuria as a test case of Japan’s role in containing bolshevism. Priests in the area, sponsored by Missions-Étrangères of Pont-Viau, depicted rule by warlords, pervasive banditry, and the Chinese “haine de l’étranger” as major obstacles to evangelization. As Lionel Groulx later remarked, a strong Japanese presence resulted in order, its capable authority ridding Manchuria of bandits and ushering in an era of religious liberty.⁴⁶ Though the Dominicans in Hokkaido and northern Honshu were far from volatile areas, the Franciscans on Oshima Island, in the straits between Japan and Korea, would be near the centre of the maelstrom. With virulent anti-communism at home and rising tension in the Far East, French-Canadian missionaries took solace in their status as British subjects and members of a church with diplomatic clout. Such factors would be important after the outbreak of hostilities, as missionaries sought protection and the Vatican considered recognizing nationalist China and Japanese interests in Manchuria.

By the late 1920s, however, missionaries were not the only Canadians promoting closer ties with the Far East. Nongovernmental organizations, buoyed by postwar idealism and prosperity, also encouraged mutual understanding. In 1925, the YMCA invited participants from nine Pacific nations to Honolulu for the inaugural conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations (IPR). Made up of academics, journalists, business and civic leaders, the IPR met regularly until the late 1950s, when it was suspected by the United States of communist leanings. Canadian participation was through the Canadian Institute of International Affairs until January 1928, when Sir Robert Borden and John Nelson, a publicist with Sun Life Insurance, set up a separate Canadian branch. Nelson, a former Vancouver journalist who had tempered his opposition to Asian immigration, became the prime mover of the group, enlisting the support of John W. Dafoe, editor of the *Manitoba Free Press* (later the *Winnipeg Free Press*), Newton Rowell, the prominent Toronto lawyer, and academics such as C.J. Woodsworth, H.F. Angus, and George Wrong. The group aimed to foster an awareness of Pacific affairs in Canada, several members later defending the interests of Japanese Canadians. The IPR was not immune from rising tension in the Far East, however, and internal divisions soon became apparent. Its Kyoto meeting in 1929 was marked by acrimony between Japanese and Chinese delegates, and the Hangchow conference two years later was almost cancelled due to the Manchurian crisis. As the situation in Asia deteriorated, the IPR turned to

research and publication, using its scholarly “inquiry series” to clarify the economic and political roots of the conflict. The Pan-Pacific Union, established in 1917, also concerned itself with Asian matters, but its infrequent meetings prompted Keenleyside to dismiss it as an “innocuous organization of glad-handers.” As Mackenzie King noted, the IPR, more than any other group, had led to a greater awareness among Canadians of Pacific affairs.⁴⁷

Also travelling with Marler on the *Empress of France* was a Bank of Montreal official sent to explore investment opportunities in the Far East. Such an initiative reflected Canada’s growing commercial interest in the region. On his cross-Canada trek, Marler had met with Toronto bankers to discuss expansion into Japan, responding to similar demands from General Motors, Canadian Car and Foundry, and Western grain exporters for information on the Asian market. In this regard, he followed the example of Sir Edmund Walker, who, until his death in 1924, had promoted such interests as president of the Bank of Commerce and honorary consul-general of Japan at Toronto. One of the first Canadian firms to establish itself in the Far East was Canadian Pacific Steamships, whose White Empress liners had plied the Pacific since 1891. With offices at Yokohama, Kobe, Shanghai, Tientsin, Hong Kong, and Manila, it operated regular fortnightly crossings between Japan and Vancouver as part of its all-red route to London. Its thirteen-day “silk train” service from Yokohama to New York was reputedly the fastest in the business. Such rapid transportation depended on smooth railway connections, and, by 1921, Canadian National Railways had opened offices at Yokohama and Hong Kong. Canadian life insurance companies had been active in East Asia since the late nineteenth century. Sun Life had established an office in Japan in 1893, the first foreign life insurance company to do so, opening offices in North China in 1894 and Hong Kong in 1899. Manufacturers Life began doing business with Japan in 1898 and China in 1897 and now in 1929 had branches at Nagoya, Osaka, Kobe, and Fukuoka.⁴⁸

Natural resource companies took a particular interest in the Asian market. Japan’s demand for raw materials had risen steadily with the industrial expansion of the Meiji and Taisho periods. Canadian exports to Japan had increased from \$1.3 million in 1913 to over \$6 million in 1921. Moreover, the Tokyo earthquake of 1923 led to a sharp rise in Canadian lumber shipments, causing exports to surge to \$27 million in 1924 and over \$38 million in 1928, with sizable trade surpluses in Canada’s favour. In 1929, Canada exported to Japan over \$20 million in wheat, almost \$7 million in lumber, over \$3 million in wood pulp, and \$8 million in aluminum, lead, nickel, zinc, and scrap iron.⁴⁹ While such trade was lucrative, metals exporters would face growing domestic criticism as Japan remilitarized during the 1930s. Within thirty years of its first aluminum shipment to Japan in 1901, Alcoa (later Alcan) had created the Asia Aluminum Company, forging a partner-

ship in 1927 with the Japanese industrial giant Sumitomo. Its engineers had helped establish rolling mills in Japan and Shanghai.⁵⁰ By this stage, Consolidated Mining and Smelting had become Canada's largest exporter to Japan of lead, zinc, copper, silver, and cadmium, working through a British firm at Kobe in which it owned controlling interest. H.R. MacMillan began lumber exports to Japan in 1920 and, within a decade, had opened offices at Tokyo, Kobe, and Yokohama, supplying close to 30 percent of Japan's wood imports from the west coast of North America. According to Keenleyside, its representative at Tokyo, Clarence Fraser, was one of Canada's most aggressive traders in Japan.⁵¹ Within Canada, business interest was particularly high in Vancouver, which handled nearly all of the nation's trade with the Far East. Most local branches of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce welcomed increased trade with East Asia, with notable exceptions in central Canada, where the textile industry, especially in Quebec, feared Japanese competition.

The growth in Canada's trade with the Far East would have been impossible without an extensive network of trade commissioners in the region. By 1930, the department of Trade and Commerce had established offices at Shanghai, Kobe, Batavia, Tokyo, and Hong Kong, managing them through a well-informed commercial intelligence service. The first trade offices in the region were Yokohama (1904) and Shanghai (1908), the former being relocated to Kobe under Langley's direction after the 1923 earthquake. As part of his transfer to Tokyo in October 1929, Langley retained supervision of the Kobe office, now managed by Richard Grew. Trade interests in China were well represented at Shanghai by Colonel Moore Cosgrave and his assistant, Bruce Macdonald. This was the same Cosgrave, incidentally, who achieved the dubious distinction at the end of the Pacific war of signing the peace treaty for Canada – on the wrong line. Between 1928 and 1930, his department experienced unprecedented growth, which in turn led to plans for expansion in China. In a report in late 1928, Canadian inspector A.E. Bryan recommended the opening of additional offices to cover the vast territory. Within the year, an office was established at Hong Kong under Paul Sykes, assisted by W.J. Riddiford, to promote trade with South China, French Indochina, and the Philippines. Plans for a possible office at Tientsin or Nanking were also considered at this time. The report also suggested an office be opened at Dairen “within the next year or two” to encourage commercial involvement in Manchuria and North China, an area now considered within Langley's jurisdiction “given extensive Japanese influence there.”⁵²

While the missionary mind was divided in its sympathies between Japan and China, the business mind generally favoured the more stable investment climate of Japan. With the outbreak of hostilities in northeast Asia in 1931, the expansion of trade offices there would prove inopportune.

Despite the great potential of the Chinese market, as Cosgrave admitted, the promotion of Canada's interests was limited until the nationalists "established complete control over the whole of China."⁵³ Canada had yet to extend most-favoured-nation status to China, though it had traded with Japan on such terms since 1913. Despite its trade surplus with both countries, Canada's exports to China in 1927 were less than half the value of its exports to Japan. The myth of the China market, as appealing to Canadian as to American traders, was tempered by the realities of political uncertainty and a weak currency. For firms considering the Asian market, the ability to guarantee contractual obligations and equality of market access remained fundamental. Reports of economic stability in Korea and Manchuria soon led companies such as Canadian Car and Foundry to consider selling rolling stock to the Japanese-run South Manchurian Railway. The open door of equal opportunity in the region, as outlined in the Washington treaties, also seemed encouraging. As Marler assured exporters during his Canadian tour, they would be welcomed in Japan by "a courteous, industrious and reliable people."⁵⁴ Japan's potential, according to the *Monetary Times*, could "hardly be gauged" and among all Asian nations, it was experiencing "a tremendous awakening" and a "commercial and industrial revolution" that required Canadian exports.⁵⁵ As he completed his Far Eastern tour in early 1929, Bryan concluded that Japan offered bright prospects for Canadian business. Despite the obstacles to such trade, notably the language barrier, dissimilar business law, and entirely different psychology, he viewed Japan as "one of the most important territories" for trade commissioners and thus, "one of the first foreign countries in which the Service should extend its operations."⁵⁶

Given the nature and extent of their activities in the Far East, the Canadians on board the *Empress of France* had much to talk about during their Pacific crossing. Though their interests were diverse, they travelled to the Orient sharing visions of success. As Canada's first official representative in the region, Herbert Marler entertained great dreams for the new legation as it took its place in Japan alongside the embassies of other nations. Katherine Keenleyside, for her part, was eager to be reunited with her husband, anticipating his colourful stories of life in Tokyo. Reconciling himself to the plight of a civil servant, perhaps Kenneth Kirkwood pondered the features of the exotic culture that awaited him. In their moments of prayerful reflection, the missionaries undoubtedly considered an inspiring array of possibilities ahead for nourishing bodies, educating minds, and saving souls. For those with more mercantile pursuits, business contacts would be made with a keen eye for opportunity and profit. As he interacted with these and many others on board, Marler learned much about Canada's emerging role in the Far East. Shortly after arriving in Japan, he would have brochures conspicu-

ously displayed on the liner, promoting the services of the new legation and the business and tourist potential of Canada.

In the early hours of 9 September 1929, he and the other Canadians on board felt their visions for the Orient had come a step closer to reality. As glimmers of the rising sun lightened the thick mist, an announcement informed them they were nearing their destination. They joined other passengers on the promenade deck, as the ship entered Yokohama Bay, and gazed out expectantly toward the bustling confusion that awaited them on the shore. Gradually, the jagged features of the harbour emerged one by one from the grey haze. The port, dotted with jetties, warehouses, and factories, seemed deceptively like any other. Had the weather been clearer that morning, a faint but sublime outline of Mount Fuji hovering above the horizon would have reminded them of the strangeness of this new land. Preparing to disembark, they could only imagine what lay ahead.