

international inspection; a reversal of attitude that appears to have been less an abandonment of principle than a recognition of a worsening world climate" (pp. 450-451). It reflected not a change of premise but that the US had more to gain from an inspection system after 1929. Prior to that time, the Japanese seemed to gain more.

The probings by the League's Mandates Commission of Japanese activities pose three considerations:

- (1) The inconclusive nature of the probes attests to the desirability of the Commission possessing adequate authority to verify reports of Japanese transgressions.
- (2) Since the Commission could not stop rumours of Japanese violations, its endeavors only lent credence to the accusations and heightened tensions.
- (3) These challenges to Japan's "honour" only strengthened the Japanese government's belief that they were politically motivated and designed to pry into matters of national security.

While contemporary observers and subsequent students have used these events as evidence supporting a case for international inspection, this position is based on untested assumptions, which, when examined critically, suggest that the case is not so clear cut. International inspectors visiting the islands would certainly have found airfields, harbour improvements and other activities. But they could not have determined the political intent behind these activities: whether they were commercial ventures or warlike preparations. Indeed, such inspections might easily have contributed to growing tensions because their results could be interpreted differently through "national selective perception".