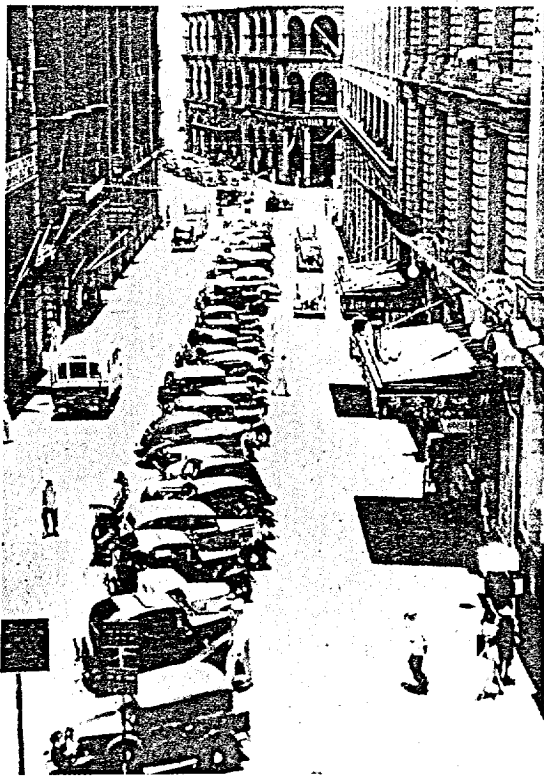


ments, there thrived "Canadian Confectionery", a shop that not only imported chocolates from home, but in 1929, featured a North American style soda fountain!

The Hong Kong Telephone Directory for 1932 records that the Canadian Government Trade Office was in the Exchange Building on Des Voeux Road Central. The Trade Commissioner was Mr. Paul Sykes; the Assistant Trade Commissioner was W.J. Riddiford, and the Chief Clerk, William G. Poy. In 1933, a young woman joined the CGTC as a secretary, having just arrived from Australia. Miss Elvie Arnold would remain with the Commission, except for brief periods, until 1974. Her memories of that first office are quite clear, fifty-four years later. She recalls that the Trade Commission had two large rooms on the second floor – the Trade Commissioner's with a wide veranda that overlooked the junction of Chater Road, Des Voeux Road Central and Pedder Street, and another for the Assistant Trade Commissioner, looking out onto Pedder Street. Her own small office had a view of Des Voeux Road Central and Chater Road.



Pedder Street just before the Second World War. The first offices of the Canadian Trade Commission were on the second floor of the Exchange Building on the corner of Pedder and Des Voeux Streets – across the street from the Canadian Pacific sign.

None of the rooms were then air-conditioned, but each had a large ceiling fan to circulate the air, and incidentally, to blow the papers about. The Trade Commissioner who hired Miss Arnold was Major Victor E. Duclos. Other members of the local staff at the time were William Poy; the File Clerk/ Receptionist, Henry Chan and the Office Boy and Messenger, Chow King Yee.

That year there were 849,751 people living in the Colony, of whom fewer than 30,000 were non-Chinese. With the Chinese Civil War and Japanese invasion of China, the influx of refugees into Hong Kong was overburdening an already-crowded city. Wealthy families, frightened by the extremist elements of the Kuomintang, were transferring assets to Hong Kong banks and the Japanese attack on Shanghai in 1932 doubled the size of Hong Kong's refugee areas that year.

The economy, however, seemed to be able to absorb the immigrant wave, and appeared to even thrive on it. While exports from China through Hong Kong had declined sharply in 1930 because of the fighting, trade with the western Pacific and southeast Asia had dramatically increased. In 1929, trade through the port – to Siam, America, Malaya and Japan – made Hong Kong one of the busiest ports in the world.

The Trade Commissioner lived in an apartment in the Mid-levels. It was rented by the CGTC since no property could be owned by the government at that time.

There were letters of complaints by Trade Commissioners at posts around the world, about this time, stating that the salaries and living allowances received did not fully compensate them for their education and experience. Prior to the First World War, all appointments to Trade Commissionerships were decided for political reasons. Only in 1919 were competitive examinations introduced, and those successful, trained in Canada for overseas service. Yet, monetary reward for those who qualified were modest.

Except for official trips to Ottawa at periodic intervals, Trade Officers had no opportunity to return home during postings, as the customary Civil Service leave entitlement was then only eighteen days annually. Even by the fastest ship, the journey to the nearest Canadian port took nine days. For the Assistant Trade Commissioners, who did not