

New Commissioner Aims at Increasing Mutual Understanding

By Victor Chan and Michael Newlands

Canada's new Commissioner to Hong Kong, Maurice Copithorne, is a veteran of the region having served in Beijing, Saigon and Kuala Lumpur and visited Hong Kong on numerous occasions since the late 1950s.

In all he has served about eight years in Asia, more time than he has spent anywhere else abroad, and he says that it is an area that he can almost call home. His domestic posting, prior to coming to Hong Kong last month, was Assistant Under-Secretary for State for External Affairs for Asia and the Pacific, Department of External Affairs in the Federal Government. As such he has been closely in touch with Hong Kong and the region following a break from Asian dealings when he was Ambassador to Austria from 1979 to September 1982.

Married with two sons, the Commissioner was born in Vancouver, British Columbia on July 3, 1931, and was educated at the University of British Columbia where he was awarded BA and LLB degrees. He was called to the Bar in 1956 and a month later joined the Department of External Affairs as a foreign service officer.

In between overseas postings he served in various legal and legal advisory positions with the Federal Government apart from a two year stint as a Fellow in the Center for International Affairs at Harvard University. He was appointed Queen's Counsel (QC) in January, 1981.

Improving the already healthy trade between Hong Kong and Canada, and increasing the understanding of each

others way of life, culture and customs appear to be among the main priorities of the new Canadian Commissioner to Hong Kong, Maurice Copithorne.

In an interview with Canada Hong Kong Business, conducted shortly after his arrival about a month ago, Mr. Copithorne covered several areas of mutual interest and dwelt on steps being taken to bring Hong Kong in particular, the region in general and Canada closer together.

Explaining the functions of the Commission office in Hong Kong he said that they were threefold with immigration being the largest section. Secondly there is a "strong and growing" trade promotion programme which incorporates a recently arrived tourism officer.

The third area was described by the Commissioner as general relations activities,



Commissioner Copithorne (left) with CBA President Jim Lawrie and editor Victor Chan.