



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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CANADA AND THE PACIFIC

Speech by the Honourable Mitchell Sharp,
Secretary of State for External Affairs,
to the Foreign Correspondents' Club,
Tokyo, April 15, 1969.

... Here in Tokyo, one naturally thinks of the Pacific face of Canada. Large numbers of Canadians, however, have their foreign gaze firmly fixed eastward on Europe - when they are not preoccupied with events on our own North American continent and our very close and rather special relation with the United States. The origins of most of our people, our culture, our politics, our history, our exploration, our trade have all combined to weave Canada's destiny intimately into that of the great Atlantic community.

But this is not the whole story. Some of the earliest explorers pushed across the northern half of our sprawling continent in part to find the Pacific and another trade route to Asia. It was not an easy task and nature often imposed difficult barriers. One such natural obstacle was the rapids in the St. Lawrence River near what is today Montreal. They were named La Chine - China - as a testimony to the ultimate goal of those early explorers from France.

As our transcontinental nation was formed, and as the Western provinces of Canada grew and prospered, they began to look as naturally across the seas to the Orient and Australasia as the older provinces looked back across the Atlantic to Europe. The government policy-makers of the late nineteenth century hoped that Canada would become an essential link in forging new channels of commerce and communication between Europe and the nations of Asia and the Pacific. Trade - and missionaries - began to draw us in that direction too. The first Canadian trade commissioner arrived in Yokohama shortly after the First World War and one of Canada's first diplomatic missions abroad was established in Tokyo in 1929, one year after we established a legation in Paris, two years after we opened in Washington.

There is, therefore, a long history of Canadian interest in the Pacific countries, particularly Japan. But it was not until after the Second World War that Canadians as a whole became aware of the Pacific as they had been of the Atlantic - as a natural focus for our trading interests and for the definition of our international personality. This growing consciousness of the Pacific is attributable in economic terms to the amazing progress of Japan, to the continuing development of other countries on the "Pacific rim" and to the