

# Canada Day **Abroad**

At many Canadian missions around the world, Canada Day is one of the main celebrations of the year—a chance to deepen relationships with local people, to promote trade and other connections and, yes, to demonstrate to the world the love that Canadians have for their own country. *Our World* takes a look at missions' use of our national day, in the past and present, to "brand" Canada.

There has been quite a history of how our missions abroad have celebrated Canada Day. In 1929, diplomat Hugh L. Keenleyside held a reception and a flag-raising ceremony at Canada's legation to Tokyo in honour of Dominion Day. The event marked the mission's first public gathering. "I had invited all the Canadians in Japan, and a large proportion of them turned up," he writes in the first volume of his memoirs, *Hammer the Golden Day*. "Some of the older participants had tears in their eyes as our flag [the Red Ensign at that time] was raised and as a recording of 'O Canada' played."

Another historic moment in Asia came on Canada Day in 1997—the same day sovereignty over Hong Kong was transferred from the United Kingdom to China. The guest list included such notable figures as Hong Kong's newly appointed chief executive, Tung Chee Hwa—making his first appearance at any foreign national-day celebration—UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Minister of Foreign Affairs Lloyd Axworthy. With Hong Kong's change of status that very day, there was a symbolic moment when a new sign was unveiled showing that the former Canadian high commission was now a consulate general.

Halfway around the world, at Trafalgar Square in London, Canada Day celebrations have been an important date on the city's calendar for decades. "It is a great example of what can be achieved through strategic partnerships involving the Canadian private sector with the support of the high commission," says High Commissioner James Wright. "With 50,000 people attending, it's perfect for showcasing the best of Canada—our vibrant culture, our amazing tourist destinations, our food and much more." This year, the Canada on Stage concert will feature some of Canada's finest performers, including Blue Rodeo and The Mahones, demonstrating the vitality of Canada's music scene.

The embassy in Paris has been holding annual Canada Day celebrations at the official residence since Canada's 125th anniversary in 1992. A reception brings together the embassy's best contacts from the local government, political, economic, academic and arts scenes. All partner departments present at the mission participate and share the



Some 50,000 people turn out each year for celebrations in Trafalgar Square.