

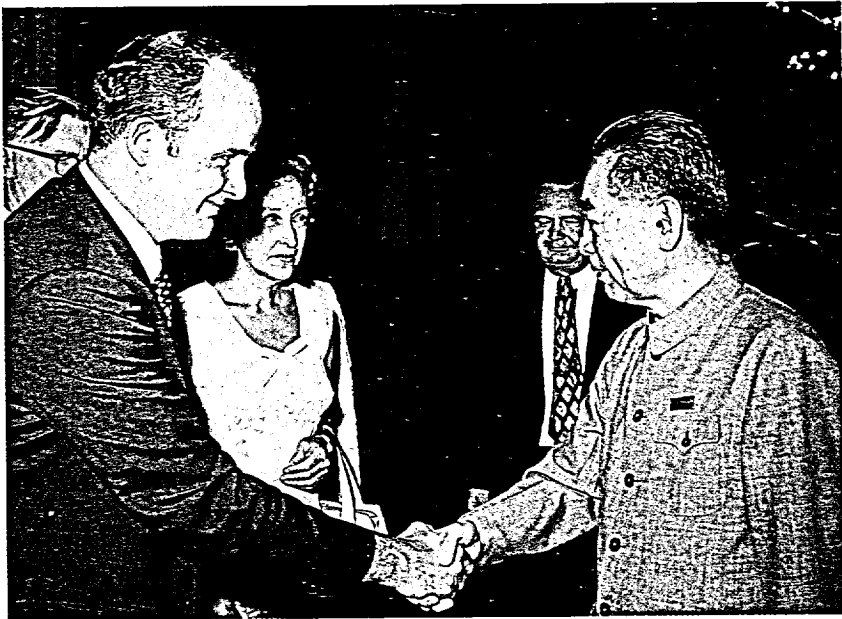
entered Canton triumphantly with the cheeses and whisky. At the Tung Fang Hotel, the Trade Commissioner arranged for a "Scotch and Cheese Reception" for the Canadians and other foreigners deprived of such luxuries.

Arrangements were made with the hotel management that the party would begin at six o'clock and, at that hour all the guests stood around enjoying the Scotch, awaiting the cheese. Time passed and there was no sign of it. On making discreet enquiries, Swanson was met by the embarrassed giggles of the normally staid hotel staff, who finally led him to a room off the kitchen. There he saw eight pigtailed girls in blue uniforms around a huge cone made up of thousands of tiny cheese balls! He had forgotten that the Chinese did not, at that time, eat cheese, and had no idea what this gooey,

smelly substance was. Unwilling to lose face by asking the "capitalists", they reasoned that it must be some sort of raw material for an elaborate centre-piece. So much for the care and expense of selecting the emmental and stilton!

In any event, the cone was triumphantly carried in on a large metal platter by the eight girls, to the shouts of the assembled expatriates – now well lubricated by the scotch. Everyone had a memorable time, trying to outdo each other by singing the familiar Red Guard songs.

The officers who pioneered the China Trade were aware they were making history, but they remembered the happier events, when politics were forgotten and humanity bridged the void.



Chou En Lai welcomes the acting Trade Commissioner Robert Godson just after recognition of the PRC. October, 1971.