

The Montreal Star

MONTREAL, MONDAY, APRIL 6, 1964

96th Year, No. 81

Traffic Jams Never End in Tokyo

One Is Hardly Ever Alone In Crowded Japan

By PETER DESBARATS

The flight to Vancouver was announced but still we dawdled in the terminal at Tokyo's Haneda Airport. Neither of us wanted to leave Japan. Then, unexpectedly, two friends showed up to say goodbye. One was wearing a brown Franciscan cassock, the other an embroidered sky-blue kimono. We left.

It was 8.25 p.m. when CPA's Empress of Calgary separated Empress of Calgary separated two Canadian journalists, Ed McNally and myself, from 96,000,000 Japanese. At 11 p.m. the same evening, after flying for about 16 hours, we landed/at Montreal Interna-tional A ir p or t. Edo-san shouldered the antique Japan-ese musicat that he had hought ese musket that he had bought in Hiroshima — only a Can-adian cartoonist would shop for antiques in Hiroshima — and descended from the aircraft into four inches of newfallen snow. He looked at Canada coolly past the end of his 100-yen plastic cigaret

holder. "Where's everybody gone?"

After three weeks in Japan, were accustomed to crowds. Japan has five times as many people as Canada, less than four per cent of our land area. There is an average of 644 people to every square mile of Japan. A square mile of Canada contains 3.86 Canadians, an infinitesimal amount of Eskimo and a fraction of separatist with, fortunately, a lot of space in between. Tokyo, with more than 10,-000,000 citizens, claims to be the most populous city in the the most populous city in the world. At all hours of the day and night there are "traffic jams" on the sidewalks. But it is still almost faster to walk than drive unless you care to fly by taxi. Taxis are cheap in Tokyo. So is human life. More than 240 traffic accidents are recorded in the city every day. More than 900 pedestrians are killed every year and the number would be higher except that auto-mobiles rarely can get up enough speed to strike effect-ively. The average speed of a bus in Tokyo is now under 10 miles an hour. Ten years ago there were about 200,000 re-gistered motor vehicles in the city. Now there are more than 900,000, not counting the few man-powered rickshaws still used by geishas as they travel

from party to party at night through the narrow streets of the Akasaka district.

Because of the dense popu-



SKETCHES BY MCNALLY

Montrealers are fortunate in having to travel to Japan via Vancouver. It gives them some advance practice in understanding a foreign people. In British Columbia however, there are some common points of reference. Both the west coast and Quebec have Social Crediters and separ-atists, although they speak languages that are as dif-ferent as English and Japanese.

If they know little about Quebec, British Columbians are more aware than other Canadians of the denselypopulated islands across the Pacific. Whalers and fishing trawlers from Japan range far to the east. Glass floats from Japanese fish nets bead the rocky B.C. shores. Iron ore from the province's mines, coal from Alberta and wheat from the prairie provinces snake down railroads from the Rockies to waiting Japanese ships. Three round-trip CPA flights a week bring Tokyo within eight hours of Vancouver. In a Vancouver suburb there is a Japanesestyle Bank of Nova Scotia.

Staff Reporter Peter Desbarats and Editorial Cartoonist Ed (Edo-san) McNally recently spent three weeks on assignment in Japan. When they returned to earth, they produced a six-part series on the manners, morals and mercantile activities of modern Japan. This is the first article.

ing to buy in a relatively un-derpopulated area of Canada and having to sell its manu-factured goods in the rich consumer markets of central Canada which benefit only in-directly from wheat sales. Ontario and Quebec has little interest in promoting Japan-ese imports. He is usually surprised to discover that Quebec exports to Japan almost as much as some in-dividual prairie provinces. Quebec, for example sup-plies about four-fifths of the asbestos used in Japan, a market that is worth up to \$14,000,000 a year to Quebec.

velopments on the Manicouagan River.

In general, the Japanese share with all other peoples of the world a deep and affec-tionate ignorance of Canada. Of course their first reaction Of course their first reaction to a Canadian visitor is, "American?" When they hear the word "Canada," they look at him with sudden interest. He is from the uttermost limits of the globe, almost from another planet. Very big. Very, cold Very cold.

Then they ask about Eski-

mos. Recently one of the largest Tokyo newspapers sent a writer and photographer into northern Canada to live with a band of Eskimos. Their articles created such a sensation that they were reprinted in book form, a current bestpower; the only highly indus-trialized Asian nation; the "floating factory" in the Pacific; the shipyard of the world; proud, insular, sensi-tive to criticism and almost neurotically concerned about its image abroad; reaching out cautiously to re-establish concautiously to re-establish con-tact with mainland China, potential customer, potential rival; watching Russia across the sea of Japan.

After World War I, Japan was pacifist. Military uni-forms were unpopular. By forms were unpopular. By 1940, Japanese had adopted a religious master-race mission and were ready to attack the world's strongest nation. After 1945, they switched to Coke, coffee - houses and democracy

Tomorrow? *

Kyoto's Tawaraya Inn re-ceived its first guest more than 200 years ago, when

*

tatami and enjoyed a nightcap of excellent Japanese Scotch. In a corner of the room, also sitting on the floor, was a television set. We watched "77 Sunset Strip" with Japanese dialogue and interminable Japanese commercials, includ-ing advertising sub-titles in-serted during the actual pro-gram. There was a geisha gram. There was a geisna party somewhere in the inn. The sound of high-pitched singing and the twang of the samisen filtered through the paper wall screens. Between runshets from the TV sat gunshots from the TV set, I could hear water tumbling into the carp pool in the garden.

Old and New Japan? Not exactly. The liquid in my glass provided a better parallel. It looked like Scotch. It tasted

lation, one is rarely alone in Japan.

Everything is crowded hotels, commuter trains, sub-ways, restaurants, bathtubs...



"Every time you turn around these days, you run into a Japanese business-man," said a Vancouver journalist.

On the prairies, wheat growers know that Japan is Canada's third best export market.

Wheat is our largest single export to Japan — in the neighborhood of \$100,000,000 a year. We supply more than half of the wheat and about 40 per cent of the wheat flour used by the Japanese. Unfortunately, we also have given them our formula for transforming No. 1 Northern Hard into limp-crusted, mass-

East of Manitoba, in the industrial heart of Canada, the image of Japan switches from sought-after buyer to feared competitor. Japan is in the difficult position of havFrench-Canadian national-ism is beginning to attract attention in Japan. In three weeks of reading the several small but excellent Englishlanguage newspapers pub-lished in Tokyo, the only Canadian news I received was the hockey scores and a full report of the separatists' objections to the forthcoming visit of the Queen. An official of the Japanese Foreign Ministry in Tokyo in-

terrupted my interview with him to interview me on the economic effects of Quebec nationalism. S o me businessmen in Japan were disturbed when a local supplier of hydro - electrical equipment, despite a low bid, failed to obtain a contract to supply Hydro-Québec's massive dem block in Japan. More Japa-nese know about Ignuk than Pearson. They all informed me that both Japanese and Eskimo babies are born with bluish spot at the base of their spines.

It takes a Japanese artist about two minutes to paint two birds sitting on a bamboo twig. After a few weeks in Japan, Edo-san McNally could draw in half that time an Eskimo woman with a baby peering from the hood of her parka, Japanese-style. Every-one asked him to draw Eskimos.

"Ah so, just like Japanese mama-san." * * *

Japan was a civilized and highly organized nation when Jacques Cartier first sailed up the St. Lawrence to confer Christianity, glass beads and European disease on the Indians. Less than 25 years ago, Japan briefly controlled a Pacific empire reaching from the Aleutians through Manchuria, China, Burma and present-day Indonesia, almost to the coast of Australia. In 1945, it suffered total military defeat for the first time in history.

Now, after 20 years of hard work, Japan is again a world

Kyoto was still the Imperial capital. In a room overlooking the classical garden, Edo-san and I sat on the straw looked like Scotch. It tasted something like Scotch. But it wasn't Scotch. It was Japanese whisky, as unique as Japanese democracy, Japanese free en-terprise, Japanese marriage and the other institutions that I will talk about in later articles articles.

