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STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
Montreal, 18-31 August 1987
Item 11(a) of the agenda

WRITING SYSTEMS AND GUIDES TO PRONUNCIATION
ROMANIZATION

The treatment of Chinese geographical names in the English
language media of the Western world *

Paper submitted by Canada

* Prepared by Alan Rayburn, Executive Secretary, Canadian Permanent
Committee on Geographical Names.

BY JOHN LEKICH
Special to The Globe and Mail
VANCOUVER

DARYL DUKE gazes with the nostalgic eye of a hometown boy at the harbor outside the Pan Pacific's Five Sails restaurant. He's recounting the story of his fall into the local waters at the age of 7 after he heard the boom of Vancouver's 9 o'clock gun for the first time. "I must've jumped three feet," he says with a laugh as he recalls his plunge off a relative's gas barge. "I thought we were being invaded by pirates."

Fifty years later, while directing the \$23-million film version of James Clavell's *Tai-Pan*, Duke found himself on the banks of Guangzhou's Pearl River, guiding the movements of period sailing ships

NOVEMBER 6, 1986

A

Princess begins tour of China

Reuter
BEIJING

Princess Margaret arrived in Beijing yesterday to begin a nine-day official tour of China, seven months after a history-making visit by her sister, the Queen. The Princess is scheduled to spend two more days in Beijing, where she will meet an as-yet-unnamed top Chinese leader, before moving on to five other cities. From Beijing, she travels to the ancient central Chinese city of Xian. She later visits Guilin, Shanghai, and neighboring Suzhou. She will spend one day in Canton before travelling home.

MAY 19, 1987

B

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APRIL 6, 1987

C

Beijing may look weird, but it sounds just right

By Bruce Ward
Citizen staff writer

Mao Tse-tung gets a makeover Sunday by editors who will transform the former Chinese chairman into Mao Zedong — his new identity in the nation's newspapers.

Beijing replaces Peking, and Chou En-lai becomes Zhou Enlai as part of the same process.

The change is to make Canadian newspapers conform with Pinyin style — the official Chinese spelling — and it brings Canada in line with the rest of the English-speaking world.

Actually, altering Mao and facelifting Peking merely extends Pinyin transliteration in Canadian newspapers. This style has been used for several years for some names and places, Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping for instance.

But familiar names and places — Mao and Peking — have clung to their westernized spellings. Now the Canadian Press wire service and Southam newspapers are ending style inconsistencies by adopting Pinyin for all names and places.

Some editors may decide to keep the old westernized spellings in brackets — not a bad idea when you consider that Tibet is

becoming Xizang — at least at first.

Major newspapers — the *New York Times*, for example — switched to complete Pinyin several years ago, as did some international wire services such as Reuter.

In his Pinyin makeover, Sung Zengshou, first secretary at the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Canada, becomes Song Zengshou.

Song (the surname comes first in Chinese) approves of the extension of Pinyin in Canadian newspapers but he's not sure the change will make much difference to his Western friends.

"The idea is to help others pronounce the sounds as we do in Chinese," he said in an interview. "But it's not so easy for Westerners."

Sung should be pronounced with an extended "oo" sound (rhymes with blue), something like "sooong," he says. Instead, Westerners tend to say it as it looks in English.

He doesn't expect much improvement now that he's officially Song.

"My Western friends will be calling me as if I'm a tune or melody," he laughs.

THE OTTAWA CITIZEN, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1987

E



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Laughing with the Cantonese in damp, humid belly of China

2

BY GERRY WINGENBACH

Special to The Globe and Mail

GUANGZHOU, China

THE PEOPLE of Canton — the Chinese city now known as Guangzhou — are warm, friendly, happy, and have beautiful children. Most speak one English word — hello — and they love to practice saying it. To respond with "ni hao," the Chinese greeting, makes even the oldest weather-beaten face roar with laughter.

That is my most vivid memory of Guangzhou — everywhere the Cantonese and I laughed together. We laughed along the tree-lined boulevards amid droves of bicycles; we laughed in big dining rooms and dark alleyways, while perched around a wok stuffed full of aromatic vegetables simmering over a coal fire. We even laughed in the cemetery, while they burned fake paper money to provide their ancestors with purchasing power in the next world.

Europeans traded opium for tea, silk

Guangzhou is the Mediterranean of China. The climate and the temperament of its three million citizens differ from the rest of the country. There is a tradition of independence from the dictates of rulers far to the north — they have their own cuisine, their own excitable approach to living, and their own racy, idiomatic dialect.

Tucked into the belly of China, Guangzhou is hot, humid and damp for much of the year. The greenness of the lush tropical countryside extends into the centre of the city. Much of the urban landscape resembles a park, a delusion made believable by 20 million trees of 100 different species which blossom throughout the year.

In the northwest corner of Guangzhou is one of China's largest zoos, and you can watch giant pandas lie on their backs sucking long bamboo canes, like fat men playing the flute before an audience of school children.

And within the centre of the city visitors also find Europe. At Shamian, a small island on the Pearl River, a stone bridge leads to a 18-hectare collection of worn but vintage European architecture.

The British and French obtained possession of the island — originally a mere sandbank — in 1859 and established a territorial base. The Westerners were selling opium, trading it for Chinese tea and silk.



Stone bridge across the Pearl River leads to Shamian Island in Guangzhou, China.

They built stately mansions, churches, embassies and even tennis courts. By the early 1900s, 300 expatriates from more than 10 nations resided here.

Today these stately manors are mostly urban housing. But you can still play tennis, lunch at sidewalk cafés and stroll by the Pearl River under the shade of statuesque banyan trees. Compared to the hustle and bustle of surrounding Guangzhou, Shamian is an oasis of tranquility.

It's also a place of low-budget hotels (the equivalent of \$3 per night), the site of the best hotel in southern China (the White Swan, \$100 per night), and the only place in Guangzhou to rent a bicycle — at 20 cents an hour perhaps the best way to explore the sprawling city.

Characteristic buildings in the city are four or five stories high with street-level arcades reminiscent of old sections of Hong Kong. Taxis are plentiful, cheap, and are flagged down on the street (in most Chinese cities they must be arranged at a hotel).

During the 1920s, Guangzhou was the centre of Chinese revolutionary activities. There are several monuments to past political struggles scattered throughout the city. Two of these are particularly worth a visit.

Both the Peasant Movement Institute and the Mausoleum of the 72 Martyrs are located in the northern part of the city.

Built during the Ming dynasty, this former temple of Confucius was converted to the Peasant Movement Institute and directed by Mao Tse-tung in 1926. The aim was to instruct peasants on Communist doctrine and then send them throughout China.

The temple has been restored and offers views of Mao's office and bedroom, dormitories, dining hall and lecture rooms. Magnificent glazed ceramic animals highlight the roof lines of gracious Chinese architecture.

Annexed to the institute is the Exhibition Hall of the Revolution, containing historical photographs and texts of Mao, Chou Enlai and other revolutionary leaders.

The Mausoleum of the 72 Martyrs is located in the garden-like setting of Yellow Flower Hill and commemorates those killed in Sun Yat-sen's unsuccessful uprising against the Qing Dynasty in 1911. Built in 1918 from funds subscribed by overseas Chinese, the monument is a curious mixture of architectural styles. The centrepiece of the mausoleum contains models of the Statue of Liberty, the Liberty Bell, a Versailles pavilion and an Egyptian obelisk.

Stretching away to the northeast edge of the city is Baiyunshan, White Cloud Mountain. This is a cool retreat surrounded by parkland, tall pines, vegetable crops and water buffalo working rice paddies. There are several Chinese teahouses with outdoor tables in the shade alongside peaceful lakes.

Guangzhou is reached by Chinese domestic air flights and by train from Hong Kong and Shanghai.

Perhaps the most interesting way to arrive is on the "slow boat," an overnight liner sailing up the Pearl River from Macau. Macau is reached by hydrofoil from Hong Kong. Canadian Pacific Airlines have regular non-stop service from Canada to Hong Kong and Shanghai.

There is a splendid story – probably apocryphal – about one of the Queen's secret yearnings. No, it's not to fling her crown up in the air and dance a jig on the forecourt of Buckingham Palace.

It appears that nearly all her life she has really wanted to visit China. And on one occasion she is said to have informed one of her courtiers: "I do so wish to visit China. I've never been there at all – and I hear it is quite marvellous."

She then sighed rather wistfully and added: "But I suppose it's impossible. I don't imagine they're too keen on queens."

This was, of course, back in the more inflexible days of Chairman Mao's rule when China offered little access to the West and the entire country appeared to be a sea of little red books.

Now, since the new and enlightened spirit of liberalism has swept over the country, contact between this ancient and mysterious country and the Western world has improved beyond all recognition. The idea of the head of the world's most surviving monarchy – hereditary monarchy is hardly in line with basic Communist thinking – actually visiting the country would have been unimaginable previously.

But things have changed immensely and the Queen's visit to China this month is a marvellous indication of the new, strong links between our two countries.

The Queen, according to my special sources at Buckingham Palace, has been looking forward to the visit with all the excitement of a teenager on her first school trip abroad. This is a refreshing insight into the Queen's character, considering she must be one of the most widely travelled people in the world.

There is a certain political significance to the visit, too. Although Her Majesty is always traditionally *above* politics, her name was very much at the forefront to the negotiation two years ago to the historic signing of the agreement by which Britain returns sovereignty of Hong Kong to China in 1997.

Diplomatically speaking, the Queen's presence in China this month is seen as setting the seal on the accord. Her presence will also be a great compliment to the 80-year-old Chinese leader, Deng Xiaoping, the main architect of the Hong Kong agreement.

The Chinese, whose own Emperors stretch back into the mists of history, are among the politest people on earth – and they are noted for their hospitality and sense of occasion. When the former Foreign Secretary, Sir Alec Douglas-Home (as he then was), visited China, the Great Hall of the People echoed to the sounds of a Chinese symphony orchestra playing the *Eton Boating Song!*



... the Queen's visit to China this month is a marvellous indication of the new, strong links between our two countries

Royal tour of China

Nothing seems too much for the Queen's visit. Even the jacuzzi-equipped number 12 guest house, a luxurious suite of apartments at Beijing's closely-guarded Diaoyutai compound, where President Reagan was once

housed, was not considered quite regal enough for Her Majesty. Instead, hundreds of workmen were assigned to construct a brand new lodge where she and Prince Philip would stay for much of her stay.

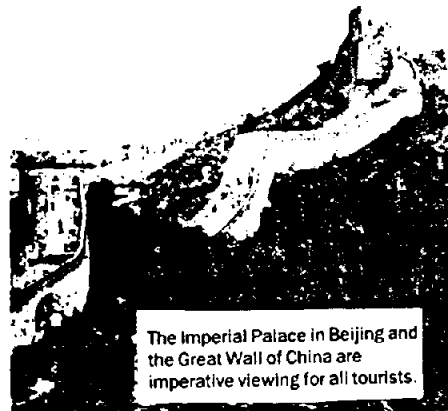
Perhaps the most historic moment of the tour comes when the Queen – living history herself – actually stands on the Great Wall of China.

Then there is the visit to Siam, home of the first Emperor of China's exquisite life-size terracotta army. This is said to have long fascinated the Queen and there is no doubt she will make much use of her favourite camera – a trusty Leica.

She will also be seeing the wonderful city of Canton – the great trading place of China. One of its great features is the huge number of boats on the River Canton (or, in Chinese, *Sheng-cheng* or *Kwang-chow-ju*) which are still used as permanent residences.

The city has a colourful political history. In the last years of the Manchu dynasty it was the home of revolutionary conspiracies, some of them engineered by the famous Sun Yat-sen. After the revolution of 1911, Canton was the seat of his government, and it became the base of the Chinese nationalistic movement which set out in 1926 to unify China.

She will also see the city of Shanghai which dates from 1360. This has always had great links with the West, having once had a nine square mile European section. The streets of the commercial sector were always well-kept and



The Imperial Palace in Beijing and the Great Wall of China are imperative viewing for all tourists.

contain many fine buildings in traditional Western styles – including a cathedral!

Chinese zeal in perfecting the arrangements for this tour has particularly impressed Buckingham Palace officials, whose task it was, months ago, to reconnoitre the places the Queen will visit. Her press secretary, Michael Shea, has been most impressed: "I have been on 50 tours with the Queen, and I have been delighted to see how easy it has been to work out arrangements in China," he said.

There is also something special for Prince Philip: the Chinese have suggested that when the royal tour ends, he might return to China in his role as head of the World Wildlife Fund. The idea is that he would visit a conservation area near Chengdu – where giant pandas live in the wild. The Chinese are as anxious as possible to publicise the plight of the panda, of which only 1,000 exist in the wild.

But for the Queen this week of history will linger in her memory. And one thing is certain: ideologies apart, it will prove that the Chinese still have a warm respect for monarchs.

4 MY CHINA

Fascinating, hospitable, endlessly surprising

by Edward Heath

As the Queen makes her historic visit to the ancient dynastic land, the former Prime Minister shares some of the sights and experiences waiting to greet her.

Since my first visit to China as Leader of the Conservative Party in 1974, I have had the good fortune to be invited back many more times and have now travelled widely in what must be one of the most fascinating and beautiful countries on earth.

China is of course a vast country — the third largest in the world — whose size and situation have blessed her with a wide variety of environmental conditions. To the north lie the Siberian Steppes; to the west huge areas of desert and high plateaux; to the east a long coastline leading on to the shallow waters of the Yellow, the East and the South China Seas; and in the south lush tropical jungles.

This environment is dominated by the chains of mountains and the great rivers in their valleys which cross the country from east to west. It is here that the majority of China's population of over a billion people live and work: on the fertile agricultural plains or in the great industrial conurbations that have built up along the natural lines of transportation. Most visitors arrive first in the capital, Beijing, (literally the Northern Capital), a city of eight million people, the cultural and administrative centre of China and the seat of Government. I will never forget my arrival in Beijing in 1974, for I received a welcome which exceeded all my expectations.

I could see from the plane that we were taxi-ing towards a large open-sided square formed from several thousand cheering, flag-waving people. When I came down the steps I was greeted by Deng Xiao-ping, then Senior Deputy Prime Minister, the Mayor of Beijing, the Deputy Foreign Minister and many others.

I was then led, with my party still carrying their bags, around the square where group after group of brightly

dressed youngsters were waiting to greet us. Each group had its own costume, its own music and dancing, and its own special way of welcome. I had never received such a spectacular and enthusiastic welcome in any of the foreign countries I had visited.

After walking around the square we were driven off to our official guest-houses, and it was from the window of my black limousine that I first glimpsed the now familiar sight of the bustling Beijing streets: long, broad thoroughfares filled with cyclists pedalling furiously to and from work, and steady streams of pedestrians filling the pavements.

That first visit to Beijing was of course mostly taken up by political engagements — my meeting with Chairman Mao, and talks with Prime Minister Zhou En-lai and his officials — but I did manage to take some time off to see the sights. At the heart of Beijing lies the Tian An Men (Gate of Heavenly Peace) Square: on one side is the Great Hall of the People, a huge modern building where the National People's Congress, China's Parliament, sits. And on another side is the Imperial City and the Old Forbidden City within that.

Twenty four emperors of the last imperial dynasties, the Ming and Qing, ruled from the fabulous palaces of the Forbidden City. It is now a museum, restored and cared for by the present government, whose great officers of state lie nearby. The art works in porcelain, jade and bronze, the silk paintings and the beautifully crafted furniture form the most impressive collection of its kind I have ever seen.

I also wanted to see the Great Wall on my first visit, and we found time on Sunday morning to drive out from the city through the countryside to the hills where it winds majestically from crest to crest. Each section of the turreted wall is topped by a guard post, and as the day was clear, I walked up to the highest point and looked out across the hills. The view was spectacular, and shimmering far in the dis-

tance I could just make out the northern mountains of Mongolia.

The far south of the country was my destination during the second half of this visit — the ancient city of Kunming. This subtropical City of Eternal Spring is located near the Burmese border on a high plateau 6,000 feet above sea-level. It has a temperate climate and beautiful vegetation with many kinds of flowering plants always in bloom.

I was immediately reminded of Kenya. In the evening as we stood on the balcony of the guest-house watching the changing light on the distant mountains, I felt as though I was at Government House in Nairobi. The next day we drove off through the lush valleys towards the Vietnamese border, passing fields of rice-paddy and vegetables worked manually by countless farmers and their water buffalo: a scene of intense activity seen everywhere in rural China. At the end of our drive we reached the extraordinary Stone Forest of Lunan.

This is a bizarre geological phenomenon of needle-pointed rocks jutting up to 100 feet from the ground. Once part of the ocean floor, the strangely twisted, top-heavy rock towers now resemble — from a distance — a forest of pines. The Stone Forest is one of many unusual and breathtaking natural sites in China, and yet it is so rarely visited by tourists that it has remained peaceful and unspoilt. But it is difficult to choose individual names from all the lovely places and interesting people in China I have come to know. Everywhere I have been met with kind hospitality and such an eagerness to introduce a stranger to the country and its culture, that I have come to realise a totally unexpected and marvellous experience awaits me each time I return.

Whether I stayed in Beijing, Kunming or the great city of Shanghai; climbed the mountains of Tibet; explored the forests of Szechuan, home of the great giant panda; swam in warm seas off the tropical island of Hainan; or even took a sail down the long River Yangtse, I was always assured of a fascinating and rewarding visit.

British Caledonian

Inflight

Sept/October 1986

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Energy, Mines and Resources Canada

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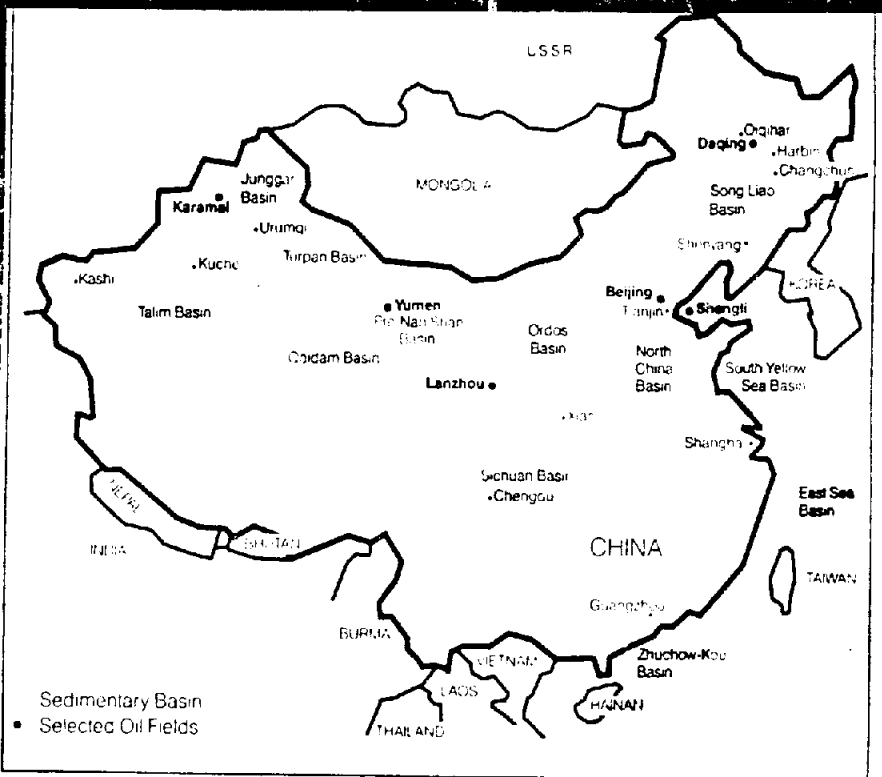
A Toronto professor gathers some new ideas from a 'frontier' region

China's recent economic surge and growing consumerism will require a rapid increase in the country's energy supply.

China is one of the world's major producers of coal and petroleum (see table), but per capita consumption of fossil fuels is currently low among the country's more than a billion people, representing one quarter of the world's population. As demand for energy grows, sources now available in China will not begin to meet the country's needs.

At present, coal meets nearly three quarters of China's energy requirements. However, since coal pollutes the atmosphere and is unsuitable for such purposes as road and air transportation, its importance will likely decline as the petroleum industry develops. Oil and gas now provide about 25 per cent of China's energy needs. Hydroelectric power, at less than 5 per cent, remains a largely undeveloped resource.

The potential for major petroleum discoveries in China is considered excellent, there are several large sedimentary basins that have barely been explored. The Ministry of Petroleum is now seeking assistance from many western countries to turn this potential into reality.



Exploration first met with success in the 1950s. The giant Daqing field, discovered in 1959, still yields one million barrels of oil per day — almost half of China's total production. Other early discoveries include Karamay and Yumen. More recently the Shengli field, near Beijing, has become a major producer.

Exploration moved into the offshore in the early seventies. In 1983 activity increased dramatically when the Ministry of Petroleum contracted several multinational oil companies to drill exploratory holes. No major discoveries have so far been announced.

Foreign companies have not yet been involved in onshore drilling activity, but several multinational geophysical companies are carrying out exploratory seismic

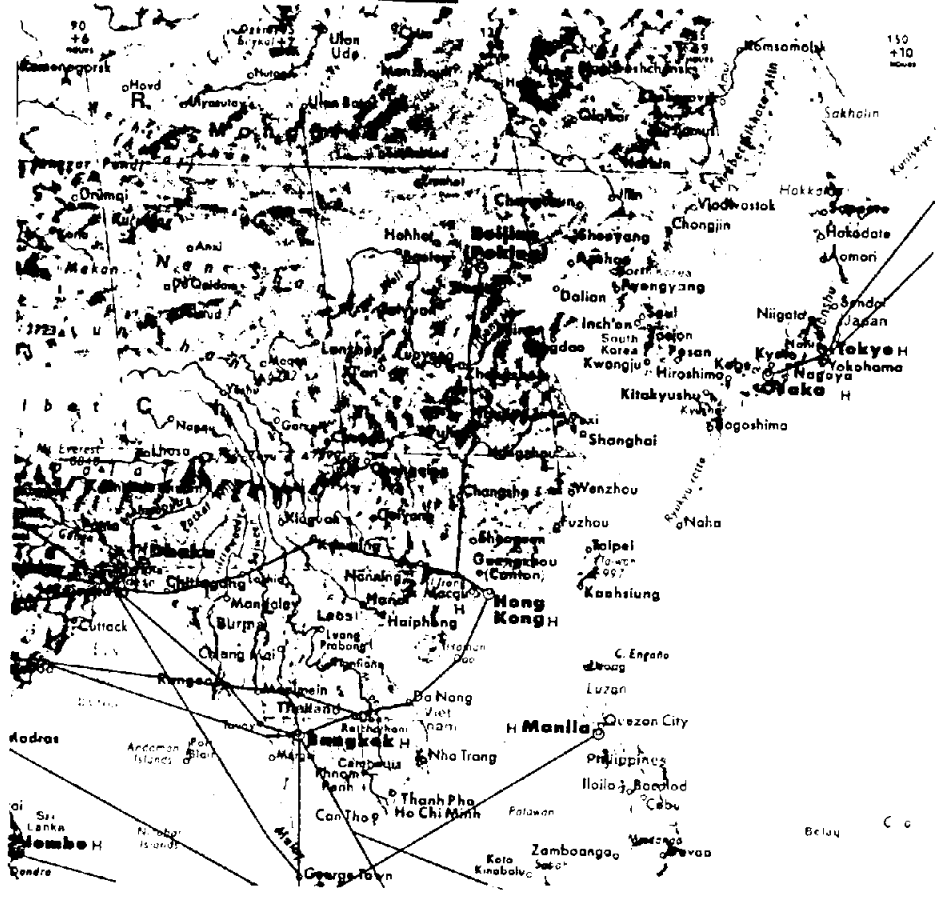
surveys in western China. They are reprocessing old Chinese seismic lines using modern computer techniques, shooting new lines, and teaching Chinese technicians to use the new equipment and technology. Many Canadian specialists are involved in this activity.

In July 1985 the Chinese announced a strategic plan to develop the four western provinces, Xizang (Tibet), Qinghai, Xinjiang and Gansu. These remote regions, characterized by deserts and high mountains, are home to most of the non-Han minority Chinese. The provinces are thought to be rich in natural resources and ripe for industrial development.

The Chinese government will probably concentrate its petroleum exploration activity in these areas, and this may be where foreign oil companies will first be involved in onshore drilling.

BRITISH AIRWAYS

A



British Caledonian
Inflight
 September/October 1986

B



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Toronto's hopes are high for its 'twin' in Chongqing

BY PAUL TAYLOR
The Globe and Mail

At first glance, Toronto and Chongqing seem unlikely twins. They certainly don't look like one another.

But in the jargon of international trade, the two cities agreed to "twin" in the hope that their fraternal bonds can be mutually beneficial.

And judging from the 10 projects already under consideration, the year-old relationship could pay off handsomely.

Toronto Mayor Arthur Eggleton, who visited Chongqing last March to sign the twinning agreement, said the 10 could be worth up to \$350-million and a lot more business could follow.

"This is not just pie-in-the-sky stuff. Things are happening," said Dorothy McIntosh, a senior Toronto official in charge of promoting international trade.

Last November, Chongqing's Mayor Xiao Yang paid a call on Toronto's civic leaders and business executives. Mr. Xiao, who has had 30 years of experience in key industrial positions, seems eager to get things under way.

Ms McIntosh noted that it can often take two to four years to reach a business deal in China. "By that standard, I think we're doing really well. We've made a lot of headway in less than a year."

She added that Chongqing, located in China's interior province of Sichuan, is a logical twin for Toronto.

For one thing, many of China's coastal cities opened up to the West some time ago and have well-established links with other cities around the world. Shanghai has as many as 10 "twins."

By contrast, Chongqing, in a region richly endowed with natural resources, has only recently swung open its doors in a bid to acquire new technology and overseas business.

"We'll be getting in on the same footing as other cities," Ms McIntosh said.

Chongqing is probably best known to Canadians as Chungking — the old name that Westerners affixed to the city. During the Second World War, it was the capital of Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Government and the site of Canada's first embassy in China.

Today, Chongqing is a sprawling megalopolis of 14 million people — so large that the central Government in Beijing has given it special status and a certain degree of autonomy. Only three other Chinese

cities — Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin — have been granted similar status.

Local Chongqing officials, for instance, can approve international deals worth up to \$5-million (U.S.) without the permission of the central authorities.

Chongqing is big in auto production, electronics, pharmaceuticals, food processing, steel and rubber. The city and Sichuan have also been at the centre of a great deal of economic experimentation.

Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang earned his reputation as an economic reformer while he was first secretary of the Communist Party of Sichuan in the 1970s. He reorganized farming techniques and introduced factory worker bonuses for increased productivity. Sichuan province is also the birthplace of Paramount Leader Deng Xiaoping.

Ms McIntosh said the official contacts between Toronto and Chongqing are helping to pave the way for Canadian businessmen into this unique part of China.

"You can't simply drop into a Chinese city and expect to do business. You must be invited and be introduced."

The potential deals range from modest exchanges to huge ventures. X-Rad International of Pickering has signed a letter of intent for a joint venture to manufacture radiators. The initial value of the agreement is set at \$500,000. Bell Canada International Inc. and Northern Telecom Ltd. are negotiating a multi-million-dollar deal to supply telephone equipment and install transmission lines in Chongqing.

But the new ties between Chongqing and Toronto go beyond business deals; they include cultural, educational and medical exchanges. Programs are taking place between York University's Osgoode Hall and the South West Institute for Political Science; the Ontario College of Art and Sichuan Fine Arts Institute; the Hospital for Sick Children and the Chongqing Pediatric Hospital, among others.

And this summer the Canadian National Exhibition plans a special show from China — complete with the Chongqing acrobatic troupe — from Aug. 19 to Sept. 7. Part of the show, to be located in the Automotive Building, will be a trade exhibit with 70 booths showcasing products from China. The provincial Government is contributing \$125,000 to help defray costs and the federal Government is being asked to contribute an equal amount.



Chongqing Mayor Xiao Yang and Toronto Mayor Arthur Eggleton sign economic pact.

Sense of humor is a handy asset for China tourists

BY ROBERT GRIEVES
Special to The Globe and Mail

Stephen Mulder, the former Beijing representative of Cummins Engine Co. Inc., the U.S. heavy equipment manufacturer, remembers his car ride from Beijing to Tianjin, less than 100 miles away.

"We had to fill up the trunk with gasoline tanks because there are no gas stations. The highway out of Beijing quickly became a badly paved road, then a gravel road, and finally a dirt road. Logs and mule carts filled with sticks and hay seemed to block our way at every turn. Finally, we ended up in a field, with no sign of a road anywhere. The peasants came up to our windows and just stared in at us."

Welcome to travel in China.

Getting around in the People's Republic is seldom easy, even though hotels and restaurants have improved markedly in the past two years.

Standards of service at all but the best joint-venture hotels is poor and the quality of food, mainly Chinese, varies greatly.

In the past five years the Chinese Government has issued directives to its citizens, and particularly to its service people, advising them to be nice to foreigners because they have a lot of foreign exchange to spend. For the most part, that message has been taken to heart, though it is best observed in places run by Japanese or Hong Kong managers.

The Chinese generally view Canadians with a great deal of warmth and goodwill and not just because Donald Sutherland will play Dr. Norman Bethune in a movie to be shot in China later this summer. North Americans in general are considered to be honest, just, open-minded and possessed of a good sense of humor (an important Chinese trait) by the bulk of the *laobaixing*, or Chinese common people.

The main problem with travel in China is that the quality of services drops dramatically outside of the great east coast cities of Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin and Guangzhou (Canton.) Arrangements to go from one of those cities to an interior area, such as Xian or Chongqing, and back, should be made well in advance of the scheduled time of departure.

In those cities, however, life for travelling business executives and tourists has improved in the past two years. In Shanghai, the newly opened Hua Ting Sheraton Hotel Shanghai is the talk of the town. A standard single room at the 1,008-room hotel costs \$120 (U.S.) a night, which is about the same price of a similar room at the older, but recently refurbished Jinjiang Hotel.

In nearby Hangzhou the luxurious, 376-room-and-suite Hangzhou Hotel, belonging to the Shangri-La chain, offers a standard room for about the same price. The newly opened Shangri-La Hotel in Beijing features a disco, an excellent coffee shop and a French restaurant.

These hotels complement the Jianguo and Great Wall Sheraton in Beijing and the Garden and White Swan hotels in Guangzhou.

Because the Civil Aviation Administration of China has a monopoly on in-country transportation, service is sometimes less than good. A one-way plane ride from Beijing to Shanghai will cost upwards of 300 yuan.

Meals on such flights consist of fish, chicken or pork, served with rice and a dash of green vegetable, accompanied by a limp salad and oily dressing. For dessert, there's a tired custard.

On a recent trip between Beijing and Dalian passengers were confronted with a six-hour delay in the takeoff of their Antonov-24 aircraft. Apart from a few clouds and little drizzle, the weather seemed fine for flying. On the return trip, a few days later, with the weather about the same, the flight of a 15-year-old British Trident jet was delayed for a day.

When irate passengers asked attendants at the service desk at Dalian airport why the big plane was delayed so long while the smaller plane had departed after six hours, they were treated to condescending smiles. "You don't understand," said one of the attendants, a young girl. "Small plane, small problem. Big plane, big problem."

The train trip from Beijing to Tianjin takes only two hours and costs about nine yuan per person in "soft seat" class, which means that you are treated to cushy seats, lace curtains, tables and all the tea you can drink. Hard seat is even cheaper, but is just that. It is also crowded, noisy and pungent with the perfume of daily life in China.

For the tired business executive or tourist who really wants to get away from it all on a trip over the rails, there is soft sleeper, at double or triple the soft seat price. These four-bed compartments can be very comfortable if the bed clothes have been laundered and the floor swept. They can also be a kind of living hell if such is not the case.

Backpacking (not recommended for business executives with schedules to meet) is another good way to see China. More than 300 cities are now open to foreign visitors. It is recommended, however, that the local foreign office (*waihan*) be contacted and that suitable arrangements for guides, interpreters and itineraries be made in advance.

Such arrangements are usually made through the state-run China International Travel Service. At best, CITS provides indifferent arrangements; at worst they are atrocious. It is recommended that alternative arrangements be attempted, though all roads through China eventually involve CITS at some stage.

A final, cautionary note on wash-room facilities: in most places outside the big cities they are non-existent. Chinese washrooms consist of trenches and holes in the ground at many historical sites and scenic areas. Rural hotels sport the same.

Even in hotels with Western-style installations, the plumbing is apt to be erratic. This is one area where the North American's valued sense of humor will come in handy.