

Unions) to the author, 2 June 1988. For the BBC problems see papers in BBC archives, R19/62, T6/185 and T32/223.

26. For traditional attitudes to information see M. Yass, *This is your War: Home Front Propaganda in the Second World War* (London, 1983), pp.3-5. This was reflected in the way the Central Office of Information was established; see chapter 3 in F. Clark, *The Central Office of Information* (London, 1970). For other points, see Wint, *What Happened in Korea*, appendix 1, "Was there a War?" H. Pelling, *The British Communist Party: An Historical Profile* (London, 1958), pp.161-63. To some extent, the need for a "purge" of communists, at least in the civil service, had been taken care of before the Korean war began; see J. E. Mortimer and V. Ellis, *A Professional Union: The Evolution of the Institution of Professional Civil Servants* (London, 1980), pp.168-75.

JOHN MCLEAVY BROWN IN KOREA

IAN NISH

John McLeavy Brown was an employee of the Korean government from 1893 to 1905, one of the most hazardous times in the history of the peninsula. Though he was supposed to supervise the Korean customs organisation, he found himself involved in many other activities, and this led to unpopularity in many quarters. The Russians twice tried to remove him but did not succeed. Ultimately the Japanese did manage to pension him off in 1905. Brown was what the Japanese call an "o-yatoi gaijin" a foreigner in the employ of Korea. A foreigner whose function was to teach financial prudence to the Korean court could not expect to be universally popular.

Brown was born in Lisburn, Co Antrim in 1835 and educated both at Queens University, Belfast and at Trinity College, Dublin. He entered the China consular service and, because of his rapid progress in the Chinese language, he saw service in the Legation at Peking. Brown resigned to join the Chinese customs service in 1873. During periods of long leave he qualified as a barrister and finally in 1888 obtained the degree of LL.D from Dublin. He is the only person with doctoral qualifications who, in my experience, chose never to use the title. During his career in the East, he was almost invariably known as "Mr McLeavy Brown". After twenty years with the Chinese customs, Brown was chosen to head the Korean Customs.

Brown owed his appointment to Sir Robert Hart, Director-general of the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs Service. To Hart, Korean customs was the "Corean section" of the Chinese network at a time of Chinese hegemony over Korea. When I.F. Schoenicke went on long leave in the autumn of 1892, Hart arranged for F.A. Morgan, who had been temporarily deputed to the customs post at Chemulp'o, to take his place. Hart was committed to the view that "fears regarding our hold of Corea are at an end."¹ This was, however, to prove over-optimistic. Morgan had to go home, suffering from a breakdown and needing surgery on his leg. He never returned to a post in Korea.

Hart hastily appointed Brown, then assistant commissioner of customs at Kowloon, a post of considerable responsibility and special sensitivity. It appears that Brown did not demur. The prospect of freezing in Seoul may have seemed more attractive than sweltering in the south China seas. But Hart had his doubts: Brown was "a first class man for any big works, but, as head of an office, he lets current work into arrears to an extent that throws the whole Service 'out of step.'"²

A little later, he wrote to his London office, "Brown had taken Morgan's place in Corea: wonder how he'll get on there! He's a first-rate man when he settles down to work, but terribly lazy generally speaking."³ This was the comment of a crusty headmaster on a junior pupil rather than that appropriate to a trusted servant aged 58. It must be remembered then that Brown was not the first choice for the post which he was to occupy with distinction for twelve years.

Brown took charge of the Korean customs on 15 October 1893. He was clever, experienced, an able Chinese linguist willing to learn Korean. He seems to have created good impressions in most quarters: Koreans, Chinese including Yuan Shih-k'ai, and foreigners. Within

six months he had taken a firm grip on the Korean situation.

In the summer of 1894, war broke out between Japan and China. Japanese troops occupied the peninsula after Yuan Shih-k'ai and the Chinese withdrew and there were fears that Brown and other Britishers in the customs service might have to be pulled out. Brown himself had been involved in an attack by Japanese soldiers on 15 July while accompanying the acting British Consul-general, Gardner, though this was not typical. To be sure, Brown was at this stage holding an appointment linked to the Chinese Maritime Customs and had a good knowledge of the Chinese language, then used for communication with the Korean court. It suited the Japanese to make use of Brown. They wanted a customs service which would be completely independent of China—something with which the Koreans were in full agreement. The Japanese induced the Korean government to set up a Korean customs. On 25 October 1894 Brown was appointed Chief Commissioner of the new organisation. In practical terms his control of the service was undiminished. In personal terms, he was deemed to be on long leave from the Chinese service: he could return there in an emergency. Existing staff were all taken over en bloc from the Chinese customs, presumably on similar terms of employment.

Dissatisfied with the financial standards within Korea, the Japanese officials came to rely on Brown. In the first place they reorganised the customs service with Brown as Chief Commissioner of the new organisation. In essence the collection of revenue and its disposal would now be controlled by the finance department of government. It was mooted in several quarters that Brown should be given an additional role and the Foreign Minister, after consultation with the Finance Minister, offered Brown on 29 October 1894 a post as adviser to the finance department. Brown accepted. Walter Hillier, the British Consul-general, wrote in November as follows:

Mr Brown's popularity with all classes of Korean officials, and his long experience in the management of Customs business in all parts of China, will render him a valuable servant to the Korean Government, while his reputation and attainments as a Chinese scholar will stand him in good stead. If the Japanese Government were sincere in the policy which has been enunciated by Count Inouye, its agents will find in Mr Brown a willing and useful ally. On the other hand, he will be in a position to give us warning of any measures under consideration that may be detrimental to our commercial or other interests in this country.⁴

When Count Inouye Kaoru, the Ambassador, announced his schemes for the reform of Korea, some control of revenue and expenditure was essential. It would appear that Brown was in fact an ancillary to the various Japanese schemes for reform. He was given a five year contract with the Korean Government by express orders of the Korean king in October 1895. Even after Inouye withdrew and the king escaped to the protection of the Russian legation in February 1896, Brown stayed on in his dual function.

While the task of Chief Commissioner was relatively free of criticism, the post of Financial Adviser during a reformist period was hard and unpopular. The Korean court blamed Brown for the careful scrutiny of government expenditure and the shedding of supernumerary clerks from the various government offices. The *Korean Repository*, sympathetic to reform wrote,

The large experience in oriental affairs, pre-eminent ability and decision of Dr McLeavy Brown fit him admirably for the position he so ably fills. *We love him for the enemies he is making* in the camps of those who care more for personal aggrandizement than for the good of Korea.⁵

Brown managed to weather the storm of Korean unpopularity for there were many Koreans well aware of the nature of maladministration.

The hostility of the Russians, who had come to fill the position vacated by the Chinese after their defeat in 1895, was a more serious matter. When Min Yong-hoan went as Korean delegate to the coronation of Tsar Nicholas II in

May 1896, he asked for Russian protection. According to the Russian record, he also asked for a loan, which the Russians were only ready to give in return for the appointment of a Russian financial adviser and for military help in the form of military advisers. The widespread ramifications of this secret deal did not immediately manifest themselves in Seoul because of the deal's secrecy. It was only communicated to the foreign representatives in Seoul after Minister Waeber left the country and was replaced by Charge d'affaires Speyer in September 1897. On the basis of their quasi-alliance, Speyer concluded with the Korean Foreign Minister a more specific agreement in November which, among other clauses, gave the Russian financial adviser entire control of the Korean financial and customs administration. This agreement took human form with the arrival of Russian "drill instructors" and K. A. Alekseyev, Councillor of State in the Finance Department of the Imperial Russian Government.

By this time Brown had come to accept there was little hope of success in the international dispute, and he made it clear he would not resign voluntarily but would serve out his contract unless dismissed outright.⁶ The Korean Finance Department refused to dismiss him, leaving the act of dismissal to the king himself. Jordan, like Speyer, was in regular contact but got no decisive answer. The Brown case was in deadlock for two long months.

The British government was inclined to take a low posture. Salisbury wrote on 6 December: "If the Korean Government dismissed Brown from office, his claim for proper compensation for breach of contract will be a good one, and Her Majesty's Government will be willing to give it their support." The implication is that Britain would not support her national continuing in office. Sir Claude MacDonald, Britain's minister at Peking who was also Minister Plenipotentiary to the Kingdom of Korea, clearly drew that inference⁷ since he telegraphed in response: "I

presume HM Government will not be disposed to afford him [Brown] any further support in maintaining his position, and that there is nothing left for him but to retire." He added that Speyer, who had been the cause of Russia's forward policy, was soon to be transferred to Peking. In that more favourable atmosphere, it would be opportune to grasp any compromise offered by the Russians and Koreans. The opportunity came with the so-called Alekseyev compromise, in which Alekseyev would act as financial adviser while Brown remained chief controller of customs, acting "with the concurrence and approval of M. Alexieff in important matters."⁸ So the situation on the ground was patched up and Brown could breathe again.

But by one of the great ironies of history, the Korean situation deteriorated internationally. On 4 December the British admiral in the East, Buller, reported that nine Russian men-of-war and their admiral had arrived at Chemulp'o two days earlier. This was a bombshell for the Foreign Office. They recommended to the British Admiralty that "an approximately equal British naval force should be sent to Corea", with the object of preventing the Korean Government and people from assuming that Russia had any special rights in the waters of that country and that its force should stay for ten days.⁹

The position of Brown was at risk and, as an employee of the Korean government, he had very few cards to play. His position as financial adviser had long been challenged by the Russians. They had cherished the idea of transferring the customs as an adjunct of the Russo-Chinese Bank under the guidance of Pokotilov, who had spent some months in Seoul studying the financial system. But Brown's position was also the victim of a tug of war between Korean politicians. His colleagues in the Finance Department were strong advocates of his retention, while the Foreign Ministry felt that Korea was bound by the understandings reached within Russia in 1896. The

Korean king could not arbitrate between them. The issue of Alekseyev and Brown was therefore left unresolved in October and November. In practice, Alekseyev took over as Financial Adviser. Although Brown was not actually dismissed he ceased to be consulted and so found his task as Customs Commissioner more and more difficult. Moreover, the Russo-Korean Bank was set up in Seoul in January 1898, though it was to close its doors again three months later.

Support for Brown came from the Independence Club and the Japanese, American and British governments. Obviously Brown could not expect more than moral support from the first three. Much, therefore, turned on the attitude to be taken by London. On 6 October Lord Salisbury (as foreign secretary) warned Korea that Britain would be "seriously displeased if Mr Brown were to be removed". At the end of October Salisbury asked his representative in Russia to enquire from the Russian Foreign Ministry and received an assurance that, while financial experts had been sent as asked for by Koreans, Russia had given no instructions for the dismissal of Brown about which it claimed to be totally uninformed.¹⁰ Recognising that Speyer was probably acting on his own initiative, the new British representative in Seoul, John Jordan, stoutly defended the retention of Brown.

It took time for the Admiralty to assemble an "approximately equal naval force." It was 29 December before Admiral Buller reported he had reached Chemulp'o with seven ships and that *Immortalite* and *Iphigenia* were visiting Port Arthur. The commander-in-chief of China Station was ordered to stay at Chemulp'o until further notice. When one remembers that the Americans had also sent ships and that Japanese ships were on alert, it is clear that a war of nerves was being waged among the powers. It was, remember, not exclusively the war of McLeavy Brown since Lushun (Port Arthur) was also a major object of British concern. Secondly, we would do

well to recall that this example of gunboat diplomacy was not waged against Korea (though it did have its impact there) but between the powers.

The naval confrontation at Chemulp'o did not better the position of Brown. He had already accepted Alekseyev's terms of compromise before it was known that the British contemplated any naval presence. John Jordan, quite a junior consul-general, made a courteous complaint to Whitehall:

Your telegram of 15 December, announcing the approaching visit of the fleet, only reached me on the afternoon of 17 December, a few hours after Mr Brown had definitely accepted M. Alexieff's additional proposals Had your telegram not been delayed in transmission, and had the information which it contained reached me earlier, it is probable that I would have advised Mr Brown to hold out for better terms. (6.1.98)¹¹

In fact, the Alekseyev compromise was remarkably workable. Alekseyev's secretary, who ironically was an Englishman called Garfield, told Brown that his boss disliked the forward policy of Speyer and was in no way bound by it since he was affiliated to the Finance Ministry. He evidently thought Speyer to be a pushy Foreign Ministry type and saw in McLeavy Brown a kindred spirit from a cautious financial background. A Frenchman, E. Laporte of the Korean Customs, who was thought to be the person favoured by Speyer as Brown's successor as Chief Commissioner, was loyal to his chief and refused to serve.

Alekseyev and the Russian drill instructors were withdrawn in the spring of 1889, partly due to the resistance of the Independence Club led by Philip Jaisohn (So Chaep'il) and partly following the Nishi-Rosen agreement which restored Japan's fortunes on the peninsula. But Brown was not restored as Financial Adviser. This was a normal setback for, as we follow his activities over the next few years, we find him described as "Superintendent of Railways" (involved in issuing railway concessions), legal adviser and drafter of Royal Decrees,

negotiator of land concessions and negotiator over the opening of ports. In short, he seems to have been drawn into most matters which involved foreign governments and which had a financial dimension. He cleared up financial positions and assured that the accounts of the Finance Ministry were properly audited so that deficits were avoided. Like Hart in China, he had a prime responsibility for raising loans from foreign banks and ensuring that debts on foreign loans were repaid, in this case especially the Japanese loan. We also find him responsible for public works both in Seoul and in the Southern ports: he was responsible for the negotiation, payment and supervision of the construction of a seawall and jetty at Chemulp'o. Yet, if his responsibilities were infinitely expandable, they were equally contractable when ministers in power were hostile to or jealous of him.¹²

It was in the nature of his position that he identified himself with British interests. He was often found working alongside Jordan, the consul-general. It was not always clear what Britain's interests in Korea were. On the one hand, there was no resident British minister; and no regular British steamer service called on Korean ports, where the Japanese flag dominated the carrying trade. On the other hand, there was some confidence in the 'large potentialities' of British trade with Korea.¹³ If we may quote further from one of Brown's greatest admirers, Isabella Bird Bishop, whose travels in the peninsula led to her book *Korea and her Neighbours* in 1898:

Though we may have abandoned any political interest in Korea, the future of British trade in the country remains an important question. Such influence as England possesses, being exercised through a non-official channel, and therefore necessarily indirect, is owing to the abilities, force and diplomatic tact of Mr McLeavy Brown ... So long as he is in control at the capital, and such upright and able men as Mr Hunt, Mr Oiesen, and Mr Osborne are Commissioners at the Treaty Ports, so long will England be commercially important in Korean estimations.¹⁴

This was true also in a political sense: Brown saw the Korean problems through British eyes. The latter is relevant to the renewal of Brown's contract, due to run out in October 1900. Russia posted Pavlov, of the forward group of diplomats, from Peking to Seoul in August 1899. He seemed anxious to re-assert Russia's position by his demands over Masamp'o. John Jordan was worried that by the time Brown's contract lapsed, Russia would again be in the ascendant and urged him to agree to an early renewal. Brown, he reported,

... had great hesitation about committing himself to a course which entailed a large pecuniary sacrifice on his part, and involved the continuation of a struggle which past experience has shown to be almost hopeless. Eventually, however, he expressed his willingness to accept another term of service, and authorised me to take such action as seemed best calculated to secure the necessary modification of his Contract (6.8.99).¹⁵

Officers of the Korean Customs were not remunerated on the same scale as those of the Chinese Customs from which Brown was seconded. What he lost in salary, however, Brown may have made up in influence. The other factor was his age of 64: even the most vigorous Son of Ulster cannot have relished battling on between Russia and Japan into his seventies. Nonetheless he eventually agreed, leaving Jordan to approach the Koreans. Korea agreed to extend Brown's contract as Chief Commissioner of Customs for five years from October 1900 as early as August 1899.¹⁶

In the aftermath of the Boxer disturbances, relations between Russia and Britain deteriorated. This affected the standing in Korea of McLeavy Brown, whose appointment was by this stage treated like a pawn between them. On 21 March 1901, the Korean Foreign Minister asked John Gubbins, then standing in for Jordan as minister to Korea, to dismiss Brown. The grounds were that he had refused to carry out a promise he allegedly gave the Korean Emperor the previous December to move out of the Chief

Commissioner's official residence beside the palace and that, when court officials had called to execute the promise, he had ejected them. Gubbins had no doubt that the demand was part of a palace intrigue and depended on Russian backing. He thought that men-of-war should be sent to Korean waters.¹⁷ It is interesting that at this stage the Koreans should ask the British representative to dismiss and punish Brown, who was their own employee. Brown told Gubbins he had made no such promise but that, since his residence was government property, he was ready to give it up on being given time enough to make other arrangements. It proved difficult to iron out the problem diplomatically, as each time the matter was raised Korean ministers increased their intrusiveness into Customs affairs.¹⁸

As before, Britain had the support of the Americans and the Japanese. Baron Hayashi Gonsuke, the Japanese minister in Seoul, agreed it was very important to retain Brown in control of the Customs and that to remove him would entail serious consequences.¹⁹ Fortified by this support, Britain informed Korea that, except for misconduct, she could not admit Korea's right to dismiss Brown before the expiry of his contract. Several questions were asked in the House of Commons. At Chemulp'o the *Bonaventure* put in an appearance, the first of the British ships to berth there. On 1 April the incident was patched up: it was concluded that everything arose from a mistake on the part of Brown's interpreter, Brown being unable to speak Korean, that the interpreter would be punished by ten years' imprisonment, and the dismissal of Brown would be countermanded. Gubbins continued to ask for a naval vessel to be sent for three weeks followed by a visit by a squadron.²⁰

The next move by the group determined to oust Brown followed one month later. Gubbins was informed that Brown's contract as renewed in 1899 had been approved by the Finance Department only, and had not

been ratified by the Council of State. He may have felt that Britain did not carry enough weight with the Korean Court, for he wrote:

The importance of the retention of Mr Brown as Chief Commissioner is, I venture to suggest, greater for Japan than for us, for, apart from the fact that she is the only Power with large commercial interests in this country, the retention of the present Chief Commissioner constitutes a *modus vivendi* between the rival interests of Russia and Japan, which it would be difficult to disturb without detriment to present international relations.²¹

When approached, the Japanese showed cordiality and offered support but with reservations:

It would be most unwise to make anything of the nature of a threat, for they hold that Mr Brown, being a servant of the Korean Government, can be dismissed by that Government at any time, provided the terms of his contract are not violated. [Mr Kato] also intimated to me that, though the Japanese Government are well aware of Mr McLeavy Brown's great ability and probity, they consider that he is rather wanting in tact, and assumes on occasion a somewhat dictatorial and improper tone towards the Government whose servant he is.²²

But the Japanese foreign minister would not entertain any idea of Japanese troops in their Seoul garrison being used to prevent the Korean Government occupying their own Customs buildings. Japan's moral support was enough and Britain's efforts to defend Brown were successful. New factions came to power in Seoul for whom the Brown case was not a top priority. Brown continued his broad portfolio of activities undiminished.

Like Isabella Bird, Gertrude Bell, the intrepid Victorian traveller, gives us a favourable picture of Brown. She visited him in 1903 when he was living in Seoul in some style, not yet dispossessed of his Commissioner's residence. She wrote:

Under Providence, it seems to me the Chief Commissioner of Customs rules Korea, or at least it is entirely open to him to rule Korea if he chooses. Whether the present one does or not, I cannot judge, he seems to have accomplished a good deal in the matter of street making, policing and cleaning Seoul but—to hazard a wide conclusion—he seems a little too

much absorbed in his new band stand and similar matters for a really busy politician. But this is a very hasty impression and while I was with him I thought of nothing but how agreeable he was.²³

The reference to the bandstand I interpret to mean that Brown was wrapped up in the minutiae of his tasks and was not inclined to grasp the full range of powers he could have had, had he wanted them. Another friend was Dr George Ernest Morrison, *The Times* correspondent in Peking. A stern judge of character, Morrison remained on the best of terms with Brown till his death. He presents a favourable view of Brown.

In Seoul I stayed with McLeavy Brown and found him the same delightful companion as ever. His position is now more pleasant than it has ever been for he is well supported by the Japanese and they recognise the good work that has been done by the Customs under his control.²⁴

The fact that Morrison was the person who proposed that Brown ultimately became adviser to the Chinese legation in London attests to Brown's congenial qualities and to his ability to maintain good relations with East Asians. The fact that he was primarily a Chinese scholar may have made him less popular in certain Seoul quarters as they reacted against the old Chinese hegemony. In British circles, Jordan thought Brown "has a marked personal influence with orientals but suffers from a paralysis of writing power ... He is a sort of walking encyclopedia who knows everything, but does not turn his knowledge to the account he might do."²⁵ So much from a companion of some ten years' standing in Seoul!

The building of a bandstand may seem a rather unusual responsibility for Brown as a doctor of laws and Chinese scholar. But customs officials attracted new responsibilities in a haphazard way. Perhaps the best explanation of how these functions accrued is given by one of the officials himself, H.V. Davidson, at one time Brown's secretary:

As the Customs Funds were held separately under the sole control of the Chief Commissioner, constant attempts were made by various Korean officials to obtain grants from these funds for numerous schemes more or less unessential. It was said that Mr McLeavy Brown always sat on his cheque book, but, when resistance became hopeless, a way out was found by which the Customs undertook the supervision and direct payment for these works. Thus the Customs Department became involved in many operations that were remote from revenue collection. The widening of the street, Chongno, from the West to the East Gate of Seoul; reducing the grade of the "Peking Pass", just north of Seoul; building bridges with Korean stonework and improving the storm drainage, were among the earliest extra jobs. Buildings were provided in the Seoul Customs compound for printing the first daily newspaper in English, "The Seoul Press", so that Customs forms and reports could be printed there ... The erection of the Stone Palace in the Toksu Palace Grounds was made and completed under Customs control. The provision of such a palace was a project long opposed by Mr McLeavy Brown, but he was forced to yield finally and to prevent waste undertook the erection with funds provided from the Customs revenue ... The building advanced slowly because whenever there were difficulties between the Head of the Customs and the Korean Palace officials, all work ceased. Thus when Mr Brown left Korea at the end of 1905, the building had reached only the first floor.²⁶

In addition to these Seoul-based projects, there were many connected with the outlying ports. This wide range of functions arose from the assumption that contracts of any sort would give rise to bribery and corruption unless the spending of money was overseen by Customs.

In February 1904 came the war between Russia and Japan which Brown had long thought inevitable.²⁷ Even as the occupying Japanese armies moved through the peninsula to the Manchurian battlefield, some attempts were made at long-term reform of the Korean administration. By an agreement signed on 15 October the Korean government appointed as Financial Adviser Megata Tanetaro (1853-1926). No financial decision could henceforth be taken without his consent; he would be present at all financial discussions by the Council of State; while he had no vote, he had the right of veto on financial decisions.²⁸ In short, Megata was not so much financial

adviser as financial comptroller and enjoyed a degree of control which Brown never had, but which Alekseyev had aspired to in 1897, even if only temporarily.

Brown's position became a matter of some delicacy both for himself and for Britain. Since 1902, Britain had been the partner in the Anglo-Japanese alliance which guaranteed the political independence of Korea. Japan was trying to avoid breaching the underlying message of that agreement. So far as Brown was concerned, the view of the British minister in Seoul, now Sir John Jordan, was that:

No attempt has been made to give the Financial Adviser any direct control over the Customs Administration; and although there is room for friction in the relations between the two Departments, there seems no reason why, with the exercise of tact and good sense on both sides, things should not be smoothly adjusted. Mr McLeavy Brown ... has an unexpended balance of about 2,500,000 yen under his sole control, and it is not improbable that the Japanese may claim that at least a portion of this sum should be employed in productive works. To this Mr Brown would probably offer no very strong objection, so long as the requirements of the service of which he is the Head were duly considered. (19.10.4)²⁹

Megata was an experienced Japanese official. He had been Customs Commissioner at Yokohama port for many years.³⁰ He immediately set about a comprehensive reform of the Korean currency. The more deeply he became involved in this, the more natural it seemed that his office should engulf the customs service. There were two deterrents to any change, however. One was the personal popularity of Brown with Koreans and foreigners and the corresponding unpopularity of the Japanese. As late as the summer of 1905, Minister Hayashi Gonsuke assured Jordan and Dr Morrison of *The Times* that there was no question of Brown being relieved of his duties.³¹ The other deterrent was the existence of the Anglo-Japanese alliance itself. The 1902 alliance, with its clause guaranteeing Korea's territorial integrity, was however

revised in the summer of 1905. The revised treaty, signed on 12 August, buried the clause.

Despite Japanese assurances, Jordan may have had his doubts. He knew that Brown's contract with the Korean government terminated in October 1905 and it was impossible to predict what the situation would be by then. His long-term thinking was clear:

It seems important that the succession should be retained in British hands. Whatever may be the future political status of Korea, the interests of British trade imperatively require the maintenance of the recent Tariff arrangements, and that object can best be attained by continued British direction of the Customs Administration. The Japanese control the finances of Korea, an American Adviser represents, nominally at least, the United States in its foreign relations, and it is only fitting that the Customs should be left to the Power which, next to Japan, has the largest commercial stake in the country.³²

In order to avoid any mishap with this plan from the Korean side, in May Jordan and Brown engineered through Sir Robert Hart the posting to Korea of C. A. V. Bowra, one of the ablest Customs Commissioners. Bowra had long experience at Niuchuang as Deputy Commissioner.

As it happened, opposition to the renewal of Brown's contract came not from the unpredictable Koreans but from the unpredictable Japanese. On 11 August, when the renewed alliance treaty was in the bag, Katsura, acting as his own foreign minister in the absence of Komura (who was in the United States), telephoned his minister in London. He was to put the point to Lord Lansdowne, in view of his goodwill under the alliance, that Japan wanted Korea to put their customs under the Finance Department there and ensure that full control was vested in the Financial Adviser. While recognising the services of Brown and grateful for his efforts over the years, Japan did not want to renew his contract and hoped that the British government, like the Japanese, would allow him to retire with generous treatment. Brown already had the CMG;

could he be given a KCMG?³³ Much else was said of the financial settlement to be made, if only Brown would resign. It was clear from Lansdowne's response that the Foreign Office was not going to stand up for Brown as it had in 1897 and 1901. Minister Hayashi in Seoul asked Jordan if he would pass over the suggestion to Brown about resignation and the winding up of the existing customs administration. Brown accepted what was inevitable. Minister Hayashi and Financial Adviser Megata called on the Korean emperor on 27 August to inform him of the reform.³⁴

History is not without its strange twists. Although Hayashi reported that the Korean Emperor's sanction had previously been obtained, the emperor did send two emissaries to the British legation on the following day to express his concern: the retirement of Brown would be interpreted as an indication of Britain's abandonment of all interests in Korea and 'caused the Emperor peculiar pain'. Could nothing be done to prevent this? Jordan, who took great pride in the British management of the Korean Customs, had to shrug his shoulders and state the inevitable.³⁵ The emperor had a private meeting with Brown; but of that nothing is known.

On 24 November, a few days before Brown left Korea, his colleagues gathered to say farewell. Wakefield, former Commissioner at Wonsan, Pegorini, an Italian who had formerly been Commissioner at Pusan, Davidson and others presented the retiring Chief Commissioner with a model of a miniature of the first lighthouse erected on the coasts of Korea at Sowolmido (Little Roze Island). In making the presentation, Wakefield said:

You have, on the eve of your departure, inaugurated an enterprise that will last forever, you have erected lighthouses on the Korean coasts; we feel confident that as these will shine as guides to mariners through fogs and shoals so will your firm and honest administration at all times act as a beacon to direct and encourage future administrators.

Other lighthouses and navigation aids were about to be completed by the Customs administration to cover the main shipping lanes around Korea's coastline. Wakefield added:

Your departure from Korea will be keenly felt not only by your staff but by the officials and people of this and of foreign countries who are acquainted with the valuable works that you have initiated and carried on for the benefit of Korea, under difficulties understood by none but yourself, with no reward but the satisfaction derived from work well done.³⁶

Apart from H.W. Davidson, who stayed on in Korea until 1941, Brown's colleagues did not take up the offer to stay on in equivalent positions under Megata. Those who had connections with Sir Robert Hart's establishment chose to return to China, where their rates of pay were higher. Brown, as the heir-presumptive, was perhaps most aggrieved, but he later reached a senior post in the China service.³⁷

Brown had a cordial send off from all quarters in Seoul, Korean and foreign. He was awarded Korean and Japanese decorations. He made his return by a slow route, calling on Sir Robert Hart at Peking. Hart, who approached Customs affairs like an unemotional greengrocer, reported:

Brown has just left me after a week here: he has 27 months' leave. He wound up his Customs business nicely and brought back no claims for himself or his staff on IMC funds so I give him full pay.³⁸

This was to be the end of Brown's customs career and his Korean experience. For these he was rewarded with honours, becoming a Knight Bachelor in June 1906. It marked the beginning of a new career at the age of 71, for he was to serve the Chinese legation in London as adviser until his death in 1926.³⁹

In conclusion, my account of Brown cannot be considered definitive. While I have used some Korean language materials and been assisted by Professor Chong

Chinsok in obtaining others, what is lacking in my account is what Brown said to Korean ministers and officials and what they thought of him.

McLeavy Brown played an important part during a cataclysmic eleven year period of Korean history. Korea was a weak country which, by the misfortunes of geography, occupied a vital strategic position. It fell between the upper and nether millstones of Russia and Japan. The Korean government, though divided, acted skilfully by playing off both sides and by using well-disposed foreigners to win the support of neutral countries. This latter was the role of Brown. By ensuring the most stable form of income—customs revenue—and by attempting to hold a balance of fairness, Brown did assist Korea in a difficult time. In recognition of this on his retirement he was accorded the Order of the Tai Kuk (First Class).

NOTES

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1. Hart to Campbell, 27 Nov. 1892 in J.K. Fairbank, K.F. Brunner and E.M. Matheson (eds) *The I.G. in Peking: Letters of Robert Hart, Chinese Maritime Customs, 1868-1907* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975), vol.2, no. 868 (hereafter cited as "Hart"). For accounts of Brown's career, see S.F. Wright, *Hart and the Chinese Customs* (Belfast, 1950), pp.390-91.
2. Hart to Campbell, 2 July 1893, in *Hart*, vol.2, no. 894.
3. Hart to Campbell, 1 Oct. 1893, in *Hart*, vol.2, no. 906. See also Hart to Campbell, 29 Oct. 1893 in *Hart*, vol.2, no. 910.

4. Hillier to O'Connor, 30 Oct. 1894 in K. Bourne and D.C. Watt (eds), *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print, Part I Series E, "Asia 1860-1914"*, vol.4, document 623 (Maryland, 1989). Hereafter cited as "FOCP."
5. *The Korean Repository*, Sept. 1896, p.369.
6. Jordan to MacDonald, 18 Oct. and 11 Nov. 1897 in FOCP, vol.6, documents 258 and 268. Also Park Il-keun (ed.), *Anglo-American and Chinese Diplomatic Materials relating to Korea, 1887-97* (Pusan National University, 1984), p.1385.
7. MacDonald to Salisbury, 14 Nov. 1897 in FOCP, vol.6, doc. 255.
8. Jordan to MacDonald, 22 Dec. 1897 in FOCP, vol.6, doc. 283.
9. Adm. Sir A. Buller to Admiralty, 15 Dec. 1897 and Admiralty to Foreign Office, 17 Dec. 1897, in FOCP, vol.6, docs. 271 and 261.
10. Goschen to Salisbury, 30 Oct. 1897 in FOCP, vol.6, doc. 253.
11. Jordan to MacDonald, 6 Jan. 1898 in FOCP, vol.6, doc. 295. For a general account of the January crisis in Korea, Manchuria and north China, see I. H. Nish, "The Royal Navy and the Taking of Weihaiwei, 1898-1905," *Mariner's Mirror*, no.54 (1967), pp.42-4.
12. cf Jordan to Salisbury, 15 July 1899 in FOCP, vol.7, doc. 83.
13. One of the interesting explanations of British policy in Korea and its attitude towards the Customs Organization there is to be found in Gubbins to Satow, 5 Oct. 1900 in the E.M. Satow papers 9/14 (Kew: Public Record Office):

"A minister like Dr [Horace] Allen who has great personal influence with the Emperor, and the Japanese and Russian Representatives, whose political interests in Corea justify frequent audiences of His Majesty, are in a better position than their colleagues to exercise pressure on the government."

Hence Britain had to retain such influence as it had through Brown and the Customs.
14. Isabella Bird, *Korea and Her Neighbours* (London, 1898), p.292.
15. Jordan to Salisbury, 6 Aug. 1899, in FOCP, vol.7, doc. 95.
16. Jordan to Salisbury, 11 Oct. 1899 in FOCP, vol.7, doc. 123.
17. Gubbins to Lansdowne, 21 March 1901, in FOCP, vol.7, doc. 297.
18. Gubbins to Lansdowne, 22 March 1901 in FOCP, vol.7, doc. 298.

19. *Nihon gaiko bunsho*, vol.34, nos 410-14, especially no. 413. Also, I.H. Nish, "Korea between Japan and Russia, 1900-1904," *Papers presented at the 6th Annual Conference of AKSE, 1983* (Seoul 1983), p.197.
20. Lansdowne to Gubbins, 23 March 1901 and Gubbins to Lansdowne, 1 April 1901, in FOCP, vol.7, docs 299 and 304.
21. Gubbins to Lansdowne, 21 April 1901, in FOCP, vol.7, doc. 309.
22. MacDonald to Lansdowne, 16 May 1901, in FOCP, vol.7, doc. 349.
23. G. Bell to G.E. Morrison, 21 May 1903, in Lo Hui-min (ed), *Correspondence of G.E. Morrison* (Cambridge, 1976), vol.1, p.297.
24. G.E. Morrison to V. Chirol, May 1905 in Lo, *Morrison*, vol.1, p.300.
25. Jordan to Campbell, 28 Jan. 1908, in FC 800/244 (Beilby Alson papers in the Public Records Office, Kew).
26. H.W. Davidson, *The First Korean Customs Service* (unpublished manuscript), p.3. The manuscript was kindly made available by J. E. Hoare.
27. G. E. Morrison to J. O. P. Bland, 23 Oct. 1903, in Lo, *Morrison*, vol.1, p.235.
28. *Nihon gaiko bunsho*, vol.38/I, no. 798. It was widely believed that Brown's influence had also increased since the Japanese occupation of the peninsula.
29. Jordan to Lansdowne, 19 Oct. 1904, in FOCP, vol.8, doc. 239.
30. Megata Tanetaro (1853-1926) studied abroad at Harvard Law School. He entered the Ministry of Finance in 1883 and after service as head of Customs at Yokohama was responsible for taxation until his appointment to Korea.
31. The papers of Dr George Ernest Morrison, Morrison diary, entries for 8 and 14 April 1905 (Mitchell Library, Sydney).

Also see Chong Chinsok, *The Korean Problem in Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1904-10* (Seoul, 1987), p.110.
32. Jordan to Lansdowne, 8 May 1905, in FOCP, vol.8, doc. 318.
33. *Nihon gaiko bunsho*, vol.38/I, no. 801.

Also Jordan to Lansdowne, 30 Aug. 1905, in FOCP, vol.8, doc. 344; Hayashi Gonsuke, *Waga 70-nen wo kataru* (Tokyo, 1935), pp.244-52.
34. *Nihon gaiko bunsho*, vol.38/I, nos. 805-6.
35. Jordan to Lansdowne, 30 Aug. 1905, in FOCP, vol.8, doc. 344.
36. *Japan Weekly Mail*, 16 December 1905. I owe this reference to Chong Chinsok.
37. Morrison diary, 20 and 22 May 1906.

38. Hart to Campbell, 17 December 1905, in *Hart*, vol.2, doc. 1392.
39. It is alleged in Lo, *Morrison*, vol.2, p.25 that Brown as a close friend of Morrison was recommended by the latter as Counsellor to the Chinese Legation in London. This is confirmed in Jordan to Campbell, 28 January 1908, in FO 8--/244. There are various references to the effect that Brown returned to Korea; but I have found no evidence of this.

THE QUALITY PUZZLE: HOW HAS KOREAN INDUSTRY MASTERED TECHNOLOGY SO FAST?

ANDREW TANK

This paper asks why south Korea has managed to produce export quality manufactures so much more effectively than other developing nations. It argues that the interaction between a hostile external environment and a cohesive, ambitious internal community forced the pace of development beyond that achievable under less intense conditions. Few other countries—including Korea in the coming years—will be able to replicate such conditions.

The Economic Backdrop to Korea's Quality Miracle

Corporations face an economic balance which has shifted from solving the problems of shortage to solving the problems of glut. The period of post-war reconstruction laid stress on production, with associated anxieties about lack of food, minerals and manufactures. The 1970s oil shocks extended this "shortage mentality". But the early 1980s recession revealed a completely changed economic landscape. World prices of traded commodities (grain, oil, minerals) fell dramatically and competition in all spheres of economic activity increased sharply. So now corporate