



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Wednesday, January 14, 1976

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RISING EXPORTS AND SOLID GROWTH FORECAST

The Governor, Sir Murray MacLehose, said today that Hong Kong could now look forward to a period of expanding exports and solid growth provided "we hold our competitive edge and our ability to attract custom".

He was speaking at a ceremony at Government House in which he presented the Governor's Award for Hong Kong Design. The competition was organised by the Federation of Hong Kong Industries.

Referring to the economic difficulty experienced last year, the Governor said: "We are still some way short of complete recovery, and we may not be looking for a return of boom conditions, but obviously the worst of the recession is behind us."

Sir Murray expressed the hope that Hong Kong's next period of growth would see a greater diversification of the industries on which Hong Kong depended.

The Government, he added, would play its part in this with regard to land policy, provision of industrial estates, promotion of foreign investment, and the rapid expansion of technical education.

The Governor said it was clear that the production of consumer goods would remain Hong Kong's chief source of income for the foreseeable future and that the prosperity of this industry would depend to a large extent on a continual upgrading of quality and design.

Note to Editors:

The full text of the Governor's speech is contained in a supplement to today's Daily Information Bulletin.

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EVENING COURSES SHOULD BE EXTENDED TO SIXTH FORM LEVEL

Evening education is an integral part of "continuing education," the Assistant Director of Education (Further), Mr. William Fisher-Short, said today.

He was speaking to graduates of the Evening Institute Secondary School Course, Hong Kong English Section, at the Clementi Middle School.

He hoped that many of the graduates would be able to continue with their education and training.

People in Hong Kong tended to think of adult education as either in "retrieval" or "enrichment." Mr. Fisher-Short felt that this was a rather outdated concept.

"No matter what validity it had in the past, the time is soon coming when such a concept can no longer provide an adequate theoretical basis for the conduct of adult education classes," the Assistant Director said.

On the line of thought about "continuing education" in evening schools, Mr. Fisher-Short, who is leaving Hong Kong in some two months' time on retirement, voiced two personal opinions.

He said: "First, I am convinced that in the near future we should try to extend our evening academic courses to the Sixth Form level. I am sure my successor will consider this.

"Second, when carrying out courses to a level beyond the Hong Kong Certificate of Education, I am convinced that we should provide not only courses which will bring people up to the entrance standard necessary for a University course, but also studies which relate more directly to the needs of business, commerce and industry.

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"Indeed I would go beyond this and say that if ever Hong Kong has an open University system, or a system of external or part-time degrees, then the evening adult education should be prepared to provide the basic facilities for group seminars and tutorial work which are essential to any of those systems.

"Such developments are, of course, for the future but they illustrate the emergent and evolutionary nature of an adult education system rooted in a developing society."

Mr. Fisher-Short said there was much adult educators could do in Hong Kong.

He said: "We have social problems with drugs, corruption, morality; we must re-inforce our drive to civic cleanliness, public health, conservation; family affairs, consumer affairs, worker education merit greater concern. All these areas are legitimate fields for the adult educator. To limit our non-academic programmes to recreation and enrichment in the narrow sense is to deny the public we serve an opportunity for personal and social development."

Adult educators, he said, were in direct contact with the community they served and were best placed to appreciate those needs and to bring them to the attention of the Government.

Note to Editors: Copies of the full text of Mr. Fisher-Short's speech in English are distributed separately in the Press Boxes, Government Information Services this evening.

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GOLD COINS: SUCCESSFUL BIDDERS TO BE NOTIFIED SOON

Letters to applicants who were successful in the Dragon Year Gold Coin ballot will be sent out early next week and the cheques will be returned to unsuccessful applicants soon after, a Government spokesman announced today.

He confirmed that there were 25,000 applications for 10,500 brilliant uncirculated coins and 9,659 applications for 5,000 proof coins.

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ROAD WORKS ON CASTLE PEAK ROAD

Motorists are advised that a section of Castle Peak Road at the 15 milestone will be made one-way, with alternating traffic flow controlled by either traffic lights or signals, from Friday (January 16) until about the end of March.

This is because of construction work on the new Tuen Mun Road. However two-way traffic flow will resume during the Lunar New Year holiday period.

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BE ALERT AGAINST BOGUS FIREMEN

The Fire Services Department today warned members of the public to watch out for bogus firemen, especially during the Lunar New Year period.

A spokesman for the Department said that reports of this nature had been received from time to time.

In a recent case, four men in civilian clothes went to a school in Kowloon. They claimed to be Fire Services personnel and tried to gain access into the premises. However, the principal of the school became suspicious and refused to allow them in. She later checked with the Fire Prevention Bureau and was told that no such visit was made on that date.

"All fire officers calling on premises are dressed in full uniform," the spokesman said. "They are issued with a numbered warrant card and they also carry a Government identity card bearing the holder's photograph."

Any member of the public in the slightest doubt should first ask to see these cards. If they are still not satisfied, they should telephone the Fire Services Department or the Police immediately.

The spokesman pointed out that these men, having tried on one occasion, would very likely try again and the public should be on their guard.

"Apart from being criminal," he stressed, "this type of action brings unwarranted discredit upon the Department."

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SPEECH BY COLONIAL SECRETARY

Note to Editors:

The full text of a speech by the Colonial Secretary, Sir Denys Roberts, at the annual dinner of the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce at the Hong Kong Club at 8 p.m. today is contained in a supplement to the Daily Information Bulletin.

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WATER STOPPAGE IN TSIM SHA TSUI

A number of premises in Tsim Sha Tsui will be without water from 1 a.m. to 6 a.m. on Friday (January 16) to allow a leakage test to be carried out.

The area affected is bounded by Nathan Road, Salisbury Road, Chatham Road and Mody Road.

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SUPPLEMENT

PRESENTATION OF GOVERNOR'S AWARD FOR HONG KONG DESIGN

Full Text Of Governor's Speech

The Governor, Sir Murray MacLehose, today presented award to winners in the "Governor's Award for Hong Kong Design" competition at a ceremony in Government House.

The following is the full text of the Governor's speech at the ceremony:

"It is a great pleasure to be able again to acknowledge the efforts made to advance the quality of Hong Kong design and improve the image of Hong Kong products overseas.

"We have just experienced a year of exceptional difficulty and anxiety in which orders were scarce, margins had to be cut to the bone, and real distress was felt by many. Nevertheless, during this period Hong Kong re-acquired something it was in danger of losing during the inflation and the stock market mania of 1973 and 1974 -- its highly competitive edge in what matters most to Hong Kong -- its export industry.

"During my recent absence in the United Kingdom and America a well-known figure remarked to me that Hong Kong's management and work force were so sensitive to demand, and so quick to adapt to it, that the slightest puff anywhere in the world's economy would fill Hong Kong's sails.

"Indeed I was impressed and encouraged by views expressed to me everywhere that Hong Kong would quickly benefit from the slow recovery in the world now beginning. I believe this to be true. We are still some way short of complete recovery, and we may not be looking for a return of

boom conditions, but obviously the worst of the recession is behind us, and we can look forward to a period of expanding exports and solid growth - provided that is to say, that we hold our competitive edge and our ability to attract custom.

"I very much hope that Hong Kong's next period of growth will see a greater diversification of the industries on which we depend. You may be assured that the Government will play its part in this with regard to land policy, provision of industrial estates, promotion of foreign investment, and the rapid expansion of technical education.

"But it is clear that the production of consumer goods will remain Hong Kong's chief source of income for the foreseeable future and that the prosperity of this industry will depend to a large extent on a continual upgrading of quality and design. Producers of low quality goods will find it increasingly difficult to retain their share of international markets in the face of competition from lower labour cost countries.

"The Industrial Design Council has an important role to play in impressing upon industry the need to use to the full the design skills and ability available in Hong Kong. I am interested to hear that the Council is paying attention to the protection of designs as one means of encouraging original work. A very important innovation introduced last year was the setting up of the Design Depository, where owners may lodge their original designs in order to provide prima facie evidence of copyright ownership.

"The importance of good design to the marketability of product cannot be over-emphasised. I share Mr. Wu's distaste for bogus aesthetics and fussiness. I think we still produce too many designs which are over complicated and gimmicky - but then, so do the most advanced industrial countries - and I am glad to say that more of our manufacturers now understand that well designed consumer products are often deceptively simple. The award winning products here today well demonstrate this.

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"I am happy to learn that they are well up to international standards in terms of function, ease of use and maintenance, health and safety requirements and appearance as well as marketability. They are all original Hong Kong designs, demonstrating the existence of high technical skills and creative ability among our industrial designers.

"The winner of the Governor's Award this year is a transistor radio - so common a product that our electronics industry produces thousands each day, yet so outstanding that it has been selected from the numerous entries by the judges. It is fitting that one of our most popular products should receive this award for it will draw the attention of many industrialists to the fact that it is within their abilities to turn out ever better products which will enhance profitability and sales.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, I am pleased to announce the name of the winner of this year's Governor's Award. It is Bolton Electronics Ltd., who have won it with their transistor radio/flashlight combination. I now have pleasure in asking the representative of Bolton Electronics Ltd to come forward to receive the trophy."

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HONG KONG AND BRITAIN

The following is the full text of the speech by the Colonial Secretary, Sir Denys Roberts, at the annual dinner of the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce at the Hong Kong Club today (Wednesday).

INTRODUCTION

"I have decided to talk to you about Hong Kong's relationship with Britain; both because it is fundamental to our existence and because it is a frequent source of misunderstanding on both sides.

"Hong Kong's link with Britain has remained strong for over 130 years, surviving a series of dramatic changes in the political structure of Asia and in the international relationships of Eastern and Western countries. Yet the nature of Hong Kong's relationship with Britain has inevitably altered. In 1841 Britain was a strong, enterprising world power, Hong Kong insignificant trading post. Gradually, in the last century, Britain has mellowed, relinquished her expansionist ambitions and begun to adapt to her new role as a medium sized Western country and a member of the European community. Hong Kong has grown in stature to become one of the largest exporters in the world, a regional centre for commerce, banking and trade and an economic entity which is capable in most respects of making its own way in the world.

"Hong Kong's attitude towards Britain might perhaps be compared to

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a successful son's view of his father. When young, the son needs to be cared for, encouraged and protected. But when he becomes an adult able to stand on his own feet, his opinion of his father is ambivalent. He is usually anxious to prove his independence, but sometimes needs support, affection and help. It is a change which demands patience and understanding from both of them.

"I have said that our link with Britain is fundamental to our existence. Indeed, and let there be no mistake about this, Hong Kong as we know it will survive only for as long as it remains under the protection of Britain. This is a reality which is fully recognised by Britain. The recent Defence Costs Agreement once more restated, in the clearest terms, the obligation of HMG to preserve the security and integrity of Hong Kong.

"Because our relationship must continue, it is important that both sides, and particularly Hong Kong, should understand its nature, the benefits which it brings and the stresses which are inseparable from it and with which we must learn to live. Above all, we should not allow disputes and differences of view to undermine the common history, the mutual advantage and the real affection which bind us together.

CRITICISM OF HONG KONG

"Many of us are upset, from time to time, by criticisms of Hong Kong from abroad. They hurt us more if they come from Britain than from elsewhere. And those which attract most attention here are the ones delivered by the media or by a few British politicians or reformers who find some of the features of our kind of society unattractive.

"The concentration of British media on subjects which show us in a poor light, such as corruption, unsatisfactory housing,

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insufficient education or social welfare, or unpleasant working conditions should not be taken as evidence of any general malice towards us. Rather does it show that some of the things of which we are ourselves not proud are the most newsworthy. It is only fair to remember that the British media devote far more of their attention to stories which reveal the least satisfactory aspects of British life.

"Naturally, we do not find it easy to welcome adverse comments by politicians or social reformers - nor their proposals for the solution of problems with which we have been grappling for years.

"But we should not overlook the sense of responsibility which many of them feel towards Hong Kong. Because we are a dependency, the Secretary of State is answerable to Parliament for the conduct of affairs in Hong Kong. From this it follows that Members of Parliament have a proper and constitutional interest in our administration.

"I suggest to you, therefore, that most of these critics speak because they are concerned, not because they want to cause trouble for its own sake. If they visit us, most of them come to learn, not to instruct; to listen rather than to speak. The Hong Kong Government encourages and assists these visits, firstly because we believe that informed criticism is a great advance on ignorant criticism and secondly because experience has shown that the most ardent critic leaves here with some appreciation of the difficulties we face, of the extent to which we have overcome them and of our not inconsiderable achievements.

"It would be foolish to deny that our society suffers from grave defects, which we are constantly striving to overcome. Nobody who visits our worst squatter areas, who sees the conditions under which

/some workshops....

some workshops operate or appreciates the unsatisfactory standards of life endured by too many of our residents, will feel satisfied with what we have achieved. Nor should we expect British politicians to feel differently. Most of them are men of social conscience who want to see an improvement in the lot of the less fortunate members of mankind. If anything, they are more critical of the slums of British industrial towns than they are of anything which they see here.

"Furthermore, we should make allowance for the common human tendency to expect others to think and act in the same ways as we do. Linked to this is the desire to impose our beliefs and standards on our fellows, whether or not these are appropriate to their circumstances.

"Consequently, it is understandable that some British reformers should feel that we ought to adopt here the political machinery and state paternalism which have been applied in Britain. And because they live under one kind of economic and social system, they regard alternatives with some suspicion.

"One particular allegation is that we are a laissez-faire society. The implication is that such a society is ruthless, uncaring and indifferent.

"The label would be an accurate description of Hong Kong if it meant that as a government we recognize that bureaucrats should confine themselves to administration, that business is best conducted by businessmen and that through the market mechanism free enterprise will discover for itself, (without state direction) those methods of production and the types of product most suited to our needs as a trader with world wide interests.

"But this does not mean that we tolerate inhuman conditions of work or the exploitation of employees. We have prohibited the employment of children in industrial undertakings, we have controlled the hours of

/work and.....

works and working conditions of women and children, we have provided for compulsory holidays and sickness benefits.

"From our general revenues we have striven, and with some success, to provide decent medical services, and education for a population which is eight times what it was thirty years ago. We have constructed public housing for $1\frac{3}{4}$ million people. Over 120,000 receive allowances, as of right by reason of age or infirmity, or by way of public assistance. We have committed ourselves to a series of programmes which will greatly improve the conditions in which our people live. These are not the actions of a callous society.

RELATIONS WITH HMG

"In addition to the friction which may be caused by the criticisms of press and reformers, there are occasions when it may seem that HMG is not giving us the support, or the understanding of our needs, which we feel we should get. Obvious recent examples of this are the reintroduction of the death penalty, the imposition of trade restraints and the defence costs agreement.

"When Britain's interests on a particular issue are not the same as ours, we can hardly expect that ours will prevail, though I believe that in practice they do receive more consideration than those of countries which are not dependencies of Britain.

"We must not, however, hope for too much. No British Government, however well disposed to Hong Kong, can afford to ignore domestic political realities, or the financial and commercial interests of Britain.

"As to the death penalty, the constitutional position is that there is a right to petition the Queen, who acts on the advice of the Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs. The latter is answerable to Parliament and must therefore be satisfied that he can defend the advice which he has tendered to the Crown if it is attacked in the
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House. Successive Secretary of States have formed the opinion that, if they were to advise the Queen that a death sentence should be carried out in Hong Kong, they would not be able to secure majority support in Parliament for such advice. It would be unrealistic of us to expect them to take this risk, however strong our feelings may be.

"By virtue of our striking success as traders, we have become, in some respects a serious competitor to British manufacturers, both within Britain and abroad. It would required a remarkable degree of detachment for Britain to refrain from taking the measures which she believes necessary to protect herself, even if these measures are inimical to our interests. We have, in a sense, become the victims of our own achievements.

"The recent negotiations on a new defence costs agreement afford another example of a clash of interests. This was resolved, after months of tough negotiation, in a manner which, while it did not fully satisfy either party, could fairly be described as a reasonable compromise in the circumstances. One important feature of these negotiations was the way in which they were conducted; not like a bitter wrangle between enemies, but like a hard but good humoured argument within the family.

"I have spoken of the degree to which we are upset by criticism from Britain. By contrast, you may be surprised to learn how wounded many British visitors are by hard things which are said of Britain here. Certainly, Britain is no longer a world power. Her economy may be in trouble and her society disturbed. But the British are a proud and clever people and take no more kindly to criticism than we do.

"It is, therefore, important, if we want our point of view to be understood, for us to show the British some of the wisdom, tolerance and detachment which we demand from them. Indeed, I have reason to believe that some of our most bitter and persistent critics first become hostile because of what to them seemed to be unreasonable and prejudiced criticism of Britain by people whom they met in Hong Kong. It would be well for us to remember that when meeting politicians, journalists or influential Britons, we are all, to some extent ambassadors for Hong Kong.

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ADVANTAGES

"I do not propose to discuss the material advantages of our association with Britain, save to remark that (as you all know) it has conferred, and will continue to confer, substantial financial and commercial advantages on both sides.

"I should like, however, to mention briefly some of the other benefits which we derive from it, though some of these can also be argued to have indirectly contributed to our material success.

"One of the most important reasons for our prosperity is the initiative and enterprise of our manufacturers, traders and commercial leaders. These men have flourished because they know that, provided they kept within the bounds of laws which were liberal in origin and humanely applied, they will not be discouraged or obstructed. They know that they may speak with complete freedom in public or in private, subject only to those restrictions on sedition and libel which any community must accept.

"This freedom of thought and expression is essential to the full development of the human spirit. It encourages an open society in which ideas and enterprise develop without constraint and in which ingenuity and originality can flower.

"It is the sad lesson of other countries that the repression of personal opinion leads, sooner or later, to bad administration, to civil unrest and ultimately to violence and insurrection. The British tradition of freedom of expression, which has been transplanted with such success to Hong Kong, is perhaps best illustrated by the way in which our media operate. They are loud and insistent in their criticism of persons, departments and institutions. In this they perform an essential function, by ventilating grievances and ensuring that the territory is administered in a humane and realistic way.

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"Allied to the freedom of speech is the independence of thought and action of the Judiciary. Although this is a British concept of long-standing, it is inadequately understood or appreciated here. Many people find it hard to believe that Members of the Judiciary, who are servants of the Crown and paid from revenues collected by the Government, are able to preserve a complete detachment when adjudicating between the Government and a private citizen.

"Yet I can assure the doubters that this is indeed so and that the administration does not, and by long custom and tradition may not, try to influence the Courts in the way in which they deal with their cases.

"There is, of course, considerable public criticism, because the courts do not impose sufficiently severe sentences to satisfy a community which is outraged by the activities of robbers and hoodligans.

"I suggest that these attacks on the Judiciary illustrate that this is a healthy society. It is healthy because people are prepared to express their indignation publicly. It is healthy because they are prepared to criticise the Judiciary openly. It is healthy because the Judiciary makes up its own mind as to the extent to which it will accept these criticisms.

"I ask anyone who argues that the Government should be able to give instructions to the Judiciary, to consider what happens in countries in which this is possible. If the administration is able to ensure the punishment of those who criticise it or who are unpopular with it, there remains only a very short step to autocracy, injustice and oppression.

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ATTITUDE OF AVERAGE BRITON

I have spoken of the critical view taken of Hong Kong by some British papers, politicians or reformers, but I like to believe that is not typical of the attitude of the average Briton, insofar as that mythical figure has any knowledge of, or interest in, Hong Kong. I guess that his feelings are a mixture of amused affection and admiration.

"Perhaps he has relatives or friends who have visited Hong Kong, particularly as members of the Armed Forces. They will have told him, in laudatory terms, of the bustle, gaiety and beauty of the place, for it is rare for someone who has been here not to have been bewitched by it.

"He may have been to a Chinese restaurant in England; here he will have eaten an extraordinary amalgam of oriental and occidental food which he will have imagined to be a Chinese meal, even though dishes like chop suey and chips would be unrecognisable to us.

"He will have met in this restaurant, and probably elsewhere, Hong Kong people who have settled in Britain. He will have discovered that they are, almost without exception, courteous, considerate and beautifully behaved. Of all the immigrant communities in Britain, the Chinese are acknowledged as the most hardworking, law-abiding and self-sufficient.

"Our average Briton will have bought a variety of Hong Kong products, ranging from shirts and shoes to plastic goods, toys and transistors. He will have found them to be well designed, of good quality and lower in price than their competitors. He no longer thinks of Hong Kong as a place in which cheap and shoddy goods are produced.

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"From time to time, he hears criticisms of Hong Kong, some of which are accurate, some of which used to be true but are so no longer and some of which are without foundation, though he will not know into which category they fall. Some of them may make an impact upon him and he will realise that Hong Kong has its flaws - as indeed we all admit. But they will not have seriously affected his admiration for Hong Kong and for its remarkable achievements.

CONCLUSION

"There is nothing rougher than a family squabble. The air rings with accusations of bias, dishonesty, stupidity and blindness. The outsider could be forgiven for supposing that each protagonist nourished an intense and irreparable distaste for his closest relatives. But the outsider would be wrong, as he would discover very quickly if he were rash enough to enter the argument himself. He would find that those who had compared one another to a selection of the lower animals (much to the latter's advantage) would close ranks and join together in sudden accord to repel the intruder.

"So it has often been with Britain. From her people we have received considerable criticism, some of it ill-informed or based upon inaccurate assumptions. But when danger arises Britain has never left us unaided. When our interests have been threatened, she has defended them vigorously against a hostile world. We are bound together by history and by political realities. Uneasy bedfellows we may sometimes be, but the disadvantages and pinpricks are heavily outweighed by the benefits which accrue abundantly to both sides from the relationship."