



HONG KONG GOVERNMENT

INFORMATION SERVICES

DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN SUPPLEMENT

Friday, October 20, 1967

EMBARGO NOTE TO NEWSPAPERS AND NEWS AGENCIES

The text of Lord Shepherd's radio and television talk must NOT be published or used on overseas radio transmission until 6 p.m. today (Friday). The talk can be heard on the English and Chinese Services of Radio Hong Kong and Commercial Radio immediately after the 6 p.m. news bulletins and by Rediffusion Television after the 8 p.m. news in Chinese and after the 9 p.m. news in English.

MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

SPEAKS TO PEOPLE OF HONG KONG

The following is the full text of the radio and television talk to the people of Hong Kong by the Minister of State for Commonwealth Affairs, the Rt. Hon. The Lord Shepherd, P.C., this (Friday) evening:

"Tomorrow I shall be leaving for Singapore and then on to London. I have spent some eight stimulating and very valuable days in the Colony and I would like to be able to give a few brief impressions of Hong Kong.

"When I arrived last Friday, I spoke of the need of change. There were some who thought that perhaps I came with a magic wand but, as you remember, I referred to the change that was all around. It is right to reflect upon the progress of the Colony. Some 20 years ago, we had a small population, dependent upon trade.

"Today we have some 3,700,000 persons living here. Hong Kong is today a thrusting, dynamic industrial port. It has been diversified from

/simple

simple cotton weaving to sophisticated electronic production. We give employment to some 1½ million people. Hospitals like the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, which I visited the other day, is the envy of the world. And we see from our statistics a dramatic improvement in the health of our people. There are some one million children at school - nearly a quarter of our entire population. On October 26 there will be a ceremony to mark the one millionth person to be resettled in this Colony. As you know, a new programme of housing was announced yesterday.

"Hong Kong depends upon exports. The exports of our Colony have risen this year by some 16 per cent. I would suggest that this, in itself, represents change. It also represents a massive achievement. This has not arisen by accident or by miracle. It has resulted by the industry and the vitality of the people here. It has resulted by investment of local and overseas capital. It also represents a sound and farseeing government, devoted voluntary services by many people of the Legislative Council and many other voluntary organisations.

"The main purpose of my visit was to learn and assess. I have been very stimulated by the many ideas I have been given. I promise that I shall give great consideration to all these ideas. Progress, if it is to be real progress, is not based on a hasty judgment. Each will require deep consideration and this, I promise, will not only be done in London but in the Government of Hong Kong.

"It is a story of great achievement and of great change, bearing in mind the size of the Colony, the lack of raw material and a population that has trebled in size over the last 20 years. As we all know, much still needs to be done, and there is no one more conscious of this than the Governor, Sir David Trench.

/"I came

"I came with no magic solution, but I do believe that there is an opportunity for sound change in the Colony. Some changes, particularly in the field of labour reform, are possible. When I came here, I expected to be challenged and obstructed but on the other hand I found willingness and determination by employers and by Government to achieve reform. Clearly it is not my responsibility but that of the Government of Hong Kong to announce the details of proposed legislation, and there are some very interesting proposals. I have very great confidence that these proposals, in due course, will be placed upon the Statute Book. There was one aspect which has given us all very great concern, particularly in the United Kingdom, and that related to the hours of work for women and young persons.

"Today the statutory limit is some 60 hours per week. I am very pleased to say that, from December 1, 1967, with the agreement of employers, we shall start to reduce the hours of work for women and young persons to 48 hours per week and we shall achieve this over four years - 30 minutes' reduction in the first instance and yet another 30 minutes' reduction in the second year. In order that there should be a period of adjustment in industry, I have agreed to raise the statutory limit of overtime. I am confident that legislation will be prepared and enacted at an early date.

"I have also started discussions with management in regard to men. I would like to see, and I believe this can now be achieved, men given a statutory one day off each week. I have been impressed with the existing standards in many of our companies. In practice, this has been adopted by many companies in Hong Kong and I think it is right, therefore, that this should prevail throughout the Colony.

"What we seek to do, however, must depend on the growth of the economy. Labour reforms and higher standards demand higher efficiency and

/higher

higher productivity. This is going to be the great challenge between management and workers. There is a great need, as I have said before, for greater co-operation and consultation between management and workers. I believe this is perhaps the greatest challenge that faces Hong Kong.

"Before closing I would refer, very briefly, to the actions of a very small group of persons who seek, but have clearly failed, to disrupt the life of the Colony. I have already paid tribute, both by visits and now on radio and television, to the services rendered by the British soldiers, the Police - both regular and auxiliary - and to the people of Hong Kong who have stood steadfast and resolute. It is interesting to note the reaction of the people of Hong Kong to the early days of the disturbances when some 1,500 young men and women came forward voluntarily to serve in the Auxiliary Police.

"My task, when I return to London, is to tell the full story not only to Parliament but to the press. I came here to learn and I believe I have learned a great deal. I have been stimulated by the ideas that have been given me and I shall work upon them.

"I look forward particularly to a restoration of good working relations between China and Hong Kong, and also between China and the United Kingdom, based on an understanding of their benefit to each other. For our part, we shall continue to work for this. But I must make it clear that we cannot consider any abdication of our authority and responsibilities in Hong Kong.

"I repeat the assurance that I gave when I came to Hong Kong. This is the determination of Her Majesty's Government and the British people to support and to sustain the Colony of Hong Kong.

/"I will

"I will end this talk by expressing my sincere gratitude and appreciation to all who have organised my visit, to the very many people who have given time to come and see me, and who have prepared papers. I really mean this. I am really looking forward to returning to Hong Kong in the not too far distant future."

- - - - 0 - - - -

Release Time: 6.00 p.m.