



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1976

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CONSULTANTS TO STUDY
K.C.R. MODERNISATION AND EXPANSION PROGRAMME
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THE GOVERNMENT HAS APPOINTED A BRITISH CONSULTANT FIRM TO CARRY OUT AN ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY STUDY OF THE KOWLOON CANTON RAILWAY'S \$1,400 MILLION MODERNISATION AND EXPANSION PROGRAMME.

ANNOUNCING THIS TODAY, THE GENERAL MANAGER OF THE KCR, MR. REGINALD GREGORY, SAID THAT THE FIRM, NAMED TRANSMARK, A WHOLLY OWNED SUBSIDIARY OF THE BRITISH RAILWAYS BOARD, WOULD MAKE A STUDY INTO THE PROPOSALS REGARDING THE KCR MADE IN THE RECENTLY COMPLETED COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORT STUDY.

THEY WOULD ALSO EXAMINE THE PROSPECTS FOR BUILDING BRANCH LINES TO THE TAI PO INDUSTRIAL ESTATE AND THE KWAI CHUNG CONTAINER TERMINAL, HE SAID.

+A FEATURE OF THE WORK WILL BE TO SHOW THE COMPARATIVE BENEFITS OF MEETING THE FUTURE INCREASED DEMANDS UPON THE RAILWAY BY EITHER DIESEL OR ELECTRIC TRACTION,+ MR. GREGORY SAID. +THE FIRM WILL ALSO DETERMINE THE BEST WAY OF MANAGING THE TRANSITION FROM THE EXISTING METHODS OF TRAIN OPERATION TO A FUTURE MODERNISED SYSTEM.+

HE ADDED THAT THE FIRM WOULD ALSO SPECIFY THE MOST EFFICIENT MANNER OF INTEGRATING FREIGHT AND PASSENGER SERVICES.

TRANSMARK WILL BE SUPPORTED IN THEIR WORK BY TWO OTHER FIRMS MAUNSELL CONSULTANTS ASIA AND WILBUR SMITH AND ASSOCIATES.

THE STUDY IS EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED BY SEPTEMBER NEXT YEAR.

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TRIBUTE TO H.K. EXPORT CREDIT INSURANCE CORP.

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EXPORTS PUT TO THE HONG KONG EXPORT CREDIT INSURANCE CORPORATION FOR COVER ARE NOW WORTH FOUR TIMES THE AMOUNT OF \$400 MILLION IT HAD DURING ITS FIRST YEAR OF OPERATION.

SPEAKING AT THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CORPORATION TODAY (THURSDAY), THE GOVERNOR, SIR MURRAY MACLEHOSE, SAID IT WAS A TRIBUTE TO ITS FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS THAT IT HAD COPEd SO WELL WITH THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC VAGARIES OF WORLD TRADE OVER THE PAST DECADE AND IN PARTICULAR IN THE LAST THREE YEARS.

+IN SPITE OF SUCH TESTING CIRCUMSTANCES, THE CORPORATION HAS BEEN ABLE TO IMPROVE ITS SERVICES, EXPAND THE COVER IT PROVIDES AND AUGMENT ITS RESERVES,+ HE SAID.

THE CORPORATION, HE ADDED, WAS NOW REGARDED AS A MODEL FOR SUCH ORGANISATIONS IN THE REGION AND A NUMBER OF NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES HAD BEEN ANXIOUS TO LEARN FROM THE HONG KONG EXPERIENCE.

THE FOLLOWING IS THE FULL TEXT OF THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH:

+MR. COMMISSIONER, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

+TODAY THE HONG KONG EXPORT CREDIT INSURANCE CORPORATION CELEBRATES ITS TENTH ANNIVERSARY. THIS COINCIDES HAPPILY WITH THE \$10 BILLION MILESTONE IN EXPORTS DECLARED UNDER ITS POLICIES WHICH THE CORPORATION REACHED THIS YEAR. DURING THE FIRST YEAR OF ITS EXISTENCE, EXPORTS WORTH ABOUT \$400 MILLION WERE PUT TO THE CORPORATION FOR COVER. THE PRESENT FIGURES ARE NOW FOUR TIMES THAT AMOUNT.

+IT IS A TRIBUTE TO THE FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS OF THE CORPORATION THAT OVER THE PAST DECADE IT HAS COPEd SO WELL WITH THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC VAGARIES ATTENDING WORLD TRADE.

+THE LAST THREE YEARS, IN PARTICULAR, HAVE WITNESSED ENORMOUS UPHEAVALS IN OVERSEAS MARKETS. CHANGES IN THE FORTUNES OF BUYERS HAVE BEEN RAPID AND UNPREDICTABLE, WITH SUDDEN BANKRUPTCIES AND INSOLVENCIES WHICH NOBODY COULD HAVE FORESEEN.

+YET, IN SPITE OF SUCH TESTING CIRCUMSTANCES, THE CORPORATION HAS BEEN ABLE TO IMPROVE ITS SERVICES, EXPAND THE COVER IT PROVIDES AND AUGMENT ITS RESERVES.

+ONLY RECENTLY DID THE CORPORATION INCREASE ITS LIABILITY PERCENTAGE FROM 85 PER CENT TO 90 PER CENT, LEAVING POLICY-HOLDERS TO BEAR ONLY 10 PER CENT OF THE RISK.

+THE CORPORATION NOW SERVICES CLOSE TO 900 POLICIES AND OFFERS PROTECTION FOR NEARLY EVERY MARKET OVER ALMOST THE ENTIRE RANGE OF HONG KONG PRODUCTS.

/+IT MUST

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+IT MUST BE GRATIFYING TO THE COMMISSIONER AND ITS STAFF TO KNOW THAT THE CORPORATION IS NOW REGARDED AS A MODEL FOR EXPORT CREDIT INSURANCE ORGANISATIONS IN THE REGION AND THAT A NUMBER OF NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN ANXIOUS TO LEARN FROM THE HONG KONG EXPERIENCE.

+IN ACHIEVING SUCH A REPUTATION, THE ADVISORY BOARD, MADE UP OF DEDICATED BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT PERSONALITIES, HAS ALSO PLAYED AN IMPORTANT PART.

+I AM SURE THAT THIS COMMENDABLE PROGRESS WILL CONTINUE OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS, FOR THE BENEFIT OF HONG KONG AS A WHOLE. I WISH TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO CONGRATULATE THE CORPORATION ON ITS FINE RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT AND HARD WORK AND TO WISH IT VERY MANY HAPPY RETURNS ON THE OCCASION OF ITS TENTH BIRTHDAY.+

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ADVANCE ORDERS FOR SERVICED FIRST DAY COVERS

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THERE IS LESS THAN A WEEK TO ORDER IN ADVANCE THE SERVICING OF FIRST DAY COVERS PRODUCED BY THE POST OFFICE TO COMMEMORATE THE 'YEAR OF THE SNAKE'.

THE SPECIAL FIRST DAY COVERS, WHICH WERE PUT ON SALE LAST WEEK, HAVE TO BE HANDED IN AT THE GENERAL POST OFFICE, CONNAUGHT PLACE, OR THE KOWLOON CENTRAL POST OFFICE, NATHAN ROAD OR THE TSIM SHA TSUI POST OFFICE, SALISBURY ROAD BEFORE 5 P.M. NEXT WEDNESDAY (DECEMBER 29).

THEY MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ORDER FORM, AVAILABLE AT THE THREE POST OFFICES, TOGETHER WITH A REMITTANCE OF \$1.70 PER COVER TO MEET THE COST OF THE STAMPS AND SERVICE. THEY MUST ALSO BE FULLY ADDRESSED AND NO LESS THAN TEN ARE ACCEPTED WITH EACH ORDER.

THE TWO STAMPS, WHICH ARE TO BE ISSUED TO COMMEMORATE THE 'YEAR OF THE SNAKE', WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR SALE FROM JANUARY 6. THEY ARE IN 20 CENT AND \$1.30 DENOMINATIONS AND ARE DESIGNED BY MISS JENNIE WONG, A GRAPHIC DESIGNER IN HONG KONG.

ON JANUARY 6 FIRST DAY COVERS CAN BE HANDED IN OVER THE COUNTER AT ALL POST OFFICES, IMMEDIATELY IMPRESSED WITH THE NORMAL POST OFFICE DATE STAMP, WITHOUT THE TIME TYPE, AND GIVEN BACK TO THE PERSON PRESENTING THEM.

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OVER 21,800 FIRE PREVENTION INSPECTIONS CONDUCTED LAST MONTH
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THE FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU OF THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT LAST MONTH CARRIED OUT A TOTAL OF 21,811 INSPECTIONS ON ALL TYPES OF BUILDINGS THROUGHOUT HONG KONG.

THE FIGURE REPRESENTS AN INCREASE OF ALMOST 70 PER CENT OVER THE FIGURE OF NOVEMBER 1975.

MORE THAN HALF OF LAST MONTH'S INSPECTIONS (12,830) WERE PROMPTED BY COMPLAINTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, OF WHICH 9,641 RELATED TO MEANS OF ESCAPE. IN ADDITION, THERE WERE 1,402 ROUTINE INSPECTIONS OF MEANS OF ESCAPE AND 4,719 VISITS TO FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS.

A TOTAL OF 158 VEHICLES USED FOR CONVEYING COMPRESSED GASES AND INFLAMMABLE LIQUIDS WERE EXAMINED IN CONNECTION WITH THE SCHEME TO LICENSE SUCH VEHICLES ANNUALLY.

THE BUREAU'S EXPERTS ALSO INVESTIGATED TWELVE FIRES IN DEPTH AND CONDUCTED 116 INSPECTIONS ON CHILD CARE CENTRES DURING THE MONTH TO CHECK ON FIRE SAFETY MEASURES.

INSPECTIONS INVOLVING THE STORAGE OR MANUFACTURE OF DANGEROUS GOODS NUMBERED 556. THERE WERE CLOSE TO 1,400 INSPECTIONS OF SCHOOLS, RESTAURANTS, NIGHTCLUBS, VENTILATION SYSTEMS AND OTHER PLACES OF PUBLIC ASSEMBLY.

THE NUMBER OF PLANS RECEIVED AND PROCESSED IN RESPECT OF NEW BUILDING PROJECTS WAS 738.

DURING THE MONTH UNDER REVIEW, 601 FIRE HAZARD ABATEMENT NOTICES WERE ISSUED AND 187 PROSECUTIONS WERE TAKEN OUT RESULTING IN THE IMPOSITION OF FINES AMOUNTING TO MORE THAN \$121,400.

MORE THAN 630 ITEMS OF FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT IN GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS AND QUARTERS WERE TESTED.

OFFICERS OF THE BUREAU ALSO CONDUCTED 23 FIRE PREVENTION LECTURES FOR THE STAFF OF PRIVATE ESTABLISHMENTS AS WELL AS OTHER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

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ANTI-CHILD LABOUR DRIVE
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LABOUR INSPECTORS VISITED MORE THAN 8,000 INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS DURING A THREE-DAY ANTI-CHILD LABOUR CAMPAIGN LAST MONTH AND FOUND ONLY 34 UNDER-AGED CHILDREN WORKING.

THE CHILDREN ALL UNDER THE AGE OF 14, THE MINIMUM LEGAL AGE PERMITTED TO WORK IN FACTORIES, WERE FOUND IN 31 FACTORIES.

THIS REPRESENTED ONLY 0.04 PER CENT OF THE 81,584 PEOPLE FOUND AT WORK DURING THE INSPECTORS' VISITS WHICH TOOK PLACE FROM NOVEMBER 2 TO 4.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH LABOUR DEPARTMENT POLICY, THE PROPRIETORS INVOLVED WILL BE PROSECUTED.

DURING THE THREE-DAY DRIVE -- THE THIRD OF A SERIES CARRIED OUT THIS YEAR -- A TOTAL OF 8,136 OUT OF 37,118 UNDERTAKINGS RECORDED WITH THE WOMEN AND YOUNG PERSONS UNIT WAS INSPECTED.

EXCEPT FOR 88 CONCERNS WHICH HAD EMPLOYED CHILDREN BEFORE, THESE ESTABLISHMENTS WERE SELECTED AT RANDOM FOR INSPECTION.

HOWEVER, ONLY SEVEN OF THE 88 CONCERNS WERE FOUND TO HAVE EMPLOYED CHILDREN AGAIN.

A LABOUR DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID IN GENERAL, THE PICTURE OF CHILD EMPLOYMENT AS REVEALED BY THE RESULTS OF THIS CAMPAIGN WAS THAT MOST OF THE CHILDREN FOUND WORKING WERE AGED AROUND 13.

+THERE WERE SLIGHTLY MORE GIRLS THAN BOYS AND MOST OF THE CHILDREN WERE EMPLOYED IN INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS LOCATED IN INDUSTRIAL OR FACTORY BUILDINGS WITH AN EMPLOYMENT SIZE NORMALLY RANGING FROM FIVE TO 49,+ HE SAID.

+THE MAJORITY OF THE CHILDREN CLAIMED TO HAVE LESS THAN THREE MONTHS SERVICE, USUALLY WORKING EIGHT HOURS A DAY AND EARNING A DAILY WAGE OF BETWEEN \$14 AND \$20.

+IN A NUMBER OF CASES, THE EMPLOYERS ADMITTED THAT BECAUSE THEY WERE SHORT OF LABOUR AND WORK WAS PRESSING THEY DID NOT CAREFULLY VERIFY THE AGE OF EACH AND EVERY WORKER WHO APPLIED FOR EMPLOYMENT,+ THE SPOKESMAN ADDED.

+FURTHER CAMPAIGNS OF THIS KIND WILL BE MOUNTED NEXT YEAR,+ HE SAID.

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CONTRACT SIGNING FOR DEVELOPMENT WORKS IN TAI PO
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NOTE TO EDITORS:

A MULTI-MILLION-DOLLAR CONTRACT FOR THE FIRST OF A SERIES OF MAJOR DEVELOPMENT WORKS AT TAI PO MARKET TOWN WILL BE FORMALLY SIGNED AT 10 A.M. TOMORROW (FRIDAY).

THE SIGNING CEREMONY WILL BE HELD IN P.W.D.'S SHA TIN NEW TOWN DEVELOPMENT OFFICE, 2ND FLOOR, SHA TIN GOVERNMENT OFFICES, NO. 2 TUNG LO WAN HILL, SHA TIN.

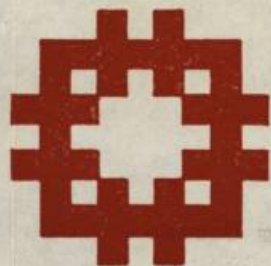
THE GOVERNMENT ENGINEER (NEW TERRITORIES), MR. KENNETH KWOK OF THE P.W.D.'S NEW TERRITORIES DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT WILL BE ON HAND TO GIVE DETAILS OF THE PROJECT.

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO SEND YOUR REPRESENTATIVES TO COVER THE FUNCTION.

TWO VANS (AM2066 AND AM2069) WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE P.W.D. HEADQUARTERS, MURRAY BUILDING, GARDEN ROAD, HONG KONG TO TAKE MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES FROM HONG KONG TO SHA TIN AND BACK.

THOSE WISHING TO MAKE USE OF THE TRANSPORT FACILITY SHOULD MEET P.W.D. PUBLICITY OFFICERS IN THE LOBBY OF MURRAY BUILDING, GARDEN ROAD, HONG KONG, BEFORE 9.15 A.M.

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HONG KONG HOUSING AUTHORITY 香港房屋委員會

PRESS
RELEASE

新聞稿

Wednesday, December 23, 1976

IT'S A HAPPY CHRISTMAS FOR
ONE BIG HAPPY FAMILY

Here is a Christmas story to gladden the hearts of all

Grandmother Mrs Lo Yuen-hung (61) can laugh now when she joins with members of her family to celebrate Christmas in the living room of their spacious flat at Converted Lower Shek Kip Mei.

But not every Christmas has been a happy one for Mrs Lo and her family for they were among the 53,000 people made homeless in the terrible Shek Kip Mei squatter area fire at Christmas 1953 which turned more than 4,000 structures into ashes.

That fire brought public housing to Hong Kong. Within weeks temporary two-storey barracks were thrown up on the site to house as many of the homeless as possible, and then as fast as they could be built solid Mark I housing blocks sprang up to form our first resettlement estate.

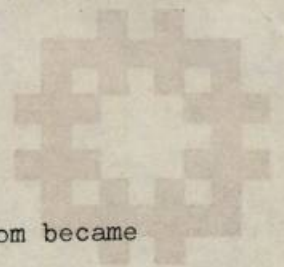
Mrs Lo remembers it well. She and her late husband, with their five sons and daughter, dashed to safety out of the huge blaze carrying only a sackful of possessions.

"We had next to nothing and our living depended on assistance given by the Government," she said.

As a family of seven they were allocated a small flat on the Estate only 120 square feet but still much better than their flimsy hut that had burnt so fiercely and with washing and sanitary facilities which, even if they had to share them, were much better than the almost non-existent ones in the squatter eyesore.

Mrs Lo said: "As the family grew so our eldest sons went to work in a knitting factory. Although we were living hand-to-mouth in those years our situation improved later and the youngest boy, Chan-wong, did well enough as a secondary student to go to a university in Taiwan. Now he is back in Hong Kong and has a good job."

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There were more grim times ahead for the family as the room became more and more crowded. Two sons married and brought home their brides, and then the grandchildren started to arrive.

"We could hardly move we were so packed in, but we applied to the Housing Manager for relief of overcrowding and although we had to wait our turn our times of hardship are over," said Mrs Lo.

Now they are one big happy family occupying two adjoining converted flats at Converted Lower Shek Kip Mei Estate with a total of 550 square feet which gives plenty of space for four sons still living at home, a daughter-in-law and three grandchildren.

"This was worth waiting for -- what a difference compared with Christmas 23 years ago," said the smiling Mrs Lo.

[The following text is extremely faint and largely illegible due to bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. It appears to be a continuation of the story.]