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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES

DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Wednesday, June 28, 1972

HONG KONG'S DOMESTIC EXPORTS INCREASE

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Hong Kong's domestic exports for May were valued at $1,277 million - an increase of $79 million or 6.6 per cent over May last year.

Provisional trade figures released today (Wednesday) by the Census and Statistics Department show that imports increased by $94 million or 5.3 per cent to $1,867 million. Re-exports valued at $329 million rose by $27 million or 9.1 per cent compared with May, 1971.

A spokesman of the Commerce and Industry Department said that during the three-month period of March to May 1972, domestic exports totalled $3,409 million, imports $5,284 million and re-exports $896 million. Compared with the corresponding period in the previous year, these figures represented an increase of 4.4 per cent, 1.3 per cent and 10.3 per cent respectively.

Figures for the 5-month period, January to May, show increases over the same period in 1971 of 9.5 per cent for domestic exports, 1.4 per cent for imports and 13.2 per cent for re-exports.

Provisional figures for May are as follows:

MERCHANDISE:	Domestic Exports:		$1,277 million
	Imports	:	$1,867 million
	Re-exports	:	$ 329 million

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COMPARATIVE FIGURES:

	May 1972 $ Million	May 1971 $ Million	Increase or decrease $ Million	Per Cent
Domestic Exports	1,277	1,198	+ 79	+ 6.6
Imports	1,867	1,773	+ 94	+ 5.3
Re-exports	329	302	+ 27	+ 9.1

	March - May 1972 $ Million	March - May 1971 $ Million	Increase or decrease $ Million	Per Cent
Domestic Exports	3,409	3,266	+ 143	+ 4.4
Imports	5,284	5,217	+ 67	+ 1.3
Re-exports	896	812	+ 84	+ 10.3

	Jan. - May 1972 $ Million	Jan. - May 1971 $ Million	Increase or decrease $ Million	Per Cent
Domestic Exports	5,663	5,174	+ 489	+ 9.5
Imports	8,383	8,267	+ 116	+ 1.4
Re-exports	1,465	1,294	+ 171	+ 13.2

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Wednesday, June 28, 1972

LOAN SCHEME FOR SMALL INDUSTRIES

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The Loans for Small Industry Scheme, announced in the budget earlier this year, will come into operation on July 3 for a trial period of three years.

An Assistant Director of Commerce and Industry, Mr. R. Porter, said this afternoon that small-scale industry in Hong Kong would benefit from the introduction of the scheme, which would provide a new source of loan capital for the purchase of equipment leading ultimately to increased productivity.

"All manufacturing companies employing less than 200 workers and in which the proprietors have invested not more than HK$600,000 can take advantage of the Scheme." Mr. Porter said.

"All that a small-scale industrialist need to do is to complete an application form, available from all licensed banks or the Loans for Small Industry Branch, and submit it to a bank of his own choice together with an audited balance sheet and profit and loss account in respect of his company's previous three years of operation and a cheque for HK$1,000 made payable to the Hong Kong Productivity Centre. The rest will be done by the Loans for Small Industry Branch in collaboration with the bank and the Hong Kong Productivity Centre."

/Loans .....

Loans will normally be for not less than HK$50,000 or more than HK$250,000. Repayment periods will be from three to five years.

Normal repayment of principal and payment of interest will be made in equal monthly instalments commencing within 90 days of the installation of the machinery purchased with the loan.

Interest will be charged on the loans at the bank's prime lending rate, currently seven per cent per annum, plus another two per cent.

The scheme was based on recommendations of the Loans for Small Industry Committee of the Trade and Industry Advisory Board. It will be administered by the newly created Loans for Small Industry Branch of the Commerce and Industry Department.

Feasibility Studies

The total amount of loan capital required by the scheme will be provided by the banks. The corner-stone principles are the acceptance by Government of 50 per cent of the risk of every loan granted and the provision to participating banks of detailed and unbiased feasibility studies conducted by the Hong Kong Productivity Centre.

Mr. Porter added that all banks registered in Hong Kong can participate in the scheme and their initial reaction has been favourable.

Elaborating on the feasibility studies to be carried out by the Productivity Centre, Mr. Porter explained that these were necessary because the criteria for making these loans were somewhat outside normal banking practice. Loans would be approved largely on the basis of assessments of companies' technical capabilities and the feasibility of the projects for which the loans were required.

/"This .....

"This would require the service of highly qualified engineers and other professional people which banks do not normally employ. If the assessments were left to the banks themselves they would, as a matter of normal commercial prudence, have no alternative but to refuse the loan applications," Mr. Porter said.

It was estimated that the average cost to the Productivity Centre of each feasibility study would be HK$3,000. However, both the Loans for Small Industry Committee and the Trade and Industry Advisory Board realised that an initial charge of HK$3,000 would be too high for the Scheme to have any chance of success.

A compromise was therefore reached whereby the cost would be recovered by an initial payment of HK$1,000 plus a charge of one per cent per annum on the amount loaned, to be paid to the Productivity Centre. Mr. Porter said both the Committee and the Board realised that an initial payment of HK$1,000 would be unpopular, but felt that this was the best payment system which could be devised, and probably the only one which would be in any way acceptable to all those concerned with the Scheme.

To successful applicants the charge would represent only a small increase in the cost of the loan, equivalent to 0.67 per cent to 0.08 per cent per annum depending on the size of the loan and the period over which it was granted. Unsuccessful applicants would receive a copy of the Productivity Centre's report which would prove most valuable to them.

/Mr. Porter .....

Mr. Porter believed that they would be well worth the money even if the full cost were charged, let alone the very heavily subsidised price proposed.

Full details of the procedures are contained in a booklet obtainable at all licensed banks and from the Loans for Small Industry Branch, Room 513 Tung Ying Building, 100 Nathan Road, Kowloon.

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Note to Editors: Any questions you may have about this scheme will be answered by Mr. R. Porter (H-236509) or Mr. Peter Kiang (K-670734).

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REOCCUPATION OF UNDAMAGED BUILDINGS SOON

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The Director of Public Works, Mr. J.J. Robson, said today that it should be possible to reoccupy many of the undamaged buildings in the Po Shan Road and Kotewall Road areas within the next seven days.

Electricity will have been re-connected to most of the buildings by this evening and full water supplies should be available within three days. Gas and telephone connections will take longer but the Gas Company is making arrangements for emergency bottled gas supplies if required.

..... Access to these properties by way of Conduit and Kotewall Roads is the major problem but this should be solved by the middle of next week. Some traffic restrictions may be necessary after that date but full details will be announced when residents are advised which buildings can be re-occupied.

The Public Works Department has now completed the diversion of the main storm water channels, which run through the area of land slip, and drainage channels have been constructed above it to divert as much water as possible away from the area.

Work is continuing on the clearance of the collapsed building but this is a slow process because of the difficulties of access and the tangle of reinforcing bars which have to be cut individually with oxy-acetylene burners before the concrete rubble can be cleared. Simultaneously, clearance work is going on in Kotewall and Conduit Roads.

/Late .....

Late yesterday the Acting Colonial Secretary, Mr. M.D.A. Clinton, met the Director of Public Works at the site in order to inspect the work for himself. He said that he was satisfied with the progress that was being made under the extremely difficult conditions. During his visit he met civil engineers and soil specialists and discussed with them their proposals for the permanent restoration of the area.

Full Details

The following is a more detailed statement of the work being undertaken by the Waterworks Office and the utility companies:-

Water - The Water Authority is making alternative supply arrangements which should improve supply to premises in Po Shan Road and Kotewall Road within the next three days.

The premises affected include No. 24 and 30 Po Shan Road and Alpine Court and Belmont Court in No. 10 and 12 Kotewall Road. Half of Alpine Court is already receiving supply.

Electricity - Barring additional technical problems, the Hong Kong Electric Company hopes to restore general supply to the Po Shan Road area "as far as possible" by tonight.

The company is trying to restore supplies to No. 15 Kotewall Road, parts of Hong Kong University and Nos. 4-6 and 10-16 Po Shan Road.

Gas - A spokesman for the Hong Kong and China Gas Company said that the company is prepared to supply bottled gas and a "hot plate" to residents of the affected area.

/The spokesman .....

The spokesman said that the following premises are now without gas supply:-

Nos. 10, 12, 14, 16, 21, 24 and 30 Po Shan Road.

Nos. 47, 49, 51, 53 and 55 Conduit Road.

Nos. 12-36 Kotewall Road.

Nos. 17, 19 and 21 Babington Path.

Sir Robert Black Hall (Residence) and Old Halls in University Path.

No decision has been taken on re-laying damaged gas mains in the area because the mains have been covered by the landslide and workers cannot get through to them at the present time.

Telephones - Workers of the Telephone Company are also trying to get damaged lines in the whole of Hong Kong repaired as soon as possible, and they are already making good progress in their repair work.

Given dry weather, a company spokesman said, it was hoped that damaged lines could be repaired and services restored "quite soon".

However, the spokesman pointed out that at this stage it was still not possible to state precisely which lines in particular areas could be restored by a given date.

He requested subscribers to be patient and assured them that the company had not spared any effort in trying to get all damaged lines restored as early as possible.

He said priority in repair work was given first to essential services, then to commercial undertakings and residential properties.

/Note to editors: .....

Note to editors: The Director of Public Works will be at the site tomorrow (Thursday) at 4 p.m. and will brief press representatives on progress to date and proposed future developments in the area.

They will also be taken on a tour of the area and in view of the conditions there press representatives are advised to wear suitable clothes and footwear.

Newspapers, radio and television stations and other news media wishing to be present are asked to telephone the Duty Officer, G.I.S. and give the names of their representatives.

Those attending the briefing and tour are requested to meet Mr. J.H. Evans of the G.I.S. at 41 Conduit Road (Realty Garden) by 3.45 p.m.

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OPENING OF SIU LAM HOSPITAL

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The Hon. Sir Kenneth Ping-fan Fung, retiring Executive Councillor, said today the Siu Lam Hospital for the severely mentally retarded -- the first of its kind in Hong Kong -- was "a significant step forward in the provisioning of social services for all."

...He was speaking at the formal opening of the 200-bed Hospital in Tai Lam Valley.

It was built with a $5.7 million grant from the Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club and is the direct result of a recommendation by Dr. L.T. Hilliard in 1960 that the severely mentally retarded, mainly among children, be hospitalised.

"Services for the treatment and rehabilitation of the mentally subnormal in Hong Kong are limited," Sir Kenneth said.

"Before Siu Lam was contructed, there was no properly planned medical institution created exclusively for the medical care of the severely retarded. It was for this reason that the Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club had seen fit to accord the project a high degree of priority."

He praised the Government for taking the view that "the time had come for all members of the community, even the most disadvantaged, to be brought into the fold to enjoy the benefits of an improved economy and general prosperity."

He felt the Government's acceptance of "the permanent commitment implicit in the Hospital's recurring costs" also deserved recognition.

/"All .....

"All of us here," he recalled, "are sadly aware how, because of other pressures and the relative urgency of other problems, these unfortunates were formerly left to die. Today, they are hospitalised."

For this reason, it gave him great pleasure to declare Siu Lam open, and he did so in the conviction that it would play a "key role in the treatment of the severely mentally ill in our midst ..... The conscience of a progressive Hong Kong requires that we do all we can for them."

Speaking earlier at the same ceremony, Dr. the Hon. G.H. Choa, Director of Medical and Health Services, said Siu Lam would be receiving its 200 patients in phases, to enable both the patients and the staff to adjust themselves to their new environment.

The first group would be coming from the Tung Wah Hospital, and the Po Leung Kuk, and they would be arriving in July. Other cases would be admitted on the recommendation of an assessment team.

He thanked the Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club for making Siu Lam possible, and he recalled that in the last 20 years, no less than 19 government projects in the medical and health field had been completed with donations from the Club, amounting in total to nearly $20 million.

Dr. Choa described Siu Lam Hospital as "a special case," and its opening was "a manifestation of the Government's recognition of its obligation to the most unfortunate section of the community."

/He had .....

He had a special word of appreciation for the Sisters of St. Paul des Chartres who had offered to serve at Siu Lam.

"I am fully conscious of the public service and humanity behind the offer," he said, "and I will certainly consider it once all administrative difficulties in the initial stage, what I call teething troubles, are ironed out."

Dr. Choa thanked Sir Kenneth for honouring the occasion with his presence, particularly as this was one of Sir Kenneth's last public engagements as an Executive Councillor before his retirement on July 1.

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Note to Editors: Copies of the full texts of Sir Kenneth's and Dr. Choa's speeches, in Chinese and English, are distributed separately in the Press boxes, Government Information Services, later today.

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THE MISSING SECOND

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The usual six-pip time signals from the Royal Observatory will not be broadcast at nine o'clock this Saturday morning (July 1). But they will be resumed 15 minutes later at 9:15 a.m.

A spokesman for the Royal Observatory said today this was to enable a correction to be applied which would result in an apparent delay of one second to the resumed time service signals.

The need to set the clock back by one second arises because world-wide time standards are now based on the atomic time scale. This provides a more precise and uniform second than that derived from the rate of rotation of the earth measured by astronomical means.

The spokesman said the time service in Hong Kong had been maintained by reference to the atomic scale since January 1 this year.

One day on the astronomical time scale is, on the average, three-thousandths of a second longer than the day on the atomic time scale.

"However, it has been internationally agreed that the two times should never differ significantly and that periodic adjustments of the whole second would be made to the time shown by those clocks using or being maintained by reference to the atomic time scale," he said.

By the end of June, the difference will be almost six-tenths of a second and the first of these adjustments is to be made at 9 a.m. on July 1, 1972.

"This correction of one second, called a leap-second, is analogous to 29th February in a leap year, which everyone is familiar," the spokesman added.

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SAFETY PRECAUTIONS ON BUILDING SITES

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Seven workers were killed and 385 injured in May while working on building construction sites, according to reports received by the Labour Department.

Of this number, three were killed and 65 injured due to accidental falls.

Mr. A.H. Carter, the Industrial Safety Training Officer stressed that falling from heights could be prevented by the erection and use of safe working platforms together with a proper means of access to them.

"The use of temporary and makeshift working platforms must be avoided," he added.

Mr. Carter said that if adequate barriers or fences were used to cover or enclose openings in floors and excavations then many of the injuries sustained by the workers could have been avoided.

"To reduce the number of accidents, there is a need for management and workers to work as a team on each construction site," he added.

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DENTAL HEALTH WEEK

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The Hong Kong Dental Society will be holding a Dental Health Week - the seventh to be organised - from July 7 to 12 this year.

During this period, there will be an exhibition of the most-up-to-date dental health education materials and dental products at the Ocean Terminal.

In addition, the Society will also sponsor a poster competition for children of all primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong.

The competition, with the theme "Better teeth, Better health", is divided into two groups - the Senior Group for secondary schools and the Junior Group for primary schools.

There will be cash prizes for the first three winning entries in each section. Consolation prizes will also be awarded to other successful entries.

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Note to Editors: The Hong Kong Dental Society will be holding a press conference at 3 p.m. on Monday, July 3, at the Jade Emperor Room, Hong Kong Hotel, Kowloon.

You are cordially invited to send a reporter and/or photographer to cover the event.

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HEALTH EXHIBITION IN LAM TIN ESTATE

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A three-day health exhibition opens today in the Lam Tin Estate Community Work Office of the Social Welfare Department in Kowloon.

It is aimed at drawing the attention of estate residents, especially children, to the need for personal cleanliness and sanitation as a safeguard against catching or spreading, contagious diseases in crowded communities.

The exhibits, provided by the Education Service of the Medical and Health Department, include photographs, charts and coloured cartoons.

The exhibition continues from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. today, and from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. on the two other days.

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Wednesday, June 28, 1972

SUMMER YOUTH CONFERENCE

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Note to Editors: The Central coordinating Committee of the Summer Youth Activities Programme will hold a press conference to announce this year's overall programme at 3 p.m. on Friday (June 30) at the 35 m.m. theatre of Government Information Services, 5th floor, Beaconsfield House.

Attending this conference will be Mr. Peter Williams, Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Stephen Law of the Social Welfare Department and representatives of various organisations involved in the programme.

Young people participating in the programme will also be present.

You are cordially invited to have this conference covered.

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Release Time: 7.15 p.m.