



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

SUNDAY, MARCH 14, 1976

HK ON THE WHOLE UNAFFECTED BY EARTHQUAKES

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FOUR HUNDRED AND TWENTY YEARS AGO, THE LARGEST KILLER EARTHQUAKE IN HISTORY STRUCK THE WEIHO VALLEY IN SHENSI PROVINCE, WREAKING HAVOC AND BRINGING DEATH TO 830,000 PEOPLE.

CLOSER TO US AND NEARER OUR TIME IN HISTORY, IN 1918, A TREMOR REGISTERING 7.0 ON THE OPEN-ENDED RICHTER SCALE OCCURRED IN SWATOW AND RIPPLED ACROSS 300 KILOMETRES TO HONG KONG.

ONE HOUSE ON THE PEAK HAD TO BE VACATED, PENDULUM CLOCKS STOPPED AND GLASSES OVERTURNED. NO ONE HOWEVER WAS REPORTED TO BE INJURED.

IT WAS APPARENTLY THE MOST SEVERE EARTHQUAKE EVER EXPERIENCED HERE.

+HONG KONG IS NOT ON THE CIRCUMPACIFIC SEISMIC BELT, WHICH IS A CIRCLE OF EARTHQUAKE AREAS SURROUNDING THE PACIFIC OCEAN,+ EXPLAINED MR. LAM HUNG-KWAN, SCIENTIFIC OFFICER IN CHARGE OF THE ROYAL OBSERVATORY'S SEISMOLOGY SECTION, +AND THERE IS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD THAT HONG KONG WILL BE AFFECTED BY A MAJOR EARTHQUAKE.+

ON AVERAGE ABOUT 600 TREMORS ARE RECORDED EACH YEAR BUT MOST OF THEM ARE NOT FELT IN HONG KONG. AS FOR THOSE FELT IN HONG KONG, NEARLY ALL OF THEM ARE ONLY OF INTENSITY 1 TO 3 ON THE MODIFIED MERCALLI SCALE AND SELDOM REACH INTENSITY 5.

THE MODIFIED MERCALLI SCALE, HE POINTED OUT, IS A MEASURE OF HOW AN EARTHQUAKE IS FELT AT THE RECEIVING END. ABSOLUTE MEASUREMENT OF ITS ENERGY RELEASED AT THE EPICENTRE IS MADE ON THE RICHTER SCALE.

WHEREAS THE MAGNITUDE OF AN EARTHQUAKE ON THE RICHTER SCALE DEPENDS ONLY ON THE AMOUNT OF ENERGY RELEASED BY THE EARTHQUAKE, ITS INTENSITY IN HONG KONG ON THE MODIFIED MERCALLI SCALE ALSO DEPENDS ON THE DISTANCE OF THE EPICENTRE FROM HONG KONG AND THE INTERVENING EARTH STRUCTURE. A MAJOR EARTHQUAKE, FOR EXAMPLE, OF MAGNITUDE 7 ON THE RICHTER SCALE COULD HAVE LOW INTENSITY IN HONG KONG ON THE MODIFIED MERCALLI SCALE AND COULD HARDLY BE FELT.

ON THE MODIFIED MERCALLI SCALE, TREMORS OF INTENSITY 3 MAY BE FELT INDOORS AND CAUSE VIBRATIONS LIKE THE PASSING OF A LIGHT TRUCK, THOUGH THEY MAY NOT BE RECOGNISED AS THOSE OF AN EARTHQUAKE.

VIBRATIONS OF INTENSITY 7, AS DURING THE 1918 SWATOW EARTHQUAKE, CAN BE NOTICED BY CAR DRIVERS, BREAK FURNITURE AND MAKE STANDING DIFFICULT.

+ALTHOUGH WE ARE ON THE WHOLE UNAFFECTED BY EARTHQUAKES, HONG KONG IS FULLY EQUIPPED TO REGISTER THEM,+ MR. LAM CONTINUED.

ALL DATA COLLECTED ARE SENT TO THE UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY NATIONAL EARTHQUAKE INFORMATION SERVICE IN WASHINGTON DAILY BY TELEGRAMS AND TO THE INTERNATIONAL SEISMOLOGICAL CENTRE IN EDINBURGH EVERY THREE MONTHS FOR PROCESSING.

+RECORDS DATING BACK TO 1921 ARE ALSO BEING KEPT LOCALLY AND WILL BE MICROFILMED FOR BETTER STORAGE,+ HE SAID.

THE SENSORS OF THE SEISMOGRAPHS AT THE ROYAL OBSERVATORY -- COMPARABLE TO THE FEELERS OF INSECTS -- ARE PERHAPS THE MOST HIGHLY PROTECTED INSTRUMENTS KEPT THERE.

THEY ARE PLACED WITHIN A DOUBLE-WALLED UNDERGROUND ROOM AT A CONSTANT TEMPERATURE AND HUMIDITY AND ARE PLACED ON PILLARS STRUCK DEEP IN THE GROUND.

+THERE ARE ALTOGETHER 12 SENSORS,+ MR. LAM SAID,+THREE FOR EACH OF FOUR SETS OF SEISMOGRAPHS WHICH ARE SENSITIVE TO TREMORS ORIGINATING FROM DIFFERENT DISTANCES FROM HONG KONG.

+EACH OF THE THREE SENSORS IN EACH SET IS IN TURN SENSITIVE TO TREMORS COMING FROM ONE DIRECTION ALIGNMENT -- NORTH/SOUTH, EAST/WEST, OR THE VERTICAL.+

EARTH MOVEMENTS, NORMALLY LASTING BETWEEN SEVERAL MINUTES TO SEVERAL HOURS, ARE DETECTED BY THE SENSOR AND CONVERTED TO ELECTRICAL ENERGY WHICH ACTIVATES A MIRROR GALVANOMETER.

A LIGHT BEAM REFLECTED BY THE MIRROR IS IN TURN DIRECTED ONTO A ROLL OF ROTATING PHOTO-SENSITIVE PAPER.

THE DIRECTION, DISTANCE, AND TIME OF THE EARTHQUAKE CAN THEN BE ESTIMATED FROM THE RECORDINGS ON THE PAPER.

+THE RECORDS ARE NORMALLY TAKEN OFF FOR INSPECTION EVERY 24 HOURS,+ MR. LAM SAID.

+INTERPRETATION OF THE READINGS REQUIRES SPECIAL TRAINING,+ MR. LAM ADDED,+BECAUSE INDICATIONS OF EARTH MOVEMENTS ON THE SEISMOGRAMS COULD BE CAUSED BY THE FORCE OF SEAWAVES AGAINST THE SHORE, OR QUITE OFTEN BY PILING ON CONSTRUCTION SITES CLOSE TO THE OBSERVATORY OR BY THE RUNNING OF MOTOR VEHICLES IN ITS VICINITY.+

IF, HOWEVER, A GENUINE INTENSE EARTHQUAKE IS RECORDED THE OBSERVATORY WOULD IMMEDIATELY CONTACT EARTHQUAKE INFORMATION CENTRES IN HONOLULU AND TOKYO ASKING FOR MORE PRECISE INFORMATION ON THE LOCATION OF THE EPICENTRE OF THE EARTHQUAKE AND ITS MAGNITUDE.

HONOLULU, BEING THE CONTROL CENTRE OF THE 56-STATION PACIFIC TSUNAMI NETWORK, WILL ALSO ALERT HONG KONG TO ANY POSSIBLE TSUNAMI (AN EARTHQUAKE-GENERATED TIDAL WAVE).

THE MAGNITUDE OF A TSUNAMI, IF THERE IS ANY, DEPENDS ON HOW THE SEA FLOOR IS AFFECTED BY THE EARTHQUAKE, THE LOCATION OF ITS EPICENTRE AND ITS DISTANCE AWAY.

+WE ARE AGAIN FORTUNATE IN BEING RELATIVELY UNAFFECTED,+ MR. LAM SAID,+THE STRONGEST EVER REACHING HERE BEING ONLY ABOUT ONE THIRD OF A METRE HIGH. THERE CAN BE NO REAL CAUSE FOR CONCERN IN HONG KONG.+

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HOME AFFAIRS DIRECTOR TO OPEN NEW HOSPITAL BUILDING

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THE DIRECTOR OF HOME AFFAIRS, MR. JOHN WALDEN, WILL OFFICIALLY OPEN THE CENTENARY BUILDING OF THE TUNG WAH GROUP OF HOSPITALS AT 12 NOON ON TUESDAY (MARCH 16).

THE CENTENARY BUILDING IS LOCATED AT PO YAN STREET AT THE SITE OF THE FORMER JUBILEE BLOCK WHICH WAS DEMOLISHED IN 1970 TO MAKE WAY FOR THIS MEDICAL HOSPITAL.

IT HAS 13 STOREYS WITH A TOTAL OF 431 BEDS. ITS MEDICAL UNITS INCLUDE A CASUALTY DEPARTMENT, AN X-RAY DEPARTMENT, A PHYSIOTHERAPY DEPARTMENT, AN OPERATING THEATRE, AND GYNAECOLOGY, PAEDIATRICS, MEDICAL AND SURGICAL WARDS.

THE CONSTRUCTION COST AMOUNTED TO OVER \$16 MILLION, HALF OF WHICH WAS SUBVENTED BY THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT, ABOUT \$5 MILLION BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE TUNG WAH GROUP OF HOSPITALS AND \$3 MILLION BY THE ROYAL HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB.

BECAUSE REMEDIAL WORK ON THE NEARBY SLOPE IS STILL IN PROGRESS, ONLY THE 6TH, 8TH AND 9TH FLOORS WITH A TOTAL OF 160 BEDS CAN BE USED FOR THE TIME BEING.

IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE REMEDIAL WORK ON THE SLOPE WILL BE COMPLETED WITHIN THE COMING YEAR AND THE CENTENARY BUILDING WILL THEN BE FULLY OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO COVER THE OPENING CEREMONY.

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SURVEY ON PRINTING INDUSTRY GETS UNDERWAY
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A MANPOWER SURVEY ON THE PRINTING INDUSTRY WILL BEGIN TOMORROW (MONDAY) WHEN INTERVIEWING OFFICERS WILL CALL ON SOME 400 ESTABLISHMENTS TO GATHER THE LATEST STATISTICAL INFORMATION.

THE INFORMATION COLLECTED WILL ENABLE THE PRINTING INDUSTRY TRAINING BOARD OF THE HONG KONG TRAINING COUNCIL TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON MANPOWER TRAINING FOR THE INDUSTRY.

THE SURVEY IS THE THIRD OF ITS KIND AND IS TO BE CONDUCTED UNTIL APRIL 5 WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT AND THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT.

QUESTIONNAIRES AND EXPLANATORY LETTERS HAVE ALREADY BEEN SENT TO EMPLOYERS OF THE 400 ESTABLISHMENTS SELECTED FOR THE SURVEY.

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PRINTING INDUSTRY TRAINING BOARD, MR. ALEX WU, HAS ASSURED THE EMPLOYERS THAT THE INFORMATION COLLECTED WILL BE TREATED IN STRICT CONFIDENCE AND WILL BE PUBLISHED ONLY IN THE FORM OF STATISTICAL SUMMARIES WITHOUT REFERENCE TO ANY INDIVIDUAL ESTABLISHMENT.

EMPLOYERS WILL BE REQUESTED TO SUPPLY THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ON EACH OF THE PRINCIPAL JOBS IN THE INDUSTRY:

- * THE NUMBER OF WORKERS CURRENTLY EMPLOYED=
- * THE NUMBER OF WORKERS CURRENTLY UNDER TRAINING=
- * THE NUMBER OF EXISTING VACANCIES= AND
- * A FORECAST OF THE ADDITIONAL NUMBER OF WORKERS REQUIRED BY APRIL 1977.

THE INTERVIEWING OFFICERS WILL ASSIST THEM IN COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

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