



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

FRIDAY, AUGUST 8, 1975

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FS CONFIDENT OF GRADUAL UPTURN IN ECONOMY

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THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, MR. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, TONIGHT SPOKE CONFIDENTLY OF A GRADUAL UPTURN IN THE ECONOMY IN THE LATTER PART OF THIS YEAR AND IN 1976. HOWEVER, HE CAUTIONED AGAINST EXPECTATIONS OF TOO EARLY A RECOVERY IN WORLD TRADE.

SPEAKING AT THE ANNUAL DINNER OF THE HONG KONG SOCIETY OF ACCOUNTANTS, HE SAID THAT ALREADY THIS YEAR, +AND IN ADVANCE OF ANY GENERAL RECOVERY OF DEMAND IN OUR MAIN MARKETS,+ MANY MANUFACTURERS HAVE REPORTED AN IMPROVEMENT IN THE STATE OF THEIR ORDER BOOKS, PARTLY DUE TO SPOT ORDERS TO REPLENISH STOCKS.

A RECENT OFFICIAL SURVEY AMONGST SOME OF THE LARGEST MANUFACTURING FIRMS SHOWED AN INCREASE OF 13 PER CENT IN ORDERS-ON-HAND BETWEEN THE FIRST AND SECOND QUARTERS OF THIS YEAR.

ALTHOUGH THE INCREASED ORDERS HAVE NOT YET BEEN REFLECTED IN EXPORT DELIVERIES, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY ADDED: +MY JUDGMENT IS THAT MANUFACTURING PRODUCTION HAS PROBABLY STOPPED FALLING AND MAY BE PICKING UP.+

HE SAID THERE WAS EVIDENCE OF THIS IN THE STATISTICS OF ELECTRICITY CONSUMPTION BY INDUSTRIAL USERS WHICH, IN THE SECOND QUARTER OF THIS YEAR, INCREASED BY TWO PER CENT OVER THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR AFTER HAVING FALLEN FOR SOME TIME PREVIOUSLY.

THERE WAS ALSO EVIDENCE THAT EMPLOYMENT IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR WAS LEVELLING OUT AFTER FALLING BY 11 PER CENT IN THE 12 MONTHS TO DECEMBER 1974.

MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID REPORTS FROM INDUSTRY SUGGEST THAT A NUMBER OF FIRMS HAVE EXTENDED THEIR WORK WEEK, INCREASED SHIFT WORKING AND BEGUN RECRUITING AGAIN. THE NUMBER OF REDUNDANCIES REPORTED TO THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT FELL BY NEARLY HALF BETWEEN THE FIRST AND SECOND QUARTERS OF THIS YEAR.

THERE WAS ALSO SOME EVIDENCE THAT DOMESTIC DEMAND WAS NO LONGER FALLING, WITH CONSUMER SPENDING NOW BENEFITTING FROM THE STABILITY OF CONSUMER PRICES. ELECTRICITY CONSUMPTION BY DOMESTIC USERS HAS INCREASED BY 13 PER CENT IN THE FIRST HALF OF 1975 COMPARED WITH THE FIRST HALF OF LAST YEAR, AND NEW CAR REGISTRATIONS, WHICH HAS BEEN AT A VERY LOW LEVEL FOR TWO YEARS, PICKED UP IN THE SECOND QUARTER OF 1975.

MR. HADDON-CAVE HAD EARLIER POINTED OUT THAT INFLATION IN HONG KONG WAS ALMOST NON-EXISTENT AS A RESULT OF THE FAVOURABLE TREND IN DOMESTIC COSTS, THE EVEN MORE FAVOURABLE TRENDS IN MANY IMPORT PRICES AND THE GOVERNMENT'S NON-INFLATIONARY FISCAL POLICIES.

IN THE SECOND QUARTER OF THIS YEAR, CONSUMER PRICES WERE ONLY TWO PER CENT HIGHER THAN A YEAR AGO, COMPARED WITH THE SECOND QUARTER OF 1974 WHEN THEY WERE 17-1/2 PER CENT ABOVE THOSE OF THE CORRESPONDING QUARTER IN 1973.

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HOWEVER, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY ADDED: +WELCOME AS THESE EARLY SIGNS ARE, A SUSTAINED RECOVERY OF OUR ECONOMY DEPENDS ON A GENERAL RECOVERY IN WORLD TRADE.+ HE CAUTIONED AGAINST EXPECTING TOO EARLY A RECOVERY. BUT, HE SAID, + CLEARLY THERE ARE SOME INDICATIONS, PARTICULARLY FROM THE UNITED STATES, THAT POINT TO A RENEWED GROWTH BEFORE THE END OF THIS YEAR.+

REFERRING TO THE GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT, MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID FINAL ESTIMATES FOR 1974 SHOW ZERO GROWTH IN REAL TERMS COMPARED WITH A PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE OF 1-1/2 PER CENT. THE FORECAST FOR 1975 IS ALSO FOR ZERO GROWTH, ALTHOUGH IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED RECENTLY THAT HONG KONG COULD NOW EXPECT A REAL GROWTH RATE OF TWO OR THREE PER CENT THIS YEAR.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID, HOWEVER, THAT BEARING IN MIND THE MARKED FALLS IN EXPORTS AND IMPORTS RECORDED IN THE FIRST HALF OF THIS YEAR, HIS ORIGINAL FORCAST OF ZERO GROWTH SHOULD STILL STAND.

ON THE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC FINANCES, MR. HADDON-CAVE STRESSED THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO ENSURE THAT PUBLIC EXPENDITURE GREW AT MUCH THE SAME RATE AS THE ECONOMY AS A WHOLE.

+IF THE PUBLIC EXPENDITURE WERE TO GROW MORE RAPIDLY IN RELATION TO THE GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT FOR ANY LENGTH OF TIME, THEN THE SIZE OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR WOULD BECOME SUCH AS TO RESULT IN A DIVERSION OF RESOURCES AWAY FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND SERIOUSLY IMPAIR THE LONGER TERM GROWTH PROSPECTS OF THE ECONOMY,+ HE SAID.

IN THE TEN YEARS TO 1972-73, THE RATIO OF TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE TO GDP FLUCTUATED AROUND 15 PERCENT. IN 1973-74 IT ROSE TO 16 PER CENT, IN 1974-75 IT WENT UP TO 19-1/2 PERCENT AND THIS YEAR THE RATIO WILL PROBABLY BE OVER 20 PER CENT.

MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID IT WAS QUITE CLEAR THAT THE INCREASE IN THE RATIO OF PUBLIC EXPENDITURE TO GDP COULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE UNCHECKED, +BECAUSE OF THE CONSEQUENCES THAT WOULD BEFALL THE ECONOMY IN GENERAL.+

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ADVISORY BODY ON JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS PROPOSED
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A JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION IS TO BE SET UP UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE TO ADVISE THE GOVERNOR ON APPOINTMENTS TO JUDICIAL OFFICES.

THIS IS PROVIDED IN THE JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION BILL WHICH IS PUBLISHED IN TODAY'S GAZETTE FOR GENERAL INFORMATION.

THE ROLE OF THE PROPOSED COMMISSION WILL NOT BE AN EXECUTIVE ONE. IT WILL FUNCTION IN A PURELY ADVISORY CAPACITY REGARDING THE FILLING OF ALL VACANCIES IN JUDICIAL OFFICES.

JUDICIAL OFFICES ARE SPECIFIED AS JUDGES OF THE SUPREME COURT, DISTRICT JUDGES, MAGISTRATES, THE PRESIDENT OF THE LANDS TRIBUNAL, THE PRESIDING OFFICERS OF THE LABOUR TRIBUNAL, THE REGISTRAR AND ASSISTANT REGISTRARS OF THE SUPREME COURT, AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE TENANCY TRIBUNAL.

UNDER THE BILL, THE COMMISSION WILL CONSIST OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE, WHO WILL BE ITS CHAIRMAN, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PUBLIC SERVICES COMMISSION, AND NOT MORE THAN THREE OTHER MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR.

ONE CLAUSE IN THE BILL MAKES IT CLEAR THAT THE JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION LEGISLATION DOES NOT DEROGATE IN ANY WAY FROM THE LETTERS PATENT AND THE ROYAL INSTRUCTIONS UNDER WHICH THE POWER OF APPOINTING JUDGES AND OTHER PUBLIC OFFICERS IS VESTED IN THE GOVERNOR.

COMMENTING ON THE BILL, A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN NOTED THAT THE PROPOSED COMMISSION WOULD SERVE TO EMPHASISE THE EXISTING INDEPENDENCE OF THE JUDICIARY.

+IT WILL BE DEMONSTRATED PUBLICLY THAT THE GOVERNOR IS TO RECEIVE INDEPENDENT, IMPARTIAL AND INFORMED ADVICE ON THE FILLING OF JUDICIAL POSTS,+ HE SAID.

AT PRESENT, APPOINTMENTS TO JUDICIAL OFFICES ARE MADE BY THE GOVERNOR ON THE ADVICE OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE.

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POPULATION ESTIMATED AT 4.36 MILLION

THE ESTIMATED POPULATION AT THE END OF JUNE 1975 WAS 4,366,600, THE COMMISSIONER FOR CENSUS AND STATISTICS ANNOUNCED TODAY. THE ESTIMATE DOES NOT INCLUDE THE 3,039 VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IN CAMPS HERE AT THAT TIME.

THERE WAS AN INCREASE OF 37,700 OVER A REVISED END-YEAR 1974 ESTIMATE. THE BALANCE OF BIRTHS OVER DEATHS FOR THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 1975 WAS 26,390. THE REMAINDER OF THE INCREASE REPRESENTS THE BALANCE OF MOVEMENTS INTO AND OUT OF HONG KONG, GIVING A NET INFLOW OF 11,304 PERSONS OVER THE SAME PERIOD.

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF BIRTHS FOR THIS FIRST HALF-YEAR WAS 37,211 WHICH WAS 533 LESS THAN IN THE FIRST HALF-YEAR OF 1974.

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF DEATHS FOR THE SAME PERIOD WAS 10,821 COMPARED TO 11,937 IN THE PREVIOUS FIRST HALF-YEAR.

THE FIGURES OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS ARE BASED UPON EVENTS OCCURRING RATHER THAN UPON REGISTRATIONS MADE AND THEREFORE DIFFER SLIGHTLY FROM THOSE RELEASED BY THE REGISTRAR GENERAL.

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SERVICE RESERVOIR FOR SHA TIN

WORK WILL SOON START ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF A FRESH WATER SERVICE RESERVOIR AT TUNG LO WAN, SHA TIN, TO COPE WITH THE FUTURE WATER DEMANDS OF SHA TIN NEW TOWN.

THE CONSTRUCTION WORK, BEING THE SECOND PHASE OF THE SHA TIN WATER SUPPLY STAGE 1 PROJECT, COMPRISES THE BUILDING OF A FRESH WATER SERVICE RESERVOIR, AND THE LAYING OF A 762 MM DIAMETER INLET MAIN AND A 813 MM DIAMETER OUTLET MAIN.

THE SERVICE RESERVOIR WILL HAVE A TOTAL STORAGE CAPACITY OF EIGHT MILLION GALLONS. WHEN COMPLETED, IT WILL SUPPLY WATER TO TO NORTH SHA TIN AREA, MAINLY WO CHE ESTATE.

TENDERS FOR THE PROJECT ARE INVITED IN TODAY'S GAZETTE. THE CONSTRUCTION WORK IS EXPECTED TO START NEXT MONTH AND WILL TAKE 18 MONTHS TO COMPLETE.

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LOTTERIES BOARD MEMBERSHIP ANNOUNCED

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THE COMPOSITION OF THE NEW SEVEN-MEMBER HONG KONG LOTTERIES BOARD WHICH WILL ORGANISE AND CONDUCT REGULAR LOTTERIES WAS ANNOUNCED TODAY.

THE POSITION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD WILL BE HELD BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE STEWARDS OF THE ROYAL HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB. THE THREE MEMBERS OF THE CLUB'S CASH SWEEP AND TOTALISATOR SUB-COMMITTEE ARE ALSO MEMBERS OF THE BOARD TOGETHER WITH THE ACCOUNTANT GENERAL, THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE AND MR. CHAU KAI-YIN, WHO IS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE EXISTING GOVERNMENT LOTTERIES MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE.

THE APPOINTMENTS, WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE BY THE GOVERNOR, ARE FOR A PERIOD OF TWO YEARS FROM AUGUST 1.

LAST WEEK, THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL APPROVED A BILL SETTING UP THE HONG KONG LOTTERIES BOARD. IT IS INTENDED THAT THE JOCKEY CLUB'S EXISTING FACILITIES WILL BE USED FOR CONDUCTING THE LOTTERIES.

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\$60M DEFICIT RECORDED IN MAY

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THE GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTS FOR THE MONTH OF MAY SHOW A DEFICIT OF \$60 MILLION COMPARED WITH A DEFICIT OF \$151 MILLION IN MAY LAST YEAR.

THIS HAS RESULTED IN AN ACCUMULATED DEFICIT OF \$78 MILLION FOR THE FIRST TWO MONTHS OF THIS FINANCIAL YEAR, COMPARED WITH A DEFICIT OF \$183 MILLION FOR THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR.

TOTAL REVENUE FOR THE MONTH AT \$406 MILLION WAS \$71 MILLION MORE THAN IN MAY 1974 DUE MAINLY TO INCREASED RECEIPTS FROM RATES, INTERNAL REVENUE AND LAND SALES.

TOTAL EXPENDITURE AT \$466 MILLION WAS \$20 MILLION LESS THAN THE SAME MONTH LAST YEAR.

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FEEES FOR CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCY ADJUSTED
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FEEES PAYABLE TO THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT UNDER THE BOILERS AND PRESSURE RECEIVERS REGULATIONS ARE TO BE ADJUSTED WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT.

THE BOILERS AND PRESSURE RECEIVERS (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 1975 GIVING DETAILS OF THE NEW FEEES, ARE PUBLISHED IN TODAY'S GOVERNMENT GAZETTE.

THEY STIPULATE THAT THE FEE FOR THE ISSUE OF A CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCY TO A PERSON ALREADY HOLDING A SUITABLE QUALIFICATION UNDER THE REGULATIONS WILL BE INCREASED FROM \$10 TO \$70.

THE FEE PAYABLE BY A PERSON TAKING AN EXAMINATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE ISSUE OR ENDORSEMENT OF A CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCY WILL BE RAISED FROM \$25 TO \$80.

THIS IS THE FIRST ADJUSTMENT TO THE FEEES SINCE 1967.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WHO HAVE ANY QUERIES ABOUT THE NEW FEEES SHOULD CONTACT THE PRESSURE EQUIPMENT UNIT OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT BY RINGING 3-688752.

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REFRESHER COURSE FOR BIOLOGY TEACHERS
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A SIX-DAY REFRESHER COURSE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE NEW 1977 MATRICULATION BIOLOGY SYLLABUS WILL BEGIN AT THE SCIENCE CENTRE OF THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG ON MONDAY (AUGUST 11).

40 BIOLOGY TEACHERS WILL TAKE PART IN THE COURSE WHICH IS ORGANISED JOINTLY BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND THE DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY OF THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY.

CONTENTS OF THE COURSE INCLUDE FUNGI, GENETICS, ECOLOGY, AND ANIMAL REPRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT.

THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION (CHIEF INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS), MR. ARTHUR BROWN, WILL ADDRESS THE PARTICIPANTS AT THE OPENING CEREMONY.

PROFESSOR L.B. THROWER, HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY OF THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY AND HIS STAFF WILL CONDUCT THE COURSE.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO HAVE THE OPENING CEREMONY ON MONDAY COVERED. IT WILL BEGIN AT 9.30 A.M. IN LECTURE ROOM 5 OF THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY'S SCIENCE CENTRE.

COPIES OF A PROGRAMME OF THE COURSE ARE DISTRIBUTED SEPARATELY IN THE GIS PRESS BOXES.

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PLB ASSOCIATIONS URGED TO PROMOTE ROAD SAFETY

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THE ACTING ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT, MR. PETER MILLER, TODAY URGED PUBLIC LIGHT BUS ASSOCIATIONS TO EDUCATE THEIR DRIVERS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF OBSERVING ROAD RULES SO AS TO HELP CUT DOWN ACCIDENT RATES.

MR. MILLER MADE THE APPEAL AT A REGIONAL MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF KOWLOON-BASED PLB OPERATORS IN WHICH, SITTING AS CHAIRMAN, HE REFUTED A CLAIM THAT THERE WERE NOT ENOUGH LICENSED PLB DRIVERS AND THAT THIS WAS ONE REASON FOR THE RELATIVELY HIGHER PLB ACCIDENT RATE.

+THERE IS NO QUESTION OF PLB DRIVER SHORTAGE. AT THE END OF LAST MONTH, THERE WERE ALMOST 50,000 PEOPLE LICENSED TO DRIVE PLBS WHILE REGISTERED PLBS TOTALLED BARELY OVER 4,300.

+IN ANY CASE, I AM YET TO BE CONVINCED THAT THE NUMBER OF LICENSED PLB DRIVERS HAS ANYTHING TO DO WITH ROAD SAFETY AND GOOD ROAD BEHAVIOUR,+ HE SAID.

AT THE MEETING, MR. MILLER AGAIN CITED THE APRIL-JUNE STATISTICS RECENTLY RELEASED BY TRAFFIC POLICE INDICATING THAT AN AVERAGE OF ONE OUT OF EVERY 12 PLBS HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN AN ACCIDENT.

THE CAUSES FOR THESE ACCIDENTS VARY, HE SAID, BUT PLB DRIVERS' BAD ROAD DISCIPLINES DO HAVE A PART TO PLAY - DRIVING TOO FAST WITH LITTLE REGARD TO OTHER MOTORISTS, ABRUPT CHANGING OF LANES OR SUDDEN STOPPING TO PICK UP OR SET DOWN PASSENGERS.

HOWEVER, HE SAID HE WOULD NOT LIKE TO BLAME ALL PLB DRIVERS AS PERHAPS ONLY A PORTION OF THEM COULD HAVE BEHAVED BADLY ON THE ROADS THUS PUTTING THE WHOLE TRADE INTO DISREPUTE.

MR. MILLER SAID THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT WAS STILL IN THE PROCESS OF CLEARING THE EXISTING BACKLOG OF PLB DRIVING TEST APPOINTMENTS WHICH WAS EXPECTED TO BE FINISHED SHORTLY.

AFTER THAT, HE SAID, THE DEPARTMENT MIGHT RECONSIDER INVITING FRESH APPLICATIONS FOR PLB DRIVING TESTS.

HOWEVER, HE POINTED OUT THAT IF IN CASE THE DEPARTMENT DECIDED TO DO SO, FRESH APPLICATIONS WOULD ONLY BE RECEIVED THROUGH POST AND NOT IN PERSON AT THE LICENSING OFFICES.

MR. MILLER ALSO NOTED THAT THE WINDSCREEN OF MANY PLBS WAS USUALLY CLUTTERED WITH DESTINATION INDICATORS AND FARE CARDS WHICH OBSTRUCTED THE VIEW OF THE DRIVERS AND WHICH MIGHT HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO A GREATER POSSIBILITY OF TRAFFIC ACCIDENT OCCURANCE.

/HE SAID

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HE SAID THAT LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS WERE BEING PREPARED WHICH, IF ENACTED, WOULD REQUIRE PLB OPERATORS TO DISPLAY THEIR DESTINATION BOARD AND FARE CARD PROPERLY SO AS TO MINIMISE THE CHANCE OF AN ACCIDENT.

AT THE MEETING, THE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS AND PLB REPRESENTATIVES ALSO DISCUSSED BRIEFLY A LIST OF SEVEN PROPOSED PLB FEEDER ROUTES FOR KOWLOON.

MR. MILLER INVITED THEM TO STUDY THE LIST MORE CLOSELY FOLLOWING THE MEETING AND TO SUBMIT WRITTEN APPLICATIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT ON ANY ROUTES THEY MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN, OR TO SUGGEST NEW IDEAS FOR CONSIDERATION.

THE PROPOSED FEEDER ROUTES INCLUDE SERVICES BETWEEN YAU YAT CHUEN AND HUNG HOM FERRY PIER, CHUK YUEN ESTATE AND CHOI HUNG, SHATIN PASS ESTATE AND KOWLOON CITY FERRY PIER, AND BEACON HILL ROAD AND HUNG HOM FERRY PIER.

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