

# The Bulletin

Magazine of The Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce

香港總商會工商月刊



25 YEARS ON  
二十五年回顧

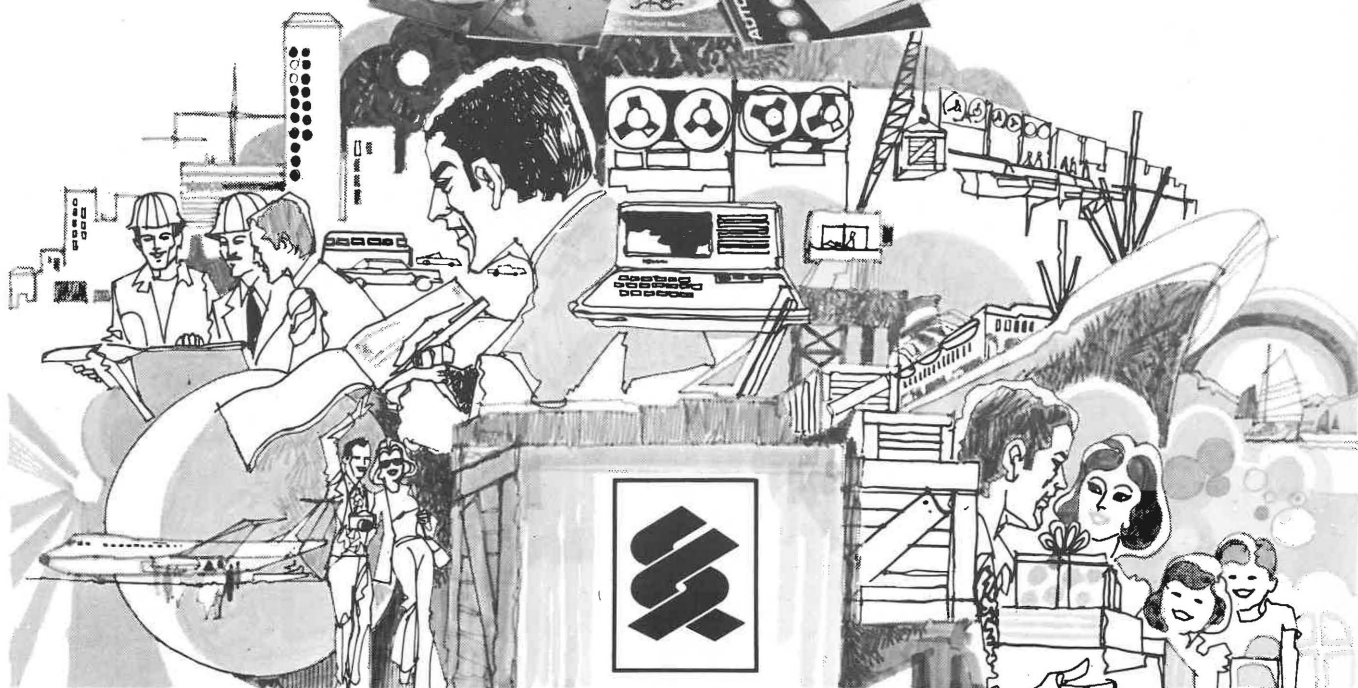
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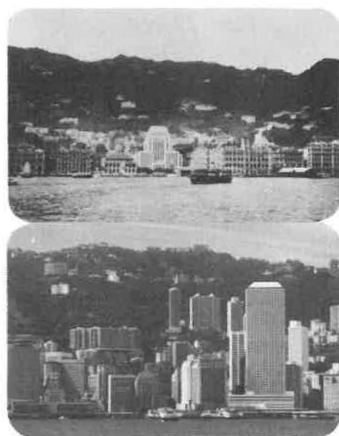
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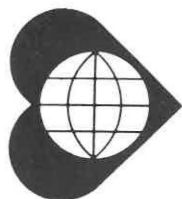
### Cover Photos:

Hong Kong Waterfront in the early 50's & in 1977  
Photos in this issue courtesy of GIS & HK Museum  
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### 封面圖片：

五十年代初與一九七七年的中環對比  
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## Director's Viewpoint

### 25 Years On

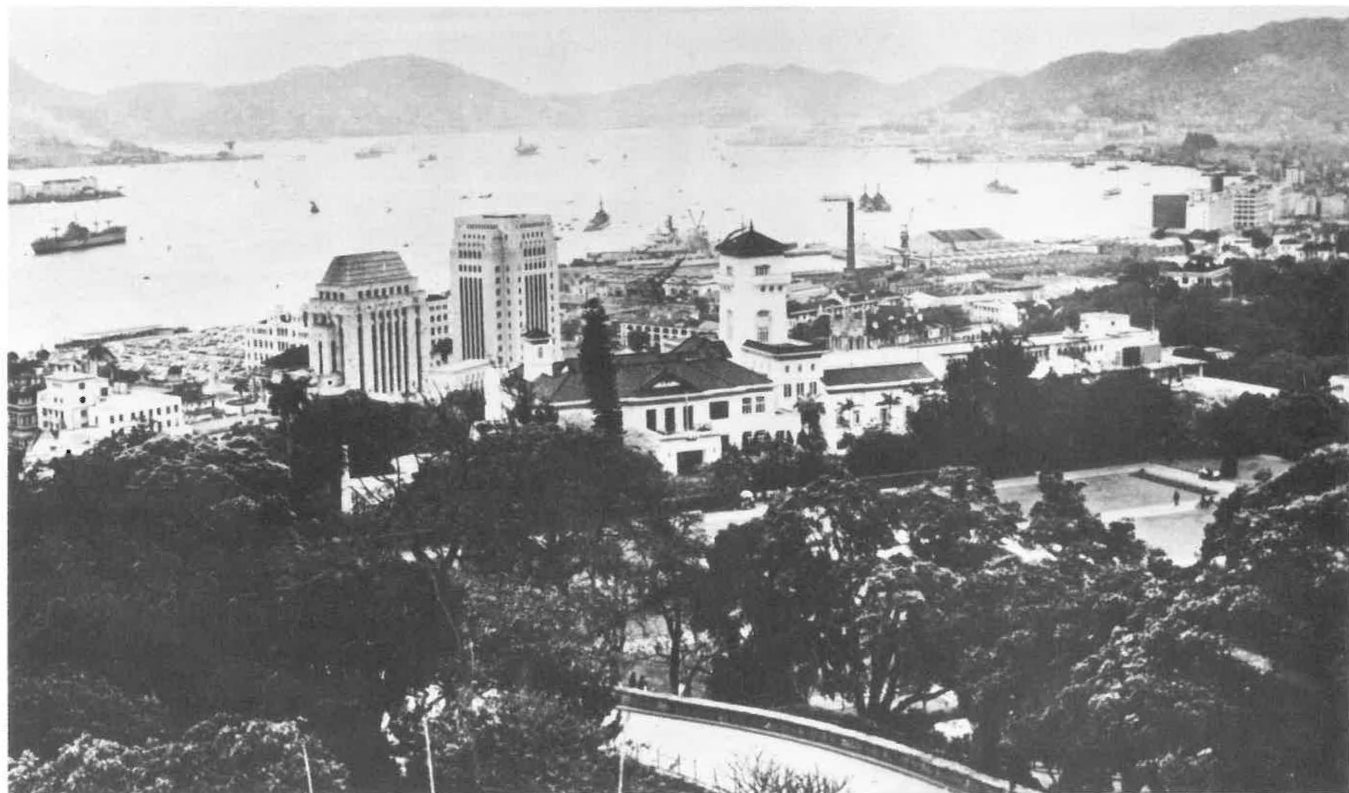
We have devoted most of this month's *Bulletin* to a look at the progress made by Hong Kong during the 25 years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth. By any standard, I think the facts and figures used produce a picture of tremendous vitality, hard work and material growth in virtually every field of endeavour.

The Hong Kong story is very well known here but not perhaps as well known as it should be in some other parts of the world. The economic philosophy which has governed the Government's attitude towards development and growth is also well understood in Hong Kong, albeit it may be anathema in many other places in the world. It is a fairly simple philosophy and the economic and social policies which flow from it can be translated into a doctrine of self-help and reliance on our own efforts unhindered by bureaucratic red tape and controls. It is also a doctrine which does not encourage social spending beyond our economic capacity to provide.

The Government has, for example, steadfastly refused to introduce the concept of protection in Hong Kong. It has maintained a policy of helpful assistance and encouragement to trade and industry and in doing so, has been prepared to remove particular disincentives and help in the creation of an institutional system which is very active in supporting development. This benevolent interest has been essential. A glance at the record is sufficient proof of this: The Federation of HK Industries, Export Credit Insurance Corporation, HK Productivity Council and Centre, HK Trade Development Council, HK Packaging Council, HK Design Council and HK Shippers' Council; all these organisations, which do sterling work on behalf of HK, either depend totally or partly on Government for the necessary funds to keep going. Some of them were in fact set up as a result of Government initiative rather than as a private sector venture. There are many more similar organisations throughout the economy which have good reason to be grateful for Government interest and support and, of course, it is the society that has benefitted in the widest sense.

But let me get back to Hong Kong's staggering growth in the face of incredible difficulties (superlatives are necessary to describe our situation). I can remember well the situation here in 1952 with our hillsides literally engulfed in a sea of wooden shanties and every sheltered place with its own ration of pitiful tar-paper homes. The problems of work, education and health were almost insuperable at that time. None of us involved then could have imagined the position today. Many of the critics who complain of the rate of progress and allege Government indifference must have short memories or little knowledge of the situation Hong Kong faced in the early 1950's. The progress we have witnessed and in which we have all participated could only have been possible with a dedicated and informed Government working in cooperation with a great many specialised agencies for the benefit of the people. Housing, education, medical services, transport, roads, water and utility distribution have all experienced remarkable growth and development. But, as Sir Alexander Grantham said during his recent television interview screened in Hong Kong, it was the people themselves who wrought the miracle. The pressure of need and the tremendous resilience and will to work of Chinese people, no matter what the circumstances prevailing, has been the source and the inspiration for HK's success.

Finally, my personal tribute to one of the finest and most dedicated Government officials it has been my good fortune to know — Sir Ronald Holmes, who retires shortly. We owe him much. We need more like him. Happy retirement, Ronnie.



# 1952

## AN END AND A BEGINNING

Prominent among the archaisms that confront the reader as soon as he opens the official HK report for 1952 is the front paper map recording the location of, among other contemporaneous landmarks, the 'Kai Tak aerodrome'.

The very phrase 'aerodrome' pre-dates not only the jet-age, but suggests, almost, an era of bi-planes and that quirk of aeronautical evolution, the autogiro. The fact that the now familiar man-made peninsula on which the modern runway stands is also missing seems perfectly apt.

In 1976, almost \$19,000 million of air freight passed through HK International Airport. If any freight arrived at or left the 1952 aerodrome its volume has gone unrecorded. The contrast graphically sums up the economic development of HK during the twenty five years of the reign of Elizabeth II.

Indeed, the early fifties seem in some ways economically more remote than the pre-war years. In 1952, HK's largest overseas customer was not China, but Indonesia. The import of certain Japanese manufactured products was actually under restriction – a reflection in part of HK's membership of the Sterling area. Exports to the US, which had increased during the immediate post war period, actually fell. Thailand and Pakistan were more important to domestic exporters

than were Canada or Australia. The HK dollar was worth one shilling and threepence Sterling; or one shilling and sevenpence Australian; or seventeen US cents – provided the then prevailing Exchange Control would allow of their conversion.

Yet hints of more recent themes emerge – the implementation of ILO conventions was under discussion; a preliminary study into the construction of a cross-harbour tunnel was shortly to take place; HK's major domestic exports were textiles and clothing; and China was busy tackling the problem of corruption among trade officials. This had the effect of depressing HK's trade – a fact that the ICAC would today challenge.

The early fifties mark a watershed in the development of modern HK. In themselves, they were a period of stagnation, contrasting sadly with the rapid recovery of the immediate post-war years, and having little in common with the industry-fed boom of the late 'fifties and the 'sixties. But below the surface of a temporarily depressed entrepot the seeds of growth were ready to emerge.

It is difficult to compare 1952 and 1977, since many of the indices at hand today did not exist then, or were not presented in comparable form. There is for example no estimate of Gross Domestic Product, while full figures for domestic exports were produced for the first time only in

1960. But it is clear that the dominant economic factor in 1952 was the Korean war and the consequent embargo on Chinese goods.

HK had resumed its position as an entrepot for southern China relatively rapidly in the wake of the Pacific War. Even the Revolution in China had been felt, not so much in terms of trade, but more in the social problems created by the influx of refugees. This flow grew after 1949 and was to continue with greater or lesser intensity during the early fifties, and indeed beyond. But business, although of course affected by events in China, was nonetheless relatively good. Then in July 1950, came the outbreak of the Korean war. In many ways, it was this, rather than the Communist Revolution, that sparked off the development of present day HK.

The effects of the Korean war and consequent U.N. restrictions on Chinese goods, which necessitated stringent export and import controls, became apparent during the second half of 1951. Trade remained dull throughout 1952, particularly in the first half of the year, and declined even further in 1953. Indeed, it was not until 1962 that HK began clearly to climb out of this period of apparent stagnation onto what was to become a virtually uninterrupted growth path. But by then fundamental changes had taken place within the economy.

As with all developments in HK, the starting point was people. By 1952, many from the early waves of refugees had passed through HK and been absorbed elsewhere in the world. But as the Report for 1952 remarks, it was apparent that refugees arriving that year had, in the main, come to stay. And not only would they remain here, they would marry and bring up children here.

#### The Workforce

People were both the problem and the answer to the problem. They arrived at a time when HK's survival as an entrepot was seriously threatened, and they also provided the basic ingredient of HK's future development — an industrial work force.

The foundations of HK's textiles industry had already been laid, and in 1952 the leading domestic exports were cotton yarn and thread, cotton singlets and shirts. It would however be wrong to accept the simplified impression sometimes given, that textile yarn, shirts and the like were HK's only industries in the early fifties. At least two other potentially important industries were active. In '52, the fourth largest domestic export was enamel ware, and the fifth largest was electric torches.

Real growth in electronics did not come until the 'sixties, but the electric torch industry of the early 'fifties probably lit the way. The diversification process went from torches into more sophisticated electrical goods, and then when the technical breakthrough made possible the quick development of cheap solid state circuits and transistorisation, HK was already well based to take advantage.

Growth in the metal processing industries may not have been as dramatic as that in electronics, but this industry last year recorded world wide exports of \$844 million, and is still a major local industry. Even the plastics industry was present in embryo, and notched up overseas sales in 1952 of £320,980 (export sales in those days were often quantified in *sterling*).

The list of HK's more important domestic exports for 1952 is given in Table 1. If we make allowances for the considerable trading up that has taken place from, for example, singlets to fashion dresses, or from torches to transistor

radios, the foundations of HK's industrial revolution can be clearly seen. What however is vastly different is the distribution of export markets. This is shown in Diagram 1, and one outstanding fact emerges — that trade with the developed countries was small.

True, HK had a delegation attending the British Industries Fair in London for the fifth successive year, but if HK figured at all in the thoughts of the British trade unionist, it was as a destination for the products of Birmingham, Manchester and Clydeside — an arrangement that understandably brought forth nothing in the way of protest in the House of Commons.

Exports to the USA in 1952 decreased below the level of 1951, a reflection of the restraint on Chinese manufactured goods. Even so, the US was, a more important market than UK. Germany, which was just beginning to show signs of its remarkable post-war recovery, hardly counted, even though

TABLE 1: HK's DOMESTIC EXPORTS IN 1952

	£ Sterling M.
Cotton Yarn & Thread	8.5
Cotton Singlets	5.9
Shirts	3.0
Enamel Ware	2.7
Electric Torches	2.5
Unbleached Piecegoods	1.6
Preserved Fruits, Jams, Ginger	1.1
Torch Batteries & Bulbs	1.1
Canvas Shoes	0.7
Paints, Varnish	0.6
Metal Pressure Lamps	0.4
Rubber Footwear	0.4
Aluminium Ware	0.3
Vacuum Flasks	0.3
Iron & Steel Bars	0.3
Plastic Ware	0.3

it was HK's second largest market in pre-EEC Europe. The Netherlands, then as now, was our third largest European market.

The export market diagram is important for what it says by omission. And this is, clearly and unequivocally, that HK's development since the early 'fifties has depended on growth in the developed markets.

Ironically, the very factor that was depressing HK's traditional trade — the Korean war — was a not inconsiderable factor in stimulating this growth, certainly in respect of the United States, if less so in respect of Europe. The macro-economic problem confronting the world economy at the end of World War Two was primarily that of manufacturing productivity — how to get output to a level where it could meet a growing world wide demand for goods. Considerable technological advances had been made during World War Two — in, for example, aeronautical engineering, plastics, electronics and pharmaceuticals, to take only a few more obvious examples. Industry world-wide, and particularly in the USA, had begun to adjust from meeting the demands of a war-time economy to that of a more normal economy, when the Korean War once again diverted resources and attention from the consumer market.

*Cont'd.*



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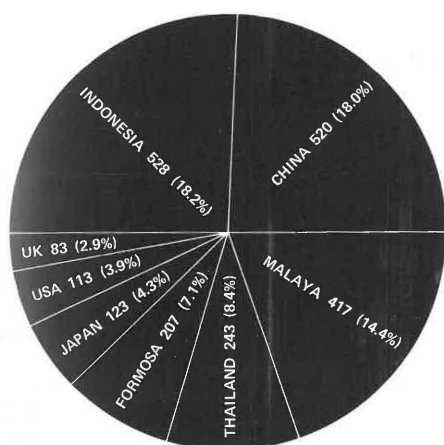
When resources were once again switched from the needs imposed by the Korean War, an increased flow of goods into the world's department stores and supermarkets set into motion the growth of the consumer society of the 'sixties, when the problem became less that of how to produce the goods, but more that of how to sell them. As the production problem eased, wage levels rose (there is little point in producing goods if no-one has the cash to buy them!), and as part of this trend, HK too became a source of consumer products to meet the ever increasing demands of western consumers.

But all this was in the future for the Hong Kong of 1952. Our largest supplier was then China, with Japan and UK in places two and three. Once again this is a direct reflection of the relatively undeveloped state of the HK economy. Although the entrepot trade was declining, it was still important, since only an estimated 17 per cent of exports in 1952 were of domestic manufacture. And the embargo on Chinese goods had most certainly not reduced demand for the products of that country to nil, an impression sometimes

of the favourable trade balance HK then ran with 'Formosa'. (See Table 2) If HK has come a long way, Taiwan has come equally far.

It is the function of this article to review history, rather than to predict it, but it nonetheless seems worth devoting a moment's thought to whether the market pattern for 1952 might be a forerunner of not-too-distant future market patterns, once development in the Asian sector of the Pacific Basin gets fully underway. Could oil-rich Indonesia some day once again become our major market?

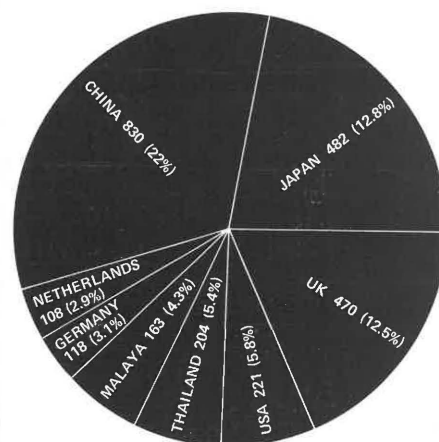
Looking inward to the domestic development of our economy, we find some of the concerns of 1952 sound not so different from those of today. For instance, a set of guidelines based on ILO conventions had been produced to assist the Commissioner of Labour in his efforts to improve factory standards. But the big problem facing the Commissioner was that he had very little estimate of the manufacturing capacity of HK industry. During 1952, the total of registered factories stood at 1,504 with a further 374 units under consideration. The manufacturing labour force in these



Hong Kong's Markets in 1952 (Exports & Re-exports, HK\$Million)  
(Diagram 1)



*Electric torches – lighting the way.*



Hong Kong's Suppliers in 1952 (HK\$Million)  
(Diagram 2)

given. Indeed, the embargo affected Western rather than Asian countries, and as Diagram 2 shows HK's trading strength lay in Asia. Although domestic industry was beginning to expand, the demand for industrial materials, that was to catapult Japan to the position of HK's number one supplier, was in the early 'fifties still small.

On the positive side, 1952 saw the beginnings of a new growth in trade with Britain and also the USA – a trade not in re-exports, but in domestic products. Whilst overall export trade may have been declining, this new trend was a reasonably steady upward one.

It was helped in the UK by Commonwealth Preference, so that Britain became a very real substitute for the lack of a significant domestic market in HK. By the end of the 'fifties this growth had reached such proportions that the British trade unionist had ceased to look upon HK as a convenient market for British motor cars and machinery and was beginning to see it as threat to his livelihood – even though he was quick to take advantage of the keen prices of HK-made shirts. Table 2, tracing trade in a few key markets, both growing and declining, shows the pattern more clearly than words.

Before leaving external trade in the early 'fifties, the crystal ball gazers may care to contemplate the implications

units was 100,000 but a further 150,000 workers were estimated to be employed in concern not requiring registration, often in domestic premises.

The increasing importance of manufacturing was apparent however since one of the few indices that did not drop in 1952 was the number of factories registered for the first time. Despite this, the employment pattern was not too happy, and overall manufacturing output was estimated to have fallen in 1952. Then, as now, no unemployment ratio existed but official reports estimated that 'many factories were closed down for as long as six months or worked for only a few weeks at a time'.

It is not therefore surprising that little increase in industrial wages was registered. Average rates in some industries were:— skilled workmen \$6.00–8.00 per day, semi-skilled \$5.00–6.50 and unskilled \$3.50–5.00. The working week in the better type of company was 48 hours but a 60 hour week was commonplace.

Inflation however remained negligible, although the Government and many European-owned businesses paid their employees a 'high cost of living allowance'. This had been introduced some years earlier and although it was paid by employers during 1952, the scale on which it was based

# Jardine, Matheson & Co., Ltd

## Part of Asia's History

In July 1832, during the Ching Dynasty, a small public notice in the Canton Register announced the formation of Jardine, Matheson & Co.

In England, William IV was on the Throne; in the United States, Andrew Jackson was in his first term as President; and in China these were the pre-Treaty days, ten years before the founding of Hong Kong.

But since that time, in almost a century and a half of trading, the Company name has remained unchanged, except for the addition of "Limited" in 1906 when the old firm became a private limited company.

Two years after Jardine, Matheson & Company had put up their sign in Canton, Parliament abolished the East India Company's monopoly of the China Trade. That same year Jardines made the first private shipment of tea to the United Kingdom and the pattern had been established, a pattern which was to see Jardines emerge as the greatest of all the Far East traders.

The scope of the Company's activities, and the areas in which it operates have progressed far beyond those early trading days. But Jardines have never lost the drive and initiative of their founders. Indeed, the history of Jardines is a history of firsts - from the first steamship to ply the Pearl River to the first Eurodollar

debenture issue by a Hong Kong company.

From the top of the 52-storey Connaught Centre, Jardines' Head Office now looks out over a Hong Kong which is almost unrecognizable from the "barren rock" where the original partners bought the first "lot" of land sold in 1841. That same year, Jardines moved their headquarters from Canton to Hong Kong, playing a major role in the founding of Hong Kong and, subsequently, in the City's emergence as one of the great trading centres of the world.

In 1848, Jardines bought the first land lot offered for sale to foreigners in Shanghai, and soon opened an office there. Branches in Foochow, Tientsin, and other major trading centres followed. In 1859, the first lot of land sold to foreigners in Yokohama, Japan, was purchased by Jardines and an office was established - followed by branches in Kobe and Nagasaki.

In the century which followed, much of the Group's enterprise centred on China, and later Hong Kong. Jardines' listing on the Hong

Kong Stock Exchange in 1961 marked the beginning of public records of the Group's financial position - records which show steady and continuous growth.

In 1973, the Group doubled its net worth with two major acquisitions - Theo. H. Davies & Co., Ltd, an old established Hawaiian and Philippine trading company, and Reunion Properties

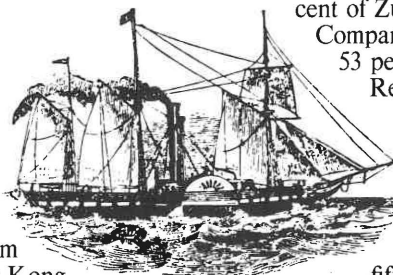
Co. Ltd in the United Kingdom.

1975 was another year of continued growth with the acquisition of Gammon (Hong Kong) Ltd; the purchase of 75 per cent of Zung Fu Company Ltd and 53 per cent of Rennie's Consolidated Holdings Ltd.

1975 also marked Jardines' fifteenth

year as a listed public company. The period since 1961 had seen the Group's net assets grow 18 times from \$108 million to \$1,993 million, net profit increase 2,900 per cent and adjusted earnings per stock unit multiply 22 times.

In 1976 Jardines acquired 25 per cent of the issued capital of Transporting and Trading Company Inc., a Liberian company with widespread interests, mainly in Saudi Arabia. Today Jardines are a major international organisation, with



35,000 stockholders and 6,000 loan stockholders, employing some 46,000 people in more than 20 countries, and the Group's divisions, subsidiaries and associates provide almost every type of commercial service throughout Asia, the Pacific and Southern Africa.



## JARDINES

Jardine, Matheson & Co., Ltd, Connaught Centre, Hong Kong



TABLE 2: EXPORT PROGRESS 1952 – 1977

	1952 <sup>1</sup> HK\$M	1960 <sup>2</sup> HK\$M	1970 <sup>2</sup> HK\$M	1976 <sup>2</sup> HK\$M	1: Exports & Re-exports 2: Domestic Exports Only
USA	113	745	5,190	11,236	
GERMANY	33	107	984	3,995	
UK	83	585	1,481	3,286	
TAIWAN	207	14	147	320	
MALAYA / SINGAPORE	417	243	399	1,081	
CHINA	520	Negligible	Negligible	24	

showed little fluctuation.

Elsewhere in the economy, fishing was of course important, and rice was still the principle crop produced, although vegetables were becoming increasingly important.

The Financial Secretary had chalked up a surplus for 1951/52 of \$37.7 million, but his estimates for 1952/53 were not so sanguine. He budgetted for a surplus of \$2 million, remarking in passing that under present conditions strict principles of conservatism were necessary, and in the event managed to come up with a surplus of \$72.8 million, a record for recent years! *Plus ça change .....*

Indeed, one of the most familiar sections of the report for 1952 is that concerned with the Government's income estimates and sources of revenue. The standard rate of taxation was already at 12½ per cent, and the Government's revenue sources were then not all that different from those of today. The fact that HK has got by with so small an increase in the standard rate of tax since then, relative to rates elsewhere and values in real terms, is really a remarkable tribute to the financial strategy of the HK Government, and more importantly, its success in terms of assisting HK in its development from entrepot to manufacturing centre.

The social reformers of 1952 may however have felt somewhat annoyed that HK should have contributed from its meagre budget \$16 million towards the upkeep of the defence forces, including \$8 million in the form of a special one-off grant, in addition to a re-current contribution. But at that period, it was perhaps more truly a defence force. In view of the events taking place some several hundred miles to the north, the prospect of military disturbance must have seemed more real.

Since then HK has lived through another war – the Vietnam war. This affected HK far less than the Korean war and, although wars can never be welcome, its effects were at least in part beneficial for HK in terms of the millions of dollars of R&R money that was attracted here. And even though R&R servicemen may not quite be equated with more conventional tourists, in 1952 very few tourists ever landed at Kai Tak aerodrome. And not all that many alighted at the quaysides.

Just as HK had no tourist industry, it had no financial status worth speaking of. The question of diversifying the Reserves out of Sterling was unimaginable, but in those days the Reserves did not represent the accumulated surpluses of several years of industrial growth. Just as HK blossomed as a tourist centre in the wake of its industrial development, so it grew as a financial centre. The dissolution of the Overseas Sterling Area, preceded by several somewhat humiliating – for Britain – guarantees of the exchange value of the HK



*Hong Kong at the British Industries Fair, London, 1952.*

dollar, is not only a chronicle of the fortunes of the British economy, but also reflects the increasing wealth of the HK economy. It took the somewhat unfortunate events of 1973 to bring home to many the fact that HK had become a financial centre even if an ill-disciplined one. But in 1952 the HK Stock Exchange – the only one then existent – did not even merit a mention in the official yearbook.

Nineteen fifty two in itself was not a good year for HK. Indeed, in many ways it was an unfortunate year. Trade fell off. Unemployment and short time working were common. Overall manufacturing output fell and wages did not rise. Above all, political uncertainty dominated Asia.

The real growth of present day HK came between the ending of the Korean war and the beginning of the Vietnam war. This was the period when the economic trends that created modern HK really emerged and grew. Since then little – may be too little? – has happened to change this course, if perhaps one excepts the development of HK as a financial centre.

Nineteen fifty two saw the death of a monarch. It also saw the end of an era in HK. But the passing of a king heralds the start of a new reign. And if one had to choose a birth year for modern Hong Kong, 1952 might be an apt choice. The omens should have been good – not only was it the year of Elizabeth II. It was also a year of the Dragon.

HG

# Ronnie Holmes

## 40 Great Years

*In a remarkable career Sir Ronald Holmes, CMG, CBE, MC, ED, JP, has served in a wide variety of administrative posts in Government, ranging from Social Welfare Officer to Acting Colonial Secretary. Since he retired from active Government service in 1971 he has been Chairman of the Public Services Commission. Sir Ronald first came to HK in 1938. During the war he served in the Defence Force and when the Japanese army invaded HK he escaped to China. He returned on the first plane to arrive here after the war and has been here ever since. Sir Ronald had a hand in many of the events and processes which took place during the key transition period in the early 1950s. In a wide-ranging interview with The Bulletin he related some of the problems facing HK at that time and how they were dealt with.*



**T**he Chinese Revolution dumped Heaven knows how many people in Hong Kong — refugees either from the Communist regime or, more likely, from the confusion which accompanied the changeover. In 1948 the population was estimated to be about 1.8 million and by 1952 was of the order of two and a quarter million.

‘Simultaneously with this immense population problem the traditional entrepot trade, the backbone of Hong Kong’s existence, virtually disappeared with the closing of the China market and the outbreak of the Korean War and subsequent embargo on Chinese goods.

‘These were the days when the industrial giants from Shanghai were beginning to make themselves felt — people like C.C. Lee and the late P.Y. Tang and so forth. They had so much foresight in Shanghai that they were able to get out with a good deal of their resources intact, with their key personnel and very often with their machinery.

‘I don’t know that very much machinery was actually shipped out of Shanghai, although certainly some was, but this was a time when they were re-equipping with new, post-war machinery. Much new machinery was on order or actually at sea and when they saw the red light it was possible to divert it from Shanghai to Hong Kong. At first we didn’t realise what was happening, but by 1952 it was very clear that these chaps meant business. They were businessmen of a very high order of experience and sophistication. They knew at once what was possible and knew exactly how to set about it.

‘However, what they chiefly wanted

was land and the great influx of people made it very much more difficult to make land available. The policy was then — and still is apart from a few vagaries — that if land was available it was sold at public auction. But the problem was, there simply wasn’t the land to sell and this was mainly because most of the available land was by then covered and sterilized by various forms of illegal occupation — the squatter problem. If you look at old photographs taken at the time you can see what the situation was. I guarantee that the government at that time didn’t know to within half a million how many squatters there were. I saw an estimate in one of the annual reports for that period of 300,000 people living in huts and shacks and other illegal structures. Well, subsequently, when they’d resettled a million people, which was quite a long time ago now, the estimate then was that there were still 500,000 squatters!

‘You see, it wasn’t a straightforward situation of people finding their way into the colony, seeing a piece of vacant hillside and building a hut there.

‘For a start, the people living in huts were not necessarily refugees, although of course many of them were. You couldn’t delineate any part of them and say ‘Here is a mountain-side with about 2,000 huts containing refugees from China.’ There would be shops and factories, brothels and boarding houses, and so on. Speculative contractors built structures and rented them out. The result was a great mix up. Areas of Crown Land that could otherwise reasonably easily have been supplied with basic services and sold just could not be made available. If you wanted to widen a road and recover a strip of

land that was covered with shacks you could probably do it. But if you wanted a decent-sized parcel of land there was no means politically whereby you could clear it for development.

‘In 1952 there wasn’t really a re-settlement policy at all. The ‘policy’, so-called, was to build pre-fabs made of concrete blocks and asbestos. The trouble was, if you rehoused squatters in these structures they were taking up roughly 40 times as much space as they had been previously. So you were stuck even before you began! The only places it was possible to build these huts were areas which had been burnt out and then Government would try to get some philanthropist to put up the money to build the cottages. The net result was that only about one in thirty of the people who had been unfortunate enough to be made homeless by a fire could actually be resettled. So the ‘policy’ was really no policy at all, and probably made matters worse.

### The Shek Kip Mei fire

‘The key change came, as you know, at the end of 1953 with the enormous fire at Shek Kip Mei, which must have been one of the worst fires in history from the point of view of numbers made homeless. It started on the evening of Christmas Day and by the next morning an estimated 60,000 people had lost their homes — personally I think the figure was a good deal higher. But fortunately there was an extraordinarily small loss of life.

‘The fire brought home to us that the problem simply couldn’t be solved by any of the means that had been tried up to that time. So the basic decision was taken that the only way we could possibly solve the problem was by Government building accom-

modation. In the time between then and now — that is, less than 25 years — we have reached the stage where nearly half the population is living in public housing. I should think that is a higher proportion than in any country in the Western world.

'The Government set up a Resettlement Department in April 1954 and I was the first Commissioner for Resettlement. As a first step a lot of temporary two-storey structures were erected on part of Shek Kip Mei. A remarkable number of the fire victims were absorbed into the city, taken in by their friends or relatives. But there were still whole sections of Shamshuipo where perhaps 30,000 people were camping on the streets in little huts made of fibre-board or asbestos. It was an incredible sight.

'We straight away designed the first resettlement blocks which were six stories high — we reckoned that that was as much as a person could be expected to climb, although the following year we revised that to seven stories (the idea that lifts might be feasible hadn't occurred to us!) The H-shaped design of these blocks has been criticised more recently, I think unjustly. These buildings were so designed as to be capable of conversion to a much higher standard. The truth was that you could do this only by removing half the people. Some conversions of this kind have been done but it has not so far been feasible on any substantial scale. Instead, the old buildings are being pulled down to make way for much higher blocks.

'I can clearly remember appearing before the Executive Council when our multi-storey resettlement plan was first put to them. After the Members had asked a variety of questions the Governor, Sir Alexander Grantham, said to me 'Well, Holmes, what do you think? Is this the best we can do?' I said that we couldn't think of anything better. Then he asked the Director of Medical & Health Services, who said, 'Sir, I feel bound to oppose it. These are standards of overcrowding which are simply intolerable and we shall be criticised all over the world.' So the Governor asked him 'Well, what *would* you do?' He replied 'I don't know Sir'. And that was the key. There was nothing else we could do in the circumstances.

'After that we really went to town on the Shek Kip Mei site and other New Kowloon sites which we cleared by a process of "decantation". I remember one particular building which

we needed in a hurry to house 5,000 people. We included a bonus clause in the contract and from the time the building contractor started work to the time it was finished and ready for occupation was two months!

'Then we had to decide what we would charge the occupants of the new estate. Quite frankly, what we did initially was to decide what we thought they could afford to pay and rig the figures so that the answer came to about the same amount! What else could we do? You couldn't take a bunch of people who were mostly pretty poor to begin with and who had probably lost all they had in some fire and then say: 'The land we're going to house you on is worth \$400 a square foot and the building costs are so much and we expect to get our money back in five years. So you can move in tomorrow as long as you can pay \$125 a month.' So we produced "notional figures", which is another way of saying we rigged the whole calculation.

#### From NT fields to ladies' pants

Sir Ronald was Director of Commerce & Industry from 1962 to 1966:

'It was a difficult post to take over. I had no first hand knowledge or experience of this work and was posted to it from the job of District Commissioner, New Territories, a very different kettle of fish. Two weeks after walking through fields in remote parts of the N.T. I was in Geneva negotiating a textiles agreement!

'I relied heavily on the experts in the department, for whom I retained great respect and affection, and also upon the businessmen and industrialists in the private sector with whom the Government then, as now, maintained the closest contact in all matters affecting international trade.

'Textile problems dominated the scene and in four years I travelled nearly a quarter of a million miles on duty, a good ideal of it in the course of textile quota negotiations. These were frustrating rather than rewarding, although perhaps in retrospect a basis was established for what can now be seen as solid progress in subsequent years.'

Sir Ronald recalled the story of negotiations in Washington when Hong Kong sought an increase in the quota level for ladies' slacks.

'The leader of the American negotiators said, "Ladies' pants are not, repeat *not*, negotiable". Small voice from somewhere in the small HK delegation: "You wanna bet?"'

Sir Ronald was asked whether throughout this long period of rapid progress and development, there was any particular field in which he thought HK, or the Government of Hong Kong, could have done better.

#### Building roads

'Yes, roads. Not urban or suburban roads, the record is good in this field, but arterial roads into the New Territories, which are the basis for bringing the New Territories in to redress the balance and relieve, so far as it can be relieved, the problems of dense concentration.

'To me, we have always seemed to be struggling here and making heavy weather of what is a relatively simple matter. We break all records with state housing, we develop the world's third largest container port without one dollar of tax-payers' money being spent, we reclaim land before anyone is ready to buy it, and yet if you try to travel to Taipo or Yuen Long you might be in the rush hour in London commuting from some remote and inconvenient suburb.

'I suppose it is being put right now, but at what a cost at today's prices and how much too late. To this day, if you except roads built by the British Army, by the Japanese, and for the purpose of water supply projects, the system is much the same as when I first drove over it in 1938.'

Sir Ronald Holmes has probably had a wider variety of Government experience than anyone else in HK. Colleagues who have worked with him profess to have thoroughly enjoyed the experience. In conclusion we asked Sir Ronald what he believed to be the main ingredients in his remarkable success with colleagues and subordinates. He replied with consummate modesty:

'I have met with a great deal of tolerance from people who often knew far more about the job than I did. In the British civil service tradition one is expected to be a 'generalist', that is, to learn a little about everything. I think it is a good system but it does mean that the experts often have to be capable of carrying their inexperienced colleagues. I have had tremendous support from people who, in some cases, might have been expected to get the top job themselves.'

Sir Ronald & Lady Holmes will be leaving HK next month to settle in Greece, although they intend to visit HK from time to time. We wish them a long and happy retirement. **MP**



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# Looking Back...

**Sir Douglas Clague — Chamber Chairman 1958/59**

'People in Hong Kong in the early '50s were very apprehensive as to their future; in fact the proprietors of a number of companies decided to leave the colony. Overseas too there wasn't much confidence in the future of Hong Kong.'

'The industrial structure in those days was very fragmented apart from the few big mills that had been established. As I remember, the Shanghai industrialists were tolerated but they weren't altogether welcome. There had been a myth that HK was climatically unsuitable for textile manufacturing.'

'I think one of the major achievements of the past 25 years has been the linking of Hong Kong and Kowloon by the Cross Harbour Tunnel. One of the major shortcomings has been the neglect of the New Territories.'

'The most important development of the next 25 years will probably be the Mass Transit Railway.'

**T.Y. Wong — HK Spinners**

'In my opinion the outstanding developments in the economic field since World War II have been, firstly our transformation from an entrepot to an industrial centre; secondly the strengthening of the HK dollar to such an extent as to have enabled it to become independent of sterling and thirdly, our emergence as the financial centre of the region.'

'Any assessment of our economic future must be based on a number of variables. The most crucial of these are firstly, changes in government policy that might tend to discourage, hamper or even jeopardise the continued growth of commerce and industry and secondly, unpredictable political and economic changes the world over that may conceivably emerge in the coming decades.'

'However, I remain optimistic as regards the future, provided that the government exercises the greatest circumspection in the adoption of economically sensitive policies and provided worldwide uncertainties will not evolve to cause a serious setback to HK's vital interests.'

**Wong Tok-Sau — President of CMA**

'The greatest development during the past 25 years has been in manufacturing industry. After the war there were only five or six hundred factories in Hong Kong. Today there are more than 36,000 and the trend is towards greater industrial sophistication.'

'The government's free enterprise policy and the Commonwealth Preference system both contributed substantially to the development of HK's industry and trade in the 1950s. We were able to take advantage of the withdrawal of Japan from South East Asia after the war and for a time SE Asia was our largest market. But the leading factor in our development has undoubtedly been the diligence, intelligence, flexibility and capacity for hard work of the Hong Kong people.'

'As for the future, I worry about Britain's apparent intention of imposing all kinds of legislation upon Hong Kong, as though they are jealous of our achievements. It is this legislation which has helped to bring Britain to its present state of decline.'

'I hope that the government will continue its economic policy of non-interference and will not be forced to adopt legislation imposed from outside. Provided this is the case, I am sure we will see even greater achievements during the coming 25 years.'

**The Hon. Q.W. Lee — Hang Seng Bank**

'One of the most important achievements of the past 25 years has been the improvement in our relations with China. They have never been better than they are today. Relations between Hong Kong banks and the Bank of China are also excellent.'

'At the end of 1954 — the earliest year for which records are available — the overall deposits in HK banks amounted to \$1,060 million. Now this has grown to \$44,030 million. That is a pretty good indication of our growth as a financial centre during the past 25 years.'

## The Chamber Then...

In 1952 the Chamber's offices were at the Hongkong & Shanghai Bank Building. The staff was headed by J.B. Kite and we had 680 members. Total expenditure for the year was \$282,513, including a surplus of \$2,834. The Chairman was the Hon. H.J. Collar, CBE, and the Vice-Chairman, C. Blaker.

Jock Kite, from his retirement home in England, writes:

'In the Chamber office we had just started to pay increased attention to Certification of Origin. Harold Aiers, who later went on to become Secretary to the Employers' Federation, had joined the staff in the Autumn of 1951, and we got a second Assistant Secretary, H.G.

'Fuzzy' Fears, about that time to specialise in certification of origin. Unfortunately, Mr. Fears died after not too long in our service.

'I can remember the tremendous rows we used to have with some of our members concerning certification. The Secretary and his two assistants were all in one office, which was also the Boardroom — and it was deafening!'

### Five-storey footwear

'Hong Kong had participated in the Commonwealth Section of the British Industries Fair and I think that, by now, financing of participation had, after earlier problems, got onto a sound basis. In 1949, one exhibitor, I remember, had rented

four square feet of space and produced a five storey pagoda with his rubber canvas footwear on each level!

'It was now three years since the HK Cotton Spinners Association had organised their own display in London at the St. Ermy's Hotel at the same time as the BIF. The results of their enterprise were already flowing in, and it was to be only three more years that the UK Federation of Master Cotton Spinners were to send their Director, Mr. C.J. Henniker Heaton on an ill fated mission to seek from the Chinese Manufacturers' Association an agreement to limit shipments to the UK.'

# IMPROVING THE

Until 1954 the only permanent housing the government had ever constructed had been for its own civil servants. Out of the Shek Kip Mei conflagration came the realisation that far more positive action was required to rehouse squatters who for the most part — and unlike refugees of pre-war years — had come to stay. Substantial public funds would be required for this purpose and Government policy changes were necessary also.

Between 1954–60 nine resettlement estates were constructed at Shek Kip Mei, Tai Hang Tung, Li Cheng Uk, Hung Hom, Lo Fu Ngam, Wong Tai Sin, Jordan Valley, Kwun Tong and Chai Wan, providing basic accommodation for 270,000 people. The Housing Authority constructed low-cost housing estates at North Point, Kennedy Town, So Uk and elsewhere. Despite the speed at which the programme progressed, however, the provision of housing in the '50s was unable to keep abreast of the population increase.

The early resettlement estates were rudimentary and congested. Understandably they came in for much public criticism — although sometimes from overseas visitors unfamiliar with the enormous social pressure under which they were built.

Quality had to take a back seat to quantity in those years.

Ten years after the public housing programme began, the government had become landlord to more than 700,000 people. And by 1972 there were more than 1.5 million people in public housing.

Then the government announced a 10-year housing programme aimed at providing 'enough permanent homes, situated in a reasonable environment' for everybody who was unsatisfactorily housed. Future development would be concentrated mainly in HK's new towns — Tsuen Wan, Tuen Mun and Shatin — each of which would eventually have a population of around half a million.

## Incredible pace

As Director of Housing, Donald Liao says, 'The pace has been incredible. In the UK it might take 20 or 30 years for the population of a new town to reach 50,000. In HK we have that many people in one estate, which might be completed in about four years.'

As with housing, so too in other fields — education, social



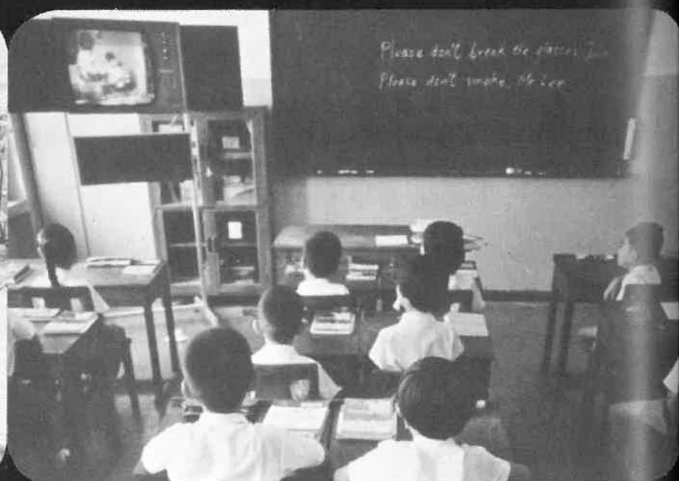
From Shek Kip Mei



To Oi Man



From makeshift rooftop schools



To Educational TV



# QUALITY OF LIFE

welfare, medical & health services, the provision of recreational facilities and so on. The problems faced in the early '50s were a massive population increase accompanied by a severe trade depression. Only basic needs could be met.

In 1952/53 the budget for education was a mere \$26 million. There were less than 1,000 schools, with an enrolment of under 200,000. Two huge building programmes were launched in the '50s, at the peak of which about 45,000 primary school places were added every year. By 1971 the goal of free primary education for all had been achieved.

Today the annual bill for education is more than \$1.3 billion, or 18 per cent of total government expenditure. There are more than 2,800 schools with a total enrolment of 1.3 million pupils. The years to come will see a greater emphasis on secondary and technical education, the expansion of which will be an essential ingredient in HK's ability to attract the technology, skills and know-how from overseas helpful to our development.

In 1952 there were 4,300 hospital beds in HK — less than two beds per 1,000 of the population. Today there are 4.4

beds for every 1,000 people. The infant mortality rate was 77 per 1,000 live births. Today it is 14.3 — lower than in many developed countries.

## Parks, playgrounds

In social welfare, a \$2.6 million budget has become \$363 million. The provision of parks, playgrounds and swimming pools and other recreational facilities is still not satisfactory. The situation has however improved enormously during the last 25 years.

Water supply problems of earlier years are well on the way to solution ... Hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent on roads & communications. The Cross-Harbour tunnel — a dream in the 1950's — is in full operation. The overall improvement to the quality of life in HK has been prodigious.

But as Donald Liao points out, 'The children being born now will expect far more than their parents ever had. As the quality of life in HK improves, aspirations grow. It would be irresponsible not to do as much as we can now and to spend as much as we can possibly afford in order to provide something that is acceptable to the greatest number of people.'



From water rationing



To High Island



From rice fields



To New Towns

# Annual General Meeting 1977

Over 170 individuals representing 138 member firms attended this year's Annual General Meeting at the Furama Hotel on April 4.

Mr. Leslie Gordon of Lowe Bingham & Matthews and Mr. Nigel Rigg of Union Insurance continue into a second term as Chairman and Vice Chairman respectively of the Chamber.

Other Members elected to the General Committee were: Hon. T.K. Ann, CBE; R.E. Belcher; Hon. J.H. Bremridge, OBE; A.G. Hutchinson; Sir Lawrence Kadoorie, CBE, Off. Leg. d'Honneur; J.M. Lawrence; J.L. Marden, CBE, MA; D.K. Newbigging; G.R. Ross, CBE; M.G.R. Sandberg; S.H. Sung; Dennis H.S. Ting; Hon. P.G. Williams, OBE and Hon. James M.H. Wu, OBE.

Proposing the adoption of the Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st December 1976, Mr. Gordon said:

'My predecessor, Peter Foxon, at last year's AGM expressed the view that 1976 would be a year of growth. I think we would all agree that this proved so and that his prediction of substantial recovery from the effects of recession was also justified by events. At least some part of the impetus for the very rapid improvement in the economy was due to the freedom from restraint which our trade and industry enjoys. If ever one wished to have evidence of the effect of low taxation and free enterprise on business growth then it was certainly provided by Hong Kong during 1976. Every sector of society played its part and not the least the Government with its sensible and well proven policies of minimum interference and maximum encouragement towards business and industrial development. Employment by the end of last year was satisfactory and real wage levels were again rising steadily.

'Progress continued in various areas of social development. As His Excellency the Governor intimated at our Annual Dinner for Members of Com-



mittees in January of this year, economic development must provide the wherewithal for social progress. The rapid economic recovery last year has enabled the Government to reconsider its social targets and to accelerate progress towards some of them. I think the entire community will be very pleased that by late next year all children in HK will have secondary school places up to Form III available to them. This will mark a watershed in our educational programme and we must hope that it will not be too long before we can extend this target to include places for all children wishing to attend Forms IV and V. Our future is heavily dependent upon the educational attainments of our young people. It is also good to see the gathering pace of development of the technical educational and training systems in Hong Kong. Here too we shall all benefit from the increasing flow of educated talent into the business and industrial sectors.

'Our Chamber committees, covering many areas of specialised interest, met regularly and dealt with a great variety of subjects and issues. Many of these were matters of concern to the community as a whole and I was glad to note the close coordination which has developed between the Chamber and the other major trade and industrial organisations. This permits joint consideration of matters of common concern, reducing duplication of effort. It is also true to say that, where there is a similarity of views, a common approach or submission can be much more effective than individual unco-

ordinated actions by different organisations. This has proved the case with several issues during the past year, notably the action taken on the Post Office Bill and on various aspects of labour legislation proposed by the Government.

'There have been times, of course, when our views have been dissimilar to those of other organisations and we have not hesitated to adopt the policy that seemed to reflect best our members' real interest. This was the case with the question of business commissions and the application of the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance. After detailed consideration by appropriate committees and the General Committee, we have agreed that in general terms the Chamber must continue to support the Government in its efforts to eradicate corrupt practices in both the public and private sectors and to do so through the vehicle of the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance.

'I am sorry to report that we have been unable to secure approval for the issue of GSP Forms A for exports to the EEC and the US. This is a serious matter for the Chamber and we shall continue to do everything we can to secure this approval.

'An essential part of the function of the Chamber is to consider problems affecting business and industry and our views and advice are sought by Government departments and by many other bodies. We give this willingly as a contribution to the development of our society.

'It is perhaps pertinent at this point to consider what the next year might hold for the Hong Kong economy and for business generally. Any prediction must be speculative in nature since we depend so much on markets which are beyond our control or influence. Nevertheless, a study of the many excellent economic reports available to us suggest that 1977 will be a good trading year for Hong Kong. This view is clearly shared by the Government and the 1977/78 Budget presented by

the Financial Secretary was conducive to business confidence. It was also oriented towards a satisfactory pace of social development, a general course which I am sure the Chamber will continue to support.

'Business confidence depends greatly on a stable economic environment and on a reasonable degree of certainty as to Government policies and intentions towards those matters which most affect business. The levels and methods of taxation are of course most vital considerations for business. In this regard I hope that the Government will quickly consider and make its views known on the recommendations of the Third Inland Revenue Ordinance Review Committee. The Chamber's Taxation Committee is presently studying this Report and will soon submit its further views to the Government as will, no doubt, many other organisations.

'Now to the accounts. It is clear from these that the budgets produced at the beginning and at the half year in 1976 were quite accurate. Income was a little higher than forecast and staff recruitment was delayed in one or two instances. These factors, together with

considerable attention to cost effective organisation and methods, resulted in the very satisfactory surplus of about \$420,000. Expectation of this surplus enabled the General Committee to decide against any increase in membership fee for 1977. The Budget for 1977 however is very nearly in balance and I should think it likely that we shall have to consider a modest increase in the membership fee for 1978. In accordance with our new Articles of Association, your Committee will consider this matter later in the year probably in October, so as to give adequate warning to members.

#### **Our Committee members**

'Let me take this opportunity of thanking all our committee members for their unfailing advice and assistance throughout the last year. We could not have been effective as an organisation without this participation by members in the work of their Chamber.

'I should like to end this statement by expressing my appreciation to the Director and his staff for a year of hard work and considerable achievement on our behalf. As Chairman, I have day to day contact with Jimmy McGregor and I can say without reservation that he

promotes members' interests with skill and enthusiasm.'

The Chairman's proposal was seconded by Mr. David Z.D. Woo. Mr. Woo in his speech commended the Financial Secretary for a budget that "achieved growth in social spending without any corresponding frustrations for those whose task it was to earn the means by which HK can pay for its social development". He was particularly enthusiastic about the proposed home ownership scheme. He also urged the FS to look very carefully at any tax or other proposals that might inadvertently reduce HK's financial growth.

Mr. Woo, in his remarks about the Chamber, commented on the increased initiative it was showing in industrial matters. He emphasised how important it was for organisations such as the Chamber to be continually on the alert, in the interest of the entire community, to the implications of new factors that could affect Hong Kong's prosperity.

Members agreed on a show of hands that the Report of the Committee and the Accounts of the Chamber for the year ended 31st December 1976 be adopted.

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## Chamber News

### More join us

New Members this month are:

Caduceus Limited  
 Carolyn Fashions Limited  
 Choi Man Kee Garment Factory Ltd.  
 Dixons Photographic (HK) Ltd.  
 Drake & Scull Engineering Ltd.  
 Good Year Trading Co.  
 Hatco Trading Limited  
 Hawley & Hazel Chemical Co. (HK) Ltd.  
 D. R. Henry & Associates  
 Hopewell Traders  
 International Optical Manufacturing Co. Limited  
 Intrade (Asia) Ltd.  
 Kita Garment Mfg. Ltd.  
 Lee Wah Industrial Factory  
 Merry Horse Garment Factory Ltd.  
 Nam Wah Neonlight & Electrical Mfy. Limited  
 R & S International Fashions  
 Samwood Chemical & Pharmaceutical Laboratories Limited  
 Scannex Merchandise (H.K.) Limited  
 Shing Cheong Metal Manufactory  
 Supramar Pacific Shipbuilding Co. Ltd.  
 Tak Kwon Plastic Factory Ltd.  
 Thakral Brothers (HK) Ltd.  
 Tung Hing Lung Fire Fighting Equipment & Engineering Co. Limited  
 Universal Pharmaceutical Laboratories Ltd.  
 Joseph Wong & Co. (HK) Ltd.

### Minich Reps Chamber in US

Herbert L. Minich, former Executive Director of Amcham in HK now based in Cleveland, has been appointed with effect from April 1 the Chamber's representative in the Northeast area of the US. His specific responsibilities will be involved in the pre-mission work and during the second industrial promotion mission to the US scheduled for the second week of June.

Mr. Minich will also carry out follow-

up work with industrial companies indicating an interest in HK as a result of the mission.



A certificate presentation ceremony was held in the Chamber's Boardroom on March 18 for recipients of Chamber scholarships for the current academic year. T.C. Cheng, Pro-Vice Chancellor of the Chinese University, presided at the ceremony. Thirteen scholarships were awarded this year to students of HK University, Chinese University, the Polytechnic, and the three technical institutes at Morrison Hill, Kwun Tong and Kwaichung.



Last month, the Chamber presented a Good Citizen Award to — a building. The award took the form of a special plaque and was in recognition of the cooperation given by the tenants in helping the police to arrest three armed robbers. The presentation was made on behalf of The Chamber by Industrial Affairs Committee member David Z.D. Woo (2nd from right).

## Bits & Pieces

### Major Survey of Wholesale, Retail, Catering, etc. Trades

The Census and Statistics Department is to undertake in 1978 a major census covering all establishments in wholesale and retail distribution (including import and export companies) and allied industries such as hotels, restaurants, catering, etc.

This Survey will cover the operations of the companies concerned in considerable detail and will be similar in form to the major survey of manufacturing undertaken last year. Future surveys will cover eg. the construction industry, and each main survey will be followed up at periodic intervals by a census based upon a sample drawn from each industry. Companies participating have a legal obligation to make returns, and it is emphasised that all information given will be treated as confidential.

As a preliminary step to the whole-sale, retail, etc. census the Chamber is getting in touch with a selected group of member companies to seek their comments on the proposed questionnaire. Any member approached is urged in his own interests to cooperate with the Chamber, since it is obviously to the advantage of all concerned that questionnaires be made as meaningful as possible.

### BUSINESS USA in HK

The American Consulate General in Hong Kong and the United States Department of Commerce are co-sponsoring an Exhibition of American Office and Business Equipment, Systems and Supplies, BUSINESS USA, at the Hong Kong Hilton Hotel from April 25 – 29, 1977.

Thirty-six companies will be exhibiting their latest machines and equipment and most recent technology designed to simplify, facilitate and expedite office operations in every type of commercial and industrial enterprise.

Mr. Douglas Harwood, Director of Marketing for Business USA, can furnish you with more details. He can be contacted at the American Consulate General.

### Have you a London Office?

The London Office of the HK Government has approached the Chamber requesting help in up-dating their records of leading HK companies that have offices in London. The Chamber has already written to several member companies where it is known that a London office exists. However, there must be many other companies also with London offices whom we have not approached. Government stresses that their interests are mainly in larger companies and only those where the London office is directly associated with the HK company — eg. not agents or representatives. Any members coming into this category are invited to send details to the Chamber addressed for the attention of Harry Garlick.



Over 700 people attended the Chamber's Annual Lunar New Year Dinner for Members, held at the Metropole Restaurant on March 3.



# Letters to the Director

## Factories in Domestic Buildings

I have read your viewpoint on the small factories operating in Domestic Buildings, which may be wrong if they are making plastic or other dangerous merchandises. But their importance to Hong Kong export are vital also on the employment, because they have their own group of workers of whom preferred to work in such factories, therefore, if without planning and the government closed them down then at least 150,000 persons could be affected by such action. Therefore unless the government or your Chamber could come out with a good answer, otherwise we have no right to stop the factories from operating in Domestic Building. However if the government could build some small flatted factories near the Housing Estate areas and such flatted factory could either be sold to them at reasonable prices with 15 years installment plan or rent to the small factories operators. So they could work and live in the same areas. So I think they will move from the Domestic Buildings.

Lastly my suggestion that the Chamber should keep out from their matter unless you could have some constructive idea.

Hoping what I have said in my letter will not affect our friendship, because I am presenting the true fact.

Superlight Industrial Co., Ltd.

Damon K.K. Cheng

Director

*The Bulletin article highlighted the problem and presented several views on this. Solutions are always more difficult to provide and in this case, most of them will depend upon Government action. But Government is clearly well aware of the need to provide against social disruption in any policy of removal of domestic factories. The great bulk of domestic factories is likely to be permitted to continue to operate as being relatively inoffensive in environmental and safety terms. The dangerous operations must be eliminated however in the*

*public interest. JDM*

## Business Commissions

In the last issue of the Chamber Bulletin you invited those with a point of view on any subject of interest to members to express their views. I should like to do so on the debate on so called business commissions.

Let me start by stating the law—which is essentially simple. If an employee, whether he is buying or selling, or otherwise acting on behalf of his employers, accepts a commission, rebate or kickback for his own benefit, and without the permission of his employer, he is guilty of corruption. Similarly, if a person offers a commission to another person's employee to influence him in relation to his employer's business, he would be guilty of an offence.

Let us not confuse legitimate commissions with *secret* commissions to buy favours, at the expense of someone else — the overseas firm who entrusts its buyers to HK, or the consumer who has to bear a higher price because someone has pocketed an undeclared sum along the line. Is this not clearly a bribe?

There are also those who maintain that the HK Prevention of Bribery Ordinance should be confined to dealing with corruption among public servants. I find the suggestion unacceptable, for accepting it would mean that whilst honest dealings must prevail within the ranks of the public service, it would be perfectly legitimate to bribe one's way in business. Just as our businessmen draw their support from the community at large in terms of its labour, consumption and goodwill, they are subject to its scrutiny and censure.

In his address to the Chamber's Annual Committee Members' Dinner, our Chairman called for the closest possible co-ordination between the private and public sectors. Implicit in this spirit of co-operation must lie a common standard of honesty and the recognition that bribery is equally harmful to the public and private sectors.

Many of HK's businessmen have realised that what makes HK's products sell is quality, price efficient

deliveries, and knowledge of our overseas markets, not bribery. We are continually trading up, and competing in world quality markets. In such a situation the need for underhanded kickbacks is often more psychological than real for it is good quality that our international buying firms are after.

However, smaller firms without the expertise and knowledge of international markets which successful competition requires may still be preyed on by the unscrupulous overseas buyer. Leaders in the business community could make a real contribution in bringing on smaller manufacturers into a competitive position and I feel that the Chamber should take the lead in assisting smaller companies in acquiring the necessary expertise and knowledge needed to enable them to trade successfully in overseas markets.

We must not underestimate the strength of international feeling against corruption and must realise that what was accepted practice in 'the good old days' is by virtue of much closer public scrutiny and a more enquiring younger generation who are demanding increasingly higher standards of morality from both the public and private sectors, no longer tolerable. If we are to harness the idealism of the young, and convince them that we mean honest business, then we must look to accountability by management at the highest levels. Business leaders must be seen to be taking the necessary steps to ensure that their own Hongks are as far as is humanly possible above suspicion.

What we clearly now need is the wholehearted endorsement of the policy of fair business practice free of graft and corruption by the leaders of the business community who should join hands with government in a "Sweep Hong Kong Clean of Graft" campaign that will firmly establish this vibrant forward thinking community in the forefront of those who stand for success based on merit alone.

Col. Ivor Daniel, MBE, ED, JP

*The subject of improper and illegal business commissions has been under study by appropriate Chamber committees for many months. JDM*

# CALTEX



**Looking  
good,  
all around  
Hong  
Kong.**





# 繼往開來的一九五二年

值此英女皇登基銀禧紀念之際，回顧香港四分之一世紀以來，從一個毫無國際地位的轉口港，發展成為世界貿易、工業、金融及旅遊中心之一，確實極有啟發意義。

## 二十五載 滄桑巨變

翻開古色古香的香港政府一九五二年年報，扉頁上有一幅當時的香港地圖。九龍城海傍是偏促一隅的「啓德飛機場」，恐怕只可供雙翼機起飛降落，尚未進入噴射機的時代。如今伸入九龍灣二英哩的現代化國際機場人造跑道，在當時還毫無迹象可尋。

一九七六年，經過香港國際機場的空運貨物總值幾達一百九十億港元。而一九五二年的飛機場却未留下任何空運記載。此一對比形象地概括了香港在英女皇伊利沙白二世登基二十五年以來的巨大經濟發展。

事實上，五十年代初期的經濟情況甚至還不及戰前。一九五二年，香港的最大出口市場並不是中國，而是印尼。香港因為屬於英屬區，所以實際上限制某些日本製品的入口。戰後一度增長的輸美出口貿易，也告衰落。對出口商而言，泰國及巴基斯坦比加拿大及澳洲更為重要。即使當時的外幣管制准許兌換，一元港幣也只值一先令三辨士英鎊，或一角七分美金。

## 相差懸殊 無法比較

接着，新的問題出現了——實行國際勞工組織條例的問題提到議事日程上來了；為了興建海底隧道也迅即展開初步勘查；香港的主要出口貿易變成紡織品及成衣了；中國則忙於解決其貿易官員的貪污問題。後者也影響到香港的貿

一九五二年香港出口商品簡表

商品種類	百萬英鎊
棉紗及線	8.5
棉織汗背心	5.9
恤衫	3.0
漆皮電線	2.7
手電筒	2.5
原色布匹	1.6
果脯、蜜餞、果醬及姜	1.1
手電筒電池及燈泡	1.1
帆布鞋	0.7
油漆	0.6
汽油燈	0.4
橡膠鞋	0.4
鋁製品	0.3
熱水瓶	0.3
鋼鐵條	0.3
塑膠製品	0.3

易——如今廉政公署也在着手解決了。

五十年代初期標誌着現代化香港發展的起點。但五十年代初葉本身却是一個停滯不前的時期，與戰後的迅速復甦相比失色，更不可和五十年代後期和六十年代的工業繁榮發展期同日而語。

一九五二年與一九七七年實在難以比較，因為如今的許多指數不是在當時無案可稽，就是與當時無法比較。例如，當時就沒有全港總產值的統計，而出口總值也直到一九六〇年才有首次記載。一九五二年主宰經濟的要素是韓戰及隨後的禁運中國貨。

## 既是問題 又是解答

二次大戰結束後，香港迅速恢復其華南轉口港的地位。中國革命的影響，在貿易方面不及在社會方面為大。後者是由於難民的湧入，在五十年代初期持續不斷，為時甚久。但香港貿易雖受影響，却仍屬良好。一九五〇年七月，韓戰爆發了。就很多方面而言，直接導致香港朝現代化方向發展的起因，正是韓國的戰爭，而不是中國的革命。

韓戰及隨後聯合國對中國貨的禁運，使香港出入口的管制極為嚴厲，對貿易造成直接的影響；於一九五一年下半年就已十分明顯，在一九五二年全年蕭條不景，到一九五三年更形衰退。事實上，香港直到一九六二年才完全擺脫此一停滯時期，開始持續的增長時期。香港經濟的內部也發生了根本的變化。

香港一切發展的根源及動力均在於其居民。一九五二年，許多難民經過香港移居世界其他地區；但正如一九五二

年港府年報指出，大部份難民都在香港停留居住，而且結婚成家，生育子女。

難民既是問題，又是問題的解答。當時，香港的轉口港地位已受嚴重威脅，而難民則為香港的未來發展提供了基本的要素——工業勞力。

## 出口商品 漸趨高級

當時，香港的紡織業已奠定基礎。

一九五二年，香港的主要出口商品是棉紗及棉線、汗背心及恤衫。但切勿以為紡織業是五十年代初香港的唯一工業。至少還有二種工業亦相當蓬勃。一九五二年，第四位出口商品是漆皮線，第五位則是手電筒。

電子工業直到六十年代才真正拓展，但五十年代初的手電筒工業却開始發展新的高級電工產品。其中的一項技術突破就是發展廉價的原子粒收音機。五金業雖比不上電子業的突飛猛進，但仍是香港的主要工業之一，去年出口總值達八億四千四百萬港元。塑膠工業當時雖仍在萌芽狀態，但一九五二年出口總值已達三十二萬零九百八十英鎊。

一九五二年香港主要出口商品統計請參閱附表。如今，出口貿易已日益趨向高級商品，汗背心由時裝取而代之，手電筒由原子粒收音機後來居上，可以明顯看到香港工業革命的進程。

## 主要市場 轉向歐美

差別更大的是出口市場。（請參閱附表）當時，香港對已發展國家的出口貿易比例極小。香港雖然派遣代表團連續五年參加倫敦的英國工業展覽會，但英國人可能對香港不屑一顧，最多是作為伯明翰及曼徹斯特產品的市場，當然也就不會在國會中引起抗議了。

由於對中國貨品限制，香港對美國的出口貿易，一九五二年反而低於一九五一年。但美國市場仍比英國重要。戰後開始迅速復甦的西德，雖然是香港在歐洲的第二大市場，但貿易額却微不足道。

香港出口貿易進展表 一九五二年——一九七七年

	1952 <sup>1</sup> 百萬港元	1960 <sup>2</sup> 百萬港元	1970 <sup>2</sup> 百萬港元	1976 <sup>2</sup> 百萬港元
美國	113	745	5,190	11,236
西德	33	107	984	3,995
英國	83	585	1,481	3,286
台灣	207	14	147	320
馬來亞/新加坡	417	243	399	1,081
中國	520	少量不計	少量不計	320

附註：1. 出口及轉口合計

2. 僅為出口



道。荷蘭則在當時及今日，均是香港在歐洲的第三大市場。

顯而易見，香港在五十年代以來的發展，端賴在發展中國家的貿易拓展。

### 戰後復甦 香港獲利

韓戰一方面是阻礙香港傳統貿易的因素，另一方面又是刺激香港貿易的巨大因素，在美國市場的影響顯然又大於歐洲。二次大戰後，世界經濟面臨的重大問題主要是生產力問題——提高產量以滿足全世界日益增長的巨大物質需求。二次大戰期間，飛機製造、塑膠、電子及製藥工業的技術均獲得可觀的進展。戰後，世界工業，尤其是美國工業，已開始符合由戰時經濟向正常經濟的調整，但韓戰却再次從消費市場抽出資源投入戰爭。

到六十年代，與日俱增的貨品湧入世界消費市場，問題就從如何生產貨品變成如何推銷貨品。生產問題緩和後，工資問題激化了。（沒有購買力，生產力提高了也無用！）在此種形勢下，香港成了足以迎合西方消費者需求的消費品製造中心。

但在一九五二年時，香港的最大供應國依次為中國、日本及英國。香港經濟尚處於未發展狀態。出口貿易中僅有百分之十七是本港製品，所以轉口港地位雖告衰落仍頗重要。而且，對中國貨的禁運並未完全遏制對中國貨的需求。事實上，禁運主要影響西方各國，而香港的主要貿易伙伴都是亞洲國家。雖然本港工業已開始發展，但對工業原料的需求（後來使日本高居本港最大供應國）仍屬有限。

### 香港十年 刮目相看

一九五二年，香港對英國及美國的貿易開始有了新的發展，從轉口變為出口，因而保持貿易總值不致繼續下降，而逐漸穩步回升。

香港借助於英聯邦特惠制，開拓了

英國市場，足以彌補本港市場太小的缺陷。到五十年代末，香港貨入口英國已達可觀程度，英國工會領袖不再將香港視為英國汽車及機器的市場。他們雖然也爭購價廉物美的香港恤衫，却開始認為香港貨威脅到他們的生存了。附表所示香港主要出口市場的主次易位，可對此種發展趨勢一目了然。

本文旨在回顧歷史，而非預測未來。但當亞太地區充分發展之後，香港未來出口市場是否會回復到一九五二年的情況，似乎值得一思。例如，油藏豐富的印尼是否會再次成為香港的主要市場呢？

### 本港問題 大同小異

至於香港經濟的內部發展，一九五二年的問題似乎與今日的問題大同小異。例如，當時曾根據國際勞工組織的條例制定一套規則，供勞工處長用以改善工廠工作條件。但勞工處長却難以估計香港工業的生產能力。一九五二年，註冊工廠共計一千五百零四間，另有三百七十四間正在考慮註冊。該等工廠僱用工業勞工總數達十萬人，但估計另有十五萬人受僱於不須註冊而且大都設於住宅樓宇的小廠。

一九五二年，香港工廠首次註冊。從此以後，註冊工廠的總數就有增無已，表明製造工業的地位日益重要。然而，一九五二年的就業情況却並不理想，而且工業產量估計反而下降。當時直至現在，並無失業率指數，但政府佈告估計，「許多工廠歇業長達六個月或每次開工僅數週」。

因此，工資也並無增加。某些工業的平均工資為：熟練工人日薪六至八元，半熟練工人五至六點五元，非熟練工人三點五至五元。每週工作的時間在較好的工廠是四十八小時，但長達六十小時的也可司空見慣。然後，通貨膨脹却微乎其微，不過政府及許多洋行却支付職

員「高生活費津貼」。

### 低稅制度 厥功甚偉

至於經濟的其他方面，漁業自然非常重要，農業作物中仍以水稻為主，但蔬菜正變得日益重要。

當時，財政司報告一九五一至五二財政年度收支結餘為三千七百七十萬港元；但對一九五二至五三財政年度的預算却太不樂觀，僅為結餘二百萬港元；還強調在當時情勢下，必須保守謹慎。結果收支結餘竟高達七千二百八十萬港元，與最近幾年的情況大有異曲同工之妙！

一九五二年年報與現在差別最小的部份，確實是政府歲入的來源及估算。標準稅率已達百分之十二點五。政府歲入來源也與現在大同小異。斯時迄今，香港的標準稅率所增甚微，確實應歸功於港府財政策略的成功，並有助於香港從一個轉口港發展成為一個製造中心。

然而，一九五二年的有限預算中，竟要撥出一千六百萬港元作為英軍的軍費，包括八百萬港元的特別撥款。但在當時，確有武裝暴亂的可能性，似也確實需要防衛的軍隊。

### 推陳出新 繼往開來

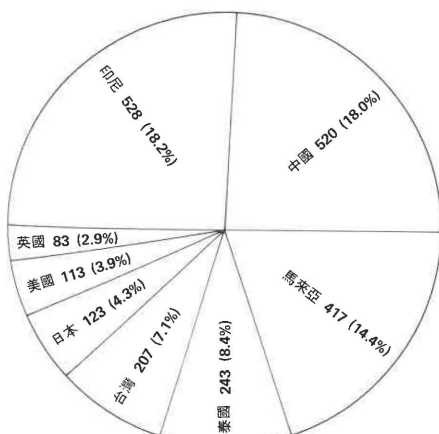
後來，香港鄰近又發生了越南戰爭。越戰對香港的影響比韓戰小得多。而大批美軍來港休假，也至少使香港增加不少收益。一九五二年時，機場或碼頭都極少有遊客抵埠。

當時，香港既無旅遊業，也無金融地位可言。根本無人想到把香港儲備金由英鎊改存其他貨幣。香港隨着工業的發展，也演進為旅遊中心及金融中心。英鎊區解體之前，英國數次强行規定港幣匯率，不僅記錄了英國經濟的日後趨勢，而且反映了香港經濟正在日益累積財富。一九七三年的股市事件，使許多人士驚覺，香港業已成了金融中心。但在一九五二年，香港證券交易所僅此一家，別無分支，而在港府年報中還未夠資格被提及。

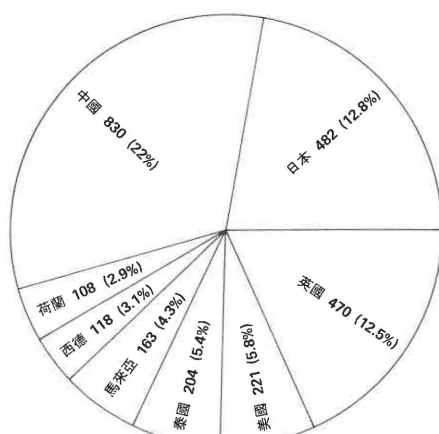
一九五二年本身，對香港而言，實在乏善可陳。出口貿易下降，工人失業嚴重，工業產量減少，工資並未增加，特別是亞洲地區政治均不穩定。

今日現代化香港的真正成長及進展，開始於韓戰結束與越戰開始之間。從此以後，香港就朝着此方向不斷發展繁榮。

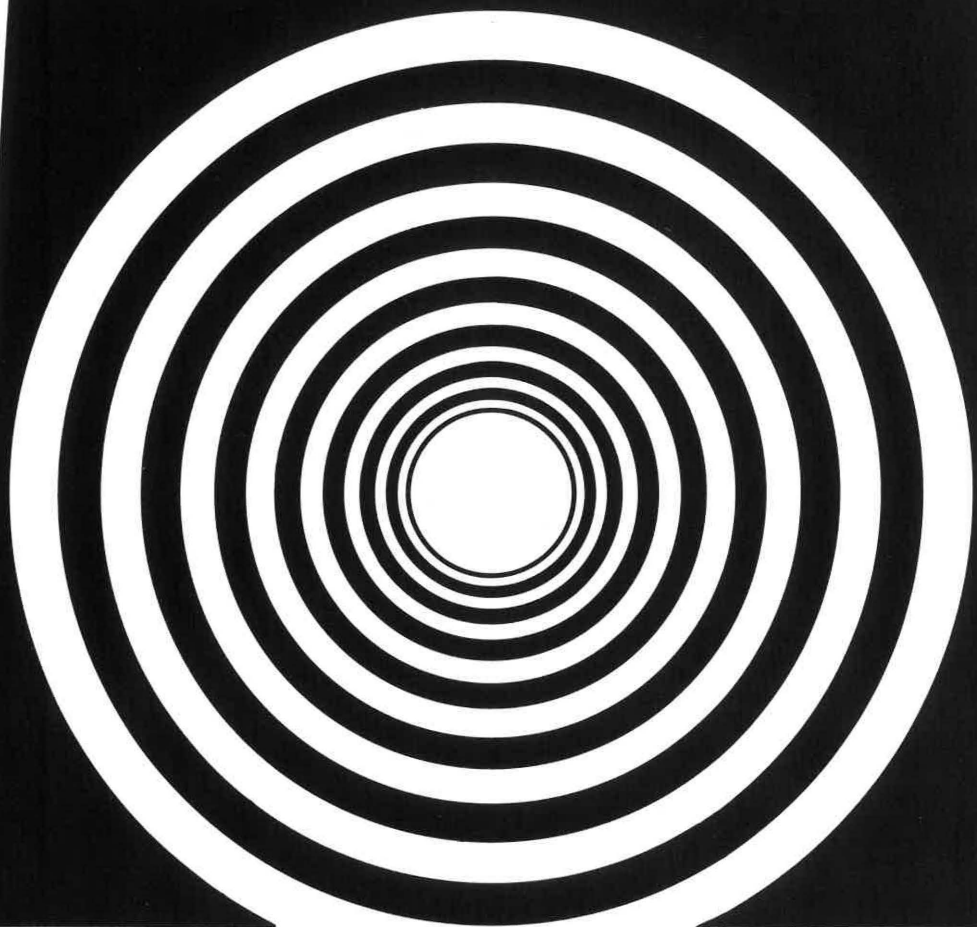
一九五二年，對英國而言是英皇喬治六世逝世，對香港而言是一個舊時代的結束。然而皇位繼承，也屬新陳代謝。一九五二年，也是現代化香港發展的起點，不僅是英女皇伊利沙白二世登基的一年，而且是中國的龍年，一定會吉祥如意！



一九五二年香港主要市場簡表（出口與轉口合計）



一九五二年香港主要供應國簡表



Our scientific planning and mechanised installation, augmented by advanced production techniques and modern management methods, make us the most up-to-date and efficient factory of its kind. With these facilities plus our continuous creative efforts, latest technical advancements, modern industrial designs and vigilant value analysis, we can supply flashlights of better quality, better design, better price and can offer you better service. For resale or own use, the best choice will always be

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# 何禮文爵士回憶香港四十年

何禮文爵士親眼目睹香港從一個小轉口港發展成為雄視一方的製造工業中心。他於一九三八年初次來港，二次大戰期間在駐港英軍中服務，當日軍侵佔香港後就避居中國。戰爭剛結束，他就乘坐第一架飛機返回香港，此後就一直在此居住工作。

何禮文爵士歷任港府各部門行政首長，政績昭著。其中包括社會福利處處長、徙置事務處處長、市政局主席、新界政務署署長、工商署署長、民政司及署理布政司。他自一九七一年退休後出任公務員叙用委員會主席。

何禮文爵士積極參與了五十年代初轉折時期的許多重大事件。他在接受本會「工商月刊」訪問時，憶述了香港當時面臨的種種問題及處理問題的經過。

## 人口問題

「中國革命及其引起的動亂，使無數難民湧來香港。香港人口在一九四八年估計約一百八十萬人，到一九五二年就猛增至二百二十五萬人。與人口劇增的同時，香港賴以生存的傳統轉口貿易，却隨着中國市場關閉及韓戰爆發後禁運中國貨而告結束。

「當時，上海工業鉅子紛紛南來香港，例如李震之、已故的唐炳源等等。他們在上海頗有遠見，及時將大量資產、主要人員甚至機器設備安然運來香港。

「當然，他們除了來香港也別無選擇。香港雖是彈丸之地，且有種種限制，但却能提供發展商業、財務及工業的基礎以及法治的制度。台灣雖是此外唯一的選擇，却毫無上述條件。香港局勢穩定，在當時極有吸引力。

「然而，他們最需要的是土地，而移民大量湧入却使土地更感缺乏。當時的土地政策（至今也是大同小異）是公開拍賣，價高者得。但問題是根本沒有土地可供拍賣，因為公地上都擠滿了非法蓋建的小木屋。當時一份政府年報估計有三十萬人住在木屋區。但政府在安置了一百萬人之後，結果仍舊有五十萬木屋居民！

「一九五二年時還沒有真正的徙置政策。當時只有臨時安置所。但木屋居民移入後所佔地方却比以前多四十倍，真是弄巧反拙！唯一可建造安置所的地方是遭火災焚燬的木屋區，由政府籲請善長仁翁籌款建造。但火災後無家可歸的人中，只有三十分之一獲得安置。實在無濟於事。」

## 石硤尾大火

「關鍵的轉變要到一九五三年底，

石硤尾發生大火，無家可歸者達到空前紀錄。火災在聖誕節晚上開始，延燒至翌晨，估計有六萬人的家舍付之一炬——我認為實際人數還要多得多。幸而喪生者極少。

「這場大火使我們深感當時所用的任何方法均無法解決居住難題。於是決定由政府建造公共屋宇。從當時到現在——不到二十五年期間——香港已有近一半人口住在公共住宅樓宇中。這一比例已高出西方世界任何國家之上了。

「港府於一九五四年四月成立徙置事務處，而我則是首任處長。第一步先在石硤尾一角建造大批二層樓臨時建築。大量災民已住入親友家中。但仍有約三萬人在深水埗街上搭棚棲身。景象慘不忍睹。

「我們立即設計了第一批徙置屋，六層樓高，翌年又改為七層（當時無法想像可用升降機！）。H形的設計到近年才受到批評，但並不公平。這種設計是便於一半一半修建。後來雖有修建，但迄未大規模施工。反而是將舊樓拆除，興建更高的新住宅樓宇。

「我清晰記得我當時出席行政局，首次討論多層徙置屋計劃。議員們提了種種問題後，港督葛量洪爵士問我：『何禮文，你認為如何？我們是否已盡力而為？』我回答我們實在別無善策。他再問醫務衛生處處長，回答是：『閣下，本人不得不表示反對。此種過份擠迫的程度，實在無法忍受，將使我們遭到全世界的批評。』港督就問他：『那麼，你說該怎麼辦？』他回答『我不知道，閣下。』問題就在於此。在當時情況下，我們實在別無善策。

「會後我們前往石硤尾地盤視察。我記得當時急需一座樓宇容納五千人，就在合約中加入獎勵條款，結果承造商從開始施工到竣工入住僅費時二個月！

「接着，我們就須規定屋租。坦白講，我們當初只是設想他們能付得起多少租金！你不能對一羣無家可歸的貧苦災民說：『徙置屋的地價是每方呎四百元，建屋費又是若干，我們準備五年內收回成本。所以你們付一百二十五元月租，明天就可搬進去住！』於是我們匆匆定出了『象徵性租金』。換言之，整個計劃要靠政府巨額補助，其實如今整個住宅計劃也仍是如此。

## 新界農田到國際談判

何禮文爵士自一九六二年至一九六六年出任工商署署長。

「我是從新界政務署長接任此職，

兩者毫不相干，我又缺乏直接經驗，因而深感困難。我二週前還在新界農田裏視察，二週後已在日內瓦參加紡織品談判了！

「紡織品談判是中心問題。我在四年中因公跋涉了近二十五萬英哩，大都是參加紡織品配額談判。雖然現在回顧是為多年的穩定發展尊定了基礎，但在當時却是挫折多於收穫。

## 港中政治關係

「二十五年前，香港與中國的政治及邊界關係遠比現在敏感多變。在國民黨政府最後幾年及共產黨政府最初幾年，廣州當局均利用香港的事件及局勢作為宣傳。」

他憶述起一九五二年擔任社會福利處處長時發生的東頭村木屋區火災。廣州寄來大筆捐款救濟災民，我身為社會福利處處長，當然希望這筆捐款能派作建設性的公共用途，在考慮時有所耽遲。

「當時，廣州宣佈要派『慰問團』來九龍維護災民的利益。人羣聚集在九龍火車站迎接慰問團，因為謠傳慰問團在邊界受阻，鄰近街道甚至有些騷動。事實上，慰問團結果根本就沒出發。結果，港督指示將捐款用現金平均分派給所有災民。

「這只是事例之一。當時，此種事件並非罕見，新界邊境並未鬆懈防守。」

## 道路建設

本刊詢及何禮文爵士是否認為香港或港府在此長期而迅速的發展過程中有某些方面原可取得更好的效果。

「有，就是道路。不是市區或市郊的道路，這方面成績良好；而是通往新界的主要公路，這些公路原應盡量疏通及平衡過份集中的人口。

「我認為我們似乎一直在香港事倍功半地艱苦奮鬥。我們創造了公共屋宇的世界紀錄，我們沒化納稅人一分錢就興建了世界第三大的貨櫃碼頭，我們沒收到絲毫訂金就填海造地。但我們如要去大埔或元朗，公路都是曲折、漫長、狹窄、擠迫。

「現在可能正在拉直，但如今的成本多麼大，又遲了多少年。到今天為止，除了英軍、日軍及為供水工程修築的公路之外，新界公路網與我在一九三八年首次駕車行駛時並沒多大改變。

※ ※ ※

何禮文爵士夫婦將於下個月離開香港移居希臘，不過他倆仍想時時回香港訪問。衷心祝願何禮文爵士夫婦退休後萬事勝意。

# 香港人生活水準大幅提高

一九五四年以前，香港政府只為政府公務員建造永久性住宅。石硤尾大火使政府認識到必須採取更積極的行動來重新安置木屋居民。為此，港府必須撥出大量公共基金，並作出必要的政策改變。

在一九五四到一九六〇年期間，政府在石硤尾、大坑東、李鄭屋、紅磡、樂富岩、黃大仙、佐敦谷、觀塘及柴灣興建了九個徙置屋區，為二十七萬居民提供了基本的住所。房屋委員會則在北角、堅尼地城、蘇屋等地興建了廉租住宅新邨。然而在五十年代，住屋計劃雖然進展極為迅速，仍無法追上人口的增長。

早期的徙置屋比較簡陋擠迫，難免受到許多公開的批評，但有時外國來客也不瞭解興建當時的重大社會壓力，質素必須讓位於數量。

公共住宅計劃開始十年後一到一九六四年，政府已經為七十多萬居民提供了住宅。到一九七二年，已有一百五十多萬居民住在公共樓宇中。當時，政府又宣佈了發展住宅的十年大計，旨在為全港居民提供數量足夠、設備完善、環境舒適的永久性住屋」。今後的發展將全要集中於荃灣、屯門及沙田等新市鎮。每個市鎮將可居住五十萬人。

房屋署署長廖本懷表示：「發展的速度令人驚異。在英國，新市鎮需要二十至三十年才能達到五萬人口。但在香港，一個住宅邨就可容納五萬人，只要四年就可建成。」

與居住一樣，教育、社會福利、醫療衛生及康樂設施等方面也迅速發展。五十年代初期面臨的問題是人口大量增加而貿易嚴重衰退，結果只能滿足基本的需求。

一九五二至五三年度教育預算只有二千六百萬元。當時，學校不到一千間，學生不滿二十萬人。五十年代開始了二個大規模的建校計劃，高峯時期每年增加四萬五千個小學學位。到一九七一年，香港實現了免費小學教育的目標。

如今，每年教育開支達十三多億，佔全部政府開支的百分之十八。全港共有二千八百多間學校及一百三十多萬學生。今後將着重發展中學教育及工業教育，使香港具備必要的條件，吸引外國工業技術來港投資。

一九五二年，香港只有四千三百張病床，平均每一千人還不到二張。如今每一個人已有四點四張病床。嬰兒死亡

率也自千分之七十七降低至十四點三，比許多已發展國家還低。

社會福利預算從二百六十萬元增至三億六千三百萬元……公園、遊樂場、游泳池及其他康樂設施在過去二十五年中已有了巨大的改進……當年的供水不足問題正在逐步獲得解決……億萬元鉅資已用於改善道路及交通……五十年代夢想中的海底隧道如今已使用多年……香港人的生活水準已經全面大幅提高。

但正如廖本懷指出：「如今出生的兒童將比父母有高出得多的期望。隨著香港生活水準的改善，香港人的願望也日益提高。我們責無旁貸，一定要盡人力物力及財力，為最大多數人謀取幸福。」



當年石硤尾大火



至現在之愛民新邨



由天台學校



至教育電視

## 往事回憶

本會前任主席祈德尊爵士：

「五十年代初，香港人瞻念前途憂心忡忡；許多公司的東主真的決定遷離香港；海外也對香港前途沒有信心。」

「香港當時除了新建的幾間紡織廠外只有零星的小工業。我記得，香港雖然容受了上海工業家，但毫不表示歡迎。當時還盛傳香港氣候不適合紡織工業。」

「我認為過去二十五年的重大成就之一是貫通港九的海底隧道，而重大弱點是忽視新界。今後二十五年的最大發展大概是地下鐵路。」

香港紡織有限公司董事長王統元先生：

「我認為香港經濟在戰後以來的最重大發展，首先是香港由轉口港變成工業中心；其次是港幣日益堅穩，終於脫離英鎊而成為國際貨幣；第三是香港開始成為東南亞的金融中心。」

「戰後，中國工業家，主要是上海工業家南來香港，帶來了專門技術、經營經驗及冒險精神，已被廣泛承認是香港工業化進程的前驅。而紡織廠則成了香港工業發展的先鋒。」

「預測香港經濟的前景必須基於多

種因素。而關鍵的因素，首先是勞工法例及稅收政策往往會妨碍甚至損害工商業的繼續增長；其次是今後十年世界各國可能出現難以預料的政治經濟變化。只要政府謹慎採取經濟政策，只要世界性不安定不致在今後十年惡化，而嚴重損害香港的根本利益，我就對前途保持樂觀。」

中華廠商聯合會會長黃篤修先生：

「香港在過去二十五年以來的最大發展是在製造工業方面。戰後復業，香



港只有五、六百間工廠；如今已擴展至三萬六千間以上，而且已經向高級工業及高級產品發展。香港已成為東南亞最大的工業城市。香港貨也已在世界市場上享有國際地位。

「戰後，中國的工業家紛紛南來香港，帶動了香港原來的舊式小工業。其中有集數代經驗技術的紗廠世家、面粉世家；有的帶來了資本及工人甚至設備；但也有的只身抵港，白手興家。他們艱苦創業，慘淡經營，才逐步實現機械化，使香港走上工業化的道路。以紡織工業為例，香港原來大多使用簡陋的木架布機，五十年代初就由上海紡織工業家的鐵織機所取代，後來又不斷購用更先進的織機，如今已達國際一流水準，比日本毫不遜色。

「在五十年代，港府的自由經濟政策及英國的聯邦特惠稅制度，都對香港工業及貿易的發展提供很大的幫助。東南亞在日本戰敗後變為真空地帶，也成

了香港的主要市場。但最重要的因素是香港人勤勞聰敏，既刻苦肯做，又善動腦筋，隨機應變，適應世界。以塑膠花工業為例，塑膠花本來是美國的首創，又被意大利取而代之；而香港貨又以價廉物美後來居上。

「然而，英國對香港的成就，似乎有些『呷醋』，一定要用英國的種種法例迫使香港接受。但這些條例却使英國本身日益衰落。香港政府在工商業方面，也偏於注重大工廠。本人認為，也應保護中小工廠。

「今後，希望港府繼續實行自由放任的經濟政策，不要採取不合實際的英國法例或新的加稅建議，香港就必然有更大的成就。」

### 恆生銀行副董事長兼總經理 利國偉議員：

「香港二十五年以來的成就，也是

香港迫於環境而爭取生存的結果。香港一向依賴中國，但在五十年代初期對華貿易遭到禁運，香港必須另謀生存之道，於是就積極發展工業，隨後又發展銀行業及財務業。

「本人認為香港二十五年以來最重要的發展，是香港與中國的政治關係日益改善，並達到空前良好的現狀。在銀行業務方面，中國銀行與香港外資銀行及華資銀行均保持良好的關係。

「根據現存的最早紀錄，一九五四年底，全港銀行存款總額僅為十億六千萬港元；至一九七六年底，已增至四百四十億三千萬港元，增幅高達百分之四百十五。此種驚人的增長足以顯示香港銀行業已獲得巨大的進展，成為東南亞的金融中心，為鄰近國家提供各種財務服務。鉅額的積累，說明香港工業生產迅速發展，對外貿易大幅順差，港幣幣值堅穩，外資紛紛流入香港，均可反映香港經濟及金融業的巨大成就。」

## 一九七七年會員週年大會

本會於四月四日假座富麗華酒店召開全體會員週年大會，共有一百七十多人代表一百三十八間會員商行踴躍參加，盛況空前。

羅兵咸會計師事務所高級合股會計師高登先生及於仁保險有限公司副主席雷勵祖先生分別連任本會主席及副主席。

當選本會理事會理事者還有：安子介議員、戴寶麒先生、畢力治議員、夏志信先生、嘉道理爵士、羅倫士先生、馬登先生、紐璧堅先生、雷勵祖先生、羅仕先生、沈弼先生、宋常康先生、丁鶴壽先生、韋彼得議員及胡文瀚議員。

高登主席向大會報告：

「各位會員：

本會前任主席霍沛德先生於上屆週年大會預測一九七六年香港經濟將會增長，並將從衰退影響中迅速復甦。本人相信各位均會同意，此一預測已經證實。本港經濟迅速好轉，至少應部份歸功於工商業自由經營之制度。香港在一九七六年之成績，足以證明低稅制及自由經營政策對繁榮經濟之功效。全港社會各界人士均盡力而為，而港府則實行最小干涉及最大鼓勵之政策，促進工商業之發展。到去年年底，就業狀況已令人滿意，實際工資已逐步回升。

本港各項社會發展工作亦繼續進展。今年一月，港督光臨本會全體理事及委員週年晚餐會指示，經濟發展必須為社會發展提供必需之基金。去年香港經



濟迅速恢復，已使港府能重新制定其社會目標並加速其進程。全港市民一定會歡迎明年下半年全部學童均有中學三年級學位之計劃。此項計劃將標誌香港教育制度之新起點，希望此項計劃能迅速發展至中學四至五年級學位。未來端賴青年一代之教育程度。香港工業教育及訓練制度亦在加速發展，令人可喜。受過良好教育人才加入工商界之人數日益增多，亦對香港有利。

本會各委員會定期集會，處理各種專門問題。其中許多問題均與全港市民休戚相關。本人認為，本會與其他各大工商組織之合作關係正在加強，有助於聯合考慮共同事務並減少重覆工作。凡有相似之觀點，進行共同商討並提出聯合意見，遠比各組織各自行動更為有效。此點已由去年數次事件所證實，例如反對郵政局提案之行動及對於政府建議各項勞工法例之諮詢。

當然，本會觀點有時也會與其他組織不同，本會則採取最能反映本會會員

真正利益之政策。本會經過詳細考慮已決定繼續支持港府實行防止賄賂法例以剷除政府部門及工商界之貪污行為。

然而，本會未能獲准簽發出口歐洲共市及美國貨物普及特惠制表格A，本人實感遺憾。此事與本會關係重大，本會將繼續設法力爭。

本會之基本功能之一是研究考慮與工商業有關之各項問題。政府部門及眾多機構十分重視本會之觀點及意見。本會樂於對香港社會之發展作出此項貢獻。

現在似應考慮香港經濟及工商業在下一年度之前景。鑒於香港過份依賴於其無法控制之海外市場，任何預測均屬推想。但本會研究許多權威經濟報告後認為，一九七七年香港貿易將繼續好景。港府顯然也持此一觀點，而財政司提出之一九七七至七八年度預算案已增強了經濟信心。預算案所提出之社會發展計劃也令人滿意。本人相信本會將繼續支持此項全面計劃。

經濟信心端賴於安定之經濟環境及明確之政府政策措施。工商界最關注者首推稅率及稅制。本人希望政府對第三屆稅務條例檢討委員會之建議迅速加以考慮並表明觀點。本會稅務委員會如同其他許多組織一樣，目前正在研究該建議書，並將向港府再次提出意見。

關於賬務方面，一九七六年年初及年中提出之預算項目顯然十分精確。收入略高出預計，而職員招聘工作曾有一

、兩次延遲，加上活動經費嚴加控制，結果結餘四十二萬港元，令人滿意。此項結餘使理事會決定不增加一九七七年會員費。但一九七七年預算則是收支平衡，因此本人認為本會應考慮於一九七八年略為增加會員費。根據新會章，理事會將於今年十月考慮此一事項，以便及時通知全體會員。

本人藉此機會感謝各委員會全體委員一年來提供之寶貴意見及協助。本會如無會員積極參與會務，就不會如此卓有成效。

最後，本人應感謝執行董事及其職員一年來代表全體會員努力工作並獲致巨大成績。本人作為主席，與麥理覺日常接觸，可以毫無保留表明：麥理覺在促進會員利益方面，確實滿腔熱誠，而且功效卓著。

現在，本人提議大會接納批准本會截至一九七六年十二月三十一日止年度之理事會報告書及賬務報告。」

何瑞棠先生對主席提議表示和議。何瑞棠先生在發言中稱讚「財政司預算案一方面增加社會開支，另一方面又不

妨礙支付社會開支之納稅人利益」，認為「政府居者有其屋計劃尤其令人鼓舞」，同時籲請「財政司詳細檢討任何可能阻碍香港金融發展之稅務建議」。

何瑞棠先生還稱讚「香港總商會已更加積極參與工業事務」，並強調指出：「香港總商會等工商組織必須繼續維護工商界之整體利益，防止各種妨碍香港繁榮之新因素。」

與會會員舉手表決，通過接納本會截至一九七六年十二月三十一日止年度之理事會報告書及賬務報告。

## 簡報滙編

獎區。

### 工商消息

#### 臨時入口免稅特許證

須攜帶樣辦、展品或專業器材赴外國訪問之人士，請使用臨時入口免稅特許證，可大大簡化海關手續；尤其須赴多國旅行，更屬隨身必需。本會為香港獨家簽證機構，通用全世界三十六個國家，包括所有香港主要貿易國家。詳情請詢本會簽證處經理王恭甫（電話三一三三七一一七七，分機三二）。

#### 米尼克出任本會駐美代表

香港美國商會前任執行董事米尼克先生現已定居克利夫蘭，並自四月一日起出任本會駐美國東北部代表，負責協助本會促進美國工業來港投資。他將參加本會六月第二次赴美工業投資促進團之先行準備工作、促進團訪問活動及事後聯絡工作。

#### 貴號是否有倫敦辦事處？

香港政府駐倫敦辦事處函請本會協助該處重新編訂設有倫敦辦事處的香港大公司名冊。港府強調該名冊僅登記大公司，且與倫敦辦事處有直接隸屬關係

，並非指代理或代表。符合上述條件的會員公司請來函本會助理執行董事葛立科告知詳情。

#### 美國辦公設施展覽會

美國駐港領事館及美國商業部定於一九七七年四月二十五至二十九日假希爾頓酒店聯合主辦「美國辦公設施展覽會」。三十六間公司將展出最新辦公設備、系統及器材，以及可以簡化工商各業辦公業務的最新技術。詳情請詢美國領事館「美國辦公設施展覽會」市務總監哈華德先生。

#### 批發、零售等業調查

政府統計處將於一九七八年對批發、零售、出入口、酒店及餐廳等行業進行一次詳細調查，規模與去年的製造行業調查相似。不久還將調查建築業等。今後，各業總調查後，將定期作抽樣調查。政府規定所有公司均須答覆調查。調查細節一律嚴守秘密，絕不公佈。該等調查旨在提供香港經濟的全面狀況。香港迄今仍缺乏各先進國家均俱備的全面資料。

在此次調查前，本會將選請批發、零售、出入口等業會員公司對調查表格提供意見。敬請各位合作。

### 本會簡訊

#### 歡迎新會員

本刊歡迎二十六間公司上月加入本會（名單請閱本期前頁英文版）



本會於三月三日假座新都城酒樓舉行會員春節聯歡膳會，七百多人共聚一堂，歡渡佳節，盛況空前。



本會獎學金於三月十八日在會議室舉行本年度頒獎儀式，由中文大學副校長鄭棟材主持。港大、中大、理工學院及摩利臣山、觀塘及葵涌三所工業學院共十三位學生榮獲本會獎學金。



三月十九日，本會向深水埗一幢樓宇頒贈好市民獎匾，表彰該樓住戶協助警方拘捕三名持械劫匪。本會工業事務委員何瑞棠先生（右二）代表本會頒贈

### 讀者來函

本刊改用新版發行以來，會員及讀者紛表歡迎，且來函提出建議或意見。本刊徵得來函人同意後登載兩封來函（英文原函請閱本期前頁英文版）。現將執行董事麥理覺按語譯發如下：

（特光實業有限公司董事鄭建鎬先生來函對本刊上期論述住宅樓宇工廠問題提出意見）執行董事按語：本會「工商月刊」專文強調此一問題並提出若干

意見。解決方法往往就較難提出，而此一問題更大都有賴於政府採取行動。但港府確切瞭解，任何搬遷住宅樓宇工廠的政策，必須要防止社會的衝突分裂。絕大多數住宅樓宇工廠較不妨礙環境及安全，所以會准許繼續經營。但為了公眾利益，危險性行業則必須搬遷。

（美斯洋行董事長戴寧侯先生來函對回佣問題提出建議）執行董事按語：本會有關委員會很久以來一直在研究不正當及非法回佣的問題。此信表達了一間大貿易商行董事長戴密侯先生的觀點。

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## Asia: room for growth

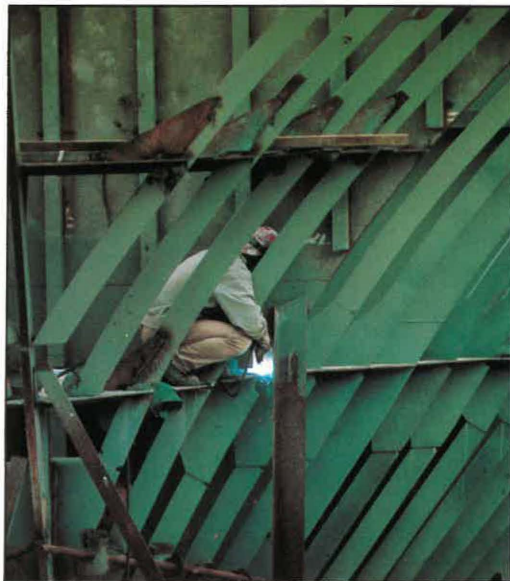
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