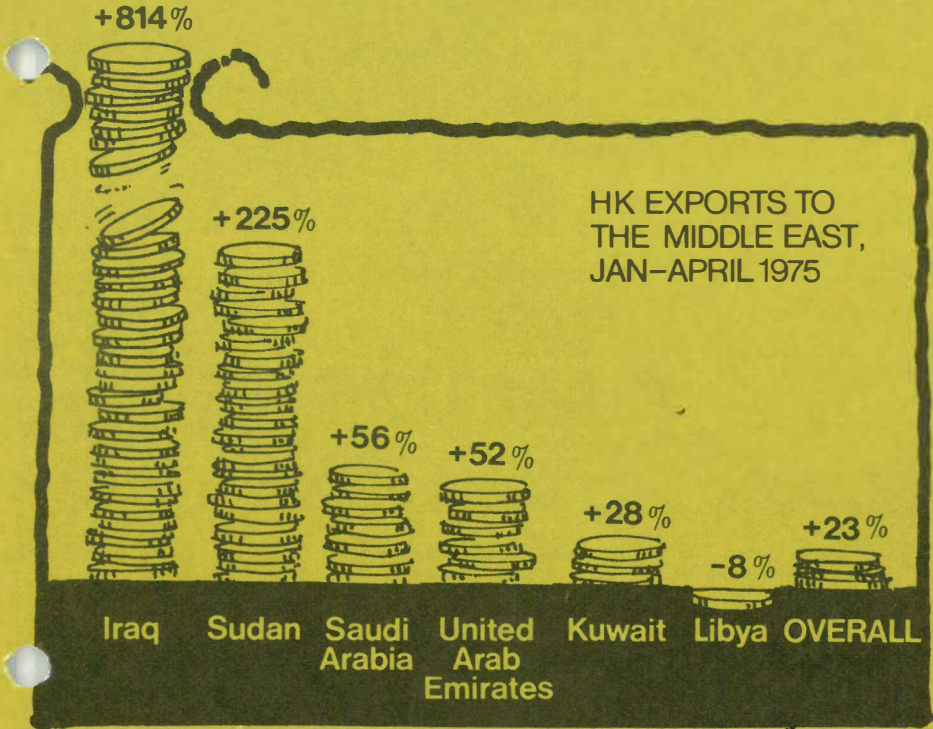




The Bulletin



**Selling to the Arab World—
Is it worth the effort?**

see page 5



奇妙的巧合

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拓展中東貿易

一九七三年末至一九七四年終期間，原油價格增加一倍，繼而三倍。已發展之國家深深恐懼油元帶來的危機，恐防商業銀行現行制度不能應付亞拉伯國家油元的突然流入。從事實觀看，此等恐懼似乎是誇大了。如果這裏還有一縷曙光的話，就是相信用油國的財富將大量轉移到產油國手上，而產油的入口即有迅速的增長。這樣的遞增最少可以局部抵消進口石油所付出的代價，有助工業國家的外匯收支平衡。

開拓新市場

香港當然存在着這種希望。和其他工業國家一樣，我們要輸入所需石油，而其中大部份來自中東。我們的入口賬單亦突然增大起來。在同一時期，我們向主要市場的輸出則開始下降。香港的出口商和廠家在沒有選擇的餘地下，便開始拓掘新市場，加緊作推銷的努力。石油豐富的中東國家便是主要對象。香港貿易發展局在三個月內先後組織三隊商業考察團前往中東，同時有許多商人亦個別到訪該地作貿易磋商以碰運氣。因此，來自中東的報告說大量入口湧進中東。該等國家更受到來自世界各地商人的入侵，很多是從我們的主要競爭國——台灣、南韓、和星加坡等地去的。

香港與中東貿易

但那些如果祈求從香港輸往亞拉伯國家的出口能達到真正大幅度進展，一如油價的加的話，則會感到失望。在今年首四個月香港輸入中東的貨物總值比去年同期增加了百分之二十三，總值由港幣二億零三百萬增至二億五千萬。在數量方面，是年上半年的增加大概是百分之十三左右。這數目是由本會簽證部予以運往中東各國之貨品所簽發之來源證所顯示出來。我們由一月至四月間輸往世界各地的出品總值減少了百分之十四，因此上述與中東貿易的數字是十分受歡迎的。但却很難說我們對中東的出口增加抵銷了

我們在美國和歐洲共同市場受經濟蕭條的影響。

於西德而言，本年首四月內所輸入之港製貨品增加了一億七千五百萬，即加了百份之二十五。尼及奈亞（亦是一石油出口國）同樣地增加了百份之一百八十六，躍升而成香港第十一大出口市場。以二億五千萬港元來說，對中東貿易祇佔我們總出口百份之四。單是對美國出口的減少，首四個月已經達五億六千萬。

貿易進展穩健

傳統上來說，中東從沒成為香港的重要市場，雖然銷售方面在近年來有穩健的進展。一九七三年，中東市場只佔我們的總出口百份之二點五。比較上來說，星加坡佔百份之二點七，加拿大佔百份之二點六。以地區來說，亞拉伯國家對香港出口的重要性隨非洲之後。但跡象顯示這種情形將有所轉變。估計在七零年代終結的時候，石油出產國的國際貿易將佔全世界百份之十。

理論與實踐

然則香港應否計算在一九八零年時期，把總出口百份之十一——或甚而百份之八或九——輸往石油出產國呢？（當然石油出產國中大部份為亞拉伯國家）。假設從目前至一九八零年期間內本港總出口增長率每年只為百份之十，在未來五年中，輸往中東之出口

每年需增至百份之三十三，才可達到上述之成果。

理論上，此增長率甚有可能。但現在，我們應冷靜地估計一下擴展與亞拉伯各國貿易事宜中之各項困難。

「切勿期望過高」

總辦事處設於貝魯特的一間廣告及市場研究公司副總裁——森美·費爾先生最近蒞港訪問時稱：「你們切勿對亞拉伯各國予以太多期望，彼等有如暴富的一羣，你們不可希望他們一夜之間便改變了生活方式。」

費爾先生對中東區域甚為稔熟。彼深信中東予以香港出口商家們長遠之潛力，只要彼等在這方面有好的開端，而又能採取合適之政策。

費爾先生首先指出：「在地域上，中東佔地甚廣。在二十個亞拉伯民族中，他們擁不同的政治、文化、氣候及經濟發展。來自西西里及芬蘭的人均稱自己為歐洲人，但相互之比較也就終於此。亞拉伯各國——除却黎巴嫩主要為一基督教國家外——全賴一共同信仰而團結一致，再者，該等國家為石油出產國之成員。但假若想像亞拉伯各國能整體地一致行動便屬眼光短拙。」

游牧式生活

除却其天然石油資源外，亞拉伯之地域頗為落後，工業及交通上之困難繁多，缺乏創建新型工業及完善交通系統之人力及技倆。因為除却財富外，一切均需要時間、技倆、人力及仔細計劃，才能把封建社會發展成一現代世界。同時要牢記的就是許多亞拉伯國家並非石油出產國，其本身仍為貧乏。該區域一大部份居民仍保持其游牧式的生活。

政治體制不一

在政治方面，亞拉伯各地政制包括保守及反社會主義之君主政制及馬克司主義等。入口政策亦因此而有異。如巴林，或亞拉伯

聯合共和國實行自由入口政策，其他如伊拉克或敘利亞，對入口均施以管制。大致而言，在入口方面，此地區較諸其他各地之管制為少。

在零售及批發事宜上亦略有差異。在中東各地，在街道上舉行之買賣場所甚為普遍，但在許多大城市，現已設有超級市場及百貨商場作取替。

興建計劃一覽

誠然，亞拉伯在其地區內之發展面對困難重重。尤其在石油出產國，試觀其在策劃中之項目便可見其一二。

在沙地亞拉伯，在策劃之項目包括有：肥田料工廠（約值美金一億萬元），八個至十個液化工廠，一間龐大鋼鐵製造廠（美金五億萬），油化工廠（美金三十億萬），興建椰達及擴建利雅得之飛機場、兩個衛星通訊站、淡水製造廠、麵粉廠、在五年內興建一萬公里道路、三合土工廠及一所「萬事達」汽車工廠。非產油國如埃及與黎巴嫩亦在建設上花費不少。

上述建設計劃之承建為歐洲、美國及蘇聯等機構所獲得。其中一些為合併下之計劃。其間，去年乃由歐洲各國從亞拉伯之花費中獲益最多。西德輸往中東之出口，由一九七三年之三十六億馬克增至一九七四年之七十三億馬克。法國往中東之出口於去年亦增加了百份之七十五，（由六十四億法郎增至一百一十四億）。當石油加價時歐洲國家即時看到對亞拉伯國家發展其出口的機會。例如西德去年在數個亞拉伯國家成立全面性的商業代表團，每團成員約共二十人。歐洲的優越條件是與中東接近，交通較為方便，運費較低廉。傳統上是該區的主要貨品供應者。在另一方面，香港吃虧的是相隔遙起，（本港出口商曾抱怨說往中東的運費有時幾乎和貨物的價值相等）。中東對香港不甚認識

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Selling to the Arabs

WHEN oil prices were doubled and quadrupled in the period late 1973 to late 1974, fears were expressed throughout the developed world of an impending 'petro-dollar crisis', resulting from the inability of the commercial banking system to cope with the sudden influx of Arab oil money. In the event, however, such fears appear to have been exaggerated.

But if there was a silver lining in that particular cloud, it was the belief that the dramatic shift of wealth from the oil-consuming industrialised world to the oil-producing countries would be followed by a correspondingly dramatic growth in the latter's imports. Such an increase, it was hoped, would go at least some way (though not in anyone's expectations the whole way) towards off-setting the rocketing cost of fuel imports and restoring the lop-sided balance of payments of the industrialised countries.

Hong Kong naturally shared in these hopes. In common with most developed countries we are in the precarious position of having to import all our oil, most of it from the Middle East. We too suddenly saw our import bill swollen by the rising cost of oil. And at the same time our exports to leading markets were beginning to decline. Hong Kong exporters and manufacturers had no choice but to step up their sales efforts in the few markets that remained strong—and these were largely in the oil-rich countries of the Middle East. As part of the Middle East sales cam-

paign, the Trade Development Council organised three business groups to the Middle East in the space of three months, and many more businessmen went on their own to try their luck at getting orders. Not surprisingly, reports were soon coming in of a Middle East 'flooded' with imports and 'over-run' by trade missions and visiting businessmen from all over the world, many of them from our regional competitors—Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, etc.

However, those who were looking for a really dramatic improvement in our exports to the Arab countries—as great, shall we say, as the increase in oil prices—will so far be disappointed. In the first four months of this year the value of Hong Kong's exports to the Middle East increased by 23 per cent over the same period last year, from HK\$203 million to \$250 million. In volume terms the increase in the first half of this year was probably in the region of 13 per cent, as is suggested by the increase in the number of Certificates of Origin for shipments to Arab countries processed by the Chamber's Certification Department.

Considering the 14 per cent overall drop in the value of our world exports during the same January-April period, these figures are most welcome. But it would be very difficult to say that the increase in exports to the Middle East balances our recession-hit sales to leading markets in the US and the EEC. That might be said of West Germany, which during the same January to April



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period increased its purchases of Hong Kong goods by \$175m, or 25 per cent. It might even be said of Nigeria (also an oil-exporting country), which boosted its imports of HK manufactures by a phenomenal 186 per cent and is now HK's 11th largest export market. But at \$250m. our exports to the Middle East still only account for four per cent of total exports. To put things further into perspective, the *drop* in exports to the US alone in the first four months of the year amounted to more than \$560 million.

Of course, traditionally the Middle East has never been a market of great importance to Hong Kong, although sales have been growing at a steady rate in recent years. In 1973 the Middle East took 2.5 per cent of our total exports. By way of comparison, in the same year Singapore alone accounted for 2.7 per cent and Canada for 2.6 per cent.

However, the signs are that this will change. It has been estimated that the OPEC countries will increase their share of total world trade to about 10 per cent by the end of this decade. The question is, should HK be aiming to send 10 per cent—or even eight or nine per cent—of its exports to the OPEC countries (most of which are of course Arab countries) by 1980? Assuming a conservative annual growth rate of 10 per cent in our overall exports between now and 1980, HK would have to increase its exports to the Middle East by about 33 per cent a year for

the next five years in order to achieve this aim.

In theory such an increase might be possible. But in the short-term we should make a sober assessment of the problems involved in developing trade with the Arab world.

As a recent Arab visitor to Hong Kong put it: 'You should not expect too much from the Arab countries. They are like the man who suddenly gets rich. You cannot expect him to change his whole way of living overnight.'

The visitor, Mr. Samir Fares, is Vice President of the Beirut-based advertising and market research organisation, Intermarkets S. A. L., and knows the region well. He is confident that the long-term potential of the Middle East for Hong Kong exporters is very considerable, provided we get off to a good start and adopt the right approach.

Diverse

Firstly, as Mr. Fares points out, the Middle East covers a vast geographical area. Within the 20 Arab nations there exist great diversities of politics, culture, climate and economic development. True, the Arab nations are tied together by a common cause and the Islam religion (with the exception of Lebanon which is mainly a Christian country) and the Arab oil-producing countries share membership of OPEC. But the fact remains that it would be very short-sighted to think of the Arab world as a monolithic block.

Despite the great wealth of the oil

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producers the region as a whole remains very much under-developed, with little industry and enormous communications problems. Moreover, the skills and in many cases manpower required to build up modern industry and efficient communications are still sorely lacking. After all, with all the wealth and will in the world it still requires time, knowledge, manpower and careful planning to move rapidly from the feudal to the modern world. And it should be remembered too that many of the Arab countries are not oil-producers and remain poor. Large segments of the population in the region continue to lead a desert, nomadic existence.

Politically, Arab governments range over almost the entire spectrum, from conservative, anti-socialist monarchy to Marxist. Import policy also varies widely from one country to the next. Some, like Bahrain or the United Arab Emirates, have a free import policy. Others, like Iraq or Syria, regulate imports. As a generalisation though, the region is less restrictive than most import-wise.

The retail and distribution network also varies. The traditional bazaar and souk are still common-place throughout the Middle East. But they are steadily being replaced by modern supermarkets and department stores in some of the larger cities.

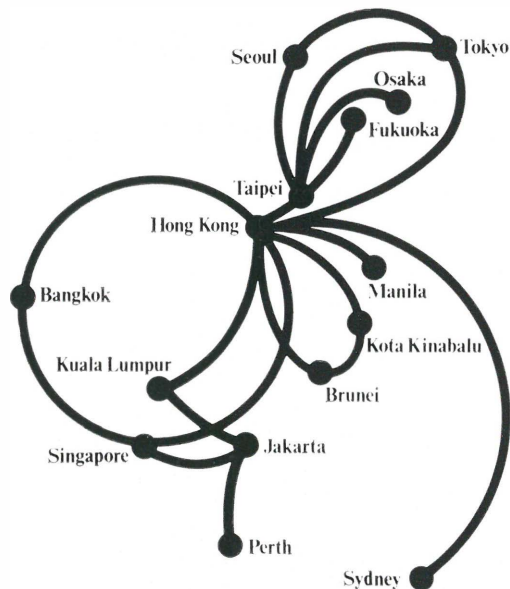
Clearly the problems to be overcome on the Arab road to development are many and daunting. But a look at the list of projects planned or underway, particularly in the oil-

producing countries, shows that these problems are being faced and tackled in a resolute manner. The list also provides a clear indication of where the greatest potential for the exporter lies. In Saudi Arabia alone, for example, major projects 'in the pipeline', so to speak, include: a fertiliser factory (estimated cost US\$100m); eight to ten gas liquefaction plants; a huge steel factory (US\$500m); a petrochemical complex—including a refinery, a methane factory and an ethylene factory (total cost around US\$3,000m); a new airport in Jeddah and the extension of Riyadh airport; two satellite telecommunications stations; desalination plants; silos; flour mills; 10,000 kms of roads in the next five years; a cement factory; and a Mercedes car factory. The list is almost as long for some of the other Arab oil-producing countries. Even non-oil producers like Egypt and the Lebanon are spending heavily on development (some of it financed by generous loans from the oil-producers).

Little scope

These projects clearly offer little scope or comfort to the Hong Kong exporter, at least in the short term. The lucrative contracts are going to European, American and Soviet companies. Some are joint ventures. It is the European countries which so far have reaped the greatest benefits from the Arab spending spree of the last year. Last year West Germany more than doubled its exports to the Arab countries, from DM3,600m in

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1973 to DM7,300m in 1974, and French exports to the region increased by 77 per cent last year, from 6,400m francs to 11,400m francs.

When oil prices were raised the European countries were quick to see the opportunities for developing their exports to the Arab world. West Germany, for example, last year set up full-scale commercial delegations staffed by about 20 officials in several Arab countries. Europe enjoys the advantage of fairly close proximity to the Middle East with easier communications and lower freight charges. Traditionally it has been the region's main supplier. Hong Kong, on the other hand, loses out by being far away (HK exporters have complained that the freight charges on shipments to the Middle East are sometimes almost equal to the value of the goods being shipped) and not well known or understood in the Middle East. Understandably, Arab buyers have tended to look westwards rather than eastwards.

So far HK's export drive in the Middle East has been focussed principally on the countries which offer the strongest immediate potential and which have in past years been our leading markets in the area—the United Arab Emirates (principally Dubai and Abu Dhabi), Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain.

With the exception of Saudi Arabia, these are small, oil-rich territories with populations of less than one million. But their average per-capita incomes are among the highest in the

world and they offer the additional advantages of being free ports and centres for the entrepot trade with other Middle Eastern countries. Exports to these countries have shown strong growth in recent months. Sales to the United Arab Emirates were up by 52 per cent in the first four months of this year, those to Kuwait increased by 28 per cent in the same period, and sales to Saudi Arabia were up by 56 per cent. These countries have been buying large quantities of consumer goods—clothing, transistor radios, TV sets, watches, electric fans, torches, imitation jewellery and travel goods (though not, take note, very many textile goods).

Hong Kong products are selling well in these places. But should we not also be building up our sales in the more populous, but poorer Arab countries, such as Egypt, Sudan, Morocco and Algeria?

The Chamber's Chairman, Mr. Peter Foxon, recently returned from a short visit to Cairo. He reported an earnest desire on the part of the Egyptian Government for an open-door policy and an eagerness to deal with the West. Although the immediate potential of the country might not be over-exciting, Mr. Foxon believes that any time spent building up relationships now will certainly not be wasted in the long run. We should try in particular to earn their trust, as well as a reputation for reliability. 'Personal relationships are very important to the Arab businessman', says Mr. Foxon.



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Our Chairman reported a keen interest in Hong Kong and our growth as a manufacturing centre over the past 25 years. 'In fact Hong Kong is looked on as something of a model of free trade industrial centre and we were told that Egypt would like to model their planned free trade manufacturing area on the Suez Canal on HK or Singapore lines. They wanted to find out all about our rules and regulations, but I told them "It is more a case of our *lack* of rules and regulations."

Opportunities

The planned duty free manufacturing zones offer opportunities for the HK industrialist to set up factories, not so much in textiles—for Egypt already has a large domestic textile industry—but in other areas, such as electronics, plastics, household goods, and so on. Egypt is also very interested in exporting to Hong Kong, in particular cotton and fruit, for example oranges. Although Egypt last year bought only HK\$1.9 million worth of goods from Hong Kong, the outward-looking policy of its government, coupled with the fact that it has the largest population of any Middle Eastern country—more than 37 million—suggests that the future potential for Hong Kong is by no means small. The re-opening of the Suez Canal should also facilitate trade between HK and Egypt.

This view is shared by the Chairman of the Chamber's Arab Area Committee, Mr. S. H. Sung. He says,

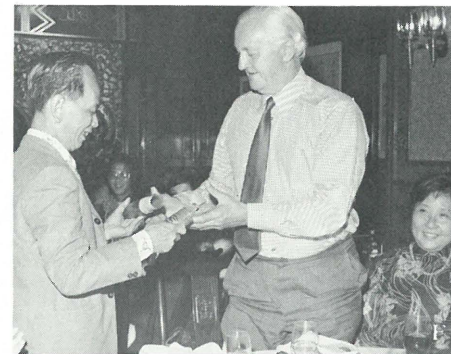
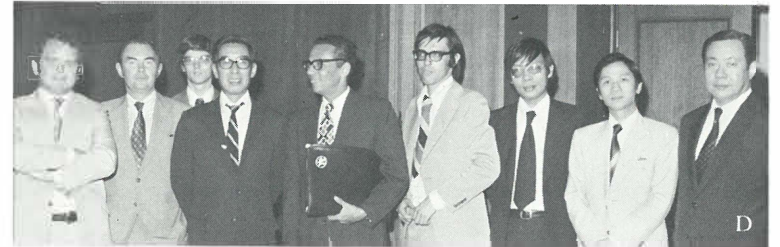
'The important thing is to beat our competitors. We should not ignore a market just because there is little business at the moment. Now, when there are few countries sending trade missions to the North African Arab countries, is the ideal time to make our move.'

Hong Kong's business groups to the Middle East have, apart from attracting several million dollars of business, created considerable interest in Hong Kong. The initial results of our export drive in the region are not spectacular, but neither are they at all disappointing. It is necessary now to follow up these groups in order to fight competition and strengthen our existing foothold in countries like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. At the same time Hong Kong still has a good opportunity to build up links in the other Arab countries.

It is doubtful how far, as yet, the super-profits from oil have managed to filter down to the average Arab consumer. When they do, though, we can expect a greatly intensified demand for just the sort of consumer goods HK manufactures. *The Bulletin* has commented before on the desirability of diversification. The trends of the past year have served to emphasise the dangers of depending too heavily on a small number of markets in Europe and North America. If we can achieve that 10 per cent target mentioned earlier by 1980 then we will have reason to be pleased.

Picture Briefing

- A. The General Committee and China Area Committee hosted a luncheon on June 3 for officials of the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce, the Hsin Hua News Agency, the China Resources Company, the Bank of China, the China Merchants Steam Navigation Company and the China Travel Service. Seen here toasting the continued cooperation between these organisations and the Chamber are (from left) the Hon. T. K. Ann, OBE Mr. Tong Ping Tat, the Chairman, Mr. Peter Foxon, Mr. Tan Kan, Sir Douglas Clague, CBE, MC and Mr. Chang Chi.
- B. The Chairman took the salute at a Police Passing-out parade on July 12 at the Police Training School in Aberdeen. In his speech, the Chairman spoke of the Chamber's association with the Force through the Good Citizen Awards and the Special Relief Fund.
- C. A luncheon hosted by the Chairman was arranged on June 17 in the Hong Kong Club for the President and Secretary General of the Riyadh Chamber of Commerce, Messrs. Saleh Humeidan (2nd from left) and Saleh Toaimi (3rd from left) and Mr. Abdalla A. Bamogaddam (right) Managing Director of Al-Eqtessad Est-Riyadh.
- D. The East Europe Area Committee held a meeting with Mr. Peter Horvath (5th from left) and Mr. Zoltan Szelenyi (6th from left), representatives of the Hungarian Foreign Trade Bank Ltd. on June 18.
- E. Mr. M. Kikuchi, Director of JETRO in Hong Kong described consumer habits in Japan to members at a luncheon on June 27.
- F. A staff dinner in honour of Mr. J. B. Kite, retiring Director of the Chamber, and Mrs. Kite, was held at the Metropole Restaurant on June 27. Here Mr. Kite is seen being presented with a scroll by Mr. Kwong Ming.
- G. The Hon. James Wu Man-Hon, OBE, JP, is the subject of this month's Pen Profile (see page 17).



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Pen Profile

The Hon. James Wu Man-hon

THE Hon. James Wu Man-hon, OBE, JP needs little introduction to the community. He is a well-known figure in business circles and his public service activities. He was recently elected to the Chamber's General Committee and Council.

James Wu is managing director of the China Cold Storage and Engineering Company Ltd. which manufactures air-conditioners and appliances, and of its wholly owned subsidiaries, the Hopewell Company Limited (real estate) and Weatherite Fashions Limited (garments). He is also deputy chairman of Hopewell Holdings Ltd. and Central Enterprises Ltd.

Born in Hong Kong in 1920, James Wu became involved in the family business while still at school, assisting his father in a business which they sold out in 1967. Mr. Wu himself had by the early 1950's taken an interest in engineering and manufacturing. It is easy to see why.

He studied mechanical engineering at Hong Kong University and the National Sun Yat Sen University, graduating with a degree in Engineering. This period was followed by World War II and James Wu spent the war years serving the Allied cause in highway transport work in China. He returned to Hong Kong to establish himself as a pioneer in the field of air-conditioning and refrigeration manufacture in this part of the world and the trade mark 'Weatherite' is today a household word.

Through experience and long technical association with Westinghouse as

a manufacturing licensee, James Wu acquired and developed considerable expertise in mechanical, product and production engineering. He still takes a personal interest in the design and development of new appliances in the business he founded in 1952. In 1957 he was elected a Member of the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-conditioning Engineers.

His own interests in so many areas of Hong Kong's commerce and industry, together with his dedication to improving the lot of his community, makes him conscious and concerned for the Hong Kong of tomorrow. This personal involvement in his community was recognised when James Wu was nominated to the Legislative Council in 1972.

He says, 'It's been a very satisfying job to be able to contribute in a small way to the development of a community of which I am very much a part and from my experience I can see that there is a great deal which Unofficial members of Legco can do to influence the Government of Hong Kong. In fact much more than I initially visualised. It must be remembered that we have a special kind of democracy here in that Legislative Councillors do not represent sectional interests. Indeed, they are to contribute in an individual and independent way on public issues with their background knowledge of any special field.'

'It may be said that it is a government of consensus rather than by opposition that characterises the Hong

Kong system of democracy, in that a great deal of consultation still goes on between Legislative Councillors and Government outside of Council Chambers and the more than 100 advisory committees and boards set up by Government to involve the community in decision-making.'

James Wu himself sits on a number of these boards and committees and is presently on the Public Works Subcommittee and Finance Committee of Legco, the Trade and Industry Advisory Board and the Fish Marketing Advisory Board. Previous involvement include the Urban Council, the Housing Authority, the Advisory Committee on Air Pollution, the Statistics Advisory Committee and the Industrial Training Advisory Committee.

Education

James Wu also concerns himself with education in Hong Kong, particularly technical education. He is deputy chairman of the Polytechnic Board of Governors and of the Hong Kong Training Council. He is also on the Council of the Chinese University and on the Court of Hong Kong University. His feelings about the education of Hong Kong's young and the industrial future of the Colony go hand in hand.

He explains, 'We have so many young people who aspire to have higher standards of living and more satisfying jobs. With the increasing competition from the lower wage countries, I believe that there is little

choice but for us to go into more sophisticated and technologically advanced industries in order that there be opportunities for the very large number of graduates coming out from our institutions of higher learning and technical studies.'

'The Polytechnic for instance has been developing at a rate of increase of 1,000 students a year. When it took over from the Hong Kong Technical College, it had a student body of 1,750. By 1978-79 it will have about 8,000 full-time and 20,000 part-time students. The two universities will have about 6,500 students.'

Mr. Wu went on to say that he thought there were still opportunities in the established industries such as textiles, electronics, toys, etc. but the development of light engineering and metal industries would provide additional opportunities. 'There is of course the need for more educated and trained people in our service industries for which Hong Kong has earned a reputation and which give us a competitive edge over our low-wage neighbours.'

He continued, 'It is essential that there is close cooperation between the academics and the business community so that the institutions of education here can produce employable graduates who have a clearer conception of the business and occupational environment before they actually leave school and begin looking for work.'

James Wu has also, despite his

cont'd Pg. 26

Pick of the Press Reprinted from The Financial Times, London Teaching People to Think Creatively'

IS innovation a gift possessed exclusively by those at top managerial level? Or is it a process which, like any other, can be learned and developed? An organisation can benefit enormously if everyone involved is encouraged to give expression to new ideas. The following article by Art Garcia, reports on the 'thinking-workshops' held by the Stanford Research Institute.

A fashionable way to come up with new ideas in the 1950s was to gather the best and brightest from among management ranks for extemporaneous brainstorming sessions. This free-flow form of community creativity was thought to provide the proper forum and mood for generating new ideas, one on top of the other, as the improvised innovations were either expanded upon or eliminated. Organisations, to be sure, still are constantly on the lookout for significant new ideas, but they needn't rely only on such stream-of-consciousness thinking or highly structured motivational laboratories.

Instead, suggests Stanford Research Institute, creativity can be learned. Through modern problem-solving and idea-generating techniques people can be "astonishingly productive" in sparking ideas if they are properly stimulated, says Dr. Joseph McPherson, a senior behavior scientist at SRI, a private, non-profit think tank in Menlo Park, California. Dr. McPherson and his colleagues have pioneered the creativity workshop they call "Innovation Research" which, unlike the brainstorming affairs of the 1950s, require weeks, even months, of intensive preliminary preparation by those participating.

Instead of focusing solely on the stimulation of ideas, SRI's modern

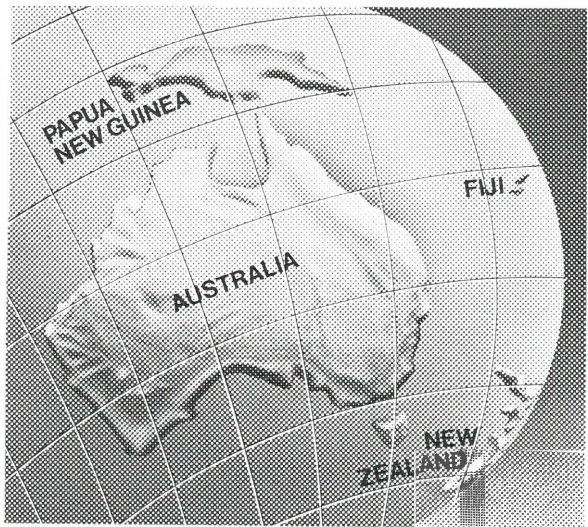
approach calls for channelling creativity toward the solution of a well-defined problem or set of problems, usually determined by two or more company representatives with the assistance of the SRI team.

The SRI creativity workshops run from three to five days, normally for the longer period. "But when you think of the total package, it really lasts about five months," explains Nick Guidici, an operations analyst at SRI and third member of the innovation search team.

Because the problem to be considered should be well defined, participants are given the opportunity to brief themselves ahead of time. SRI has come up with a number of techniques at the sessions to help channel creativity towards solving the problem, but more important than techniques, Dr. McPherson emphasises, is the calibre of the participants. Attitudes, willingness to experiment, educational and work backgrounds—even willingness to play potentially productive games—are more relevant to success than are techniques, he says.

The creativity workshops should include persons from all levels of management, from several different departments and with broad backgrounds in more than one area, rather than just specialists. The question

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frequently arises from technically oriented participants regarding the presence of those with non-technical backgrounds, says Mr. Guidici, "but it's been discovered in the workshops that not all good ideas come only from technical specialists." "The so-called "soft science" areas of finance and marketing, for example, also contribute to company profits and can produce innovative ideas.

The theme of the SRI meeting is that one significant discovery or invention can change the direction of a division, subsidiary or an entire corporation. To help organisations in uncovering these kinds of ideas, the innovation searches are held not only to find new products or services but new uses or modifications for existing ones, as well as outlets for patents and technological processes that aren't being utilised and outlets for special capabilities the company may have.

Low-key role

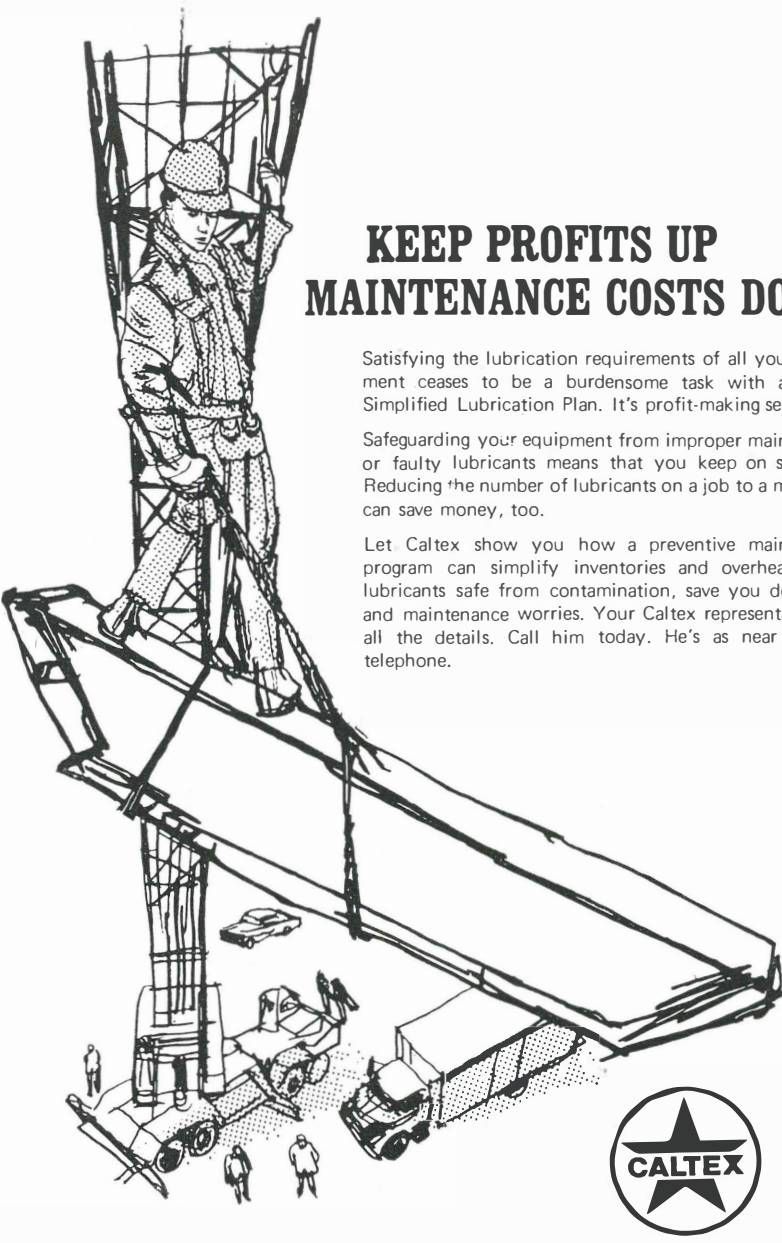
The role of workshop leaders is played down as much as techniques. "We feel those who conduct the sessions should assume a catalytic or 'low-key' role," says Dr. McPherson, "because they can inhibit a group by acting as lecturers, judges or even session leaders."

To prevent the more verbally articulate participants from dominating the session, the workshop provides a number of ways for members to express themselves. The meeting rooms normally contain blackboards, flip charts, plenty of sketch paper on the walls and personal notebooks. Idea-

generating sessions alternate between large and small groups and time is set aside for participants to think and work alone. As an idea pops up, a member of the SRI team logs it on large flip charts called "group memory" and which don't include the name of the person who thought it up so other members won't be discouraged from making additions. All ideas belong to the group as a whole, making them easier to implement because the "personality" is removed.

How many ideas can come out of a creativity workshop? Several hundred reportedly were generated from a project held in Germany earlier this year for SKF, the Swedish ball-bearing concern. An intensive search for a worldwide sporting goods manufacturer led to more than 500 ideas for its technical products division, with the company indicating it will follow up on about 100 of them.

SRI has conducted its innovative search workshops for about 10 clients around the world in the two years since the programme began. The fees range between US\$40,000 and US\$50,000 and the week-long sessions can be held either at the client's location or at SRI, although it prefers to host the session because of the availability of nearly 2,000 SRI specialists in more than 100 disciplines. Participants are encouraged to express ideas in their own language "to get the idea out," says Mr. Guidici. "We'll have it translated. The main thing is not to inhibit the flow of ideas."



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ICC Congress in Madrid Talks About Market Economy

THE 25th Congress of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) was held in Madrid from June 15-22. The Chamber was represented at the Congress by the Secretary, R. T. Griffiths, while Mr. K. Sital represented the Indian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong. The theme of the Congress—of vital importance—was 'Market Economy—more than competition and profit'. In the following article Mr. Griffiths reports on the Congress.

After H. M. Prince Juan Carlos had declared the Congress open, 1,300 delegates from 60 countries, together with representatives of international organisations and of Chambers of Commerce in socialist countries, began a week of study and discussion led by panels of distinguished experts in their fields. The venue was the Palacio Nacional de Congresos y Exposiciones—the Congress and Exhibition Hall—a modern and functional building in the Spanish capital.

Congress is the forum where the main objectives of ICC policy are defined but its main purpose is to stimulate an exchange of views between businessmen from all over the world—not primarily with the aim of arriving at a consensus. Since the theme of this Congress, 'Market Economy—more than competition and profit', was so wide, it was broken down into four sub-themes: global resources in an inter-dependent world; growing social responsibilities of business; responsibility for informing the public; and consequences of state interference in the function of market-oriented economies. Each of these sub-themes was considered by separate committees, sometimes meeting concurrently, so that one had to choose which sub-theme meeting to follow. Because of the topicality and im-

portance of the subject I elected to follow the proceedings of the committee tackling the subject of global resources and, probably for the same reason, so did many other delegates.

Professor Hendrik S. Houthakker, Professor of Economics at Harvard University, was the rapporteur and he submitted a report dealing in primary products in general: petroleum—the main energy source; foodstuffs; and industrial raw materials. He expressed the concern felt by business leaders all over the world now faced with uncertainties of a kind rarely encountered in the past and the fact that developments in the economic sphere, having become intertwined with political factors, had made the future even more cloudy. Nevertheless, his thesis was that in free market conditions the laws of supply and demand could hardly be eliminated. However, it had to be recognised—and this was borne out by several speakers—that completely free markets were rarely found in reality and the degree of freedom varied as between products or groups of products.

He distinguished between three basic types of market organisation—'open', 'closed' and 'mixed'. Agricultural products fell into the 'open' market category in which production and utilisation were in different hands

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so that central trading facilities such as commodity exchanges, for example The Chicago Board of Trade, were needed to establish prices. Industrial materials, on the other hand—bauxite for example—tended to fall into the 'closed' market category in which the primary producers were also users or processors, so that there was little need for elaborate trading facilities, prices being calculated mostly for fiscal and accounting purposes. Where they did not fall into the 'closed' category, primary products such as petroleum and copper were in the 'mixed' market category in which there was substantial but not complete participation by users or processors. Central trading facilities might or might not exist but where they did (as in copper) they covered only part of the market.

Open markets

Professor Houthakker pointed out that 'closed' markets appeared to be losing ground and that there was a tendency towards greater open-ness. The price mechanism was, therefore, becoming more important in production and distribution. In contradistinction, this development had not become more acceptable politically; on the contrary the price mechanism had come under increasing attack in those open and mixed markets where its operation was relatively unrestricted.

How to reconcile these apparently conflicting tendencies was the topic of much of the ensuing discussion and debate and there tended to emerge a polarisation of views as between the

so-called 'developed' and 'developing' countries, which in general correspond to the primary product consuming and producing countries respectively. The tendency towards cartelisation of production was likely to grow and, in the short run, prove successful in shifting the distribution of income in favour of cartel members.

The cartel idea had political appeal, especially at this time when raw material prices were weakening under the influence of a worldwide recession. A cartel meant the exercise of market power which, concretely meant that a group of producers curtailed its output below the level that would prevail in the absence of joint action, and thus raised the price. But since widespread curtailment of output would lead to a fall in consumption and investment, in an inter-dependent world both consumers and producers were likely to suffer.

Oil producers, for instance, would pay more for the raw materials they imported, including raw materials embodied in industrial products. Because some kind of official backing was generally needed to make a cartel effective, a choice had to be made as to whether a change in distribution of income was to be the main objective, or whether efforts should be directed more at increasing aggregate income to the benefit of both producer and consumer countries.

The different points of view expressed during the discussion clearly hinged on differences in short run objectives. In a masterly summing up, Professor Houthakker felt optimistic that these

ICC CONGRESS—cont'd.

could and would be reconciled. The immediate relevance of the discussion for Hong Kong is, I think, to be found in Professor Houthakker's view that markets are becoming more open so that instead of the management decision of integrated firms, supply and demand would be increasingly determined by prices. This perhaps is of relevance to the current debate in Hong Kong on whether a central trading facility in the form of a commodities exchange is desirable here.

During the week there were specialist discussion groups on arbitration, East-West trade, trade facilitation and transport. There was also a special meeting of the International Bureau of Chambers of Commerce to enable officials of Chambers to exchange views on topics of interest to all Chambers irrespective of legal status, and particularly to enable the IBCC to fulfil its role as the body ensuring liaison between all Chambers at the world level.

I had been asked to speak on the 'Role and activities of Chambers of Commerce and Industry vis-a-vis governments as spokesman for business' and attempted to describe how the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce functioned in this respect.

It was a well-organised and successful Congress on which the Spanish National Committee and the International Chamber of Commerce Secretariat are to be congratulated.

PEN PROFILE—cont'd.

other heavy commitments, managed to take an active role in a number of trade associations and lately this has also included the Chamber. He is Chairman of the Federation of Hong Kong Industries, Deputy Chairman of the Productivity Council, a member of the Trade Development Council and Honorary President of the Chinese Manufacturers Association. Up to 1973 he was also a Committee member of the Hong Kong Tourist Association.

He says, 'It is good to see the increasing cooperation among the major trade organisations. This is very encouraging and can only work to the benefit of the community in trade promotion and in the strengthening of our economy.'

On the personal side, James Wu is the father of five daughters and two sons, one of whom has made him and his wife proud grandparents. James Wu has an interest in photography, boating, swimming and Chinese calligraphy. The latter, James Wu explains, has been an interest for over 40 years. 'Chinese calligraphy helps concentration and tempers one's nature, so the scribes of China believed. It certainly disciplines the mind. I find it helps me to be more patient. When I need to think things out, or just to relax, I take out my brushes, ink and paper. Unfortunately I find I have much less time to write these days.'

或了解。因此中東買家有傾向西方的趨勢。

富裕的小國

直至目前為止，我們輸往中東主力都集中在現刻階段最有潛力的國家。這些國家如科威特，沙地亞拉伯，巴林等，過去幾年來已經是我們在該區的主要市場。除沙地亞拉伯外，這些都是產油豐富的小國，人口不及五百萬。但個人收入則是全世界最高的。而他們的額外優點是自由港和轉口貿易中心。對此等國家的出口近月大有進展。他們購入大批衣物、原子粒收音機、電視機、手錶、電風扇、電筒、人造手飾及旅行用品。

既然香港產品在這些地方暢銷，我們是否應該在那些人口較多，但較為貧乏的亞拉伯國家如埃及、蘇丹、摩洛哥等作努力的推銷？

大開門戶

本會主席霍沛得先生最近在開羅作了一短暫的訪問後回來，他報說埃及政府有誠意採取門戶開放政策及與西方國家進行貿易。霍氏相信把時間用諸於建立關係在長起來計是不會白費的。我們尤其是應該爭取他們的信任和獲得可靠的聲譽。霍氏說：「在亞拉伯，商人對個人的交情方面認為很重要。」

我們的主席稱：埃及對香港及我們廿五年來成爲一製造中心的成就有莫大興趣，實際上香港是被認爲一個自由貿易中心的階梯。據悉，埃及正效法香港及星加坡計劃將蘇彝士運河區建爲自由貿易及製造中心。

自由貿易中心

該計劃中的自由貿易區將給與香港出口商各種機會，如電子產品、塑膠、家庭用品等。（雖然埃及本土之紡織工業頗爲宏偉而並不大需求港製紡織品）。埃及亦有興趣向香港推銷其產品，尤其蔬菜及生果。蘇彝士運河重開對香港和埃及間的貿易大爲方便。雖然於去年埃及輸入之港製貨品總值只約

二百萬元，但其政府政策頗爲開朗，其人口達三千七百萬，爲中東各國之冠，因此於與香港貿易而言，其潛力頗爲不俗。

本會亞拉伯區貿易分區委員會主席宋常康先生，亦有同感。彼謂：「最主要的是戰勝我們的競爭者。當很少國家派貿易團往北非亞拉伯國家之時，正好是我們出動的良機。」

香港的貿易團訪問中東，除了獲得幾百萬元訂單外，還引起彼邦對香港的興趣。現在正是需要乘勝追擊，戰勝競爭和在沙地亞拉伯及科威特等地打穩陣腳的時候。

本會刊於前曾指出市場分散的重要，過去一年的趨勢使我們更加認識依賴少數在歐洲和美洲的市場的危險。如果我們能夠如以上所述在一九八零年，向中東石油出產國輸出我們出口百分之十，則我們可以以此爲悅，我們當認爲這是值得嘗試的。

介紹本會新任董事 ——胡文瀚議員——

胡文瀚議員於最近獲委任爲本會諮詢董事局及董事局董事。胡氏爲本港工商界顯赫名人士，對社會服務工作貢獻殊多。

胡氏處理業務繁多，彼除任中國冷氣公司、合和有限公司、惠風製衣有限公司及惠風旅遊有限公司等機構總經理一職外，亦爲合和實業有限公司及中央建業有限公司副主席。後者二公司均致力置業業務。

胡氏生於一九二零年，於在校肄業時已開始參與由其家庭所處理之業務——包括一的士公司，但該聯繫於一九六七年便終結。

彼爲香港大學及孫逸仙國立大學高材生，專攻機械工程，獲工程科文憑。於第二次

大戰期間，胡氏於中國會負責公路交通事宜。隨後回港於一九五二年始創其冷氣及冷藏製造業，時至今日，「惠風」為一口碑載道之名牌。於一九五七年，彼被選任為美國暖氣、冷藏及冷氣工程師學會會員。

由於胡氏對本港工商業各方面甚為關注及全心致力改善社會事宜，於一九七二年被選任為立法局議員。

胡氏指出：彼甚慶幸能有機會對社會發展予以貢獻。立法局之非官守議員能予以政府莫大之影響。彼又稱：於本港而言，我們擁有一頗為特別之民主政制，因立法局並不代表某一方面之利益，而是基於各議員之特別專長知識而作貢獻。

再者，立法局及政府於會議室外仍保持切密磋商及聯繫。政府亦附設二十多個諮詢委員會參與及商討社會決策事宜。

胡文瀚先生目下亦為立法局工務小組委員會及財務委員會委員，又為工商諮詢委員會及漁業事務諮詢委員會委員。於此之前，亦致力市政局、房屋司處、空氣污染委員會、統計諮詢委員會及工業訓練諮詢委員會等會務工作。

除此之外，胡氏對本港教育工作，尤其工業教育方面，甚為熱忱。彼為香港理工學院董事局及香港訓練董事局副主席。於中文大學及香港大學等校務董事會之工作亦致力不少。彼一向認為香港青年一羣之教育事宜及本港工業前途應是雙提並論的。

胡文瀚先生謂：「全港人口中超過百份之六十為二十一歲以下之青年人，彼等一致渴望得到較高之生活水平及滿意之工作。香港面臨工資較低之國家之競爭，因此我們要研究較為繁雜及技術較高之工業至使大量工專畢業生獲較多之機會。」

彼續謂：「本港之理工學院已發展為每年增收學生約一千名。初期於工專學院與理工學院交替期間，學生人數只約共一千八百

名。於一九七八至七九年，日校人數將增至八千名，而夜間學生們將達二萬名。」

「因此，該等畢業生及各中學畢業生應能獲得合適就業機會，而我深信工商各界人士及政府各部門首腦應注意到本港沒有產生學問之人仕失業之現象。」

誠然，胡氏認為在紡織、電子及玩具各基本工業仍頗具就業機會，但輕巧之工業及金屬工業更增加了就業良機。

胡氏指出：「我們甚需要更多訓練有素的人材在本港之服務性工業工作，香港有賴此類行業獲盛名，遠勝鄰近勞資低廉國家。」

「學術界及工商界應保持密切的聯繫，至令從教育學院培養之畢業生能在肄業完竣離校尋找工作時能澈底了解就業各方面之環境。」

「我們很難說在過去已辦到此點。我們應認識到高深之教育學院乃受納稅人仕所資助，因此，該等學院之畢業生應能符合社會所需。」

胡文瀚先生於要務羈身之餘，仍能活躍參與各工商社團會務工作。

胡氏除身為本會董事局董事外，亦為香港工業總會主席、香港生產力促進中心副主席、香港貿易發展局委員及香港廠商聯合會名譽主席等。至一九七三年止，彼又為香港旅遊協會委員會之委員。

據胡氏稱：「各主要工商社團能互相合作，為一可喜之現象，此舉有助促進及發展本港經濟事宜。」

胡氏共有子女七名。於工餘閒暇，彼嗜攝影、放舟遨遊、游泳及書法等。

胡氏致力研習書法達四十年之久。據悉此舉能增加其耐性。胡氏強調：「研習中國書法能陶冶性情，又能助我更為忍耐。當我需要沉思以解決某一事情或憩息時，我便把紙、筆、墨取出來運用。可惜，現今我只有很少時間用於研習書法方面。」

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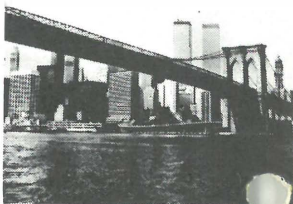
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