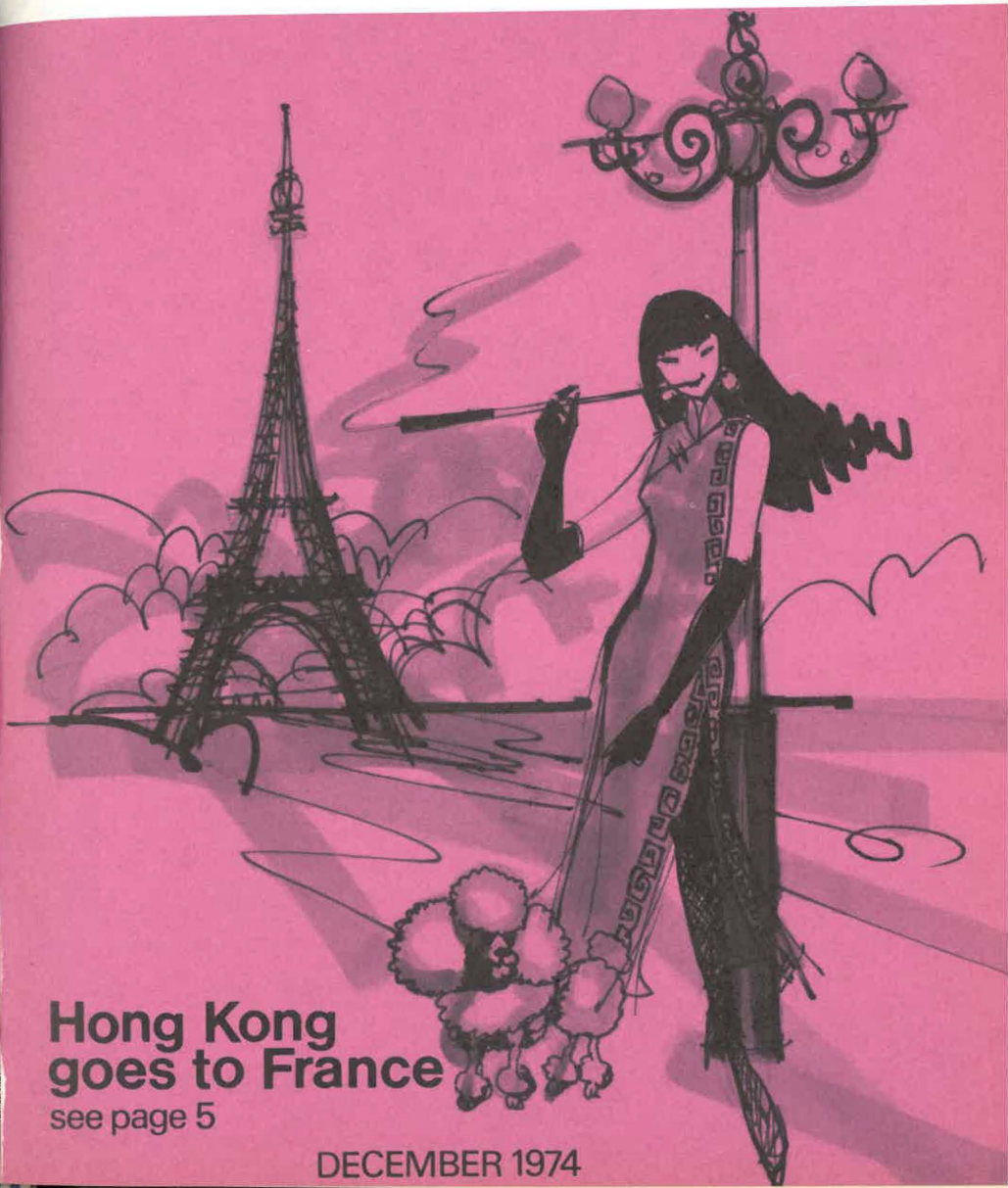


The Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce



The Bulletin



**Hong Kong
goes to France**

see page 5

DECEMBER 1974



奇妙的巧合

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香港與法國面面觀

當人們談及法國的時候。大家立即想起的該是——干邑拔蘭地和香檳酒、時尚服裝、碧姬巴鐸、拿破崙，或是「巴黎最後的探戈」。但現代之法國人——尤其是工商界人仕——會強調地着重指出，除却美酒，佳餚及阿倫狄龍外，法國還有許多其他可供於世的地方。

一向以來，在文化及經濟上，法國被視爲一「內向」民族，而其人民均爲弱小、安居樂業的農民。

因此，當大家知悉於去年，法國出口總值遠超英國或日本，而緊隨美國及西德之後時，該是何等驚訝！

再者，法國之產品範圍甚廣，包括各類奢侈品和香水，還有機器、汽車、公共巴士及地下鐵路系統等。

另一「法國革命」

一如一七八九年，這現代法國革命是相當澈底，但却是相當靜悄悄的。現今，法國已是世界上生活水準最高之國家行列中一員。

是年度，一如世界其他工業先進國家，法國亦面臨通貨膨脹之困難，經濟已遲減退。在出口方面，其增長已下跌，又估計本年底，全國收支差逆將達美金六十億元。

但對香港來說，無論在出口或入口方面，香港及法國間之雙邊貿易，將繼續增加，前途是樂觀的。

促進港法貿易

上述之言並非遐想。

首先，在法國，其新政府已決意解放與非共同市場國家，尤其遠東各地之貿易，彼又願意使法國工業面對世界之競爭。

其次是最近由簡悅強爵士所帶領往訪法國之香港貿易團，獲異常美滿成績，港法貿

易將作戲劇化激增。

再者，最近蒞港履新之法國商務專員——杜均先生——決意細察香港情況，以增加法國之出入口貿易爲宗旨。

入口貿易欠佳

一向以來，在西歐國家中，法國爲一最弱小市場，其人口只爲五千一百萬。正如香港貿易發展局執行董事鄧寧先生所說——目下，港法貿易水平之低令人難以置信。

去年，法國採購港製貨品總值只爲一億四千五百萬。相比之下，香港與歐洲貿易共同市場之貿易情勢爲：英國採購港貨總值爲二十八億一千四百萬；西德爲十九億一百萬；荷蘭爲四億一千一百萬；意大利爲一億八千六百萬；丹麥爲一億五千五百萬及比利時與盧森堡爲一億五千四百萬，其中，只有愛爾蘭輸入較少港製貨品。

法製貨品出口

另一方面，去年，香港輸入法國產品總值約四億三千二百萬元，法國佔我們供應地之第十三位，又爲歐洲共同市場各國中香港之第三位主要供應國。

本年首七個月內，香港輸往法國之貨品較去年同期增加了百份之五十三，而法國產品輸入香港者只增加了百份之十。對香港而言，這是令人鼓舞的。香港輸往法國之出口之增長率雖未及德國或英國，但亦遙遙領先

其他歐洲共同市場各國。而港法貿易差逆仍保持頗高。

在過去，人們會由於港法貿易數量少及差逆懸殊而指控法國政府不應建立「不公平」之貿易壁壘。但法國商務專員指出謂：誠然，在過去，法國為一保護貿易主義者，但到底，每個國家均有其入口規條與配額制度。彼又強調謂：「再者，大家不要忘記法國為歐洲共同市場一份子，因而要遵隨共同市場政策。例如：我們限制香港紡織品入口，但這非是我們之錯，這乃是歐洲共同市場之政策。」

法國美酒佳餚

港法間之貿易將與時日俱增，隨之，又引起了香港對法國文物之濃厚興趣，同樣地，法國人仕對遠東亦有類似興趣。此間人仕對法國佳餚日漸嗜愛。

目下，本港只設有數間所謂法國式餐廳，而正宗法國式的更是寥寥可數。

法國人及中國人有一點是相似的——就是大家對美酒佳餚甚為嗜愛，所謂：民以食為天。

香港從法國所輸入的飲料——其中大部份為拔蘭地。本地人仕，不少一致認為中式飲宴席上，配以拔蘭地甚為適合。實際上，香港人仕為世界上飲用拔蘭地酒之第三位。

至於其他葡萄酒方面，近年來甚為暢銷據天祥洋行洋酒部副經理葛提雅先生謂：不少年青中國男女於近數年間購買法國酒品，但外籍人仕、餐廳、酒店及船公司等仍是最大主顧。」

但本年法國酒之銷路已較去年少——間接也就反映一般在奢侈品上之消費減削了。

香水銷路呆滯

同樣地，本年之香水及化粧品等銷售

亦較諸去了約減少了百份之三十五。

對我們大多數而言，法國服裝可算奢侈品，其銷路亦因人們面臨經濟窘境而受阻滯。本「會訊」上期專文指出通貨膨脹使社會各階層人仕深受打擊，因而影響在法國奢侈品上之消費。但據悉，本港年青的一輩受西方文化薰陶，該等物品在本港將仍有作為

非奢侈品遞增

法國輸進港口之物品於是年共增加了百份之十，所增加之物品為法國紡織紗綫，布匹及製成品；非電動機器及科學器材（如鐘錶、眼鏡及攝影器材等）及化學製成品，而此等物品輸入數量將繼續增加。

誠然，法國仍將不斷向香港推銷貨品，但另一方面亦着重如上述各類非奢侈品。

經濟貢獻殊多

於本港開設之法國機構約五十二間，屬下僱員約八十名為法國人仕。

此等商號包括出入口公司、船務公司、銀行及機械工程公司等。

但假若我們由於在港法國人仕不多而認定法國對本港經濟上之貢獻不多的話，那便是錯誤的想法。

例如：在工程及公共建設上，法國一著名工程公司在過去十年來承建不少工程上之建設。

在過去十年多以來，法國把三個地鐵路系統售與滿地可，墨西哥及聖地牙哥。

雖然本港地下鐵路之興建合約為日本所得，但兩間著名法國公司曾參與初步泥土查勘及興建實驗性隧道之工作。於前，彼等亦承建石壁及船灣淡水湖之主要水壩及目下獅子山隧道第二階段之興建。

將來，當本港籌策興建替代啓德之新機場或一核子廠時，法國公司可能踴躍參與。



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IT is our sincere hope that soon France, the fourth largest import nation in the world, will see fit to dismantle trade barriers and allow HK to compete on an equal footing with other suppliers to the French market'.

Sir Y. K. Kan said this before departing for France at the head of a high-powered Hong Kong trade mission on 20th September. The basic purpose of the mission was to explain Hong Kong's position to trade and business circles in France and break down the misconceptions and prejudices which have hitherto inhibited the development of trade between HK and France.

It would probably come as a surprise to many people to learn that France is the fourth largest importer in the world (behind the USA, West Germany and the UK), for as far as Hong Kong is concerned it is only our 19th largest export market and buys from us less than all the other EEC countries, with the exception of Eire and taking Belgium/Luxemburg as a single country. Only 3.2 per cent of French imports originate from Asia and only a miniscule 0.1 per cent come from HK. A mere 2.7 per cent of our total exports to the EEC Nine goes to France.

The reasons for our poor performance in France are well enough known. There has for long been a large number of discriminatory restrictions against our products in the French market in addition to the restrictive trade measures adopted by the Common Market overall. It was this not-too-pleasing situation, coupled with signs of a more liberal attitude towards trade on the part of the new French Government which led to the

decision to send a HK delegation to France.

In addition to Sir Y. K. Kan the eight-man delegation included the Chamber's Chairman Mr. Peter Foxon; the Chairman of the Federation of HK Industries, the Hon. T. K. Ann; and the Chairman of the HK Garment Manufacturers Association, the Hon. Francis Tien.

Mr. Foxon was highly optimistic about the achievements of the mission, and particularly the climate which it has created for a rapid and immediate growth in our trade with France. 'Of course, the proof of the pudding is in the eating, but I think it would be fair to say that we were all delighted with the success of the mission and with the warmth of the reception we were given by our hosts.'

The climax

Sir Y. K. Kan was equally optimistic. On his return he described the mission as 'one of the most fruitful and useful I have ever led.'

The undoubted climax of the trip was a meeting with the new French Secretary for External Trade, M. Norbert Segard. The Minister told the group that he was personally determined to develop French trade with the Far East as a whole, and with HK in particular. He viewed HK as an ideal spring-board for trade expansion in the Far East.

'M. Segard agreed with our view that the present level of trade between

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our two territories is highly unsatisfactory, and that the existing quotas are beneficial to neither side', said Mr. Foxon. 'And he assured us that major changes will be made in order to promote trade with HK.'

M. Segard added that the French Government had already decided to expand allocations of quotas for a number of products, and to drop them altogether on others. M. Segard also told the delegation that he will personally be leading a mission to the Far East, including HK, early next year.

Elsewhere the reception was equally cordial. In Paris the delegation visited the Conseil National du Patronat Francais — the Federation of French Industries — and held a very useful question-and-answer session with leading French industrialists. The delegation also had cordial discussions with the Vice President of the Paris Chamber of Commerce, M. Bellanger; the Association of French Cotton Industries; the Credit Lyonnais Bank; the Centre Francais du Commerce Extérieur — which is a kind of French TDC; and with representatives of leading department stores.

The talks were generally frank, and there was no attempt to avoid the thorny question of quotas. In the past not only have the quotas allocated for our products been extremely restrictive, but even these small amounts have often not been fully utilised owing to administrative complexities.

As pointed out by M. Segard, the value of the quotas in protecting

French industry has been dubious, and for HK the quotas have formed a 'psychological barrier' which has resulted in a pretty meaningless trade performance.

The idea of joint ventures with HK, British or other companies in HK industry was also touched upon in the talks with French officials. Such ventures would help France to further its interests in the Far East region as a whole, as well as providing a stimulant to Hong Kong industry.

The problem of inflation in France, as in most other countries, is one of principal concern to the Government, and it could well be that the French Government sees an increase in imports from developing countries like those of the Far East as one way of combating inflation. At the same time, of course, France would like to increase its exports to Hong Kong, particularly of non-luxury items such as machinery or complete plants, or raw materials. The delegation assured the French that HK is quite prepared to buy more from France. However, at present the balance of trade is strongly in France's favour and the first priority must be to develop our exports.

To mark the beginning of what we hope will be an era of rapid expansion in our trade with France, *The Bulletin* this month examines the 'French Connection' in Hong Kong, with a survey of current trading patterns, French products and companies in HK, cultural influence, and so on, a profile of the new French Trade Commissioner, and for dessert a gourmet's guide to French gastronomy.

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The French Connection

COGNAC and champagne, fashions and fine clothing, escargots, Brigitte Bardot, Napoleon, perhaps The Last Tango in Paris — these are some of the things or people for which France is justifiably famous. But if this is the image which France projects to most people in Hong Kong then it is a rather lop-sided one. The modern Frenchman — the businessman in particular — is likely to insist that France has much more to offer than excellent cuisine, randy lovers and Alain Delon. And he would certainly have a point.

Both culturally and economically France has traditionally been regarded by many outsiders as a rather inward-looking country. If Britain has been seen as (to quote a well-known Frenchman) 'a nation of shopkeepers', France has been viewed as a nation of small farmers, all living in delightful little villages like *Clochemerle* and tending their vineyards.

Thus it would come as a considerable surprise to many to learn that last year France exported more than either Britain or Japan, and was in fact placed behind only the USA and West Germany in the total value of its exports. Moreover, the products of French industry and agriculture are not limited to brandy and beaujolais but extend over a wide spectrum, ranging from luxury goods to heavy machinery, from perfumes to motor vehicles, from onions to air-buses, from complete Metro systems to lingerie, and so on.

The modern French Revolution has been no less complete and thoroughgoing than the 1789 one, and much more quiet and painless. Indeed, some might claim that France's post-war economic recovery and growth has been no less dramatic than that of its neighbour to the East. France now boasts one of the highest stand-

ards of living in the world.

This year, in common with all the advanced industrial countries, France has suffered from double-figure inflation, coupled with signs of an economic slowdown; export growth has fallen, and it is estimated that the country's balance of payments deficit will reach US\$6,000 million by the end of the year. Nevertheless, France appears to be faring better than many of its competitors, and as far as Hong Kong is concerned we can look forward to a rapid growth in our future trade with France — both exports and imports.

This statement, moreover, is no mere pious hope. This year a combination of circumstances has served to bring about a breakthrough in our exports to France, with the hope of much better things to come. Firstly, a new Government has come to power in France — one which is determined to liberalise trade with the non-Common Market countries, and with the Far East in particular, one which is not afraid to expose French industry to competition. Secondly, the recent Hong Kong trade delegation to France headed by Sir Y. K. Kan turned out to be a greater success than anyone here could have hoped for, paving the way for a dramatic increase in our

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trade with France (see the report on the Mission to France on pg. 5). And thirdly, the new French Trade Commissioner in Hong Kong, M. Georges Duquin (see Pen Profile) is personally determined to examine the situation of HK with a view to expanding both imports and exports.

France traditionally has been one of our poorest markets in Western Europe, particularly considering its population of 51 million. In fact to quote Mr. Len Dunning, Executive Director of the TDC — the current level of HK trade with France is 'incredibly low'. Last year France bought only HK\$145 million worth of our products. And to put this figure in its proper perspective — viz. our overall trade with the EEC: the UK bought \$2,814 million; West Germany \$1,901 million; the Netherlands \$411 million; Italy \$186 million; Denmark \$155 million and Belgium/Luxemburg \$154 million. Only Eire of the EEC Nine bought less from Hong Kong.

On the other hand, France last year managed to sell to HK nearly three times the amount it bought from us. Imports of French products were valued at \$432 million, which made France our 13th largest supplier, and the third largest of the EEC countries.

In the first seven months of this year our exports to France have increased by 53 per cent over the corresponding period last year, while imports from France have grown at a rate of only ten per cent. From HK's point of view this is obviously en-

couraging. Our exports to France are currently growing faster than those to any other Common Market country — although they still have a long way to go to catch up with Germany or the UK. And the imbalance in our trade with France remains high.

Rules of the game

In the past, the low volume of trade with France, coupled with the imbalance, has led some people to accuse the French Government of erecting 'unfair' trade barriers, or of 'not playing by the rules'. The new French Trade Commissioner told *The Bulletin* that, while France has admittedly been protectionist in the past, it is unfair to single out France alone for such an accusation. After all, every country has its import regulations and quota systems. 'Furthermore, one must not forget that France is a member of the EEC and adheres to EEC policies. For instance we restrict entry of HK textiles. But that is not our fault, it is the policy of the EEC'.

Anyway, it is expected that trade between HK and France *will* grow and that this will in turn bring about an increased interest in things French in HK — and a parallel interest in the Far East in France. Perhaps French gastronomy will become more popular which the local population. *The Bulletin* certainly hopes so. At present there are very few restaurants in HK which call themselves French, and even fewer that a Frenchman would recognise as being French. We take a look at French cuisine elsewhere in these pages. Suffice it to say here that the French and Chinese people share

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one great thing in common — their love of good food. Or as the Chinese proverb goes, they 'regard eating as Heaven'.

The ideal complement

Turning to specific products and companies, and areas of French influence in Hong Kong, it should certainly come as no surprise to anyone in HK to learn that our major import item from France is 'beverages' — and within that category the great bulk is made up of brandy and cognac. Cognac is regarded by many of the more affluent section of the local population as an ideal complement to a Chinese dinner — possibly almost as essential an ingredient at a major celebration as mahjong. Hong Kong is now reckoned to be the third largest consumer of cognac in the world, and in per-capita terms is far and away the world's Cognac King.

Sales of wine have been increasing fairly rapidly in recent years, and according to the Assistant Manager of Dodwells Wines & Spirits Department, Mr. Gautier, more and more young Chinese people have been purchasing wines in recent years, although admittedly the principal clientele is still expatriate — along with the large restaurants, hotels and shipping lines.

However — again not surprisingly — sales of French wines and spirits this year are down on last year's, reflecting a general cutback in consumer expenditure on luxury items.

Another popular French export sold here is perfume and toiletries. Sales of these have again shown a

marked decrease this year — by around 35 per cent.

French clothing is also a luxury item for many of us, and sales have been similarly affected by the fall in real income. As *The Bulletin* observed last month, sustained inflation has hit at almost everyone's income, and has not affected merely the lower income groups in the community. This observation is borne out by the drop in expenditure on French luxury goods.

But in the long-term, the process of westernisation among the younger generation must spell a growing market for these kinds of items in HK.

However, M. Duquin told us that the current pattern of French imports to HK is most unsatisfactory from the French point of view, as sales of luxury items are the first to be affected by a cutback in consumer expenditure. Furthermore, such items as wine, clothing and perfume are popular with tourists (particularly the Japanese) and a slowdown in the tourist trade this year must to some extent be responsible for the decrease.

If one were to list all the products one can buy in Hong Kong with the "Made in France" label, the list would be very long. Much of the ten per cent growth in French exports to HK this year has been accounted for by purchases of French textile yarn, fabrics and made-ups; non-electrical machinery and scientific instruments (watches, clocks, optical goods, photographic equipment, etc.); and chemical products. And it is in *these* areas where the greatest growth potential exists.

cont'd.

Turning to the local French community, we find there are some 52 French establishments in Hong Kong employing more than 80 French expatriates. These range from import-export companies and agents for French consumer products to large shipping, banking and engineering concerns. But it would be wrong to assume from the small size of the local French population or the 'incredibly low' value of France as an export market that the French contribution to our economy is a small one. (And besides, \$145 million worth of exports is not to be sneezed at!)

For example, in the engineering and public works field the name *Societe Francaise d'Enterprise de Dragage et de Travaux Publics* is a very meaningful one (despite its length!). The company has been associated with a number of major public works projects in HK over the past two decades. These include the construction of Kai Tak runway between 1955-58, the Shek Pik dam, the first Lion Rock Tunnel completed in 1964, the Plover Cove Dam between 1964-68, site formation at the Chinese University (1964-1968) and the construction of berth no. 1 at the Kwai Chung Container Terminal. The company is now involved in the work on the second Lion Rock Tunnel project and is a partner in the joint venture building the High Island Tunnels. These projects are in addition to a number of smaller contracts. It is an impressive list by any standards. S.F.E.D.T.P. is also active in other parts of SE Asia — Cambodia, Indonesia, North and

South Vietnam, Thailand and Pakistan — as well as in Africa, Europe and New Zealand.

In the past ten years France has exported three complete Metro systems — to Montreal, Mexico City and Santiago. While the contract for our own 'Mass Transit' system has gone to a Japanese company, two leading French companies, *Enterprises Bachy et Soletanches*, have been jointly involved in the preliminary work of soil investigation and the construction of trial tunnels and shafts for the railway. In fact, according to their manager in HK, M. Henry Marchini, their M-T Railway contract — HK\$10 million — was one of the largest of its kind there has been anywhere. Bachy/Soletanche have also been associated with other major projects, such as the Shek Pik and Plover Cove Reservoirs, where they did the grouting for the main dams, and the current Second Lion Rock Tunnel project.

With huge public works projects planned for the future — such as a new airport to replace Kai Tak and a possible nuclear power plant — we can be sure that French companies will be at least in the bidding for a piece of the action. The French nuclear programme, for example, is the most important in Europe, and France has so far exported five nuclear plants to Iran alone.

The French aerospace industry is also one of the most advanced in the world. In HK it is represented by a regional office of *Aerospatiale* — *SNIAS*. The Manager, M. Henri Vernazobres, told *The Bulletin* that

France has sold six Alouette II & III helicopters to HK during the past few years — to Hutchison's 'Hong Kong Air' and the Hong Kong Auxiliary Air Force.

In the banking field France is very active in Hong Kong. There are three major French banks with branches or subsidiaries here. They are the *Banque Nationale de Paris*, the *Banque de L'Indochine*, and *Credit Lyonnais HK (Finance) Ltd.* The former two are by far the largest employers of French expatriates in HK, employing some 22 Frenchmen and women between them. The *Banque de L'Indochine* is now planning a joint venture in HK with the British merchant bank, Morgan-Grenfell. Similar joint ventures with British and other banks have already been undertaken in other countries.

Les touristes

France is one of our largest tourist 'import markets', and the third largest in Europe. So far this year (January to September) nearly 14,000 French tourists have visited HK. This is some nine per cent fewer than in the first nine months of 1973. Such a decrease is however in line with the general trend of fewer tourists from the developed countries (Australia being the exception), and is a further reflection of how people's income has been cut by soaring inflation in the 'advanced' countries.

France of course has a great deal to offer the rest of the world in the cultural sphere, and in HK the Alliance Francaise is active in teaching,

promoting concerts, and so on. About ten thousand local students study in French classes at the Alliance Francaise every year and French is the second 'second language' taught in many HK schools. An estimated 3,000 students are learning French at schools in HK. There is quite a large French Department at the Chinese University, with about 200 students, with a further 50 students studying French at the Comparative Literature Department at HKU.

Some French films — particularly those starring Alain Delon — are popular with local audiences, although the more 'high-brow' stuff is not considered suitable by the local film importers. Offerings by such world-renowned directors as Truffaut, Jean-Luc Godard or Louis Malle are rarely seen here.

French humour — like British or Chinese humour — is seldom understood or appreciated by foreigners, although films starring the French comedian Louis de Funès have been well received here. There is also a very popular, and exceedingly funny little book of humorous sketches on HK by the French cartoonist Zabo, whose cartoons also adorn the walls of a bar at a leading hotel.

The 'French Connection' in Hong Kong then is stronger than at first meets the eye. The 652 (at the end of 1973) French nationals in Hong Kong are active in a wide variety of fields and the French presence has already enriched Hong Kong considerably — economically, culturally, and gastronomically.

Pen Profile

Georges Duquin

GEORGES Duquin arrived in Hong Kong less than one month ago but he has already settled into his post and is about to embark on plans to promote his 'business' on a wider scale in Hong Kong.

Georges Duquin is the new French Trade Commissioner in Hong Kong and his 'business' is to promote new trade relations between France and the Colony and to oversee existing relations.

'I wanted to come here. For years I worked to get this posting. I have not been disappointed. I have a great admiration for the British and the Chinese.'

Georges Duquin was born in 1938 in Hanoi, North Vietnam. He is in fact part Vietnamese. 'I left Vietnam to study in France. I took my Master's degree in Economics and Political Science at Bordeaux.' He then entered the École Nationale d'Administration, ENA for short.

The ENA is the first step into the high civil service. M. Duquin explained that the ENA was founded in 1945 by Charles De Gaulle in order to 'unify the service and to fight against nepotism.'

He continued, 'It is the original institution that was designed to produce quality civil servants for France. It is one of three or four, what we call, "grandes écoles" in France. Both President Giscard d'Estaing and M. Chirac, the Prime Minister, were graduates of the ENA.'

'Entrance requirement is an examination for which nearly 2500 people sit. But only 80 or 90

succeed. Of course to enter the ENA one must already have finished one's university studies.'

'After the ENA, one can choose whichever ministry one wishes to work for. I chose the Ministry of Economics and Finance which is in fact the most powerful ministry in our government.'

The trade commission side of the French diplomatic unit is under the Ministry of Economics and Finance rather than the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. When abroad trade commissioners for France receive consular status but they usually answer to the Minister of Economics and Finance, although in Hong Kong the trade commission is headed by the Consul General. M. Duquin pointed out that President Giscard d'Estaing was for many years Minister of this power-wielding body.

Three postings

Georges Duquin completed his ENA studies in 1965. 'I am only at the beginning of my career.'

'My first posting was as Commercial Attache in New York. I was there from 1966 to 1969. In that time I travelled throughout the States and I do believe I know it far better than my native France.'

'New York is fascinating and I feel that no trade commission man's career would be complete without having done a stint there. Hong Kong is like that in a way.'

After New York, Georges Duquin made his way to Madrid where he was Commercial Counsellor until his departure for Hong Kong.

And what was it about Hong Kong that made this man who had never even been in Hong Kong fight to come here?

'Well, there is a myth about Hong Kong and I wanted to see whether it was just a myth. It isn't. Hong Kong is a city with a special significance. It is a merchant city and being here is an experience all its own.'

He continued, 'Every job has its own idiosyncracies. Each job has its own speciality. There are times when one must practically forget everything he was doing in his last job.'

'My role here is that of observer and only comes into the fore when projects have to be insured and approved by the French government.'

'French interests here which in fact will be my fields of interest are textiles, finance and banking activity and equipment, which at times could be major public works projects.'

'The Trade Commission is not a large outfit—including the chauffeur, we number 12. Myself, the Assistant Trade Commissioner, Jacques Rudant, three assistants, one French and two local staff who are engaged in market research and field work, three secretaries, one statistician who analyses official French statistics as well as information supplied by the Census and Statistics Department, one accountant, one messenger and of course the chauffeur.'

Georges Duquin is most enthusiastic about future trade prospects between France and Hong Kong.

'For the first eight months of this year, Hong Kong domestic exports to France increased by 45 per cent over the same period in 1973. This is quite a substantial increase in the light of present circumstances. Re-exports increased by an astounding 79 per cent. At the same time imports from France increased by eight per cent. So although the balance of trade is still very much in France's favour, the difference is narrowing.'

Responsible personalities

'I arrived here at an important moment. I met the TDC mission to France and met Sir Y. K. Kan and your chairman, Mr. Foxon. This mission has done a successful job in opening eyes in France. The French now know that Hong Kong has a very active administration and there are very responsible personalities in this town. It is more than just a place for exports.'

He continued, 'I shall make it a personal job to work in the path of the TDC mission, that is, to facilitate exports to France. Trade is a two-way street. It is an automatic and spontaneous link between imports and exports.'

Georges Duquin is married, with four daughters, all of whom are here. Although he admits to being more acquainted with the States geographically than his native France, his ideas on such subjects as a woman's place in the home are very definitely French in origin. Georges Duquin will find himself very much at home here.

Picture Briefing

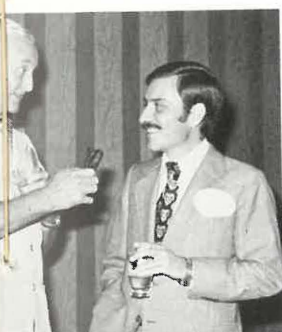
A-B The Commonwealth Press Union held its annual conference in Hong Kong from October 2 to 6. The Chamber, in conjunction with the TDC, GIS and the HKTA, helped organise the delegates programme. A) shows an evening harbour cruise on October 3, and B) a dinner reception at the Mandarin Hotel on October 4, which featured a display of Chinese martial arts.

C-D A second large-scale public presentation of the Chamber's 'Good Citizen Award Fund' was held on October 17, at the Southern Playground, Wanchai. Eighteen recipients were handed their awards by cast members of RHKTV's 'Below Lion Rock' series. C) shows the Chairman opening the presentation while D) shows stars (from left) Leung Ming, Tsang Kwong, Kot Kim-ching and Fung Shui-chun.

E The Director exchanges a joke with the Consul-General for the Arab Republic of Egypt, Mr. Aly Boraie (left) and the Honorary Consul for Jordan, Mr. Fahed S. Bughdali (right) during a staff-meets-staff luncheon held on October 22.

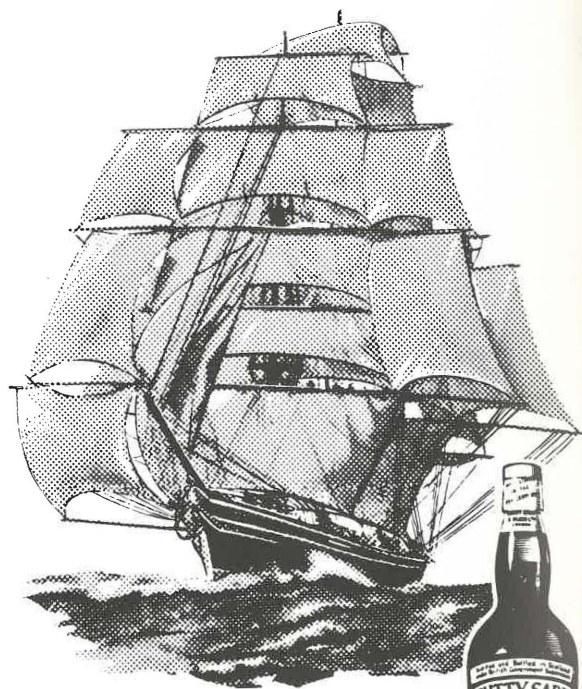
F Georges Duquin is the newly-arrived French Trade Commissioner and subject for this month's Pen Profile (See page 16).





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The Good (French) Business Lunch

LET'S start by being dogmatic — the two finest schools of cookery so far evolved by man are the Chinese and the French. To take things any further and say which is the greater is not the intention of this article, and its author is in any case undecided.

Having started with a sweeping assertion, may we be equally clear about what we do *not* wish to claim?

Firstly, we do not suggest for one moment that every meal in a French (or for that matter Chinese) restaurant is an unqualified delight. It is as easy to get mediocre, indifferent or downright bad food in a French restaurant as in a British, American or, presumably, Siberian restaurant.

And not all French eating places even try to be temples of gastronomy. France has its share of indifferent hamburger stop-overs and restaurants where price and convenience take precedence over choice of materials, arrangement of menu and cooking.

We would not want to claim either that the *best* French restaurants are necessarily any better than the best British, American or Siberian restaurants. Equally, the best French chefs (or housewives) may be no more skilled than their British etc. counterparts.

What then was the purpose of the challenge in our opening sentence? Well, we did use the phrase 'school of cookery'

In order to evolve a great national cuisine, a country must firstly have certain natural advantages, derived from terrain, soil and climate.

France is exceptionally well blessed when it comes to farming. It is no coincidence that much of the wrangling within the Common Market should concern agricultural policy. Within French borders, farmers harvest both wheat and rice, produce both fine butter and olive oil, grow both excellent apples and grapes, and rear most forms of domesticated livestock known to man.

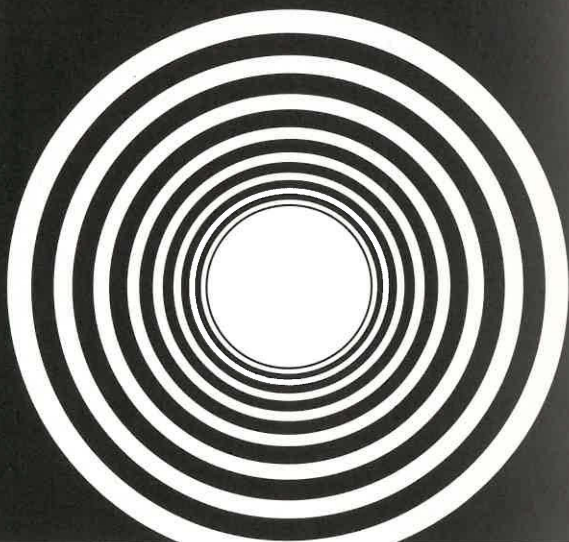
Secondly, a truly gastronomic country must have a tradition, a history of civilisation. For instance, centuries of experiment and trial and error are required to coax from the land what it best may give, although today modern science does short circuit the process. France has maintained more or less the same defined borders (with a few variations along the continental boundaries) since the Fifteenth century, thus giving a cultural and political coherence to the geographical entity, and creating the conditions in which a communal tradition can flourish.

People

Thirdly, one needs of course people — people of imagination who may rely on a reasonable degree of political stability and economic development, so that the arts of civilisation can develop.

And it is perhaps worth adding that all the factors mentioned so far apply to a greater or lesser extent to China.

And, again, as in China, French cookery is not just one district style. As Chinese food has its regional



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variations such as the Northern, Szechuan, Shanghai, Cantonese, so perhaps what makes French cooking great is its triumph in producing such a variety of regional dishes that are nonetheless related within what is recognisably an overall style. It is probably fair to claim that no other country — certainly of comparable size—has managed to produce such a variety of different types of dish.

It is an accident of history that one style—the so-called 'Haute Cuisine'—is sometimes regarded as *the* French style. The grill rooms of the bigger international hotels sometimes attempt even today to provide an echo of this. But, under the influence of the Yankee dollar, the grill rooms of most hotels now incline more towards an Americanised version of *Haute Cuisine*, even if the menu is still printed in French.

The origins of *Haute Cuisine* are to be found in the eighteenth century or even earlier, perhaps when Catherine de Medici brought her Italian chefs to the court of Henri II in the sixteenth century, a date that has been put forward as the beginning of French cookery as an art; although for example the Mediterranean *bouillabaisse* has been dated to the time of the Phoenicians who established a trading post at Marseilles several hundreds of years before the birth of Christ.

But it was the nineteenth century, and in the part the influence of great gastronomes and chefs such as Careme, Brillat-Savarin, Urbain Dubois and more recently Escoffier, that

was really the age of *Haute Cuisine*. It lingered into the twentieth century, but as the idle rich either declined in numbers or became less idle, the clientele that had the time and the cash to sit down to a meal of eight or more courses dwindled.

We are not concerned with *Haute Cuisine*, since it is really part of history. But apart from *Haute Cuisine* one may group French cooking into bourgeois cooking and peasant or regional cooking. The latter has produced some formidable dishes, which are often refined and modified by affluent and ambitious chefs, and two styles of cooking more or less imperceptibly merge into what today is probably most typical in French cooking.

Imperceptibly merged

This is the style which was developed over the years by patient provincial housewives and their cooks — the countless *tantes Marie* — and by restaurateur-chefs to delight the palate of small town lawyers, doctors, businessmen and their families.

The regional styles of French cooking are grouped more or less according to the old Provinces of France. There are almost 40 of these, including Corsica, and each is able to produce its specialities. Some even vary from town to town — the *cassoulet* of Castelnaudary for instance being somewhat different from that of Carcassonne.

While it is invidious to select some of the Provinces for special mention it is equally impossible to cover all.

cont'd.

Likewise, to cover all the dishes of each province would be the work of a lifetime. The few mentioned here, then, are to be taken not as the best, but merely as representative of the best.

In this spirit, one might mention Normandy in the north; the region of the Loire valley, and Burgundy and that surrounding Lyons (a town that has been referred to as the capital of French gastronomy) in central France; Alsace on the eastern borders, and Provence and Languedoc along the Mediterranean coast.

If one looked at the two extremes — Normandy and Provence — one might be forgiven for believing that the two had no common link. For instance, the basic 'fat' of Normandy is butter—the best butter in the world, some might claim. The traditional fat of Provence is olive oil.

Butter & olive oil

Stress is put on what might seem a minor difference since it seems to this writer that it is the type of fat used that imparts the basic character to food. For instance, herbs and flavourings often tend either to be imported or alternatively can be grown with equal ease in a variety of different climates. Even in days when the distribution of foodstuffs was more localised than it is today, both the Provencale and the Normande housewife could have at hand locally grown parsley and imported peppercorns. But the Provencale housewife was unlikely then to have available Nor-

mandy butter, and her northern counterpart would have seen little sense in using Provencale oil, except perhaps for salad dressing.

Apples & cream

Again, the good butter of Normandy, is not just for spreading on bread, but it — or rather the milk from which it comes — finds its way into so much that is characteristic of the region — *Camembert* and *Pont L'Eveque* cheese, for example. Then the famous Normandy cream, the richest in the world and indeed not unlike a cheese in some ways, may accompany a *tarte* made from Normandy apples, to produce a distinctive dessert that should not be equated with just anyone's apple pie and cream (not even Mom's).

A Norman meal might thus consist of a *potage* (vegetable soup) in which the vegetables had been first sautéed in butter. Then a sole fried in butter. And since a milk producing region must also possess the odd cow — a veal escalope might follow, again probably fried in the local butter. To follow, *Camembert* (in France the cheese must come before the dessert), and then the *tarte* and cream. And the flavour of the apples would be echoed in the *cidre* that washed down the meal.

Although this is a deliberately extreme example (and not a particularly well balanced meal) it shows the way a distinct flavour deriving from one or two basic ingredients can form a complete meal.

Other Norman dishes worth mentioning are perhaps *tripes a la mode de Caen* (a rib-sticking tripe stew for those with healthy appetites, internationally better known by name than by ingestion), Rouen ducklings, and of course seafood. Probably the most famous of the latter is the sole (also fished by others under the appellation *Dover sole*), which can appear with a host of different sauces, depending on the particular coastal town where it is prepared, and containing ingredients such as mussels, shrimps, clams and other varieties of shell fish.

In the Loire valley, river fish—including eel, pike, bream and salmon—would replace sea fish. But here again is a region of butter, which features in the making of sumptuous sauces to accompany the river fish, such as the so called *beurre blanc*.

Into grape country

The Loire is also a grape region. So here a new flavour, quite distinct from the Norman apple enters the dishes—the wines of *Saumur*, *Muscadet* and *Vouvray*. And of course the wine accompanying the dish imparts a far different *gout* (flavour) from the cider traditionally drunk in Normandy.

The wine of Burgundy most certainly over-shadows that of the Loire. But wine apart, Burgundy is well known for its *boeuf a la Bourguignonne*. In this dish the distinct flavouring element is the wine in which the beef is simmered, while a garnish of mushrooms, salt pork and

small onions adds its own inflections. (Ridiculous somehow to translate this dish as beef and wine stew!) Much the same recipe, but this time with chicken as the main ingredient, appears as *Coq au Vin*. Or if one is particularly extravagant, it may become, with a flourish of vigneren's pride, *Coq au Chambertin*.

Chicken

Coq au Vin may however be a dish for the fowl that has passed the prime stage of youth. No-one would waste a tender chicken from the Bresse region in *Coq au Vin*, and a little further south in the Lyonnaise the chicken comes into its own. It may be roasted or poached and accompanied by a variety of sauces. Lyons is also traditionally famous for its use of onions—the term Lyonnaise on a menu usually means 'cooked with onions'. And Lyons is still within the butter belt and your chicken may therefore be cooked in butter, as would the onions and potatoes (sauted separately please) that make up the accompanying *Pommes Lyonnaise*. A bottle of *Beaujolais*, drunk within the year of the vintage, washes down the chicken. It would not be sacrilege to drink the young wine slightly chilled. Lyons is also celebrated for its pork and the sausage of Lyons forms a tasty hors d'oeuvre.

But the region in which the sausage reigns supreme is of course Alsace, reflecting no doubt the influence of its German neighbour (or vice versa?). The sausage might be



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accompanied by what most non-French menus will refer to as sauerkraut but what the Alsatian will call *choucroute*. And there is not simply one variety of sausage, but many, along with a variety of pork and ham products that act as either hors d'oeuvre or main courses.

Alsatian wines also hold a distinct place in French gastronomy and, for purposes of easy identification, may be likened to the Rhine and Mosel wines of Germany. Alsace too is the home of French beer, not to mention being the centre of the *foie gras* industry.

The Languedoc is now really an over-rich agricultural land. Here the vine is the typical crop, but even so the wines produced cannot compare with those to the north. And of course here one finds the olive, so that olive oil is to much Languedoc and Provencale cooking what butter is to Norman cooking. It imparts its flavour to for example the *ratatouille*, (which can only be described as a mass of aubergine, pimentoes and tomato slowly simmered in oil), it will be used for sauteing the Mediterranean shell fish that go into one of the fish soups of the coastal region. The most famous is of course the *bouillabaisse* of Marseilles, where the oil will blend with the flavouring of saffron and the rascasse fish without which no *bouillabaisse* is truly correct, to produce a soup sufficiently substantial to form a main course.

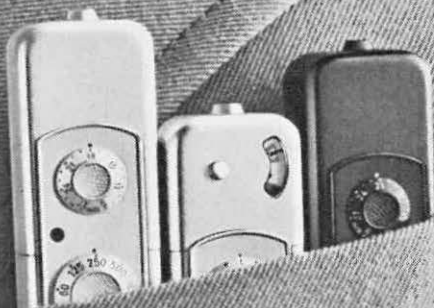
But Provence and Languedoc are not just a coastal region — they stretch far inland where fresh fish is

not readily available. And the fact that Languedoc is not really as rich an agricultural area as Normandy or the Loire valley possibly led to the development of the famous *cassoulet*. The basis of the *cassoulet* is the small white haricot bean, which is of course capable of being dried, a useful consideration in an area where fresh vegetables are not always thick at the wayside. The beans are cooked with a variety of meats, usually either or both of mutton and pork and, especially important, preserved goose and probably pork rind. A sliced sausage may also be put in. The whole combines to form a homogeneously blended mass, in which beans and meat still retain their distinct identities. Here of course the goose and pork fats contribute more to the flavour than does olive oil.

Memories of Carcassonne

Cassoulet does not often feature on Hong Kong menus, and when tried here at a leading central hotel, it did not bring back over-abundant memories of Carcassonne. And in reality, there is not much French food in Hong Kong, despite the facts that the word 'French' sometimes crops up in restaurant titles and the language occurs inside menus. This arises partly because many of the ingredients necessary to any local style of cooking often seem not to travel well. Cheese, unless it is air freighted adding prohibitively to the cost, is an example. Some French cheeses, especially of the Camembert or Brie variety, seem in fact to travel rather badly. But then

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even a voyage across the English channel can upset these two. And Norman sole or lobster for obvious reasons can never arrive here sea fresh.

And then there are economic factors. Although modern transport is technically able to transport produce thousands of miles and keep it in a relatively fresh condition, the price of a Provencale aubergine (eggplant) thus imported would be prohibitive, especially when markets nearer hand can supply something of the same sort. And the ingredients which do make the journey to Hong Kong reasonably well, say olive oil, butter and wine, are distinctly pricy.

Economic factors

Economic factors also operate in other ways. The profitability demands on large catering organisations lead for instance to the making of mayonnaise (only arguably a French dish in origin) with less expensive substitute for olive oil. And the dish of prawns served with freshly made mayonnaise gets bowdlerised into the so called prawn cocktail, where the accompanying sauce, although not unpleasant, has no relation to a lovingly created mayonnaise. But the sauce for prawn cocktail may however be made cheaply. After a time one acquires the taste and forgets the original.

The restaurateur anxious to attract business from a clientele largely unused to French dishes must of course compromise. Standard beef-steaks (although beloved by all Frenchmen)

will appear alongside a mix of regional specialities, drawn from divergent areas such as Brittany and the Basque Country, but sometimes lacking key ingredients.

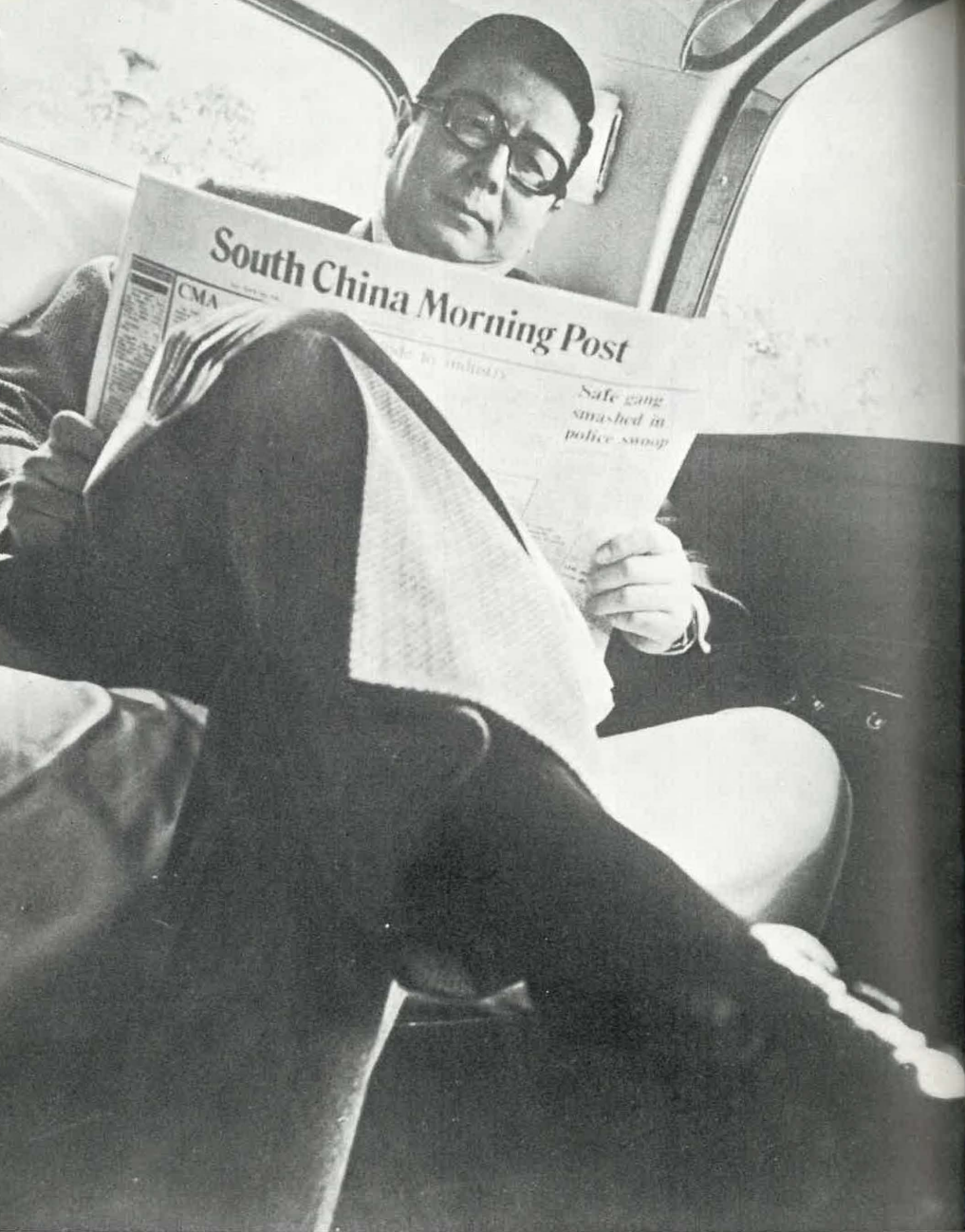
Au Trou Normand, in Hankow Road, is of course Hong Kong's only French restaurant. One or two others come reasonably close with particular dishes and the *Marseilles* in Hart Avenue is a fascinating mixture of France and Asia, but with the emphasis perhaps East of Suez.

Truly to enjoy one's meal at *Au Trou Normand* one should try to take it French style, and avoid the temptations of compromising with the more cosmopolitan dishes that the owner-chef very wisely allow for his less Francophile customers.

A recent meal enjoyed by the *Good Business Lunch* team at *Trou Normand*, where our hosts were French and therefore know what they were about, went, in the case of this GB Luncher:—galantine (a sort of meat pie/pate, although that description is inadequate) for starters, followed by the dish of the day, which in this case was saute d'agneau. M. Bernard Vigneau, the proprietor, rather apologetically described it as 'lamb stew' but admitted that these were not *les mots justes*. Saute of lamb is really the only conceivable translation.

Both these were washed down by a Beaujolais of the year, (ie. the *current* year, 1973). Then a pause for the *Trou Normand*, from which the

cont'd. on Pg. 34



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Good News and Bad News

From time to time the Chamber has been accused of 'optimism'. (For example in **HK Economic Journal** on Nov. 8) This is an accusation we do not wish to deny. Nobody in touch with reality will claim that business is going through a good period at the moment. But we still believe it is necessary to look at the whole situation—the bad and the good, and when so many people are emphasising the gloomy reports, perspective demands that an attempt be made to preserve a balanced view.

Thus recently there have been a few hopeful signs that, in certain sectors the situation is improving slightly, the improvement may for the time being be limited to the larger concerns.

In the garment industry, it was reported in **Sing Tao Jih Pao** (23.10.74) that most of the large factories are now operating normally. Orders have been received from the USA, Canada, UK, Germany, Eastern Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Japan. Improved designs and lower prices have attracted buyers.

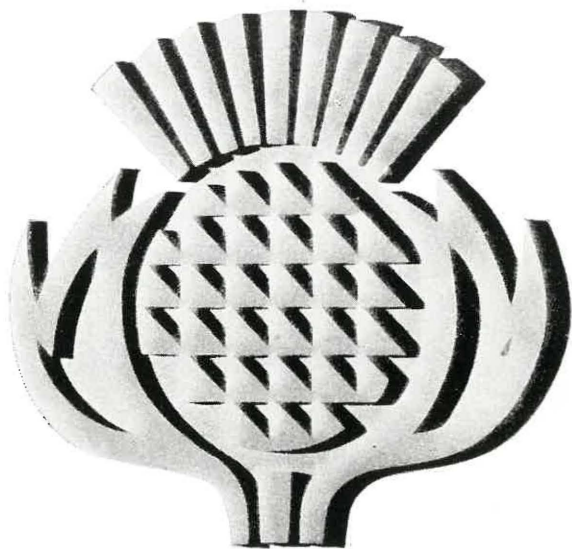
The HK Economic Journal (24.10.74) also carried an optimistic report on local industries, the garment industry in particular. Local manufacturers have managed to reduce costs and improve quality, leading to more orders. In the plastics and electronics industries too, conditions are not quite so gloomy as they were earlier in the year.

A survey of local industry carried

out by **Wah Kiu Yat Pao** (18.10.74) saw signs of improvement in many areas. The upturn in the garment industry was having a good effect on textiles production, and the situation in the toys, plastic flowers, electronics and other industries was likely to begin to improve soon, particularly if the price of oil were to come down slightly. Manufacturers had lowered their prices, and this was resulting in more orders. In short, the paper believed that business conditions were less depressing than they were earlier, and urged manufacturers to go all out to sell their products.

The Chairman of the Hong Kong Weaving Mills Association, Mr. Lau Sai-yan, writing in **The Star** (25.10.74), claimed that the tight labour situation had resulted in increased productivity in HK industries. In his own factory, he said, productivity was about 20 per cent higher than it was two or three years ago. He added that he was not in favour of retrenchment of workers just because a factory was not doing as well as it was in the boom period, and he called on employers to show more understanding of their workers' problems.

Meanwhile, a survey carried out by two social researchers in conjunction with the Social Work Department of the University of HK painted a rather depressing picture of unemployment and underemployment. According to the results of the survey, over 200,000 workers in HK are either unemployed or only partially employed. Hardest hit appeared to be the



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plastic industry, where the rate of unemployment was 11.2 per cent. In the textile industry, 47 per cent of workers were employed part-time only, and in the construction industry the rate was 43.2 per cent. Over half of the workers working part-time had experienced a wage cut of more than \$100, the report said.

Workers On Legco?

The proposal put forward by Dr. S. Y. Chung that there should be on Legco people who can represent the interests of HK's more than one million blue-collar workers was welcomed by the **Wen Wei Pao** (31.10.74), although at the same time the paper very much doubted whether the deeds of Legco would ever match the words. **The Star** thought the proposal very reasonable, and added that it was 'a tribute to (Councillors') common sense and their sincerity that they ask now to be joined by representatives of our workers in embarking upon new plans to legislate towards a more equitable share for all which is their due.'

The proposal was also welcomed by a Trade Union leader, Mr. Lee Shing-chu, who is an unofficial member of the Labour Advisory Board.

He believed that all five of the proposed new seats in Legco should be allocated to workers. Those appointed should be treated without discrimination. The most important factor, he said, was whether the workers' representatives feel the way workers do and understand their problems clearly. He also believed that there are workers qualified both

academically as well as in terms of experience to represent the 'under-privileged'. (reported in **HK Standard**, 2.1.74)

A short editorial in **Sing Tao Man Pao** (2.11.74) also welcomed the proposal, but it claimed that the addition of worker-unofficial members to Legco would make very little difference in terms of policy as unofficials lack any practical power of decision-making. But should the proposal be accepted by Government, it was most important the suggestion put forward by the new councillors should lead to positive action. Otherwise, the paper claimed, such Councillors would have little value.

Taiwan Economy

On the subject of Taiwan, a recent report in the **British Financial Times** (29.10.74) is of much interest to HK. Entitled 'The Nasty Medicine Worked', the article describes how the Taiwan Government has been coping with inflation and trade recession. Like HK, Taiwan is 'exposed to any economic infection that may be carried on the trade winds, and yet can ill-afford to be anything but robust at all times.' Last year in Taiwan wholesale prices rose by 35 per cent, money supply by 45 per cent, and wages in manufacturing industry by 22 per cent. At the same time, GDP increased by 12.5 per cent, and both exports and imports by 43 per cent. (All this sounds very much like HK—only more so.)

Then in January this year the

FORUM—continued

Prime Minister, Chiang Ching-kuo, decided to take drastic measures to stabilise the economy. The key features were to be spectacular, once-and-for-all price increases and an exceptionally tight domestic monetary policy. Interest rates were raised by one-third or more. Amazingly, this prescription appears to have worked. The wholesale price index leaped 25 per cent from the end of December to the end of February (an annual rate of 150 per cent), since when it has dropped steadily. Consumer prices peaked at the end of March. Recently they have started to creep up again, but have yet to overcome the March level.

There are a number of possible reasons for the remarkable success of these measures, commented the paper. Firstly, the annual rate of increase of the money supply has been slashed to around 10 per cent, so that in September interest rates could be brought down by between one and 1½ per cent. Secondly, the public has suddenly started to save rather than spend—this has shown up dramatically in the banks' time deposits.

However, at the same time these drastic measures have weakened the economy. Large numbers of workers have been laid off in key industries and it is reckoned that corporate profits will be down. Even so, after eight months of 1974 exports were running 47 per cent ahead of the same period last year, and it is said that real GDP will be about 8.4 per cent above last year's.

G. B. LUNCH—continued

restaurant gets its name, and which refers in practice to the Norman habit of serving a small glass of Calvados (apple brandy) part of the way through the meal in order to make a trou (hole) for what follows. Cheese (Munster, Cantal and Camembert for this luncher) came next. And, concerning the habit of eating the cheese before dessert, we find it far more logical than the anglo saxon habit of having cheese later. Cheese after all is a savoury and is far better on the palate before, rather than after, something sugary. It also provides an excellent accompaniment to what remains of the wine from the main course, or in our case, as an excuse for an extra bottle.

Also try eating cheese 'neat' — with a knife and fork rather than slapping it onto biscuits. If you must have it accompanied, try bread, as long as it is good bread, and if you happen to get a truly creamy Camembert (creamy but *not* gushing over the plate like Niagara Falls), there is no need to insult it by adding butter to the bread. Take off the rind also, unless of course you happen to like the taste of ammonia.

Then came an orange soufflé, for which we had to wait while the chef performed so as to be able to serve it exactly at the right moment, while still bouffant. Finally, coffee and instead of a liqueur, more Calvados. Since we were guests we do not know what the meal cost. But it must have been worth it.

法國之核子計劃在歐洲國家中尤為重要。直至現在，法國共輸出了五個核子設備給予伊朗。

而再者，法國之太空事業為世界最先進者。在香港，亦設一地區性辦事處。於過去數年間，香港共向法國購進了六架直升飛機

銀行業務蓬勃

在本港銀行業務上，法國甚為活躍，共設有三間銀行另附分行數間。該三間銀行為法國國家巴黎銀行，法國東方滙理銀行及里昂財務有限公司。

前二者屬下職員約二十二人為法國人，法國東方滙理銀行現正與一英國銀行正洽商合夥計劃。

旅港人仕遞減

在旅遊方面，本年一月至九月間，約共一萬四千名法國人仕蒞港觀光遊覽，較諸去年同期減少了百份之九。

但除却澳州以外，來自已發展國家之旅客人數亦同時下降了——反映出在「進步」國家內人們均受通貨膨脹打擊，消費力也就大受影響。

文化貢獻一覽

法國文化予以世界貢獻尤多。

設港之法國文化協會於教育上不遺餘力。每年本港約共一萬名學生在該協會學習法文。不少中學亦教授法文，視之為「第二語言」。估計約共三千名中學生在本港各學校學習法文科。香港中文大學亦設一法國語文部，學生人數約共二百名。在香港大學內，亦有約五十名學生攻讀法國現代文學一科。除此，浸會書院之法國語文部共有學生一百名，而理工學院之現代語文系亦包括法文教授。

香港不少人仕亦嗜愛法國電影，尤其喜愛阿倫狄龍等法國明星。

法國式的幽默——一如英國式或中國式之幽默——很難使外國人看懂，但法國一漫畫家——沙賓先生——之風趣繪描為香港人所喜愛。

簡言之，法國跟香港之關係頗為密切。居住在香港之六百五十多名法國人仕（此數以一九七三年年終計），在本港多方面上均甚活躍。法國在香港之經濟，文化甚而飲食之貢獻是相當大的。

港商團訪法 獲美滿成績

「這是有史以來最成功的貿易團之一……」

我們擊誠地希望在不久，法國能解除貿易壁壘，讓香港得以平等地與其他輸運貨物入法國市場之各國較一高下。目下，法國為世界第四位最重要之入口國。」

以上為簡悅強爵士於九月二十日領導一權威貿易團離港往法國時所發表的一席話。

該貿易團之主要任務是向法國工商界人仕闡釋香港之實況，及排除一切有礙港法間雙邊貿易發展之誤解及偏見。

也許，很多人仕均未知悉法國於世界入口國家中佔第四把交椅（緊隨美國、西德及英國）。

對香港而言，法國佔我們出口市場之第十九位，除却愛爾蘭、比利時及盧森堡外，法國採購之港製貨品，較歐洲共同市場各國為少。

輸入法國之貨品中，只有百份之三點二源自亞洲，而其中又只有百份之零點一來自香港。從香港運往歐洲共同市場九個國家中之出口，只有百份之二點七運往法國。

上述這拙劣表現之原因，如象所週知，主要乃基於法國市場予以港製貨品歧視及制限，而基本上，歐洲共同市場各國對港製貨品入口，早以加以不少管制。

於此形勢下，又加以法國新政府對貿易態度似較和緩，故香港決定組團前往作貿易磋商。

貿易團一行八人，除簡悅強爵士外，其他包括本總商會主席霍沛德先生，香港工業總會主席安子介議員，及香港製衣廠商聯合會主席田元灝先生等。

據本會主席霍沛德先生稱：彼對是次親善訪問成果，表示甚具信心，有助香港及法國間雙邊貿易之發展。霍氏謂：「貿易團各人對是次之行皆覺滿意，我們對彼邦人仕熱誠之款接，尤感興奮。」

貿易團領隊簡悅強爵士於返港時亦稱：「這是有史以來最成功之貿易團之一。」

貿易團訪問法國為時一週，於留法期間曾與該地工商處官員及工商界領袖磋商談討貿易各事宜。貿易團亦往遊近瑞士及德國邊界之紡織及工程業中心，還有白蘭地製酒中心等地。

其中，尤以與法國新任對外貿易秘書長——史格先生——之會談，最令人矚目。史格先生向貿易團透露：彼決意發展法國與遠東，尤其香港之貿易，彼又謂彼視香港為發展遠東貿易之跳彈板。

霍主席謂：「一如我們之觀感，史格先生亦同意認為港、法貿易差強人意，目下之配額對雙方無一利。史格先生允諾我們對此將作改善，以促進港法貿易。」

史格先生指出法國政府已決定對一些物品放寬配額，甚而完全取消另一些物品配額

制度。因此，望遠鏡之配額已增至百份之二千五百，手提電燈、收音機、電磁、遊艇、相機、玩具及顯微鏡等配額亦有所遞增。而瓷具器皿方法之制限則全部取消。

史格先生宣稱於明年初，彼將帶領一代表蒞臨遠東各地，包括香港，作貿易磋商。

於逗留巴黎期間，貿易團喜獲當地熱烈歡迎，與彼等磋商會談人士包括工商界領袖，巴黎總商會要員，銀行界首長及主要之百貨商店代表等。彼等交談甚歡，互相切磋，並一致認為海外之競爭，是可喜而並非可怕的。

一如史格先生所指出：配額制限能否予以法國工業合適護衛是令人致疑的。對香港而言，配額之存在引致心理上之障礙，致令貿易表現欠佳。

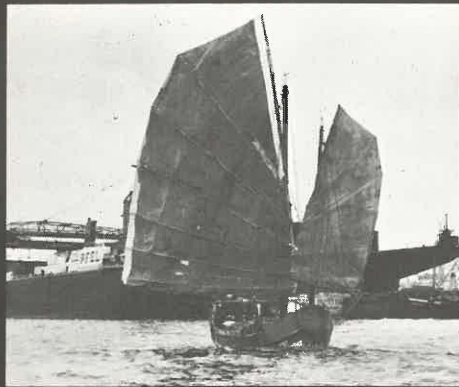
於與法國官員交談間，彼等亦談及法國與香港、英國及其他公司合資經營一事，此舉可使法國於遠東佔一有利形勢，亦予以香港工商業鼓舞作用。

法國國內通貨膨脹，一如其他各國，為該地政府所最為關注。也許，法國政府視發展中國家，如遠東各地等之輸入貨品為應付通貨膨脹方法。當然，法國亦希望把更多貨品運往香港，其中包括機器及製造原料。

香港訪法貿易團向法國人士強調謂香港願意向彼等採購更多貨品。但現刻貿易差逆對法國有利，故香港以推進我們之出口為要務。

為紀念是次訪法貿易團成功，又希望港法貿易將蓬勃發展之下，本「會訊」是期以法國為中心主題，介紹其貿易形勢、貨品及文化等，並有專文報導訪問法國商務專員之詳情。

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