

HONG KONG AND ITS FUTURE

By NICHOLAS WONG

To most people, the two words "Hong Kong" will bring into the mind a picture of a prosperous and glamorous city, bustling with life and business. In their mind, Hong Kong is a city where there are a lot of people, working, living and dying, a place where they dream about having a holiday, and a place where things are considerably less expensive. All that is true, but truer is the fact that currently Hong Kong is facing a very critical economic crisis.

Hong Kong is a very small colony, only about four hundred square miles in area. Most of the land, about three hundred and fifty square miles, of it, will be returned to Red China in 1998 when the lease for the New Territories and part of the Kowloon Peninsula will expire, unless the British government arranges for another lease. Because of its small area and geographical limitations, Hong Kong has to rely on other places of raw materials for her industries and factories as well as food for her citizens. The only factor which so far has enabled Hong Kong to keep up in this modern competitive world market is its comparably less expensive labor. However, with the countries all over the world imposing regulations and restrictions, one after the other on Hong Kong goods, Hong Kong is critically running out of foreign markets.

As for the economy of the colony itself, things are not looking too well either. The land is still expensive as ever, and consistently increasing in value. However, the prices for building on the land are dropping quite sharply. Because of the tightening of money supply and raising of interest rates, there is an acute shortage of money. The prices of things are going up at an alarming rate, especially food and the daily necessities. The corresponding increase in income is not catching up to the price increases, with the exception of the labor market. The white collar class is not earning as much money or not getting as much in raise as the laborers; in general a laborer working in a good-paying factory can earn more than an ordinary clerk in a bank or the government. This fact is mainly due to the increase in factories which attracts people to work for higher wages, better hours and benefits. Through a lot of new jobs created by this boom, there are still a lot of unemployed people. This consists of mostly the unskilled labor force which once thrived on the building and construction boom. With the passing of the construction boom, many fall back again into unemployment. Some of them are refugees and have no work at all.

Due to the fact that their products are restricted in many countries, a lot of factories in Hong Kong, the small ones in particular, have to fire workers and cut production to maintain their existence without bankruptcy. Some are so fortunate and have to close. This is most acute in the thing manufacturing companies. Some other factories flourish because their products, like enamel wares, plas- tics and toys, are still selling quite well. However, most workers are not sure of their future and this is the prevailing state of mind of the people. They are not that much afraid of the war, it's the fear of unemployment which is worrying them.

For Hong Kong's future, we believe that it will come under the influence of Red China, not through politics but

through supplies and raw materials from other parts of the world. Most of the vegetables and food, Chinese medicines which are made up of herbs, insects and the like, come from China Mainland. The steel, iron, cement, and lumber, used in construction works are mostly purchased from China Mainland.

Others believe that Hong Kong can stay on the competitive world market. They think that the industries should try to better the qualities of their products. They also think that in order to make the economy flourish, Hong Kong should support home industries more. That means buying more Hong Kong products and less foreign products. The grouping together of factories which are working in the same line of products will help to reduce the overflooding of the market with "hot" goods. The factories should improve productions through utilizing the machines as much as possible, and by working as many shifts as possible on the machinery. The careful expansion of the manufacturing plants of products which are selling steadily well on the market, like transistor radios and light electric appliances, will bring in more orders and so keep the industries alive.

The struggle is hard, the obstacles are tough and numerous, but we do believe that Hong Kong has a bright future, and we will persist in our task, confident that some day we shall come out ahead.

BUBBLES' BREAK

History does not always repeat itself. This was shown amply well on the evening of March 19, 1966 at the Charlottetown Confederation Centre when the Saint Dunstan's University Drama Society, usually a winner of numerous awards, was all but left out from taking any of the spoils of this year's Dominion Drama Festival.

Presenting the Greek tragedy, "Electra," written by Euripedes, the Saint Dunstan's University Players managed only one award, that being the Regional Chairman's Award for Merit of Speech, won by Ken Doiron for his part as Orestes. However, Judy MacKenzie, playing the leading role of Electra, gained unanimous acclamation for her fine work.

All was not lost for members of Saint Dunstan's though, as Peter Jungermann (PHIL-3) and his R.C.A.F. Players from Summerside walked off with four big prizes for their performance of "Under the Yum-Yum Tree." Their awards were: best play; best director - S.D.U.'s own Peter Jungermann; best actor - John Perry for his part as Dave Manning; best supporting actress - Margaret Sliman who played the role of Robin Austin.

Fifteen year-old Gracie Wells -Finley of the V.I.P. Children's Theatre won the award of best actress for her brilliant work as the Miller's Daughter in the performance of Rumpelstiltskin. In the same production, Gerry Allen took the prize for best supporting actor for his part as Rumpelstiltskin.

Hats off to Mr. Jungermann for the tremendous success of his group. Best of luck for your chances in the National D.D.F. But remember we'll be back next year, and not for only one award.

This performance marked the last appearance for Ken Doiron with the Saint Dunstan's Players. To Ken go our best wishes for the future and many, many thanks for numerous fine performances for Saint Dunstan's University.

The adjudicator for this series of plays was Jacques Zouvi, a Paris born actor doing most of his work in Montreal. Comments about his adjudication were mixed, but there was general agreement in one area: Mr. Zouvi was different.

Note of Thanks

On behalf of Father Arsenault, the Executive of the Drama Society and myself I should like to thank the cast and crew of "Electra" for their untiring efforts and sincere co-operation during our recent presentation at the Confederation Centre. The Centre Administration has asked me to pass on to you their appreciation for the manner in which the company conducted itself and for the numerous professional qualities displayed by our group.

Leland Currie
Production Manager

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