

Inaugurating the Hong Kong Branch

By The Secretary

Council approved the forming of a Hong Kong Branch of the Institute at its meeting on 9th December, 1977. At the same time the requirement for the inaugural meeting to be held within thirty days was waived and thus Sunday, 12th March, 1978 saw us, the President – Michael Wilkins and the Secretary – Brian Peck, boarding a British Airways Boeing 747 for the nineteen hour journey to Hong Kong. Stops at Frankfurt, Bombay and Bangkok broke the monotony of a crowded jumbo and we were met at Kai Tak airport at 2100 local time on Monday, 13th March by a party of those nominated for election to the new Branch Committee, including the prospective Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary. The resting place for our visit, which we saw occasionally (!), was the Hong Kong Hotel situated next to the Ocean Terminal in Kowloon. The car park for the hotel formed part of the terminal itself and the *Queen Elizabeth 2* on one side and the *Canberra* on the other made a most imposing introduction.

After a nights "sleep" at a time when our bodies told us we should really be awake we were whisked to the offices of the Government Environment Department on the island of Hong Kong, passing through the vehicle tunnel which connects Kowloon and Hong Kong. Here we made official calls on The Hon. D. J. C. Jones, Secretary for the Environment and The Hon. D. W. McDonald, Director of Public Works (both members of the Legislative Council which governs Hong Kong). We then met various members of the Public Works Department including Mr. J. G. Stean, Director of Building Development, Mr. J. B. Aitken, Principal Government Architect, Mr. R. B. Hanna, the Government Quantity Surveyor and members of the Institute both qualified and unqualified, employed by the Department. We were entertained to lunch at the Hong Kong Club and then Tuesday afternoon saw us climbing up to the 10th floor of the half completed new armed services headquarters building (with Brian Peck wearing a hard hat for the first time since he came to the Institute nine years ago). This was followed by visits to the new Planetarium, an indoor sports centre consisting only of a roof structure jacked high in the air and then to the headquarters of the Hong Kong Housing Department, which probably controls the building of more tower blocks than there are in New York. A visit to the latest completed estate – the Oi Man – followed with us being received by the occupant of one of the flats on the 7th floor. The day was rounded off by attending a meeting of the prospective Branch Committee in the evening.

This first day set the pattern for the whole visit – a constant rush to meet the next engagement followed by a quick meal and then off to another part of the territory. (Although Hong Kong remains technically a colony the word is no longer used). This also seemed to be the pattern of life in Hong Kong, certainly so far as the construction industry is concerned.

Wednesday saw us visiting the Department of Architecture of the University of Hong Kong with a call on the

Vice-Chancellor Dr. Raysung Lisung Huang. Under the guidance of the Professor of Architecture, Prof. K. C. Lye, we met the members of the Faculty of the Department, which included three members of the Institute (and of the prospective Branch Committee) Dr. Alex Bunting, Mr. J. L. McCarthy and Mr. S. L. Yip. The students put on a slide presentation of their work and aspirations and we then had a discussion with them which was photographed and will no doubt form part of their presentation for the next guests. Lunch was followed by a discussion with the faculty. The weather so far had been disappointing but as the afternoon had brought sun, and the clouds on the Peak had lifted, we were very grateful for the opportunity to be driven round the western and southern part of Hong Kong, visiting a typical social centre serving a vast area of tower blocks and a stop on the Peak to photograph the breath-taking view of the harbour and the mainland. This was just as well for at no other time during our visit was the Peak other than hidden in cloud.

Thursday morning saw the first of three visits to private quantity surveying practices, that of C. S. Toh and Press. In the afternoon we visited Hong Kong Polytechnic, calling on the Acting Director Dr. Y. K. Ching, Mr. D. J. Peake (Associate Director, Engineering Division) Mr. R. D. Stringer (Head of Building and Surveying Department) and meeting members of the staff and students of the Building and Surveying Department, including the Branch Secretary designate Mr. W. C. Vick, a senior lecturer.

In the evening the President held a reception at the Furama International Hotel for a number of distinguished guests and the prospective Branch Committee. This was followed by the Inaugural Meeting itself at which the top table party were blinded by television lights and flash bulbs. (It is understood that the proceedings appeared in that evening's news on the Chinese television channel. Nevertheless the Branch was properly inaugurated and Mr. V. W. Miller (F) was duly elected the first Chairman. The other officers elected were the Vice-Chairman – W. H. Holden (A), the Secretary – W. C. Vick (F), the Treasurer – R. G. Butler (A), the Branch Training Officer – C. K. Ho (A) and the Public Relations Officer – K. K. Chan (A). Messrs. R. C. Bell (F), A. A. Bunting (F), P. C. Lau (A), P. K. Lau (A), J. L. McCarthy (F), K. S. Mok (A), B. Tang (A) C. F. Yim (A) and S. L. Yip (A) were all elected to the Branch Committee. The meeting was followed by a dinner at which the toast of the Institute and the new Branch was proposed by The Hon. Derek Jones, Secretary for the Environment. The President replied on behalf of the Institute and Mr. Vic Miller, the new Chairman, on behalf of the Branch and proposed the toast of The Guests. Mr. Bob Hanna, the Government Quantity Surveyor, replied on behalf of the guests. Also present at the dinner were the Vice-Chancellor of the Hong Kong University, the Acting Director of the Hong Kong Polytechnic, the Professor of Architecture of Hong Kong University, the Director of Building Development



The President invests the newly elected Branch Chairman with his badge of office. The Vice-Chairman, Mr. W. Holden [left] and the Branch Treasurer, Mr. R. G. Butler look on.



The Branch Chairman thanks the President and the Secretary for having attended the Inaugural Meeting. Left to right: Mr. K. K. Chan (Branch PRO), Mr. W. H. Holden (Vice-Chairman), the President, Mr. V. Miller (Chairman), the Secretary, Mr. W. C. Vick (Branch Secretary) and Mr. C. K. Ho (Branch Training Officer).



The Hon. Derek Jones, Secretary for the Environment, proposes the toast of the Institute and the Hong Kong Branch



The President replies to the toast of The Institute



Mr. Vic Miller, the Branch Chairman, proposes the toast of The Guests



Mr. Bob Hanna, the Government Quantity Surveyor replies to the toast of The Guests

of the PWD and the Chairmen of the Hong Kong Institute of Architects, the Hong Kong Branch of the RICS, the Hong Kong Centre of the Institute of Building, the Hong Kong Branch of the Institution of Structural Engineers and the Senior Vice-President of the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers.

Friday morning saw visits to two other private practices – Messrs. Langden, Every and Seah and Messrs. Levett and Bailey, at both of which we were very pleased to have the opportunity to meet members of the Institute, both qualified and unqualified. An opportunity was also afforded by the partners, mainly members of the RICS, for the President to clarify the position in the United Kingdom of RICS/IQS relations. The partners all expressed the view that at least the two bodies should combine their examinations to avoid the students studying for both bodies having to spend so much time away from their offices during March each year!

On Friday afternoon we were privileged to tour the Mass Transit Railway in the company of the Managing Director, Dr. Ridley, and the Editors of *South China Morning Post*, *Asia Wall Street Journal* and *International Railway Gazette*. We inspected four station sites and walked through the tunnel between Shek Kip Mei and Lok Fu stations. Most impressive was the Kowloon Bay "stabling" with its 10 hectare concrete overhead deck on which will be built 41 tower blocks housing some 30,000 people. Thus in Hong Kong they not only make the greatest possible use of land but also build it themselves!

(An article on the Mass Transit Railway appears elsewhere in this issue).

The week-end brought some respite from official calls and thus allowed time for visits to the New Territories (with the obligatory photographs of the Chinese Border) on the Saturday and on Sunday a ride on the Peak tram (but only up into the cloud) and a relaxed luncheon at the Repulse Bay Hotel followed by a drive through the fishing village of Aberdeen with its famous floating restaurants, round the eastern part of the Island.

Monday, our last day, saw us back to work with a visit to those sitting the Institute's examinations at the Hong Kong Polytechnic. It is hoped that the sight of the President brought inspiration to the candidates! Further discussions with the Polytechnic staff followed and the afternoon was spent visiting the private enterprise housing development which is being built on the site of the old Tai Koo private dockyard. Here tower blocks vie with ships being refitted although soon the former will have completely replaced the latter. At 2215 we were back at Kai Tak being seen off for the flight back to London by the Branch Chairman and many members of the Committee. It had been a whirlwind seven days – entirely in keeping with the pace of Hong Kong. However of one thing we were sure – the Institute in Hong Kong is in good hands and, unlike many other areas, the industry is booming and pleasantly free of red tape, allowing projects to move at an unbelievable pace.

Presidential visit to South Africa

27th January to 12th February, 1978

The President and Mrs. Wilkins accompanied by the Director visited the South Africa Branch earlier this year. Shorter visits had been made by previous Presidents in 1972 and 1975 but the APEX scheme now provides substantial fare reductions for a stay of 15 days or more; it was therefore possible to plan a schedule which, in addition to normal liaison activities with IQS members in South Africa, also made possible a determined effort to deal with the recognition problems which they face.

Our members in South Africa are concentrated mainly in four areas: Johannesburg, Durban, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town. The President was able to discuss Branch and local problems at well attended gatherings in each of these centres and also to visit two of the six South African universities which provide training for the profession (the universities of Natal and Port Elizabeth) for a useful exchange of information with Heads of Departments and other staff. The President also attended the Branch AGM and Annual Dinner in Johannesburg.

The South African government has a policy of statutory registration for the professions and, in common with

engineers and architects, quantity surveyors are regulated by a specific act (The Quantity Surveyors Act 1970). The South African Council for Quantity Surveyors is appointed to carry out the provision of the Act and both the title of quantity surveyor (RQS) and specific functions are reserved to those registered. The Act therefore not only protects the title (as is the practice in most continental European countries) but also enforces a system of licensing. Other Practitioners may work as quantity surveyors provided that they do not use the title or usurp any of the reserved functions.

In order to qualify for registration quantity surveyors must either pass the Council's examinations Part I (Academic) and Part II (professional practice), or graduate through an exempting degree and complete three years qualifying experience in a "professional" office. They must also be members of the Association of South African Quantity Surveyors.

IQS members (post-1964 syllabus) are exempted from Part I of the Council's examinations but for registration have to pass Part II and show a total of three years