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THE HISTORY OF
HONGKONG AND YAUMATI FERRY COMPANY LIMITED,
1923 TO THE 1970S

SHAM WAI CHI

MPHIL

LINGNAN UNIVERSTIY

2007

THE HISTORY OF
HONGKONG AND YAUMATI FERRY COMPANY LIMITED,
1923 TO THE 1970S

by
SHAM Wai Chi

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree of
Master of Philosophy in History

Lingnan University

2007

ABSTRACT

The History of Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, 1923 to the 1970s

by

SHAM Wai Chi

Master of Philosophy

The Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited (HYF) was established by a group of Chinese merchants in 1923. Among the companies who got licences to operate the ferry service in the early days, the HYF is the only company that could provide the performance that satisfied the original goals of the Government for regulating the ferry service. Due to these reasons, the Government had confidence in HYF and was willing to grant more licences to it to operate both passenger and vehicular ferry services.

The threat that the Government would build the Cross Harbour Tunnel anytime since 1950s unexpectedly contributed to a golden period for the HYF until the 1970s. The expansion and improvement of ferry services that the HYF adopted for facing the possible challenges from the Cross Harbour Tunnel eventually made the HYF the world's largest local ferry company and facilitated both urban and rural development in Hong Kong. Unfortunately, due to the rapid development in Hong Kong, the service provided by the HYF was not capable of satisfying the increasing market demand. This led to the Government decision to build the Cross Harbour Tunnel and Mass Transit Railway in the 1970s, which to a great extent led to the decline of the HYF.

This thesis focuses on analyzing the history of the development of the HYF from 1923 to the 1970s. Through analyzing Government policies toward the ferry service, and of the HYF in different periods, it shows how the HYF developed from a small Chinese-owned company to be the major public utility in Hong Kong. It also tries to analyze how social, urban and rural development in Hong Kong, and Government's policies on urban and rural planning, affected the development of HYF.

DECLARATION

I declare that this is an original work based primarily on my own research, and I warrant that all citations of previous research, published or unpublished, have been duly acknowledged.

SIGNED

(SHAM Wai Chi)
16th July, 2007

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL OF THESIS

THE HISTORY OF
HONGKONG AND YAUMATI FERRY COMPANY LIMITED,
1923 TO THE 1970S

by
SHAM Wai Chi

Master of Philosophy

Panel of Examiners:

(Chairman)
(Prof. Richard Lee DAVIS)
(External Member)
(Dr. Henri Wing On YEUNG)
(Internal Member)
(Dr. Grace Ai Ling CHOU)
(Internal Member)
(Dr. Chi Pang LAU)	

Chief Supervisor:
Dr. Chi Pang LAU

Co-supervisor:
Dr. Shuk Wah POON

Approved for the Senate:

(Prof. Mee Kau NYAW)
Chairman, Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee

27/9/2007
Date

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This thesis is dedicated to my family and all former and present members of the Department of History of Lingnan University.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

When the Parsee merchant, Dorabjee Nowrojee put a ferry in the Victoria Harbour in 1874 to provide regular ferry service, it marked the beginning of the development of systematic ferry service in Hong Kong. After nearly twenty years, the first ferry company, the “Star” Ferry Company Limited (hereafter, the “Star” Ferry) was set up to provide the regular ferry service between Central of Hong Kong Island and Tsim Sha Tsui of Kowloon Peninsula in 1898. The “Star” Ferry was owned by the Hongkong and Kowloon Wharf, Godown and Cargo Boat Company (hereafter, Kowloon Wharf) which was a European firm.¹

Shortly after the establishment of the “Star” Ferry, since 1902, Chinese merchants who settled in the Yaumati area also setup a number of small ferry companies for running the ferry service between Central of Hong Kong Island and Yaumati area in Kowloon Peninsula.

With the leadership of Wong Lan Sang, the owner of one of the ferry companies providing the Yaumati ferry service, twelve small ferry companies formed a coalition for providing the regular ferry service between Central and

¹David Johnson, *Star Ferry: The Story of Hong Kong Icon* (New Zealand: Remarkable View Limited, 1998), 15-21.

Yaumati. The Yaumati ferry service was under the control of Wong Lan Sang's coalition since 1910.

Up to that moment, the Government had not made any regulation to control the ferry service in Hong Kong. However, with discovering that a huge profit could be gained from operating a ferry service which met the British major objectives of making profit and doing business in Hong Kong, the Government started to explore measures to maximize their benefit from the ferry service operators. Upon hearing many complaints about the quality of the ferry service, the Government intervened and began regulating the service in Hong Kong.²

In 1917, the Ferries Ordinance was passed for regulating the ferry service in Hong Kong. According to this Ordinance, the Government would grant the licence to an operator to operate a certain group of ferry routes through the public tender. The operator was required to pay the Government a designated amount of royalty and had to follow the Ferries Regulations for providing ferry service.³

The Government issued two ferry licences to two companies for operating ferry service in 1919 and 1921 respectively. However, as their

²C.O.129/454/95-103, "Yau-Ma-Ti and Mong Kok Service" in Enclosure 1 of the letter from Claud Severn, Officer Adminstrating the Government to Viscount Milner, 7th April, 1919.

³The full details of the Ferries Ordinance 1917 refer to Appendix 1.

service could not satisfy the Government's goals of providing huge amounts of royalties and operating the ferry service properly, the Government called for tenders again in 1923.

Finally, the Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited (hereafter, HYF) was set up by a group of well-known Chinese merchants with the leadership of Lau Tak Po. The HYF gained the ferry licence for operating the Yaumati ferry service starting from 1924.⁴

Ever since the commencement of ferry service in 1924, the HYF could always satisfy the goals of the Government in providing huge amounts of royalties, and continually improving their service. The good performance of the HYF helped to gain the trust of the Government and eventually developed to be a major Chinese owned public utility company in Hong Kong.

Throughout the seventy-five years of service, the HYF contributed much to the development of Hong Kong. The HYF provided the only method for the passengers and vehicles to travel between Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula until 1972 when the Cross Harbour Tunnel was introduced. It was also the only method for the people in Outlying Islands to go to the urban area.

⁴Yaumati ferry service means the ferry service between Central and Yaumati, Central and Mong Kok Tsui, Central and Sham Shui Po.

Since the management personnel of the HYF were very enterprising and established convenient ferry services to many parts of Hong Kong, the HYF helped the expansion and development of urban areas and also aided the development of the New Territories and Outlying Islands. It also facilitated the business activities in Hong Kong.

There were a number of records made by the HYF in the development of Hong Kong. It was the first and the only company to provide the regular vehicular ferry service in Hong Kong. During the Japanese occupation, the HYF was the only ferry company that could resume service.

The HYF has been the world's largest local ferry company as it owned more than a hundred ferry vessels and with more than 100 million people per year travelling on its ferry service from the 1970s to the early 1980s. It was also the first company to introduce the hoverferry to Hong Kong.⁵

Even though the HYF has been an important public utility company, and maintained all ferry services in Hong Kong other than the "Star" Ferry, there is no thorough historical research on the development of the HYF. Only two anniversary magazines published by the HYF include brief descriptions of the

⁵Hong Kong Transport Department, *Hong Kong Annual Departmental Report by Commissioner for Transport 1977* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Transport Department, 1978), Appendix V; Hong Kong Transport Department, *Hong Kong Annual Departmental Report by Commissioner for Transport 1979* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Transport Department, 1980), 22, Appendix V; Hong Kong Transport Department, *Hong Kong Annual Departmental Report by Commissioner for Transport 1984* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Transport Department, 1985), 88.

development of the HYF. There are three scholarly pieces related to the development of the HYF including Miss Kwan Chui Lan, Rachel's research on "A Study of the Death of Franchise Policy for Ferry Service in Hong Kong;" Mr. Wong Ho Wah's research on "The Future Role of Ferry Service in Hong Kong;" and Mr. Pang Ming Ho, Darwin's research on "An Evaluation of Waterborne Ferry Services in Hong Kong, Past and Future."

However, these pieces focus primarily on discussing the recent issues of the ferry service. Also, these three scholars used either urban planning methodology or public administration methodology in conducting their research. These pieces are lacking details on the history and the development of the HYF.

The Government produced a research piece in 1974 titled, "*The Development of Public Transport in Hong Kong: An Historical Review 1841-1974.*" It covered the history of the development of public transport in Hong Kong. However, as the research needed to cover many kinds of public transport, it lacks many details on the development of the HYF.

For this research, the main theme is to analyse how the business-oriented policy of the Government, the short-sighted development policies of the Government, and also the Chinese people's response to the

colonial Government contributed to the success of the HYF and made it an important public utility in Hong Kong from 1923 to the 1970s. It discusses the role of the HYF in the urban and rural development in Hong Kong, and tries to analyse how the change of the management style affected the development of HYF. It also provides the details of the history of the development of the HYF from its beginning in 1923 to the 1970s.

The reasons choose to stop the research in the 1970s are that the ferry service of the HYF has started to decline in 1970s after the opening of the Cross Harbour Tunnel. The HYF eventually shifted the major focus of its Company from the ferry service to property construction, and tourism. As the research material mainly focused on the discussing the development of the HYF's ferry service, it would be appropriated to stop the research at the 1970s.

As mentioned before, there are no scholarly articles and secondary publication on the history of the HYF. Therefore, this research is mainly based on primary sources including the newspapers, Government documents, the HYF documents and interviews with both recent and former employees of the HYF.

There are six chapters with an introduction and a conclusion in this

thesis. The first chapter tries to provide some background for the development of ferry service in Hong Kong before the establishment of the HYF. The second chapter talks about the course of the establishment of the HYF and provides analysis for how the HYF gained the licence.

The third chapter discusses the further expansion of the HYF in the late 1930s. It talks about how the HYF management survived the company during the Japanese Occupation and the consequence of the HYF development in the Post-war period. The fourth chapter talks about the rehabilitation of the HYF after the war. It judges the importance of the rehabilitation programme to the further development of the HYF in the following decades.

The fifth chapter analyses how the intention of the Government to build the Cross Harbour Tunnel contributed to the development of the HYF and made it into the world's largest local ferry company. The last chapter talks about the declining period of the HYF. It discusses how the Government changing policy on transportation affected the development of the HYF and led to the decline of its ferry service.

CHAPTER 2

INITIAL DEVELOPMENT OF FERRY SERVICE IN HONG KONG

After the British gained the Kowloon Peninsula as part of the Hong Kong colony in 1860 for facilitating trade, the peninsula was rapidly developed. A number of industries such as shipbuilding, soy, and tanneries set up in different parts of the Kowloon Peninsula.¹

At the same time, many people have migrated and settled in the Kowloon Peninsula. Both the European Community and Chinese Community built up the Tsim Sha Tsui and Yaumati areas respectively. As the residents in Kowloon still needed to connect with the Colony centre-the Victoria City on Hong Kong Island, it was necessary to have water transportation.²

In fact, there were already casual sampans and junks providing the communication between Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula in the 1860s. In the early 1870s, a Parsee merchant started a regular ferry service

¹Yaumati Kai Fong Welfare Advancement Association Limited油麻地街坊福利會有限公司, *Youmadi jie fang fu li hui cheng li nian yi zhou nian ji nian te kan*油麻地街坊福利會成立廿一週年紀念特刊 (Yaumati Kai Fong Welfare Advancement Association Ltd. Kowloon annual report) (Hong Kong: Yaumati Kai Fong Welfare Advancement Association Limited, 1972), unpagued; Carl T Smith, *A Sense of History: Studies in the Social and Urban History of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Educational Publishing Company, 1995), 203.

²E.J. Eitel, *Europe in China* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1983), 188-189; Steve Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004), 17. When the British occupied Hong Kong in 1841, they decided to build a new city in Hong Kong with the name of Victoria. The Victoria City covered most of the areas in present days Central and Western District. When people talked about the Central and Western District in pre-Second World War period, they simply referred it as Victoria City.

between Victoria City and Tsim Sha Tsui as the sideline of his business. This ferry service was the first regular ferry service in Hong Kong. The ferry service was very popular and it had eventually developed into a major ferry service in Hong Kong. It overtook by the Kowloon Wharf in 1898.³

On the other hand, a number of Chinese merchants also started to provide ferry services between Victoria City and Yaumati in 1902. They eventually formed a coalition and dominated the Yaumati ferry service in 1910.

Due to a number of reasons, the Government started to plan on regulating the ferry service in 1913. After the careful research and the approval of the Legislative Council, the Ferries Ordinance was passed in 1917. It provided power for the Government to select the operator for operating a certain group of ferry routes through public tender. The Government would grant a ferry licence to the operator for running the service and the operator needed to pay a designated amount of royalty to the Government and had to follow the regulations in providing ferry service.⁴

³David Johnson, *Star Ferry: The Story of Hong Kong Icon* (New Zealand: Remarkable View Limited, 1998), 17-18, 24-27; C.O.129/454/95-103, "Yau-Ma-Ti and Mong Kok Service" in Enclosure 1 of the letter from Claud Severn, Officer Adminstrating the Government to Viscount Milner, 7th April, 1919.

⁴C.O.129/454/113-123, "Memorandum from the E. R. Hallifax, Secretary of Chinese Affairs to Colonial Secretary, 15th December, 1913" Enclosure 2 of the letter from Claud Severn, Officer Adminstrating the Government to Viscount Milner, 7th April, 1919; Hong Kong Government, "Ferries Ordinance 1917," *The Hong Kong Government Gazette* 1917 (30th

The first ferry licence was granted in 1919 and the second ferry licence was granted in 1921 for running two groups of ferry routes. Unfortunately, both operators did not run the services properly and they could not reach the requirements of the Government. The Government needed to call for another tender for running the ferry services.

This Chapter provides the background of the beginning of ferry services in Hong Kong and talks about the development of the early ferry services in Tsim Sha Tsui and Yaumati. Also, it discusses the course and the reasons for the Government to regulate the ferry services. It mentions the course of the implementation of the Ferries Ordinance and the problem faced by the Government.

Starting from the cession of the Kowloon Peninsula to Britain in 1860, apart from the barracks set up in Tsim Sha Tsui area, different kinds of industries were also set up in the Kowloon Peninsula. In the early 1860s, the Hong Kong and Whampoa Dock Company was set up in Hung Hom and in the early 1870s, a British merchant, Paul Chater, established the Kowloon Wharf and spent about ten years time building some cargo-handling facilities in Kowloon Point of Tsim Sha Tsui. In 1874, a huge cinnabar factory was

moved to settle in Yaumati from Western Point in Hong Kong Island.⁵

In the 1880s, there were a number of boat-building companies, soy factories, tannery factories and cement factories established in Yaumati, Tai Kok Tsui and Mong Kok Tsui and Hung Hom. In 1883, a Parsee merchant, Dorabjee Nowrojee established the Victoria Hotel in Kowloon. With the establishment of these industries, many people, especially Chinese, were attracted to work or even migrate and settle in Kowloon Peninsula.⁶

Thus, in the late 19th century and early 20th century, the Chinese Community was eventually built up in Yaumati and Hung Hom area. The development in the Kowloon Peninsula has contributed to the increase of population from a few thousand in 1860s to 43,883 in 1901.⁷

Since the Victoria City was the administration and business centre, it was the most densely populated region of the colony of Hong Kong, even though people worked in Kowloon Peninsula, many of them still chose to live in the Victoria City or other parts of Hong Kong Island. For those people who have migrated to settle on the Kowloon Peninsula, due to the same reason, they

⁵ Johnson, *Star Ferry*, 17-18, 24-27; Yaumati Kai Fong Welfare Advancement Association Limited, *Youmadi jie fang fu li hui cheng li*, unpaged; Smith, *A Sense of History*, 203.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Hong Kong Legislative Council, "Report on the Census of the Colony for 1901," *Sessional Papers 1901*, No.39, 8.

still needed to travel to the Victoria City frequently. In addition, many farmers in Kowloon Peninsula travelled to Victoria City or Hong Kong Island for selling their agricultural products as the demand in Hong Kong Island was far greater than the demand on the Kowloon Peninsula.⁸

Due to these trends, as early as the 1860s, transportation between Hong Kong and Kowloon Peninsula existed. There were some casual junks and sampans providing the cross-harbour service on an irregular basis. This situation continued until the early 1870s.⁹

In 1874, a Parsee merchant Dorabjee Nowrojee, who was the owner of a bakery, the operator of the Hong Kong Hotel in Hong Kong Island and later the founder of the Victoria Hotel in Kowloon, started to provide ferry service between Victoria City and Tsim Sha Tsui on a regular basis.¹⁰

At the beginning, this ferry service was not a major business focus of Nowrojee. Nowrojee mainly used the ferries to transport the bread from Hong Kong Island to the Kowloon Hotel on the Kowloon Peninsula, and through this developed a good relationship with the hotel's operator.¹¹

⁸Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 17; Johnson, *Star Ferry*, 19.

⁹C.O.129/454/95-103, "Yau-Ma-Ti and Mong Kok Service" in Enclosure 1 of the letter from Claud Severn, Officer Adminstrating the Government to Viscount Milner, 7th April, 1919.

¹⁰Johnson, *Star Ferry*, 17-21.

¹¹*Ibid.*

In the mean time, he wanted to attract more people to stay in Kowloon Hotel by providing the ferry service. Although unexpected by Nowrojee, the ferry service was very popular with the general public and became very famous in Hong Kong. Many people, especially Europeans, travelled on Nowrojee's ferry as Tsim Sha Tsui was still dominated by Europeans in early 1870s.

However, with the continued development of the Kowloon Wharf, there was an increase in the number of Chinese people travelling with Nowrojee's ferry. This was because the Kowloon Wharf employed many Chinese people. The rapid growth of Nowrojee's ferry service attracted others to join the ferry business.¹²

In 1888, a group of Europeans led by J. J. Francis established the Steam Launch Company Limited (hereafter, Steam Launch Company) for running a ferry service between a number of places of Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula. One of the ferry services of the Steam Launch Company was directly competing on the same route with Nowrojee between Victoria City and Tsim Sha Tsui.

However, the Steam Launch Company failed to challenge Nowrojee's Tsim Sha Tsui ferry service. In the late 1880s, Nowrojee and Kowloon Wharf

¹²Ibid., 17-27.

signed a contract that the Kowloon Wharf would provide access to and maintenance of the pier at Kowloon Point free of charge for Nowrojee's ferry service. In addition, the Kowloon Wharf decided to treat its employees for traveling on Nowrojee's ferry service. In return, Nowrojee agreed to provide more frequent ferry service with departures at every quarter of an hour by using three ferry vessels to facilitate those employees of the Kowloon Wharf.¹³

This contract made the Tsim Sha Tsui ferry service provided by Steam Launch Company become unattractive. Within a few years, the Steam Launch Company decided to suspend the Tsim Sha Tsui ferry service and turned to focus on operating other ferry services. The Tsim Sha Tsui ferry service was again dominated by Nowrojee.¹⁴

Even though Nowrojee's ferry service was already the major transportation for crossing the harbour in the 1890s, Nowrojee still considered the ferry business as the sideline business to his hotel. Thus, when he planned to retire and go back to India in the late 1890s, he decided to give up the ferry business and finally sold to the Kowloon Wharf.

On 5 April 1898, the Kowloon Wharf formally took over the ferry business

¹³Ibid., 25, 29, 30, 35.

¹⁴Ibid., 34.

of Nowrojee and established the “Star” Ferry Company Limited to continue the service between Victoria City and Tsim Sha Tsui. The “Star” Ferry ran for 200 crossings a day and followed a regular timetable. In order to improve the ferry service, the Kowloon Wharf ordered four new double-decked double-ender ferry vessels between 1898 and 1901.

Since there was continuous growth in the population and the urban development in Kowloon Peninsula, these new ferry vessels helped the “Star” Ferry to cope with the rapid growth of the number of passengers on the Tsim Sha Tsui ferry route. The regular services and the improvements made the “Star” Ferry became an important public transportation utility in Hong Kong in the beginning of the 20th century.¹⁵

In helping the management of the “Star” Ferry to run the ferry service and provide maximum public benefit, the Government passed the “Star” Ferry Company Ordinance in 1902. This Ordinance allowed the “Star” Ferry to make the by-law with the approval of the Government to regulate the ferry passengers. This ordinance was the first ordinance that the Government ever passed to regulate the ferry services in Hong Kong. This was also the only ordinance that the Government tailored for one ferry company until 1951. This ordinance allowed the “Star” Ferry to have special rights and position in the

¹⁵Ibid., 37-44.

development of the ferry service until the 1950s.¹⁶

Apart from the Tsim Sha Tsui ferry service that has been mentioned, many factories were built up in Yaumati, Mong Kok Tsui, Tai Kok Tsui, Sham Shui Po and Hung Hom area since the late 19th century. This attracted many people, especially the Chinese people, who migrated and worked in these areas and built up the Chinese Community there. Similar to the case of Tsim Sha Tsui, people in these areas demanded cross-harbour transportation.¹⁷

Before early 1890s, there were no regular ferry services in these areas except junks and sampans which were operated by Chinese people for the provision of cross-harbour service on an irregular basis. As most of the Chinese people were farmers and factory workers from the lower class and simply demanded a tool for harbour-crossing, the poor quality of those cross-harbour services did not concern them.

For example, the owners of junks or sampans would not start sailing until their junks or sampans were full, they would charge different people different prices, and most of the junks and sampans were decrepit and dirty. Although

¹⁶Hong Kong Government, "The 'Star' Ferry Company Ordinance 1902," *The Hong Kong Government Gazette 1902* (17th December, 1902), 2205; Hong Kong Government, "The 'Star' Ferry Company Limited By-laws," *The Hong Kong Government Gazette 1902* (24th December, 1902), 2235; Hong Kong Legislative Council, "'Star' Ferry Co., Ltd.," *Hong Kong Hansard 1902* (9th December 1902), 81.

¹⁷Yaumati Kai Fong Welfare Advancement Association Limited, *Youmadi jie fang fu li hui cheng li*, unpagued; Smith, *A Sense of History*, 203.

the Chinese people accepted this quality of service, the Europeans were very dissatisfied with the services and repeatedly complained about the services.¹⁸

Finally, in the early 1890s, the Steam Launch Company started a regular ferry service between the Victoria City and Yaumati. This ferry service was running according to the regular timetable; the ferries which ran for this service were clean and tidy, and the company charged the passengers a reasonable fare. The ferry service of the Steam Launch Company was quite popular with the European Community.

However, it could not attract the Chinese people, who were the majority group in the Yaumati area. It was because there were a dozen Chinese junks and sampans running on the same route as the Steam Launch Company.

Even though the Steam Launch Company ran on a regular basis, the combined departures of these Chinese junks and sampans were much more frequent than the Steam Launch Company which only had three ferries running on the same route.

As the Chinese people were not really concerned about the service quality, it was more convenient to travel with junks or sampans as they could provide service anytime. Not many Chinese people were willing to wait for the

¹⁸C.O.129/454/95-103, "Yau-Ma-Ti and Mong Kok Service" in Enclosure 1 of the letter from Claud Severn, Officer Adminstrating the Government to Viscount Milner, 7th April, 1919; Johnson, *Star Ferry*, 29-35.

fixed schedule ferry service provided by the Steam Launch Company.¹⁹

As the Steam Launch Company failed to attract the Chinese, and faced keen competition from the Chinese junks and sampans, the Company eventually ran into deficits and withdrew from the service around 1896.

After the failure of the Steam Launch Company, there was another European Company, Lauts Wegener & Co., providing the regular ferry service between Western Market and Yaumati in 1900. However, they also lost money from the provision of ferry service and withdrew from the service in 1903.²⁰

Apart from the Europeans, from 1902 to 1919, a number of Chinese merchants also established ferry companies to run regular ferry service between the Victoria City and Yaumati.

The first Chinese ferry company was Tai Yan Steam Launch Company (hereafter, Tai Yan Steam Launch) established by Wong Lan Sang with the financial backup from a shroff in A.S. Watson & Company. Tai Yan Steam Launch started the ferry service between the Victoria City and Yaumati in 1902. There were four ferry vessels running on this route and the company ran these ferries on a regular timetable. The fare charge for the service was

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰C.O.129/454/95-103, "Yau-Ma-Ti and Mong Kok Service" in Enclosure 1 of the letter from Claud Severn, Officer Adminstrating the Government to Viscount Milner, 7th April, 1919.

two cents per person and there was only single class accommodation in each launch. Similar to the European companies, Tai Yan Steam Launch also suffered initial losses on running this ferry service.²¹

Even though the Tai Yan Steam Launch was losing money, competitors still entered the market. Three Chinese merchants who were providing the casual cross-harbour launch service jointed together and formed a coalition company – Lee Kee Company (hereafter, Lee Kee) in 1903. They continued to provide irregular ferry service between the Victoria City and Yaumati and became a competitor of Tai Yan Steam Launch. The competition between Tai Yan Steam Launch and Lee Kee made both companies suffer a great financial loss. Thus, after a short period, Wong Lan Sang, the manager of Tai Yan Steam Launch approached Lee Kee and succeeded in ending the competition by forming a coalition for running the ferry between Victoria City and Yaumati.

Lee Kee agreed to follow the practices of Tai Yan Steam Launch running the service according to regular timetables and charging the same fare as Tai Yan Steam Launch. Tai Yan Steam Launch was the leading company in the

²¹C.O.129/454/95-103, "Yau-Ma-Ti and Mong Kok Service" in Enclosure 1 of the letter from Claud Severn, Officer Administrating the Government to Viscount Milner, 7th April, 1919; "Gangshen Huang Lansheng Shishi 港紳黃蘭生逝世" (Hong Kong Merchant Wong Lan Sang passed away), Hong Kong Chinese Mail 香港華字日報 1st March, 1935, 3, 2; The Po Leung Kuk Board of Directors for 1977/1978, *Centenary History of the Po Leung Kuk Hong Kong 1878-1978* (Hong Kong: The Po Leung Kuk Hong Kong, 1978), 182. Wong Lan Sang was not a famous merchant when he started the Tai Yan Steam Launch. With the expansion of his company and the formation of the coalition, he eventually became famous that he has been the director of Po Leung Kuk in 1918. He was also the Chairman of the Motor Boat Association, Kowloon Confucian Club and the Wong's Clanship Association.

coalition. With an increase in the number of passengers travelling with the coalition's service, both companies finally made some profit.²²

As the ferry service between the Victoria City and Yaumati increased its profits, it attracted some Chinese merchants to compete in the market. In 1907, the owners of four small Chinese steam launch companies formed a combination for running the ferry service between the Victoria City and Yaumati. The new combination also ran the ferry service on a regular timetable. However, they reduced the fare to one cent in order to compete with the original coalition led by Wong Lan Sang. Facing the challenge from the new combination, the original coalition followed the new combination and reduced the fare to one cent. The reduction of the fare made both the original coalition and the new combination suffer losses.

In order to solve the deficit problem, Wong Lan Sang approached the owners of the new combination inviting them to join together and form a new and bigger coalition. Finally, Wong Lan Sang succeeded and became the leader of the new coalition which consisted of eight companies. The coalition followed the practice of Tai Yan Steam Launch to provide ferry service

²²C.O.129/454/95-103, "Yau-Ma-Ti and Mong Kok Service" in Enclosure 1 of the letter from Claud Severn, Officer Adminstrating the Government to Viscount Milner, 7th April, 1919. Lee Kee Company consisted of Li Ki, Sam Wo and Hop Yick.

according to regular timetables, and the fare was raised to three cents.²³

Unfortunately, the new coalition faced more challenges after three years. In 1910, the owners of four other small Chinese steam launch companies formed a combination to run a regular ferry service between the Victoria City and Yaumati.

Similar to the previous combination in 1907, the new combination reduced the fare to one cent for competing with the coalition led by Wong Lan Sang. It forced the original coalition to follow and reduced the fare to one cent. The competition continued for one year, and produced negative effects - both the original coalition and the new combination were suffering deficits.

In the face of such difficulty, Wong Lan Sang restored to an old method to solve the problem. He approached the new combination and suggested the formation of a new coalition. The new combination accepted the suggestion of Wong Lan Sang and a new huge coalition was formed with twelve steam launch companies. Wong Lan Sang again became the leader of the new coalition and all companies followed the practice of Tai Yan Steam Launch. Up to this stage, the ferry service between the Victoria City and Yaumati had

²³Ibid. The four companies including Wing Shun Company, Chee Wo Company, Tuck Kee Company and Wai Kee Company.

been united under the control of Wong Lan Sang's coalition.²⁴

Even though the coalition ran the ferry service according to a timetable and charged a standard fare, there was still room for the coalition to improve their services as most of the ferries used by the coalition were old and decrepit. In fact, between 1913 and 1914, the coalition had built eight new ferry vessels for improving their services. Unfortunately, due to the outbreak of First World War in 1914, all the eight new ferries were requisitioned by the Government and the coalition could only continue using the old and poor-conditioned ferries to provide ferry services to the general public.²⁵

Apart from the ferry competition in Yaumati, another demand for cross-harbour ferry service was expressed in Sham Shui Po. Starting from the early 20th century, Li Ping, a Chinese merchant who owned many lands in

²⁴Ibid; C.O.129/454/57-65, "Petition Letter from the coalition of Wong Lan Sang to the Government." in Enclosure 1 of the letter from Claud Severn, Officer Adminstrating the Government to Viscount Milner, 7th April, 1919; "Gangshen Huang Lansheng Shishi 港紳黃蘭生逝世" (Hong Kong Merchant Wong Lan Sang passed away), Hong Kong Chinese Mail 香港華字日報 1st March, 1935, 3, 2; C.O.129/454/113-123, "Memorandum from the E. R. Hallifax, Secretary of Chinese Affairs to Colonial Secretary, 15th December, 1913" Enclosure 2 of the letter from Claud Severn, Officer Adminstrating the Government to Viscount Milner, 7th April, 1919. The last four companies for joining the coalition including Kwong Fuk, Tung Kee and Cheng Pui Ki. Up to this stage, the members in the coalition of Wong Lan Sang including the following Companies and owners: Tai Yan Steam Boat Company, Tai Wing Steam Launch Company and Weing Hing Company – owned by Wong Lan Sang and his son Wong Kam Wan ; Lee Kee Steam Launch Company – owned by Leung Hing Wan; Sam Wo Company – owned by Chan Yat Chiu; Hop Yick Company – owned by Kwok Lin; Wing Shun Steam Launch Company – owned by Kwok Lai Pun; Tak Kee – owned by Chau King Chi; Kwong Fook Steam Launch Company – owned by Kwok Fook; Wai Kee – owned by Chan Mau Kan; Tung Kee Steam Launch Company – owned by Ng Tsze Mei; Wing Hing Company – owned by Fung Hon Chi; Chang Pui Kee – owned by Chang Kam Man; Tak On Company owned by Yau Sui Chi. Among all these owners steam ship companies, in fact, Yau Sui Chi was also a famous Chinese merchant in Sham Shui Po area.

²⁵C.O.129/454/95-103, "Yau-Ma-Ti and Mong Kok Service" in Enclosure 1 of the letter from Claud Severn, Officer Adminstrating the Government to Viscount Milner, 7th April, 1919.

Sham Shui Po started a large residential development scheme there. Much residential housing was constructed, as well as the establishment of factories. Many people now migrated to and worked in Sham Shui Po.

Due to this, two steam launch companies who later became the members of Wong Lan Sang coalition joined together to operate regular ferry service between the Victoria City and Sham Shui Po in 1904. There were two ferries with single class accommodation on this ferry route and the fare charge was four cents per person. From 1904 to 1916, these two companies were the only combination running the ferry service between the Victoria City and Sham Shui Po.²⁶

In 1917, another ferry company, the Sze Yeuk Company started to operate the same ferry route. To make it competitive for the original operator, the Sze Yeuk Company set the fare at three cents per person. This forced the original operators to reduce their fare to three cents. However, the original pier used by these three companies was destroyed during the typhoon of 1917. These three companies then had to find another pier to continue their services.

Finally, the Sze Yeuk Company got the authorization from Li Ping to use his own private pier for continuing the ferry service. The remaining two

²⁶Ibid; Smith, *A Sense of History*, 180-188.

companies failed to find another pier and withdrew from Sham Shui Po service in 1917. The Sze Yeuk Company therefore became the dominant company for running the ferry between the Victoria City and Sham Shui Po.²⁷

After the British extended the territories of the colony to the New Territories in 1898, people in the New Territories and the Outlying Islands, especially farmers and fishermen started to sell their products on, and were supplied some daily necessities from Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula.

At the same time, the Government wanted to make the Outlying Islands into resorts for the Europeans. Therefore, it was necessary to have ferry services to link up the Outlying Islands and Hong Kong Island. Among all the Outlying Islands, Cheung Chau Island was the island that had the highest population. It was the most developed, and the first Outlying Island that the Government chose to develop into a resort for the Europeans. Thus, the first regular ferry service between Hong Kong Island and the Outlying Islands was started in Cheung Chau.

The Cheung Chau Kai Fong Association operated a regular ferry service between Hong Kong Island and Cheung Chau Island starting in 1919. Similar

²⁷Ibid; Smith, *A Sense of History*, 194-195. The two steam launch companies were Chee Wo Company and Tack On Company. Chee Wo Company was bankrupt in 1914 and took over by Tung Hing Company.

to the Yaumati and Sham Shui Po ferry services, the quality of Cheung Chau ferry service was poor.²⁸

Up to the mid-1910s, there was no regulation set by the Government to control the ferry service in Hong Kong excluding the “Star” Ferry Company. Anyone could run a ferry service without getting any permission from the Government. However, this situation came to an end in 1917 as the Government passed the Ferries Ordinance 1917 for regulating the ferry service in Hong Kong.

This seemed to be an odd action taken by the Government, but in fact, in 1913, the Secretary of Chinese Affairs had examined the situation of the ferry service in Hong Kong and wrote a memorandum to the Colonial Secretary. According to the memorandum, the Secretary of Chinese Affairs strongly suggested the Government should try to control and regulate the ferry services. He pointed out that the Government could control the ferry services by issuing a monopoly to a particular company for running one ferry route or one group of ferry routes through public tender. The company was required to run the ferry service following the regulations set by the Government.

²⁸The Hong Kong Government, *Hong Kong Administration Report 1913* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government, 1914), I11; The Hong Kong Government, *Hong Kong Administration Report 1917* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government, 1918), J11; The Hong Kong Government, *Hong Kong Administration Report 1918* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government, 1919), J11; The Hong Kong Government, *Hong Kong Administration Report 1919* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government, 1920), J12.

Secretary of Chinese Affairs made this suggestion hoping to see improvement in the quality, safety and convenience of the ferry service.²⁹

According to the research done by the Secretary of Chinese Affairs, the coalition of Wong Lan Sang was in fact gaining a huge profit by dominating the Yaumati ferry service and the Sham Shui Po ferry service. In order to protect their huge profit, the coalition tried to prevent other companies from competing with them.

With no competition, the coalition never upgraded their poor quality of service. The ferries continued to be very crowded, and many serious accidents occurred. The Secretary of Chinese Affairs believed that the introduction of monopoly and the dissolve of coalition would be the best way to solve these problems and to improve the ferry service.³⁰

From the memorandum of the Secretary of the Chinese Affairs, it is evident that the initial reason for the Government to regulate the ferry service was the poor quality of service provided by the coalition of Wong Lan Sang. At the same time, the memorandum showed that the Government had been aware of the huge profits made from their Yaumati ferry service. This had

²⁹C.O.129/454/113-123, "Memorandum from the E. R. Hallifax, Secretary of Chinese Affairs to Colonial Secretary, 15th December, 1913" Enclosure 2 of the letter from Claud Severn, Officer Administrating the Government to Viscount Milner, 7th April, 1919.

³⁰Ibid.

eventually become another major focus of the Government for regulating ferry service.

The analysis of the Secretary of Chinese Affairs' memorandum aroused the Government's concern and interest on the ferry service issue. In January 1914, Governor Sir Henry May appointed the Hongkong Ferries Committee, which consisted of five government officials, to indulge in a further study on the issue of ferry service in Hong Kong.

In late February 1914, the Committee quickly submitted the report to the Government. It suggested regulation of the ferry services and stressed that the ferry services between the Victoria City and Yaumati, and the service between Victoria City and Sham Shui Po were the "most in need of regulation."

However, the main reason for supporting their suggestions was different from the Secretary of Chinese Affairs. The Committee emphasized that the Government could yield a good return by requiring the licensed ferry company to pay a fixed amount of monthly royalty. The regulating of ferry services was good for the public interest.³¹

The possible reason for the Committee to emphasize on the profit issue

³¹C.O.129/454/124-126, "Hongkong Ferries Committee Report, 27th February, 1914" Enclosure 3 of the letter from Claud Severn, Officer Adminstrating the Government to Viscount Milner, 7th April, 1919.

was that during 1913, the Government had financial difficulty and borrowed a large amount of money for some special expenditure such as the construction of the Kowloon-Canton Railway. It made the Government eager to have stable source of income. It was believed to be a good idea to grant the ferry licence and thereby gain the royalty fees for the Government.³²

After careful consideration, the Government accepted the suggestion of the Committee. With the approval of the Executive Council on the principle of regulating the ferry, the Government started to make an Ordinance for regulating the ferry services. The Government took three years to make the details of the Ferries Ordinance.³³

During this period, the coalition of Wong Lan Sang learnt that the Government planned to regulate the ferry services, they employed a solicitor firm, Deacon, Locker, Deacon & Harston to represent them and negotiate with the Government on the issue of ferry service.

The solicitor firm tried to help the coalition from getting the preferential position in the competition for licensing under the future Ferries Ordinance. The solicitor firm told the Government that the coalition had already run the

³²The Hong Kong Government, *Hong Kong Administration Report 1913* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government, 1914), 4-5.

³³C.O. 131/49/235, "Ferries", Minutes of 17th Meeting of Hong Kong Executive Council 1914, Hong Kong Executive Council 1914 Vol.1, 39.

ferry service for a long time and had invested for the provisions of the ferry service. The coalition would suffer a great financial loss and it was unfair to the coalition if the Government did not grant the licence to them.³⁴

However, as the memorandum of the Secretary of Chinese Affairs had stated very clearly, the coalition should be dissolved in order to improve the ferry service, the Government refused to grant any privilege to the coalition on the ferry licence issue.³⁵

In October 1917, the Executive Council made a Bill to regulate the ferry service and passed the Bill to the Legislative Council for consideration. On 21st November, 1917, the Legislative Council approved the first reading of the Ferries Ordinance 1917. One week later, the Legislative Council started the second reading debate of the Ferries Ordinance 1917.

During the debate, the Attorney-General, Mr. J. H. Kemp, pointed out that the object of the Bill was not to secure revenue, but the interests of the traveling public. The Unofficial Member Mr. Holyoak had mentioned the request of the coalition of Wong Lan Sang for the preferential consideration in

³⁴C.O.129/454/66, "Letter from Deacon, Looker, Deacon & Harston to the Colonial Secretary, 10th October, 1916" in Enclosure 1 of the letter from Claud Severn, Officer Administrating the Government to Viscount Milner, 7th April, 1919; C.O.129/454/67-70, "Letter from Deacon, Looker, Deacon & Harston to the Colonial Secretary, 23rd October, 1916" in Enclosure 1 of the letter from Claud Severn, Officer Administrating the Government to Viscount Milner, 7th April, 1919.

³⁵C.O.129/454/71, "Letter from the Colonial Secretary to Deacon, Looker, Deacon & Harston, 3rd November, 1916" in Enclosure 1 of the letter from Claud Severn, Officer Administrating the Government to Viscount Milner, 7th April, 1919.

the competition for licence. However, the Officer Adminstrating the Government, Mr. Claud Severn rejected the request and stated clearly that the Government would not give anyone any preference for getting the licence as it was not fair. After the debate, the Legislative Council approved the second reading. Followed by the third reading, the Legislative Council approved the Ferries Ordinance 1917.³⁶

There were several important characteristics for the Ferries Ordinance 1917. First of all, no person could maintain the ferry services within the boundary that was stated in the Ferries Ordinance without getting a licence from the Government.³⁷

Apart from that, the Government had the right to decide the amount of royalty that the licensee was required to pay. Besides, the Government had the right to draft the regulations and conditions of the licence, to determine the type and specification of ferry vessels used in the service, and to exclude any particular ferry service from being regulated by the Ordinance.

In addition, any person who offended the Ferries Ordinance would be charged a penalty not exceeding one thousand dollars and their ferries could

³⁶Hong Kong Legislative Council, "Ferries Ordinance 1917," *Hong Kong Hansard 1917* (22nd November 1917), 115; Hong Kong Legislative Council, "Ferries Ordinance 1917," *Hong Kong Hansard 1917* (29th November 1917), 119-120; Hong Kong Government, "Draft of Ferries Ordinance 1917 and Proposed Ferries Regulations," *The Hong Kong Government Gazette Supplementary 1917* (9th November, 1917), 454-462.

³⁷The full details of the Ferries Ordinance 1917 refer to Appendix 1.

be seized by the Police. Finally, the “Star” Ferry Company was excluded from being regulated by the Ferries Ordinance 1917.³⁸

After the passing of the Ferries Ordinance 1917, the Executive Council started to make the formal Ferries Regulations with amendment to the proposed Ferries Regulations presented to the Legislative Council during the debate on the Bill of regulating ferry service. After half a year of deliberations, the Executive Council approved the Ferries Regulation made under the Ferries Ordinance 1917 on 30th May, 1918.

The Ferries Regulations provided further details of the conditions of the ferry licences, and the process for granting licences. It stated the boundary that the ferry service would regulate, and provided the details on how the first group of ferry routes – between the Victoria City and Yaumati, the Victoria City and Mong Kok Tsui, the Victoria City and Sham Shui Po, would be regulated.³⁹

Shortly after passing the Ferries Regulations, on 26th July, 1918, the Government called the tender for operating the ferry service between the Victoria City and Yaumati, the Victoria City and Mong Kok Tsui, the Victoria

³⁸Hong Kong Government, “Ferries Ordinance 1917,” *The Hong Kong Government Gazette 1917* (30th November, 1917), 677-678.

³⁹Hong Kong Government, “Ferries Regulations,” *The Hong Kong Government Gazette 1918* (31st May, 1918), 216-223. The full details of the Ferries Regulations refer to Appendix 2.

City and Sham Shui Po for three years starting from 1st January 1919.

At the deadline of the calling of tender, a few companies submitted the tender including the original Sham Shui Po ferry service operator – the Kau Lung Sze Yeuk Kai Fong Ferry Company Limited and the original Yaumati operator – Shut Luk Company (the coalition of Wong Lan Sang).

During the Legislative Council's debate, the Government official claimed that the introduction of ferry licences was only for improving the ferry service, not for revenue. However, when considering which company was suitable for running the ferry service, the Executive Council was in favour of the tender which was willing to pay the highest royalty. Besides the royalty issue, the Government had already regarded the coalition of Wong Lan Sang as an obstacle to the improvement of the ferry service, so the Government would definitely not grant the licence to the coalition of Wong Lan Sang. Therefore, the Government finally accepted the tender from the Kau Lung Sze Yeuk Kai Fong Ferry Company which was willing to pay the highest amount of royalty to the Government.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ C.O.129/454/55-56, The letter from Claud Severn, Officer Adminstrating the Government to Viscount Milner, 7th April, 1919; C.O. 131/54/366, "Ferries Ordinance, 1917", Minutes of 46th Meeting of Hong Kong Executive Council 1918, Hong Kong Executive Council 1918 Vol.2, 45; C.O. 131/54/409, "Ferries Ordinance, 1917", Minutes of 1st Meeting of Hong Kong Executive Council 1919, Hong Kong Executive Council 1919 Vol.1, 2; Hong Kong Legislative Council, "Questions from the Unofficial Member Mr. Ho Fook to the Government," *Hong Kong Hansard 1919* (15th May 1919), 27. The Kau Lung Sze Yeuk was willing to pay \$9,900 per month. The Shut Luk Company was only willing pay \$4,850 per month. There was another company that was willing to pay \$6,000 per month. It was possible that Wong Lan

In January 1919, the Kau Lung Sze Yeuk Kai Fong Ferry Company Limited, the first licenced ferry company, started to operate three ferry routes, Central Market (Jubilee Street) and Yaumati (Public Square Street), New Western Market (Morrison Street) and Mong Kok Tsui (Shantung Street), West Point (Eastern Street) and Sham Shui Po (Nam Cheong Street).

For the Yaumati ferry route, it operated from 5:00 A.M. to mid-night with a frequency of every 15 to 30 minutes for a departure. The fares charged on this route were 10 cents for first class accommodation, 5 cents for second class accommodation, and 3 cents and 4 cents for third class accommodation for before 6:00 P.M. and after 6:00 P.M. respectively.

For the Mong Kok Tsui and Sham Shui Po ferry routes, they operated from 5:00 A.M. to 11:00 P.M. and from 5:00 A.M. to 10:00 P.M. respectively with a frequency of every 15 to 30 minutes for a departure. The fare charged on both routes was 10 cents for first class accommodation, 7 cents for second class accommodation, and 4 cents before 6:00 P.M. and 5 cents after 6:00 P.M. for third class accommodation.⁴¹

Sang really believed the amount of royalty was not an important element to compete the ferry licence. Thus, for lowering down the running cost and for gaining more money, it would be very normal for Wong Lan Sang to suggest the Shut Luk Company to pay a least royalty.

⁴¹“Jiulong Siyue Jiefang Lunchung Yuoxian Gongsì Bugao 九龍四約街坊輪船公司佈告” (Notice from the Kau Lung Sze Yeuk Kai Fong Ferry Company), The Chinese Mail 華字日報, 4th November, 1918; “The Advertisement of The Kau Lung Sze Yeuk Kai Fong Ferry Company Limited”, The China Mail, 31st December, 1918, 3.

The Kau Lung Sze Yeuk Kai Fong Ferry Company was owned and managed by a group of Chinese merchants in Sham Shui Po, Yaumati, Mong Kok area, including Li Ping who was the major landowner in Sham Shui Po. Before receiving the ferry licence, it had operated the ferry route between the Victoria City and Sham Shui Po under the name Sze Yeuk Company since 1917. Different from other Chinese steam launch companies in the coalition of Wong Lan Sang, the Kau Lung Sze Yeuk Kai Fong Ferry Company managed by a group of Chinese merchants, and sold shares to collect more capital for running the company. The issue of shares prevented the company to face any financial instability. It also made the company capable of paying the Government large royalties.⁴²

Since some Chinese merchants had gone for the Kai Tak Reclamation Project in 1920, the Government decided to assist and support the project by introducing the Kowloon East ferry service which provided the ferry service between Victoria City, Hung Hom, Kowloon City and Shau Ki Wan. Therefore, after granting the first ferry licence for one year, the Executive Council proposed to grant the second ferry licence for operating the Kowloon East ferry service. In November 1920, the Executive Council called for tenders for

⁴²Smith, *A Sense of History*, 194-195. The Board of Director of the Kau Lung Sze Yeuk Kai Fong Ferry Company included Li Ping, Lo Chak Hung, Cheung Yuet Hung, Wong Yue Tung, Kwok Kan, Chau Chu U, Cheuk King and Wong Lai Tong.

a three year term of operating this group of ferry routes starting from 1st April, 1921. Finally, the Government granted the licence to Mr. Tsang Ping Shu trading as the Eastern Ferry Company.⁴³

On 1st April, 1921, the Eastern Ferry Company started the ferry service between the Victoria City, Hung Hom, Kowloon City and Shau Ki Wan. The ferry operated from 5:15 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. The fare charged on the ferry service between Victoria City and Shau Ki Wan was 15 cents for first class accommodation and 8 cents for the second class accommodation.

For the service between Victoria City and Kowloon City; Hung Hom and Shau Ki Wan; and Kowloon City to Shau Ki Wan, the fare charge for these three routes was 10 cents for the first class accommodation and 6 cents for the second class accommodation.

For the service between Victoria City and Hung Hom and the service between Hung Hom and Kowloon City, the fare for both routes was 5 cents for the first class accommodation and 4 cents for the second class accommodation. And shortly after it started the service, the Government approved the Eastern Ferry Company to raise the first class accommodation

⁴³Hong Kong Legislative Council, "Annual Budget Debate," *Hong Kong Hansard* 1920 (18th November 1920), 64, 65, 75; C.O. 131/60/178, "Ferries Ordinance, 1917", Minutes of 26th Meeting of Hong Kong Executive Council 1921, Hong Kong Executive Council 1921 Vol.2, 38; Hong Kong Government, "Regulation under Ferries Ordinance 1917," *The Hong Kong Government Gazette* 1920 (19th November, 1920), 420-422; Hong Kong Government, "Report for the Finances For the Year 1921", *Hong Kong Administrative Report* 1921 (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government, 1922), A(1).

fare from 5 cents to 8 cents. The Eastern Ferry Company used the traditional method to run the company and it was managed by a single merchant.⁴⁴

As mentioned before, the goals for the Government to regulate the ferry service were to take over the Yaumati ferry service from the coalition of Wong Lan Sang to improve the quality of ferry service and to gain profit from the royalty for solving the financial difficulty of the Government. Among these goals, the Government succeeded in taking over the Yaumati ferry service from the coalition of Wong Lan Sang. However, shortly after the Government terminated the right of the coalition to run the Yaumati ferry service, the coalition had sent a petition of appeal to the Government asking for compensation for the financial loss caused by the termination of their service. The Government spent three years negotiating and finally agreed to pay \$75,000 as compensation to the coalition of Wong Lan Sang. The Government had therefore lost money for regulating the ferry service.⁴⁵

⁴⁴Hong Kong Government, "Report for the Finances For the Year 1921", *Hong Kong Administrative Report 1921* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government, 1922), A(1); Hong Kong Government, "Regulation under Ferries Ordinance 1917," *The Hong Kong Government Gazette* 1920 (19th November, 1920), 420-422; C.O. 131/60/84, "Eastern Ferries", Minutes of 19th Meeting of Hong Kong Executive Council 1921, Hong Kong Executive Council 1921 Vol.1, 69; C.O. 131/60/262, "Eastern Ferries", Minutes of 2nd Meeting of Hong Kong Executive Council 1922, Hong Kong Executive Council 1922 Vol.1, 5; C.O. 131/60/422, "Eastern Ferries", Minutes of 51st Meeting of Hong Kong Executive Council 1922, Hong Kong Executive Council 1922 Vol.2, 51.

⁴⁵C.O. 131/60/631, "Yaumati Ferries", Minutes of 34th Meeting of Hong Kong Executive Council 1923, Hong Kong Executive Council 1923 Vol.2, 36; C.O.129/454/57-65, "The Petition from Tai Yan Steam Launch" in Enclosure 1 of the letter from Claud Severn, Officer Adminstrating the Government to Viscount Milner, 7th April, 1919; C.O.129/454/113-123, "Memorandum from the E. R. Hallifax, Secretary of Chinese Affairs to Colonial Secretary, 15th

On top of losing money for regulating the ferry service, the Government also failed to improve the quality of ferry service. When the Kau Lung Sze Yeuk Kai Fong Ferry Company started their ferry service in 1919, they initially suffered from a shortage of ferry vessels as the First World War had just ceased. They could not meet the Government requirement of increased ferries, either by purchasing from other companies or constructing them themselves. An exemption was therefore granted by the Government that the Kau Lung Sze Yeuk Kai Fong Ferry Company could start their service with a reduced number of ferry vessels. However, even though the situation was improved in late 1919, the Kau Lung Sze Yeuk Kai Fong Ferry Company did not buy or build more ferry vessels, and therefore did not fulfill the original requirement. The lack of ferry vessels often led to an overload problem. Together with the high fare charge and poor and old wooden ferry vessels, many people were dissatisfied with the service of the Kau Lung Sze Yeuk Ferry Company.⁴⁶

On the other side, the service quality of Eastern Ferry Company was also

December, 1913" Enclosure 2 of the letter from Claud Severn, Officer Adminstrating the Government to Viscount Milner, 7th April, 1919; C.O.129/479/393, "Letter from Sir R.E. Stubbs, Governor of Hong Kong to the Duke of Devonshire", 26th February, 1923. According to the letter from Governor Stubbs to the Duke of Devonshire, the Government was base on the generous spirit for paying the compensation to Wong Lan Sang.

⁴⁶"Hong Kong Ferries – New Terminals To Open Wednesday", The China Mail, 30th December, 1918, 5; "Yaumati Ferry Launch Coxswain Fined Too Many Passengers", The China Mail, 4th February, 1921, 4.

poor. It ignored the regulations and allowed the carrying of pigwash on the ferry vessels. The environment of the ferry vessels was therefore very poor.

Even though the services provided by the two licensed ferry companies could not reach the requirements stated in the ferry regulations, the Government did not fine the ferry companies or terminate their licences. The Government rather provided a favourable offer to lure the ferry companies to improve their service. For example, the Government offered the extension of the licence to the Kau Lung Sze Yeuk Kai Fong Ferry Company with the condition that the company needed to provide more boats for service.⁴⁷

On the issue of profit, the Kau Lung Sze Yeuk Kai Fong Ferry Company Limited had a better financial backup as it issued shares for collecting capital; it was capable of paying the large monthly royalties on time. However, as the Eastern Ferry Company did not have strong financial backup, the Eastern Ferry Company was sometimes in arrears of the royalty.

As the amount of the royalty of the Eastern Ferry Company was far less than the Kau Lung Sze Yeuk Kai Fong Ferry Company, the arrear of the royalty from the Eastern Ferry Company meant the Government had slightly less income than expected. The Government still gained much from the Kau

⁴⁷C.O. 131/60/461, "Communications", Minutes of 63rd Meeting of Hong Kong Executive Council 1922, Hong Kong Executive Council 1922 Vol.2, 90; C.O. 131/60/542, "Ferries", Minutes of 17th Meeting of Hong Kong Executive Council 1923, Hong Kong Executive Council 1923 Vol.1, 57.

Lung Sze Yeuk Kai Fong Ferry Company. However, since the major reason for the Government regulating the ferry service was to gain profit, the Government had sent a warning to the Eastern Ferry Company and even suggested terminating its licence.⁴⁸

From the above information, it could be concluded that the profit issue and the quality of service were the major concerns of the Government as these two factors were interrelated. The Government understood well that good quality of service could help to attract more people to travel with the licensed ferry service. The ferry companies could have more income which guaranteed the Government a stable source of royalty. However, among the two main concerns for the Government regulating ferry service, the profit issue was at the top of the Government's list.

Although facts might suggest that the Government would terminate the licence given to the ferry company because of the poor quality of services, profit was always the first priority. This is supported by the fact that the Government did not take serious action on punishing the ferry companies for not providing good quality of service, but rather on the arrears of the royalty.

Besides, based on the above information, it can be observed that the

⁴⁸C.O. 131/60/422, "Eastern Ferries", Minutes of 51st Meeting of Hong Kong Executive Council 1922, Hong Kong Executive Council 1922 Vol.2, 51; C.O. 131/60/446, "Eastern Ferries", Minutes of 59th Meeting of Hong Kong Executive Council 1922, Hong Kong Executive Council 1922 Vol.2, 75.

Government did not have any long term and well-planned policies on the development of ferry service. The Government only made policies to regulate the ferry service when problems arose. All of these principles adopted by the Government greatly affected the development of ferry services in Hong Kong in the following decades.

CHAPTER 3

THE ESTABLISHMENT AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE HONGKONG AND YAUMATI FERRY COMPANY LIMITED 1923-1937

Even though the Government succeeded in gaining profit by regulating the ferry service, the licenced ferry companies did not operate properly and in reality the Government treated the first two ferry licences as a trial run for regulating the ferry services. The Government decided to call tenders again for operating the Yaumati ferry service and Kowloon East ferry service in 1923.¹

Based on the principle of profiting from the licenced ferry service, the Government granted licences to the Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited (HYF) and the Eastern Ferry Company for operating Yaumati ferry service and Kowloon East ferry service. These companies demonstrated an ability to provide highest royalty to the Government.

Since the management of the HYF was very enterprising and also keen on making profit by operating the ferry service, the HYF operated the service properly and made great improvement in it. The financial backup and the profit that the HYF gained made the HYF capable of paying the huge royalty

¹C.O.129/461/461-463, The letter from Sir R. E. Stubbs, Governor of Hong Kong to Vicount Milner, 14th July, 1920; The Yaumati ferry service included the ferry routes between Victoria City and Yaumati; Victoria City and Mong Kok Tsui; Victoria City and Sham Shui Po. The Kowloon Esat Ferry service included the ferry service between Victoria City, Kowloon City, Hung Hom and Shau Ki Wan.

on time to the Government.

In the late 1920s, the HYF enthusiastically participated in the process of introducing the Vehicular ferry service, which allowed the Government to meet the demand for the cross harbour vehicle traffic. The performance of the HYF fulfilled the two most important objectives of the Government on regulating the ferry service which included making profit and improving the quality of service.

Thus, the HYF gained the trust from the Government and was repeatedly granted the ferry licences by the Government. The HYF therefore gained nearly all the licences for operating the inter-Victoria Harbour ferry routes, including both the passengers and vehicular service within fifteen years.

This chapter examines the background and course of the establishment of the HYF. It will discuss the early development of the HYF, and analyses how the HYF operated the ferry service in the 1920s and 1930s and why it gained nearly all the inter-Victoria Harbour ferry routes. It also analyses the relationship between the Government and the HYF during this period.

In the letter written by Governor Sir R. E. Stubbs, he notes that the granting of the first ferry licence was experimental; the Government knew it still had room to improve. As both the Kau Lung Sze Yeuk Kai Fong Ferry Company and Eastern Ferry Company did not operate the ferry service

properly, even though they could usually pay their royalties, in 1923 the Government decided to call for other tenders to operate the ferry routes, together with the Cheung Chau ferry service.

Since the Yaumati ferry service was the most profitable, the Government had imposed stronger control on the Yaumati ferry service, and only granted a two-year licence for operating this service. For the other two ferry services, the Government planned to grant a three-year licence.²

In April 1923, the Government issued a notice in the Gazette calling the tender for operating the Yaumati ferry service and set a deadline in June 1923. When the Government started to call tenders, a Chinese merchant – Lau Tak Po started to recruit other Chinese merchants to join together to compete for the ferry licence. There was only one record from the HYF Golden Jubilee Magazine mentioning reasons why Lau Tak Po would like to form a new company to run a ferry service. It stated that Lau Tak Po believed that the ferry service would be important for the communication between the people who lived in Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula. In addition, the ferry

²C.O.129/461/461-463, The letter from Sir R. E. Stubbs, Governor of Hong Kong to Vicount Milner, 14th July, 1920; Hong Kong Government, "Tenders invited for the maintenance of ferry services," *The Supplement to the Hong Kong Government Gazette* 1923 (20th April, 1923), 254-255; Hong Kong Government, "Tenders invited for the running of Eastern ferry services," *The Supplement to the Hong Kong Government Gazette* 1923 (8th June, 1923), 366; Hong Kong Government, "Tenders invited for the maintenance of ferry service between Victoria and Cheung Chau," *The Supplement to the Hong Kong Government Gazette* 1923 (15th June, 1923), 382.

service was important to the development of business in Hong Kong.³

Given the personal background of Lau Tak Po, these reasons were quite valid as Lau Tak Po was the son of Lau Chu Pak, a famous businessman who was the comprador of A.S. Watson's, Legislative Councilor, and Chairman of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. Lau Chu Pak was the influential leader of the Chinese Community in Hong Kong.⁴

Before the death of Lau Chu Pak in 1922, Lau Chu Pak and Lau Tak Po jointed together and formed a mercantile firm, Lau Chu Pak and Son Company. After the death of Lau Chu Pak, Lau Tak Po continued the mercantile business. Since running the mercantile business required transportation between Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula, a reliable ferry service was very important.⁵

Unfortunately, even though the Government has regulated the ferry service, it was still unreliable and inconvenient. In addition, the Kau Lung Sze

³Hong Kong Government, "Tenders invited for the maintenance of ferry services," *The Supplement to the Hong Kong Government Gazette* 1923 (20th April, 1923), 254-255; Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, *The Hongkong & Yaumati Ferry Co. Ltd.: Golden Jubilee, 1923-1973* (Hong Kong: Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, 1973), 13.

⁴John M. Carroll, *Edge of Empires – Chinese Elites and British Colonials in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2007), 79; Sing-lim Woo, *The Prominent Chinese in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Wu Chou Book Store, 1937), Part 2, 5-6; Zhou Jia Rong 周佳榮, Zhong Bao Xian 鍾寶賢, and Huang Wen Jiang 黃文光. *Xianggang Zhonghua zong shanghui bainianshi* 香港中華總商會百年史 (The Hundred Year History of the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce) (Hong Kong: Shangwu yinshuguan xianggang youxian gongsi, 2002), 18-20.

⁵*Anglo-Chinese Directory, Hong Kong 1922* (Hong Kong: The Publicity Bureau for South China, 1922), 1.

Yeuk Kai Fong Ferry Company gained a large profit from operating the Yaumati ferry service. These circumstances aroused the interest of Lau Tak Po to form a ferry company by himself in order to facilitate his mercantile business.

Also, from the Memorandum of Association of the HYF, it was stated clearly that one of the objectives for the establishment of the Company was to facilitate the mercantile business. From the analysis and the fact, it showed that, to a great extent, the business concern was the major reason for Lau Tak Po to form a ferry company to compete for the licence to operate the Yaumati ferry service.⁶

Finally, Lau Tak Po recruited thirteen Chinese merchants to join together to compete for the ferry licence. Among these thirteen merchants, some of them were famous businessmen in Hong Kong such as Lau King Cho and Kwok Chuen; and some of them were the merchants running steam launches service such as Chan Shek Shun. In addition, many of the thirteen merchants and Lau Tak Po himself were active in the Chinese Community and its charity activities. For example, Lau Tak Po and Kwok Chuen had both been the

⁶F.E. Nash, *Memorandum and Article of Association of the Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited* (Hong Kong: Victoria Printing Press, 1923), 5-9; C.O.129/475/272-281, The letter from Messer. Johnson, Stroke & Master to the Government on the issue of the Yaumati Ferry Service, 30th November, 1921.

directors of Po Leung Kuk.⁷

Lau Tak Po and the thirteen merchants issued shares through Bank of East Asia to raise the capital for establishing and running the company. They succeeded raising a total of \$400,000. After finishing all the preparation work, Lau Tak Po and Lau King Cho submitted a tender to the Government for running the Yaumati ferry service.⁸

After the careful consideration of the Government, in July 1923, the Executive Council decided that the licence for operating the Yaumati ferry service would be granted to Lau Tak Po and Lau King Cho. According to the record of the Executive Council, the reason for granting the licence to Lau Tak Po and Lau King Cho was that they could satisfy the Government as they had sufficient financial support.⁹

The Government gave such an explanation was that Lau Tak Po and Lau King Cho stated in the tender that they were willing to pay \$22,300 per month

⁷Sing Lim Woo, *The Prominent Chinese in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Wu Chou Book Store, 1937), 25; Zheng Zi Can 鄭紫燦 (Jan George Change), ed, *Xianggang Zhonghua shangye jiaotong renming zhinanlu* 香港中華商業交通人名指南錄 (The Anglo Chinese Commercial Directory) (Hong Kong: Privately Printed, 1915), 197; Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, *The Hongkong & Yaumati Ferry Co. Ltd.: Golden Jubilee, 1923-1973*, 6, 13; "Death of Mr. Lau King Cho" *The Hongkong Telegraph*, 26th November, 1931, 10. The thirteen merchants were Lau Tak Po, Lau King Cho, Kwok Chuen, Chan Sau Fung, Chan Shek Shan, So Tsz Hang, Wong Choi Ho, Cheuk Ming Shan, Yue Wai Pun, Wong Kwong Po, Wong Kwong Wa, Au Yeung Lu Ming, Au Yeung Tso Sheung and Chung Sau Chi.

⁸Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, *The Hongkong & Yaumati Ferry Co. Ltd.: Golden Jubilee, 1923-1973*, 6, 13.

⁹C.O. 131/60/614, "Communications", Minutes of 30th Meeting of Hong Kong Executive Council 1923, Hong Kong Executive Council 1923 Vol.2, 19.

for the royalty. This amount was more than double the original royalty (\$9900) paid by the Kau Lung Sze Yeuk Kai Fong Ferry Company. Since the major goal of the Government for regulating the ferry service was to gain extra profit, the amount proposed by Lau Tak Po and Lau King Cho was very attractive and could satisfy the Government's goal.¹⁰

Apart from this formal explanation from the Government, there were also some other possible reasons for making the Government to accept the tender from Lau Tak Po and Lau King Cho. Since Lau Tak Po and Lau King Cho had prepared \$400,000 for operating the Yaumati ferry service, which was enough for operating as well as improving it. There was therefore no need for the Government to worry about the financial situation of the new ferry company.

Since the Government treated the first and second ferry licences as experiments for gaining experience, and the Kau Lung Sze Yeuk Ferry Company did not operate the ferry service properly, the Government might also want to let the new ferry company operate the Yaumati ferry service so that it could gain more experience.¹¹

Moreover, the Government granted the licence to Lau Tak Po and Lau

¹⁰C.O.129/526/34-45, The letter from W. T. Southorn, Officer Adminstrating the Government to Lord Passfield, 22nd April, 1930;

¹¹C.O.129/461/461-463, The letter from Sir R. E. Stubbs, Governor of Hong Kong to Vicount Milner, 14th July, 1920.

King Cho might also due to the background of Lau Tak Po and the thirteen merchants. As Lau Tak Po was the son of Lau Chu Pak, who had cooperated with the Colonial Government for a long time and was a Chinese Community leader, Lau Tak Po still maintained a good relationship with the Government even though Lau Chu Pak died in 1922.¹²

The fact that, Lau Tak Po and some of the thirteen merchants were also respectable Chinese Community leaders in Hong Kong might have encouraged the Government to have faith in them and trust that they could run the ferry service properly. Additionally, the granting of the ferry licence to the Chinese Community leaders might also help the Government to gain support from the local Chinese people and resume a normal relationship with the Chinese people after the Chinese strike in 1922.¹³

Shortly after the calling of tenders for running the Yaumati ferry service, the Government called tenders for the running of the Kowloon East and Cheung Chau ferry services. However, Lau Tak Po and the thirteen merchants at that time were busy with the preparation work for the implementation of the Yaumati ferry service. Also they did not want to start too

¹²Carroll, *Edge of Empires*, 79-83; Zheng Hong Tai鄭宏泰, Huang Shao Lun黃紹倫. *Xianggang Dalao — He Dong*香港大老—何東 (The Grand Old Man of Hong Kong – Ho Tung) (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing (Hong Kong) Company Limited, 2007), 218-222.

¹³The Hong Kong Government, *Hong Kong Administration Report 1922* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government, 1923), 2-4.

many ferry services at a time with not much experience, so they did not submit the tender for the Kowloon East ferry service and Cheung Chau ferry service.

Finally, as the original Kowloon East ferry operator, the Eastern Ferry Company promised the Government to reduce the fares, separated the pig-wash carrying from the passenger service and provided the Government highest amount of royalty. The Government therefore decided to grant the licence to the company to continue running the Kowloon East ferry service.¹⁴

The Cheung Chau ferry service was the first ferry service in the New Territories and Outlying Islands to be regulated by the Ferries Ordinance 1917. Although the Cheung Chau Kai Fong Ferry Company did not perform well in the past, when the Government decided to regulate the Cheung Chau ferry service, the Government made a promise to the Cheung Chau Kai Fong Ferry Company that an opportunity would be given to the company for improving its service. Under this special circumstance, the Cheung Chau Kai Fong Ferry Company got the licence for operating the ferry service between Hong Kong

¹⁴C.O. 131/60/542, "Ferries", Minutes of 17th Meeting of Hong Kong Executive Council 1923, Hong Kong Executive Council 1923 Vol.1, 57; C.O. 131/60/669, "Communications", Minutes of 45th Meeting of Hong Kong Executive Council 1923, Hong Kong Executive Council 1923 Vol.2, 74; C.O. 131/60/678, "Communications", Minutes of 48th Meeting of Hong Kong Executive Council 1923, Hong Kong Executive Council 1923 Vol.2, 83.

Island and Cheung Chau.¹⁵

The processes and results of choosing tenders for the three ferry services, with the exception of the special arrangement of the Cheung Chau ferry, show that the Government still prioritized profit when granting licences for companies. It is also revealed that the Government did not have a long term plan for the development of the ferry service as all the licences granted by the Government were short-term.

Upon gaining the licence for running the Yaumati ferry service, from July to December 1923, Lau Tak Po and the thirteen merchants started to do the preparation work for taking over the Yaumati ferry service on 1st January, 1924.

In 5th November, 1923, the Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited (HYF) was established with Lau Tak Po and Lau King Cho as the Managing Directors of the Company. Together with other founders of the HYF, they formed the Director Board and the Management Board of the company.¹⁶

Nearly, all the members in the Director Board and Management Board participated in the operation of the HYF. Lau Tak Po and Lau King Cho's role

¹⁵C.O. 131/60/675, "Communications", Minutes of 47th Meeting of Hong Kong Executive Council 1923, Hong Kong Executive Council 1923 Vol.2, 80.

¹⁶Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, *The Hongkong & Yaumati Ferry Co. Ltd.: Golden Jubilee, 1923-1973*, 6, 13.

was to act as the leaders of the Company. There was no record explaining why Lau Tak Po and the thirteen founders chose to use this name to represent the company. However, it was possible that they adopted this name for the company because the ferry service that they operated served Hong Kong and the Yaumati area.

With the effort of Lau Tak Po and the thirteen merchants, they brought 11 old small wooden hulled vessels and rented one wooden hulled vessel in order to reach the requirement set by the Government for running the Yaumati ferry service. All the ferries brought by the HYF were given a name with the prefix Chinese word “min” (man, public, 民). There was no record on why the HYF founder chose this word as the prefix for their ferries. With reference to the interview with the former staff member of the HYF, he said that the HYF founders chose this word because of the idea of to “yi min wei bun” (serve in people-based, 以民為本).¹⁷

On 1st January, 1924, the HYF commenced its ferry service between

¹⁷Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, *The Hongkong & Yaumati Ferry Co. Ltd.: Golden Jubilee, 1923-1973*, 6, 13; “Zongjingli Liuzhenguo Zhengshu sishinianqian duhai jiaotong qushi 總經理劉鎮國講述四十年前渡海交通趣事 (General Manager Lau Chan Kwok talks about the story of the ferry transport of forty years ago)”, Hong Kong Industrial and Commercial Daily 工商日報, 18th November, 1964, 5; Hong Kong Government, “Tenders invited for the maintenance of ferry services,” *The Supplement to the Hong Kong Government Gazette* 1923 (20th April, 1923), 254-255; Interview with Mr. Ng Siu Yuen Nelson, the former staff of the Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, 7th September, 2006. The Government required the operator to provide total of 12 vessels for running the Yaumati ferry service. Six vessels would be for the Yaumati Ferry service; three vessels for Mong Kok Tsui ferry service; three vessels for Sham Shui Po ferry service.

Victoria City and Yaumati, Victoria City and Mong Kok Tsui, and Victoria City and Sham Shui Po. The fare charge was 10 cents for the first class accommodation, 5 cents for second class accommodation, and 3 cents for third class accommodation. As the ferry vessels used by the HYF were old, far below the Government expectation, and always overcrowded, the Government was dissatisfied with the service provided by the HYF.

Keeping in mind that the HYF had sufficient financial support, the Government took serious action to deal with these problems. Two months after the HYF started their service, the Executive Council sent a warning to the HYF asking the HYF to construct five new ferries according to the approved design from the Government before 1st September, 1924. Before completing the new ferries, the HYF was required to provide at least two additional ferries in order to provide more frequent service.¹⁸

After receiving the warning from the Government, the HYF immediately placed an order in the Kwong Tak Cheong Shipyard for construction of a new 105 feet wooden ferry to be named *Man Ying*. Shortly after, the HYF placed another order in the Hong Kong and Whampoa Dock Company for the

¹⁸Hong Kong Government, "Tenders invited for the maintenance of ferry services," *The Hong Kong Government Gazette* 1923 (20th April, 1923), 108; C.O. 131/62/39, "Communications", Minutes of 6th Meeting of Hong Kong Executive Council 1924, Hong Kong Executive Council 1924 Vol.1, 20; "Zongjingli Liuzhenguo Zhengshu sishinianqian duhai jiaotong qushi 總經理劉鎮國講述四十年前渡海交通趣事 (General Manager Lau Chan Kwok talks about the story of the ferry transport of forty years ago)", Hong Kong Industrial and Commercial Daily 工商日報, 18th November, 1964, 5.

construction of four 100 feet double ended steel ferries to be named *Man Lai*, *Man Yee*, *Man Chung* and *Man Shun*. *Man Ying* was completed in July 1924 and the other four was completed in 1925.

Even though there was only one new ferry that was completed before the deadline set by the Government, the HYF demonstrated that it had sufficient financial support for improving and operating the ferry service. This was because with the four double ended steel ferries, *Man To*, *Man Tack*, *Man Chi* and *Man Wai* built in late 1920s, the HYF spent \$600,000 for building all the eight double ended steel ferries. The Government was satisfied with the quick response and actions of the HYF.¹⁹

Starting in 1925, most of the ferry vessels used by the HYF were new steel vessels and the HYF rigidly followed the timetable to provide a reliable ferry service. During the Chinese General Strike in Canton and Hong Kong in 1925, the management of the HYF succeeded in preventing the employees from striking and maintained the normal service. The performance of the HYF during the strike period boosted the Government's confidence and in the HYF.

As the HYF could satisfy the objectives of the Government, gaining profit

¹⁹Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, *The Hongkong & Yaumati Ferry Co. Ltd.: Golden Jubilee, 1923-1973*, 6, 13, 17; "Zongjingli Liuzhenguo Zhengshu sishinianqian duhai jiaotong qushi 總經理劉鎮國講述四十年前渡海交通趣事 (General Manager Lau Chan Kwok talks about the story of the ferry transport of forty years ago)", Hong Kong Industrial and Commercial Daily 工商日報, 18th November, 1964, 5.

and improving the quality of service, the Government repeatedly extended the licence of the HYF to operate the Yaumati ferry service. At the same time, there was a continuous increase in the number of people travelling on the Yaumati ferry. In 1928, there were more than 22,000,000 people travelling on the ferry service provided by the HYF.²⁰

From the late 1920s to the mid-1930s, the HYF actively participated in the introduction of vehicular ferry service. It was a milestone of the development of the HYF as it laid down the foundation for the HYF to build up its ferry kingdom in Hong Kong in future.

Ever since the beginning of the 20th century, in 1902, the Harbour Master, Commander Murray Ramsey suggested the construction of a bridge to connect Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula. However, with lack of support for the idea of Commander Ramsey, the suggestion of building the bridge never saw life.²¹

In the following twenty years, the population of Hong Kong grew, and with it the number of vehicles in Hong Kong increased. As a result, a demand

²⁰Ibid.; "Strike service – The Yaumati Ferry", The Hongkong Telegraph, 7th July, 1925, 1; Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, *The Hongkong & Yaumati Ferry Co. Ltd.: Golden Jubilee, 1923-1973*, 6, 13; C.O.129/526/34-45, The letter from W. T. Southorn, Officer Adminstrating the Government to Lord Passfield, 22 April, 1930.

²¹Victoria City Development Company Limited, *Report on a Proposed Road Crossing of Hong Kong Harbour Vol.1* (Hong Kong: Victoria City Development Company Limited, 1961), 2.

for cross-harbour vehicular service arose. In fact, the “Star” Ferry had already cooperated with the Wharf and Godown Company to provide the vehicular cross-harbour service by using lighters with cranes and cradles since 1918.

However, it was inconvenient to use this service as it required advanced booking and the car had to be put on board and lifted out separately. Also, only four to six motor cars could travel at one time. Since there was continuous growth of demand of cross harbour vehicular traffic and it was quite inconvenient to use the service provided by the “Star” Ferry, building a bridge or a tunnel to connect the two sides of the harbour again entered the public discourse.²²

Facing this problem, the Government asked the Harbour Development Consulting Engineers, Mr. Coode, Fitzmaurice, Wilson & Mitchell to conduct the research for dealing with the continuous growth of the demand for cross harbour vehicular traffic.

In November 1924, the Harbour Development Consulting Engineers submitted a report to the Government. In their report, they suggested that a vehicular ferry was still the best method for dealing with the problem of cross harbour traffic as it did not require a great additional expenditure.

²²David Johnson, *Star Ferry: The Story of Hong Kong Icon* (New Zealand: Remarkable View Limited, 1998), 63.

Since the Government at that time was facing the financial difficulty, it did not consider building a bridge or tunnel as a long term solution to the cross harbour vehicular traffic. The Government decided to follow the suggestion of the engineers and started to do further research to introduce a convenient vehicular ferry service to Hong Kong. The decision revealed that the Government did not have any long-term plan for the development of Hong Kong and made decisions only in regard to the present situation.²³

One month later, in December 1924, an initial plan for the vehicular ferry service was presented by Mr. John Duncan, the Port Engineer. According to this initial plan, the praya near Pedder Street and the praya at the end of Jordan Road were suggested respectively as the Hong Kong and Kowloon sites for the vehicular ferry service. The design of the vehicular ferry boat allowed the motor car to drive onto it directly from the pier when boarding and off the ferry directly onto the pier when disembarking.²⁴

In October 1926, the Director of Public Works submitted the proposal to the Government for introducing the vehicular ferry service. According to this proposal, the service would run between the praya of Murray Road on Hong

²³ C.O.129/526/34-45, The letter from W. T. Southorn, Officer Adminstrating the Government to Lord Passfield, 22nd April, 1930; Hong Kong Legislative Council, "Vehicular Ferry, Hong Kong – Kowloon," *Sessional Papers 1928*, No.6, 8.

²⁴ "Local Ferry Service", The Hongkong Telegraph, 31st December, 1924, 1.

Kong Island and the praya of Jordan Road on Kowloon Peninsula.

The vehicular ferry vessel would be a double ended ferry of 150 feet in length and 38 feet beams which would be able to carry 20 five-seat motor cars, 250 third class passengers on the lower deck and 540 first class passengers on the upper deck. The design of the vehicular ferry vessel would allow the motor cars to drive aboard and disembark. The proposal estimated that the cost for introducing the vehicular ferry, including reclamation in the two pier sites, construction of two ferry piers, and construction of three vehicular ferry vessels, would be \$1,890,000.²⁵

In 1927, the Government sent the proposal to the Chamber of Commerce and a number of Government Departments for comments. After considering all the comments from the Chamber of Commerce and the Government Departments, the Government amended the proposal and made a new proposal in the Sessional Paper published in 1928.

According to the new proposal, the vehicular ferry service would be run between the praya of Jubilee Street on Hong Kong Island and the praya of Jordan Road in Kowloon Peninsula. The proposal suggested that the vehicular ferry service could be combined with the original passenger ferry

²⁵Hong Kong Legislative Council, "Vehicular Ferry, Hong Kong – Kowloon," *Sessional Papers* 1928, No.6, 1-8.

service between Hong Kong Island and Yaumati. The design of the vehicular ferry vessel would be the same as the previous proposal. The estimated cost for introducing the vehicular ferry service would be \$1,715,000.²⁶

In fact, in the introduction of the new proposal, the Government stated clearly again that it would not choose to build the bridge as it was impractical. As for the tunnel, the building and maintenance cost was considered out of reach of the Government budget.

From the introduction part of the proposal in the Sessional Paper, it seemed that the Government was adamant that building a bridge was not suitable for Hong Kong. However, the only reason given for rejecting the construction of a tunnel was the high cost. This displays the Government's short-sighted thinking as it ignored the long term value of building the tunnel for the cross-harbour vehicular problem only because of the shortage of funds. The lack of long term Government planning facilitated the development of the ferry service and the development of HYF.²⁷

After the publication of the new proposal in the Sessional Paper, the Government sent the proposal to two major ferry companies, the "Star" Ferry and the HYF to ask for their opinions on the proposal.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid.

In March 1929, the “Star” Ferry sent a reply to the Government that they were interested in operating the vehicular ferry service if the Government could grant them a fifty years lease for the two vehicular ferry piers in Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula. At the same time, the “Star” Ferry wanted the Government to combine the passenger ferry route between Hong Kong and Yaumati with the vehicular ferry route between Hong Kong and Jordan Road.²⁸

In July 1929, the HYF also gave a reply to the Government on the vehicular ferry issue. Different from the reply of the “Star” Ferry, the HYF displayed sincerely to the Government by telling the Government that they prepared \$1,000,000 on the reclamation and the construction of the two ferry piers in Jubilee Street and Jordan Road and they were willing to pay for any other fee that may be required.

In addition, they told the Government that they would provide four double ended and ten other passenger ferries for running the ferry service between Hong Kong Island and Jordan Road immediately upon receiving the tender. They would try to place an order with the British Ship Builders to build the modern vehicular ferries as soon as possible in order to provide vehicular

²⁸C.O.129/526/58, The letter from C.M. Manners, Acting Secretary of The “Star” Ferry Company Limited to Colonial Secretary, 19th March, 1929.

ferry service.

Furthermore, the HYF requested the Government to combine the vehicular ferry route with the three ferry routes that the Yaumati ferry service was running, to form the new Hong Kong and Kowloon West ferry service system. However, the HYF told the Government that whether or not the Government combined the ferry routes, they would submit the tender to compete for the vehicular ferry licence.²⁹

The reply from the HYF made a good impression on the Government. The HYF would help to cut down the Government cost if the Government granted the vehicular ferry service operation right to the HYF. The HYF made a sincere reply to the Government with the knowledge that if the Government did not plan to build the cross harbour bridge or tunnel, the vehicular ferry service was the only method for vehicles travelling between Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula. The HYF could gain profit by operating the vehicular ferry service.

In 1930, the Legislative Council approved the construction work on the vehicular ferry piers in Jubilee Street and Jordan Road by granting \$1,300,000 for the job. The Jubilee Street Pier would also be used as the pier

²⁹C.O.129/526/59, The letter from Russ & Company to Colonial Secretary, 3rd July, 1929.

for the passenger ferry services to Sham Shui Po, Mong Kok Tsui and Hung Hom.³⁰

However, at this moment, the Government still had not decided whether the vehicular ferry service should be run by the Government or private enterprise. Some people criticized the Government for building the pier without deciding the ownership of the vehicular ferry service.³¹

Within a short period of time, in early 1931, the Government drew the conclusion that it would grant the licence to the private enterprise for building the vehicular ferries and operating the vehicular ferry service through public tender. The term of licence would last for 15 years. The licensee would need to build the ferry vessels following the specification made by the Government. Also, the licensee needed to pay a designated amount of royalty to the Government. The Government had the right to review and modify the fare and the Government reserved the right to take over the ferry service in the case of emergency.³²

As the Government estimated that it took at least two years for

³⁰“Vehicular Ferry,” *Hong Kong Hansard* 1930 (4th September 1930), 142.

³¹“Crossing the Harbour”, *Hong Kong Daily Press*, 4th September, 1930, 8.

³²C.O. 131/84/23, “Communications”, Minutes of 2nd Meeting of Hong Kong Executive Council 1931, *Hong Kong Executive Council 1931 Vol.1*, 9; Hong Kong Government, “Tenders invited for Passenger and Vehicle Ferries,” *The Supplement to the Hong Kong Government Gazette* 1931 (2nd October, 1931), 891 – 896.

completing the vehicular ferry piers, and wanted to give some time for the vehicular licensee to prepare the vehicular ferry vessels, the Government called the tender for running the passenger and vehicular ferry in October 1931.

The details of the notice for calling tender were evidently favourable to the HYF for gaining the licences. The Government adopted the suggestion of the HYF to combine the vehicular ferry route together with the three ferry routes of the Yaumati service operated by the HYF. Besides, the Government did not offer the 50 year pier lease to the ferry company suggested by the “Star” Ferry. This demonstrated clearly that the Government had stronger inclination towards the HYF.

As an enterprise company, in January, 1932, the HYF submitted the tender to compete for the passenger and vehicular ferry licence. Even though it seemed that the regulation in the notice of tender was favourable to the HYF, the “Star” Ferry also submitted a tender to compete for the licence. Finally, not surprising to either company, the Government accepted the tender from the HYF and granted the HYF a 15 year licence for running the passenger and vehicular ferry service between Hong Kong Island, Jordan Road, Mong Kok

Tsui and Sham Shui Po.³³

Gaining the passenger and vehicular ferry licence gave the HYF control over the most important communication channel in Hong Kong. All the communications, whether people, goods, or business between Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula, they were dependent on the HYF. Therefore, the granting of the licence in fact showed that the HYF, had gained the trust and faith of the Government and made the Government believe in the HYF's ability to maintain an acceptable ferry service.

During the launching ceremony of the vehicular ferry *Man Kung*, Mr. W. T. Southorn, the Officer Adminstrating the Government publicly stated that the HYF "is well known as one of our most enterprising and successful company that we have every confidence that in its capable hands the vehicular ferry service will realize our fullest hope."³⁴

After gaining the licences, the HYF started to do the preparation work for commencing the service on 1st January, 1933. In order to get enough capital to build the ferry vessels required by the Government, the HYF issued shares for raising their capital from \$400,000 to \$800,000.³⁵

³³Johnson, *Star Ferry*, 64; C.O. 131/87/39, "Communications", Minutes of 6th Meeting of Hong Kong Executive Council 1932, Hong Kong Executive Council 1932 Vol.1, 25.

³⁴"New Vehicular Ferry Successfully Launched", Hong Kong Daily Press, 24th November, 1932; 6.

At the same time, the HYF placed an order in Hong Kong and Whampao Dock Company for constructing three combine vehicular and passenger ferry vessels at the cost of \$1,701,000 in accordance to the specifications of the Government. These ferry vessels were 130 feet in length, 43 feet in width, and the depth moulded to the vehicular deck was 13 feet 3 inches on the main deck. A space of 21 feet in breadth and 11 feet 6 inches clear height for the full length of the ferry was provided for vehicles.

Abreast this on each side, third class passengers would be carried with a saloon for their accommodation at the end below deck. First and Second class passengers would be carried on a separate shaded deck. With the effort of the Hong Kong and Whampao Dock Company, the first passengers and vehicular ferry, *Man Kung* was completed and launched in November, 1932.³⁶

Even though the HYF had completed the preparation work, there was a delay in the construction of the vehicular ferry piers, and the new ferry service could not commence on its scheduled date. The Government extended the existing licence of the HYF several times until the commencement on 6th March, 1933.

Initially, the vehicular ferry service ran with the interval of one hour

³⁵“Vehicular Ferry”, The Hongkong Telegraph, 22nd March, 1932, 12.

³⁶“The Vehicular Ferry”, The Hong Kong Daily Press, 28th April, 1932, 7; “New Vehicular Ferry Successfully Launched”, Hong Kong Daily Press, 24th November, 1932; 6.

because of the incompleteness of two passenger and vehicular ferries. However, the situation improved, and the frequency of ferries increased when the other two ferry vessels were completed in late March, 1933.³⁷

Shortly after the HYF launched the passenger and vehicular ferry service, the HYF has submitted a tender to compete the licence for running the Eastern Ferry service in October 1933. In light of the good performance of the HYF during the past ten years, the Government accepted the tender from the HYF and granted the HYF a five year licence for running the Kowloon East ferry service. The HYF commenced the Kowloon East ferry service (between Victoria City, Sai Wan Ho, Hung Hom and Kowloon City) in November, 1933.³⁸

As mentioned before, the major concern for the Government in regulating ferry service was profit. From 1934 to 1935, the Government negotiated with the HYF for granting the franchise to HYF.

Different from the franchise granted after the Second World War, the franchise in this period just gave the HYF some benefits such as the

³⁷HKRS828-1-12, British Ship's Register Book – Hong Kong Vol.10 – 154078 Man Kim, 21st September, 1933; HKRS828-1-12, British Ship's Register Book - Hong Kong Vol.10 – 154083 Man Yeung, 21st September, 1933; C.O. 131/87/205, "Ferries Ordinances, 1917", Minutes of 39th Meeting of Hong Kong Executive Council 1932, Hong Kong Executive Council 1932 Vol.2, 69; C.O. 131/89/49, "Ferries Ordinances, 1917", Minutes of 8th Meeting of Hong Kong Executive Council 1933, Hong Kong Executive Council 1933 Vol.1, 36; "Vehicular Ferry Service", The China Mail, 6th March 1933.

³⁸Hong Kong Government, "Tenders invited for Ferries," *The Supplement to the Hong Kong Government Gazette* 1933 (22nd September, 1933), 981.

Government allowed the HYF gained supplementary income by use the ferry piers for advertising purpose. The HYF was also allowed to raise the third class fare to three cents for all days.

However, with accordance to the terms of franchise, the HYF was required to employ an auditor for auditing the financial situation of the company. Moreover, the HYF was not allowed to pay any bonus on shares without the approval from the Government or the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation. In addition, the HYF required undertaking to write off annually a sum not less than \$180,000 from the value of their fleet of the double ended and vehicular vessels.³⁹

All these measures helped the Government know more about the financial situation of the HYF and ensured that the HYF would have enough financial backup to pay the royalty to the Government as the HYF gained the longer period ferry licence. Furthermore, it required the HYF to construct an additional passenger and vehicular ferry.

From the terms of the franchise mentioned above, it was not favourable to the HYF. It was simply additional requirements to the original ferry licence. However, it finally agreed with the terms of the franchise, and the Government

³⁹C.O. 131/91/249-251, "Transport", Minutes of 35th Meeting of Hong Kong Executive Council 1934, Hong Kong Executive Council 1934 Vol.2, 114-116.

granted the franchise to the HYF in mid-1935.⁴⁰

There were several reasons for the HYF to agree with the unfavourable franchise. One of the major reasons was that many members of the Management Board of the HYF, such as Lau Tak Po, Kwok Chuen, Kwan Sum Yin cooperated with the Colonial Government for a long time. They had much experience negotiating with the Government and understood that the Government would not easily step down from implementing policies.

Additionally, many members of the Management Board of the HYF, such as Kwok Chuen and Kwan Sum Yin have still had their own business, and they did not want to harm their relationship with the Government. Other reasons include that the HYF had just invested a large amount of money for commencing the vehicular ferry service and it was unwise to reject the terms in the franchise and spoil the relationship with the Government. Moreover, most of the members of the Management Board were very enterprising and wanted to continue the ferry business.⁴¹

⁴⁰C.O. 131/93/104, "Communications", Minutes of 12th Meeting of Hong Kong Executive Council 1935, Hong Kong Executive Council 1935 Vol.1, 91; "Harbour Transport", The Hongkong Telegraph, 17th June, 1935, 5.

⁴¹Sing Lim Woo, *The Prominent Chinese in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Wu Chou Book Store, 1937), 25, 48, 97. Apart from being the member of the Management Board of the HYF, Lau Tak Po was the committee of the Tak Shun Bank and has been the Committee member of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. Kwok Chuen was founding director of the Wing On Department Store, Wing On Bank, Wing On Life Assurance Company. Kwan Sum Yin was the first dentist in Hong Kong and has been the Chairman of the Chinese Club Hong Kong for a number of years. Thus, they have much experience for dealing with the colonial Government in Hong Kong and not willing to worsen the relationship with the Government.

From the above analysis, it is evident that both the profit-making and the quality of service were still the major concerns of the Government when it comes to ferry service policy.

On the other hand, from the early development of the HYF, it was clear that the founders of the HYF such as Kwok Chuen, Lau Tak Po, and Lau King Cho who had much experience in cooperating with the British Colonial Government were keen on getting the licence for operating the Yaumati ferry service.

With making huge profit from the ferry service taken for granted, they put much effort on improving the service and attracting more people to travel with their ferry service. In order to facilitate their own business and gain huge profit, it was natural for those HYF's founders to suggest paying the Government a huge royalty of \$22,300 per month in exchanging for a stable grant of the ferry licence. This fit well with the behaviour of the Government. Besides, with the collective management in the HYF, those founders of the HYF cooperated well with each other which were reflected in the huge profits earned from the ferry service.

By agreeing to the terms in the franchise, always supporting the policies of the Government on the ferry service, and obeying the arrangements of the

Government, the HYF maintained a good relationship with the Government. In return, in the following years, there was not much interference from the Government on the development of the HYF.

With the continuous growth in the number of passengers and vehicles travelling on the HYF ferry service, the HYF built and bought more ferry vessels for running the service. In late 1935, there were a total of 25 ferry vessels in the fleet of the HYF. With the largest ferry fleet in Hong Kong, the control of all the inter-Victoria Harbour ferry service except the Tsim Sha Tsui ferry service, and together with a good relationship with the Government, the HYF consolidated its important role of the transportation in Hong Kong and became a major Chinese public utility in Hong Kong. It laid down the important foundation for the further expansion of the HYF and even become the “ferry kingdom” in the following years.⁴²

⁴²The Bedikton Company, *Commercial & industrial Hong Kong: A Record of 94 years Progress of the Colony in Commerce, Trade, Industry, & Shipping, 1841-1935* (Hong Kong: The Bedikton Company, 1935), 117 – 118.

CHAPTER 4

FURTHER GAIN AND HEAVY LOSS – UNITED FERRY SERVICES AND THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION 1937-1945

Passing through the fruitful fifteen years, the HYF became a major Chinese owned public utility which controlled nearly all the inter-Victoria Harbour ferry routes.

Starting from 1937, due to the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, a large number of refugees came from Mainland China to Hong Kong. There was a rapid growth of the population in Hong Kong, which contributing to the rapid growth of number of passengers and vehicles travelling on the HYF ferry service.¹

In 1937 and 1938, the HYF succeeded in getting the extension of Kowloon East ferry licence for six years and gaining the New Territories and Outlying Islands ferry licence. With the gaining of the New Territories and Outlying Islands ferry licence, all the ferry services in Hong Kong other than the Tsim Sha Tsui ferry service were under the operation of the HYF. It seemed that the future of the HYF would be prosperous.²

¹Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, *The Hongkong & Yaumati Ferry Co. Ltd.: Golden Jubilee, 1923-1973* (Hong Kong: Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, 1973), 17.

²C.O. 131/97/84-85, "Ferries Ordinance, 1917", Minutes of 13th Meeting of Hong Kong Executive Council 1937, Hong Kong Executive Council 1937 Vol.1, 72-73; C.O. 131/98/226,

Unfortunately, in late 1941, the Japanese invaded Hong Kong and the British surrendered after 18 days of resistance. Hong Kong was occupied by the Japanese and became a colony of Japan for three years and eight months.

During the beginning of the Japanese Occupation period, the HYF was taken over by the Japanese Military Government. After more than one year, the HYF was allowed to reestablish and resume its service. As many ferries were damaged during the war, and there was shortage of resources, the HYF could only resume part of its pre-war ferry services.

Even though it was not easy to maintain the ferry service during the Japanese Occupation, the continuation of operation during the war helped the HYF prevent itself from being totally ruined, as well as helping it recover quickly after the end of the Second World War.

In this chapter, it talks about the further expansion of the ferry service provided by the HYF and talks about the ferry service of the HYF under the Japanese Occupation. It tries to analyse the importance for the HYF of expanding its service to the whole colony. It also tries to analyse the reasons for the Japanese Colonial Government allowing the HYF to resume service. It

“Ferries Ordinance, 1917”, Minutes of 37th Meeting of Hong Kong Executive Council 1938, Hong Kong Executive Council 1938 Vol.2, 81.

will further discuss the importance of the HYF maintaining service during the Japanese Occupation to the post war development of the HYF.

Ever since 1937, due to the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war, many refugees came from Mainland China to Hong Kong, and there was rapid growth of the population in Hong Kong. The population increased from 1,006,982 in 1937 to 1,750,256 in 1939, nearly doubling within three years. The rapid growth of the population led to the rapid growth of the number of passengers and vehicles travelling on the HYF ferry services. The HYF had to build more ferries and increase the frequency of service in order to deal with the huge demand from the public.³

Because the HYF ran the ferry service properly and always paid royalties on time, the Government was satisfied with the operation of the HYF. Thus, in 1937, the Government decided to grant a six-year extension on the licence of the HYF for operating the Kowloon East ferry service with effect from 1938.⁴

Later in 1938, even though the Hong Kong and New Territories Ferry Company operated its service according to the regulations set by the

³The Hong Kong Government, *Hong Kong Administration Report 1937* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government, 1938), 5; The Hong Kong Government, *Hong Kong Administration Report 1939* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government, 1940), 1.

⁴C.O. 131/97/84-85, "Ferries Ordinance, 1917", Minutes of 13th Meeting of Hong Kong Executive Council 1937, Hong Kong Executive Council 1937 Vol.1, 72-73.

Government and managed to pay its \$2,400 monthly royalty to the Government on time, in response to many complaints about its quality of service and many accidents related to its service, the Government decided to call tenders for running the New Territories and Outlying Islands ferry service.⁵

The members of the Management Board of the HYF were enterprising and wanted to expand the company, so they submitted the tender to compete for the New Territories and Outlying Islands ferry service licence. Due to the good performance of the HYF in the past fifteen years and the fact that the HYF had sufficient financial support, the Government accepted the tender of the HYF and granted the HYF a 15 year licence for operating the New Territories and Outlying Island service.⁶

In November 1938, the HYF commenced the New Territories and

⁵Hong Kong Government, "Tenders invited for Ferries," *The Supplement to the Hong Kong Government Gazette* 1938 (2nd September, 1938), 612; "Changzhou xiaolun zhuangchen shating 長洲小輪撞沉沙艇 (The Cheung Chau Ferry crashed with a boat)", Hong Kong Industrial and Commercial Daily 香港工商日報, 25th July, 1930, 3,2; "Hong Kong and New Territories Ferry Co., Ltd.", *The China Mail*, 15th March, 1932, 1; "Xinjie Xiaolun gongsi beikong 新界小輪公司被控 (The New Territories Ferry Company was charged)", Hong Kong Industrial and Commercial Daily 香港工商日報, 4th February, 1933, 3,3; "Cheung Chau Notes – Dissatisfaction Over Ferry Service", *The China Mail*, 19th September, 1935, 8; "Cheung Chau Notes – Junk rammed by Ferry", *The China Mail*, 6th April, 1936, 12. There were many ferry accidents related to the Hong Kong and New Territories Ferry Company. For example, one of its ferries was out of control and crashed to the pier in 1935. There was at least two times that its ferry crashed with other ferries. The New Territories and Outlying Islands ferry service including the ferry service between Hong Kong Island, Castle Peak, Cheung Chau, Tung Chung, Tai O, Ping Chau, Silver Mine Bay, Tsuen Wan and Kap Shui Mun.

⁶C.O. 131/98/226, "Ferries Ordinance, 1917", Minutes of 37th Meeting of Hong Kong Executive Council 1938, Hong Kong Executive Council 1938 Vol.2, 81.

Outlying Islands ferry service. The launching of the New Territories and Outlying Islands ferry service was a milestone to the development of the HYF as it meant that all the ferry services in Hong Kong other than the Tsim Sha Tsui ferry service were under the operation of the HYF.

The HYF immediately improved the service in New Territories and Outlying Island area by using new ferry vessels to run these routes and increasing the number of departures. The improvement work was praised by the press.⁷

The continuous growth in the number of passengers and vehicles travelling by the HYF ferry service and the expansion of the ferry service in 1938 brought huge profits to the HYF. Their net profit before tax was \$255,000 in 1938, which was nearly doubled to \$465,000 in 1939. This was the highest record of the net profit before tax in the pre-war period.⁸

The development of the HYF in the late 1930s showed that the HYF could maintain its good performance without being in arrears with any royalty for the Government, helping the HYF succeed in gaining the trust of the Government. Whenever the HYF competed for the ferry licence, the

⁷"Bengang xinjie xiaolun jiaban hangxing 本港新界小輪加班航行 (Additional departure for the New Territories ferry service), Dagongbao 大公報, 22nd December, 1938, 2, 6.

⁸Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, *The Hongkong & Yaumati Ferry Co. Ltd.: Golden Jubilee, 1923-1973*, 6-7, 17.

Government always accepted the tenders of the HYF and granted the licences to the HYF. The repeated granting of ferry licences allowed the HYF to become the largest ferry company in Hong Kong with the control of nearly all the ferry services in Hong Kong.

During the early 1940s, it seemed that the HYF would have a prosperous future and would continue to develop as a huge and important public utility in Hong Kong. Unfortunately, the Japanese invaded Hong Kong at the end of 1941 and succeeded in occupying Hong Kong after fighting with the British for eighteen days. The war and the Japanese Occupation brought negative effects to the development of the HYF.

When the Japanese started to invade Hong Kong on 8th December, 1941, the British Colonial Government requisitioned the fleet of the HYF, which included thirty-one vessels, for assisting the British Army to transport the resources.

Later the Japanese succeeded in occupying the New Territories and Kowloon Peninsula, and the British Army used the ferries of the HYF for retreating to Hong Kong Island. After retreating to Hong Kong Island, in order to defend the Island, the British Army ordered the HYF to sink a number of its ferries at different part of the coast of Hong Kong Island as barriers to prevent

the landing of the Japanese Army.⁹

Unfortunately, the Japanese Army still succeeded in landing on Hong Kong Island and finally on 25th December, 1941, Governor Sir Mark A. Young surrendered to the Japanese, marking the beginning of the three years eight months of Japanese rule in Hong Kong. The eighteen days war in Hong Kong was a serious loss to the HYF.¹⁰

After the Japanese occupied Hong Kong in December 1941, the Japanese Government started to draw its plan for ruling in Hong Kong. They decided to maintain the practice of the British and send a Japanese Governor to Hong Kong for leading the Japanese Military Government in Hong Kong.

The Japanese found that it was not easy for them to rule large number of Chinese people in Hong Kong because they did not have much knowledge about Chinese customs. So, in contrast to the practice of the British, the Japanese Government decided to encourage the Chinese people in Hong Kong to cooperate with them. The Japanese believed that it could facilitate the rehabilitation of Hong Kong.¹¹

In order to carry out this policy, before the arrival of the Governor the

⁹Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, *The Hongkong & Yaumati Ferry Co. Ltd.: Golden Jubilee, 1923-1973*, 20.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Philip Snow, *The Fall of Hong Kong: Britain China and Japanese Occupation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 91-96.

Japanese Military Administrative Board in Hong Kong had incommunicado the prominent Chinese leaders and told them that the incommunicado would not end if they did not cooperate with the Japanese.

Because of the threat, most of these Chinese leaders agreed to cooperate with the Japanese. The cooperation from these Chinese leaders facilitated the Japanese in gaining the support of the ordinary Chinese.

Apart from that, in early 1942, the Commander in Chief of the Japanese Military Administrative Board in Hong Kong made a declaration to the Chinese leaders in a meeting that the war to Hong Kong was against the British only. He asked the Chinese to cooperate with the Japanese as members of the same race and asked the Chinese leaders to form a Committee to work with the Japanese to restore order and bring prosperity to Hong Kong.

Finally, Sir Robert Kotewall and Sir Shouson Chou, the two senior Chinese unofficial members in the Executive Council of the British Colonial Government supported the ideas of the Japanese and promised to help to ask the Chinese to cooperate with the Japanese. Shortly after, Sir Robert Kotewall and Sir Shouson Chou, together with seven Chinese leaders were appointed by the Japanese Military Administrative Board in Hong Kong to form a

Rehabilitation Advisory Committee.¹²

The duty of the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee was to give advice and report the needs and problems of the Chinese Community to the Japanese Military Administrative Board. Apart from that the Japanese Military Administrative Board also set up new government agencies called District Offices.

There were about eighteen District Offices in Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula and these District Offices were under the control of the Civil Affairs Bureau. Each of the District Office was led by a Chinese. The duties of the District Office were to take care of the public health, business, repatriation and welfare of the residents of the district.

At the same time, the District Office was required to relay the needs and wishes of the residents to the Japanese authorities. Many Chinese leaders were appointed to be the heads of District Offices. Kwan Sum Yin, the Chairman of the HYF became the head of the Kowloon Tong District Office.¹³

After the First Japanese Governor, Isogai Rensuke, arrived in Hong Kong in February 1942, the Japanese Military Government was formally established. The Japanese Military Government continued the policy of the

¹²G. B. Endacott, *Hong Kong Eclipse* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1978), 125-129.

¹³*Ibid.*, 129-133, 385,

Japanese Military Administrative Board of “using the Chinese to govern the Chinese”.¹⁴

Governor Isogai retained the District Offices, but he restructured the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee, dividing it into two Councils: the Chinese Representative Council which consisted of five members under the leadership of Sir Robert Kotewall; and the Chinese Co-operative Council which consisted of five members under the leadership of Sir Shouson Chow.

The Chinese Co-operative Council worked under the direction of the Chinese Representative Council. All these District Offices and the two Councils continued to be tools for the Japanese to rule the Chinese in Hong Kong.¹⁵

Two weeks after the surrender of the British, on 8th January, 1942, the management of the HYF sent a representative to the Japanese Military Administrative Board to request the resumption of ferry service. The HYF told the Japanese authority that they had ten ferry vessels surviving so that they had the ability to resume service within three days.¹⁶

¹⁴Hideo Kobayshi, “*Taiheiyo sensoka no Honkon: Honkon gunsei no tenka*”, published in Komazawa University, Tokyo, Economic Association, *Keizaigaku Ronshu*, vol.26, no.3, December 1994, 215; quoted in Philip Snow, *The Fall of Hong Kong: Britain China and Japanese Occupation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 95.

¹⁵Snow, *The Fall of Hong Kong*, 91-96; Endacott, *Hong Kong Eclipse*, 126-129, 348-349.

¹⁶“Gangjiu xiaolun gongsi qingqiu xiezhu fuhang 港九小輪公司請求協助復航 (The ferry

The Japanese Military Administrative Board did not immediately reply to the HYF, and only agreed to consider the request. There is no record explaining why the HYF quickly turned to the Japanese authority and asked to resume ferry service. The possible reasons for the management of the HYF taking such actions include that the attitude of the Japanese made the management of the HYF believe that the Japanese were willing to let the Chinese to participate in the rehabilitation of Hong Kong; the traditional practice of the HYF of cooperating with colonizers; the HYF wanted to continue their business for profit.

One week later, there was information that after careful consideration, the Japanese Military Administrative Board accepted the request of the HYF to let the HYF resume ferry service. The information said that the reasons for the Japanese accepting the request were that the Japanese authority believed the resumption of the ferry service could bring convenience to the communication of the residents of Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula. At the same time, the resumption of the ferry service could facilitate the business activities which could contribute to the prosperity of Hong Kong.¹⁷

company request to resume operation)” Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 8th January, 1942, 1.

¹⁷“Jinchen huifu jiaotong 今晨恢復交通 (The communication resume this morning), Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 15th January, 1942, 1; “Xianggang youmadi xiaolun yuedi fuhang 香港・油蔴地小輪月底復航 (Ferry service between Hong Kong and Yaumati would resume at

Unfortunately, this information was only partly correct. The Japanese authority really did want to resume ferry service as it could contribute to the rehabilitation of Hong Kong. However, as the ferry service was a kind of strategic resource, the Japanese Government decided to run the ferry service directly.¹⁸

The Japanese Military Government established the Office of Hong Kong and Kowloon Ferry Service to manage and operate the ferry service. This office was under the supervision of the Shipping Department of the Department of Communications.

In fact the Japanese Military Government had already taken over and operated the original “Star” Ferry’s Tsim Sha Tsui ferry service for transporting the staff of Government shortly after the beginning of the Japanese Occupation. Thus, in order to provide the ferry service for the general public as soon as possible, in mid-January 1942 the Japanese authority simply cancelled the restriction and allowed ordinary people to travel on the Tsim Sha Tsui ferry service.

The Japanese authority increased the frequency of departures of the

the end of this month), Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 2nd May, 1942, 1.

¹⁸Snow, *The Fall of Hong Kong*, 156; Endacott, *Hong Kong Eclipse*, 126-129; “Gangjiu jiaotong huifu hugaiqi 港九交通恢復忽改期 (There was a sudden change on the resume of the cross harbour transport)”, Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 16th January, 1942, 1.

Tsim Sha Tsui ferry service to every twenty minutes. The fare charge on this route was 10 cents Military Yen for the first class accommodation and 5 cents Military Yen for the third class accommodation.¹⁹

As there was an average of more than 70,000 people travelling on the Tsim Sha Tsui route daily and there was a very great demand on the cross harbour ferry service, the Japanese authority resumed the Sham Shui Po ferry service by using the original HYF's ferry vessels in late January 1942. The Japanese authority also started to put the original HYF's ferry vessels into the Tsim Sha Tsui ferry service.²⁰

Both of the ferry routes provided service from 8:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. and charged 10 cents Military Yen for the first class accommodation and 5 cents Military Yen for the third class accommodation. The demand for crossing the harbour was so great that the increase in frequency of the Tsim Sha Tsui ferry service and the resumption of the Sham Shui Po ferry service still could not satisfy the demand. There were serious overcrowding problems of the cross

¹⁹Endacott, *Hong Kong Eclipse*, 383; "Gangjiu jiaotong huifu hugaiqi 港九交通恢復忽改期 (There was a sudden change on the resume of the cross harbour transport)", Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 16th January, 1942, 1; "Tianxing hangxian xiaolun zuori zaike duhai 天星航線小輪昨日載客渡海 (The original "Star" Ferry vessel started to provide the cross harbour transport service yesterday)", Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 17th January, 1942, 1.

²⁰"Zuijin laiwan Gangjiu xiaolun dake pingjun meirisu yuqiwanren 最近來往港九小輪搭客平均每日數逾七萬人 (The average daily number of passenger travel on the cross harbour ferry was more than 70,000)", Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 3rd February, 1942; "Xianggang shenshuibu huifu xiaolun hangxing 香港・深水埗線恢復小輪航行 (The ferry service between Hong Kong and Sham Shui Po resumed)", Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 24th January, 1942, 1, 3.

harbour ferry service.

To solve the problem, the Japanese authority started to salvage the HYF's ferries sunk by the British during the eighteen days war. The Japanese Military Government effort succeeded in salvaging two passenger and vehicular ferries and succeeded in repairing these two ferries.²¹

In May 1942, these two ferries were put into the service. At the same time, the first New Territories and Outlying Islands ferry route between Hong Kong, Peng Chau and Silver Mine Bay was resumed. Two months later, the ferry route between Hong Kong, Kap Shui Mun, Castle Peak and Tai O was resumed. Both the Silver Mine Bay and Tai O ferry routes were operated by the Japanese Government and three original HYF ferries were used for running the service.

In February 1943, the ferry service to Silver Mine Bay was extended to Cheung Chau. Since there were not enough resources, there were only two departures each day for the New Territories and Outlying Islands ferry service.²²

²¹Ibid.; "Zichen zhi duhai xiaolun dangju qijiaozhong 自沉之渡海小輪當局起絞中 (The authority was salvaging the ferries sank by the British)", Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 30th January, 1942, 1, 2; Xianggang youmadi xiaolun yuedi fuhang 香港・油蔴地小輪月底復航 (Ferry service between Hong Kong and Yaumati would resume at the end of this month)", Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 2nd May, 1942, 1.

²²"Zaiche duhai liangjulun xiujun 載車渡海兩巨輪修竣 (The repair work of two vehicular ferries completed)", Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 19th May, 1942, 1; Endacott, *Hong Kong*

Starting from 1943, as the Japanese Military Government faced the shortage of resources, the Government started to encourage merchants to provide junks service in Hong Kong. It was because junks used less energy than ferry as it could use wind as the driving force. At the same time, the Japanese authority also planned to let the private enterprise run the ferry services in order to save the Government resources.

Finally, on 1st May 1943, the Japanese Military Government granted permission for the HYF to operate ferry services. Excepting the Tsim Sha Tsui ferry service, the HYF would be responsible for running all other ferry service in Hong Kong.²³

There were a number of reasons for the Japanese authority to choose the HYF for operating the ferry service. First of all, the Japanese authority had dissolved the “Star” Ferry which was owned by Europeans. It made the HYF become the only ferry company that was capable of running a large number of ferry routes.

Besides, since most of the ferry routes were originally operated by the

Eclipse, 148; “Xianggang xinjie shuilu yunshu fazhan 香港・新界水路運輸發展 (The development of the sea transport between Hong Kong and New Territories)”, Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 10th August, 1942, 4; “Xianggang changzhou yiri zhijie tonghang 香港長洲一日直接通航 (The ferry service between Hong Kong and Cheung Chau commenced on 1st February)”, Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 31st January, 1943, 4.

²³“Tongyi matou zhi zuodundao hangxian huifu 統一碼頭至佐頓道航線恢復 (The ferry service between Jubilee Street and Jordan Road resume)”, Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 3rd May, 1943, 4.

HYF and the Government also used the ferry vessels that were originally the HYF's for running the ferry service. It would be easy for the HYF to take over the ferry service within a short period of time as the HYF had experiences on running these services.

Apart from that, starting from the beginning of the Japanese Occupation, the HYF has already requested permission to resume ferry service. It was natural that the Japanese authority granted the permission to the HYF.

In addition, the Japanese Military Government has adopted the policy of asking the Chinese to cooperate with the Government. Since the HYF was a ferry company wholly owned by the Chinese, it was also natural for the Government to let the HYF operate the ferry service.

Furthermore, Kwan Sum Yin, the chairman of the HYF was one of the heads of the District Office and had cooperated with the Japanese for more than a year; it made the Japanese authority had confidence that the HYF would obey and cooperate with the Japanese.

The HYF was formally reestablished on 1st May 1943. Except Chau Tsun Nin who had slipped to Macau, most of the pre-war members in the Management Board of HYF resumed their posts in the HYF. Kwan Sum Yin continued to be the Chairman of the HYF and Lau Tak Po continued to be the

Managing Director. Starting from the reestablishment of the HYF until the end of the war, most of the members of the Management Board actively participated in the management of the HYF.²⁴

After the reestablishment of the company, Lau Tak Po announced that an intermediate stop at Jordan Road ferry pier would be added to ferry service between Hong Kong and Sham Shui Po so that the ferry service between Hong Kong and Jordan Road could be resumed.

There were six ferry vessels running on this ferry route. The fare charge was 12 cents Military Yen for the upper deck and 7 cents Military Yen for the lower deck. The service hour of this ferry route was from 7:00 A.M. to 10:00 P.M. There were fifty-seven departures from Hong Kong and Sham Shui Po once every 15 minutes.

However, at the same time, the HYF announced that there would be reduction of frequency of the Hong Kong and Castle Peak ferry service from having two departures a day to only one departure a day. Apart from that the HYF also announced that they planned to resume the ferry service between Hong Kong and Hung Hom; and Hong Kong, Tsing Yi and Tsuen Wan within a

²⁴Hong Kong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, Minute of the Board of Directors Meeting, 6th January, 1944; Snow, *The Fall of Hong Kong*, 108, 284. The listed members of the Managing Board of the HYF during the Japanese Occupation including Kwan Sum-yin, Lau Tak Po, Kwok Chuen, Li Sing Kue, Cheng Kwok-on, Young Tsun Dart, Cheng Kwok Leung, Chan Kam Yung, Wong Kwok Shuen, Choy Wai Hung, Chau Tsun Nin.

short period of time.²⁵

Starting from mid-1943, since the war between Japan and the Allies powers became more severe, the Japanese Government had to allocate most of its resources for supporting its military force. It made the resource shortage problem in Hong Kong become more serious. The lack of resources not only forced the HYF to give up its plan for resuming more ferry services, but also brought difficulties for the HYF in maintaining the ferry services that had already resumed.

Shortly after the HYF took over the ferry service from the Japanese authority, the HYF started to reduce the number of departures of different ferry routes. In July 1943, the HYF combined the ferry service between Hong Kong and Tai O, and Hong Kong and Castle Peak into one ferry route with only one round-trip everyday. The Cheung Chau ferry service was also reduced to having one round-trip everyday. The operation time of Sham Shui Po ferry service was shortened and the number of departures was reduced from 57 to 31 in total.²⁶

²⁵“Tongyi matou zhi zuodundao hangxian huifu統一碼頭至佐頓道航線恢復 (The ferry service between Jubilee Street and Jordan Road resume)”, Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 3rd May, 1943, 4; “Daohai xiaolun kaihang qingxing渡海小輪開航情形 (The commence of the ferry service), Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 6th May, 1943, 4.

²⁶“Changzhou daiao qingshan xiaolun kaihang shijian biangeng長洲大澳青山小輪開航時間變更 (The change of the time table for the ferry service to Cheung Chau, Tai O and Castle Peak)”, South China Daily 南華日報, 6th July 1943, 3; “Minri qi laingxian xiaolun

In March 1944, the HYF suspended the Sunday service for all New Territories and Outlying Island ferry routes. There was also a further reduction in the number of departures for the Sham Shui Po ferry service from 31 to 24 departures. In December 1944, the ferry service of the New Territories and Outlying Island routes was reduced to have only ten departures every month.²⁷

In January 1945 and June 1945, the HYF reduced the number of departures of Sham Shui Po ferry service from 24 to only 14 with most of the ferry stopped service in Mong Kok – the intermediate stop of the Sham Shui Po ferry service.²⁸

At the same time, the lack of resources led to serious inflation in Hong Kong. The cost of running the ferry service became very high and forced the HYF to repeatedly increase fares.

The fare for travelling the Sham Shui Po ferry service had increased from

biangeng xianzou shijian明日起兩線小輪變更行走時間 (The schedule of two ferry services would change tomorrow)", South China Daily 南華日報, 31st July 1943, 3.

²⁷"Gexian xiaolun minri gengzheng hangxian shijian各線小輪明日改正航行時間 (The change schedule of the ferry service)", Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 24th March, 1944, 4; "Xianggang laiwan changzhou daiao hangqi chuanfei gaizheng 香港來往長洲大澳航期船費改正 (The change of the fare charge and schedule for the ferry service to Cheung Chau and Tai O)", Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 21st December, 1944, 2.

²⁸"Xianggang wangjiao shenshuibu xian lianluochuan minri genggai shi jian香港・旺角・深水埗線連絡船明日更改時間 (The schedule for the ferry service between Hong Kong, Mong Kok and Sham Shui Po would change tomorrow)", Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 9th January, 1945, 2; "Xianggang Wangjiao Shenshuibu xian xiaolun laiwei shijian biangeng 香港旺角深水埗線小輪來回時間變更 (The change of the schedule for the ferry service between Hong Kong, Mong Kok and Sham Shui Po)", Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 1st June, 1945, 2.

first class 12 cents Military Yen and third class 7 cents Military Yen in 1943 to first class 7 dollars Military Yen and third class 3 dollars Military Yen. And the fare for the New Territories and Outlying Islands also drastically increased from average of 1 dollar Military Yen in 1943 to average of 20 dollars Military Yen in 1945. As there was shortage of other means of transport, there was always an overcrowding problem in the ferry service despite the extremely high price.²⁹

Even though the lack of resources and serious inflation forced the HYF to reduce the number of departures and severely increase the fare, the HYF in fact tried its best to use the limited resources available to improve its service.

In August 1943, as many people suggested that it would be more convenient to change the intermediate stop of Sham Shui Po ferry service from Jordan Road to Mong Kok which was densely populated, the HYF acted on the suggestion and moved the intermediate point to Mong Kok. The HYF also switched to double ended ferries for running the Sham Shui Po ferry service when it changed the stop to Mong Kok in order to save the energy,

²⁹“Tongyi matou zhi zuodundao hangxian huifu統一碼頭至佐頓道航線恢復 (The ferry service between Jubilee Street and Jordan Road resume)”, Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 3rd May, 1943, 4; “Jianshazui youmadi xiaolun minri biangeng kejiao尖沙嘴油蔴地各小輪線明日變更客腳 (The fare of the Tsim Sha Tsui and Yaumati ferry would change tomorrow)”, Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 6th March, 1945, 2.

lowered the cost of running the ferry service and prevented fare increase.³⁰

At the same time, in order to maintain the communication of the Southern part of Hong Kong Island with other places after the suspension of bus service, the HYF had established a ferry service to Aberdeen and Stanley.³¹

Facing the overcrowding problem and lack of ferry departures, the HYF let ferry vessels tow a number of boats so that more people and more goods could travel on its service. The Japanese authority was satisfied with the service provided by the HYF and in March 1945, the Japanese authority even let the HYF run the Tsim Sha Tsui ferry service.³²

From the above information, it showed that the HYF basically continued its operation after the Japanese granted permission for running the ferry service and returned fifteen ferry vessels to the HYF in May 1943.

However, as there was a lack of resources and there were a number of ferry piers damaged, the HYF could not resume all the pre-war ferry services.

³⁰“Gaosong jiaotong buzhang huijian jizhetan高松交通部長會見記者談 (The press conference of the Secretary of Department of Communication)”, Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 16th April, 1943, 4; “Xianggang Shenshuibu xian xiaolun zhongzhan gaibo wangjiao matou 香港深水埔線小輪中站改泊旺角碼頭 (The intermediate stop of the Hong Kong and Sham Shui Po service would change to Mong Kok)”, , South China Daily 南華日報, 30th July 1943, 3; “Minri qi laingxian xiaolun biangeng xianzou shijian明日起兩線小輪變更行走時間 (The schedule of two ferry services would change tomorrow)”, South China Daily 南華日報, 31st July 1943, 3;

³¹“Yuenxianggang chizhu hanglu元香港赤柱航路 (The ferry service to Aberdeen and Stanley)”, Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 22nd September, 1943, 4.

³²Ibid.; “Xianggang jianshazui xian xiaolun youmadi googsi banli香港尖沙咀線小輪油蔴地公司辦理 (The Tsim Sha Tsui ferry route run by the HYF)”, Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 2nd March, 1944, 2.

At the same time, even though the Japanese authority returned fifteen ferry vessels to the HYF, not all of the ferry vessels could be put in service as there was lack of resources to repair and maintain the ferries. Similar problems also happened with those ferries which were found and salvaged by the HYF before the end of the war. Thus, during the end of the Japanese Occupation, among the twenty-one HYF's ferries which were afloat on harbour, many could not be used to run the service.³³

Although the HYF suffered a serious loss during the Japanese Occupation, the permission for reestablishing the ferry services since 1943 in fact helped the HYF to rehabilitate quickly as it did not have to start again from the beginning.

It also helped the HYF maintain its status as one of the important public utility companies in Hong Kong as the HYF dominated all the ferry operation for nearly one year from March 1945 to February 1946. It contributed towards making the HYF become more influential in the development of Hong Kong.³⁴

The performance of the HYF during the Japanese Occupation showed the high adaptability of the Hong Kong Chinese people under different colonial

³³Hong Kong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, Minute of the Board of Directors Meeting, 6th January, 1944.

³⁴ Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, *The Hongkong & Yaumati Ferry Co. Ltd.: Golden Jubilee, 1923-1973* (Hong Kong: Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, 1973), 20.

rulers. Due to their weak concepts of having certain identities, the change of the governing party did not affect the Hong Kong Chinese people. They just tried to continue what they were working with. What concerned the Hong Kong Chinese people most was their daily life rather than who was their ruler.

As for the HYF, the main concern was profit. This is reflected in the fact that though the HYF had already built up a good relationship with the British authority before the Japanese occupation, the management of the HYF took the initiative to request the Japanese authority for resuming the ferry service within two weeks time after the starting of Japanese Occupation.

They hoped to continue their ferry service for profit in the colony and did not care about who they were working for. They also believed that the Japanese government shared their point of view. However, the Japanese did not approve the request of the HYF immediately. The HYF repeatedly asked the Japanese authority to grant permission for them to resume the service in the following years.

Eventually the HYF was granted permission to resume ferry service in 1943 by the Japanese authority and started cooperating with them. The HYF had some profit gained. With the continuation of their running the ferry service, what they had gained unexpectedly was the anchoring of their position

serving as an agent in providing ferry service in the colony.³⁵

³⁵Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited. *Balance Sheet 1944*. (Hong Kong: Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, 1944), n.p.

CHAPTER 5

REHABILITATION OF THE HONGKONG AND YAUMATI FERRY COMPANY LIMITED, 1945 TO 1951

After the Second World War, similar to many public utility companies in Hong Kong, the HYF spent more than five years, from 1945 to 1951, to fully rehabilitate its operation.

During the period of the rehabilitation, there were several tasks that the HYF had to deal with. The repair, reconstruction and rebuild of the ferry fleet that was damaged or lost during the Japanese Occupation Period and the resumed ferry services to the pre-war standard were the most immediate and important tasks that the HYF needed to deal with.

Apart from that, there was a special task for the HYF to deal with in 1946. It was the first and the only general strike by the HYF employees for requesting the increase of wages and improvement of welfare.

Furthermore, as most of the ferry licences of the HYF would expire in 1948 and 1949, the HYF needed to start the negotiation with the Government to get a licence extension. The Government finally decided to grant the HYF franchise which was totally different to the one the Government granted to the HYF during the pre-war period. The new franchise allowed the HYF for

operating the ferry service for 15 years and could be extended for 15 more years starting from 1951.¹

This chapter focuses on the rehabilitation programme of the HYF after the Second World War. It discusses how the HYF rebuilt its ferry fleets and resumed the ferry service to the pre-war standard under a difficult situation. It examines the strike of the HYF's employees and its importance to the development of the HYF. It also talks about the negotiation between the Government and the HYF on the issue of licence extension. It analyses the reasons for the Government to grant the franchise to the HYF.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, starting from 1943, the HYF was reestablished and operated all the ferry service in Hong Kong. When the Japanese Occupation ended, the British restored their rule in Hong Kong and quickly started the rehabilitation programme. At the beginning, the British Military Government wanted to put all public utilities under its direct control. Later, the Military Government changed its mind and let private enterprises to operate those public utilities. Under this arrangement, the British Military Government granted the permission to the HYF, which was the only ferry company left after the war. The relationship between the British and the HYF

¹HKRS163-1-1472, Report and Accounts of Hong Kong and Yaumati Ferry Company 1953, n.d. The commencement date of the franchise was on 1st January, 1950.

was basically resumed.²

Ignoring the fact that the HYF had cooperated with the Japanese authority, the HYF treasured this permission once they got it from the British authority and tried its best to operate the service properly and tried to regain the trust from the British authority. At the same time, the HYF also wanted to resume its service in order to gain profit.

Shortly after the end of the war, as there was shortage of Hong Kong dollars, the HYF operated its service for free for three days. The HYF said that it was for the convenience to the passengers as many of them did not have Hong Kong dollar.

However, it seemed that the shortage of Hong Kong dollar could not be solved within three days. The HYF's offer was simply a kind of promotion. It also showed that the HYF basically focused on the profit as it did not prolong the free of charge arrangement.³

Since there were only twenty-one ferries survived after the war and some of them were not in service, the HYF could only maintain the service

²G. B. Endacott, *Hong Kong Eclipse* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1978), 274-275.

³Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, *The Hongkong & Yaumati Ferry Co. Ltd.: Golden Jubilee, 1923-1973* (Hong Kong: Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, 1973), 20; "Zongjingli Liuzhenguo Zhengshu sishinianqian duhai jiaotong qushi 總經理劉鎮國講述四十年前渡海交通趣事 (General Manager Lau Chan Kwok talks about the story of the ferry transport of forty years ago)", *Hong Kong Industrial and Commercial Daily 工商日報*, 18th November, 1964, 5; "Gangjiu liangxian daohai xiaolun 港九兩線渡海小輪 (Two cross harbour ferry routes)", *Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報*, 18th September, 1945, 3.

with the reduction of the number of departures. At the same time, some of the ferry piers, such as the Jordan Road Ferry Pier, were seriously damaged during the war; the HYF could not resume the pre-war ferry service immediately.

In addition, as the British Military Government cancelled the restriction for the people to migrate and settle in Hong Kong, the population in Hong Kong grew rapidly. There was a great demand on the ferry service. The reduction of departures, suspensions of ferry service, together with the rapid growth in population contributed to the overloaded problem of ferry service.⁴

Facing these problems, the management of HYF made special arrangement of their rehabilitation programme. For the issue of repair and reconstruction its ferry fleet, those ferries that were nearly destroyed and could not return to service within a short time, the HYF had to have major repair and reconstruction immediately on let these ferries. For those which have not been seriously damaged, the HYF would just give them minor repair and put them back in service as soon as possible. These ferries would

⁴“Bujiu dangke jiaikai banci不久當可加開班次 (There would be additional service within a short period of time)”, Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 27th November, 1945, 3; Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, *The Hongkong & Yaumati Ferry Co. Ltd.: Golden Jubilee, 1923-1973*, 21; “Zongjingli Liuzhenguo Zhengshu sishinianqian duhai jiaotong qushi 總經理劉鎮國講述四十年前渡海交通趣事 (General Manager Lau Chan Kwok talks about the story of the ferry transport of forty years ago)”, Hong Kong Industrial and Commercial Daily 工商日報, 18th November, 1964, 5.

receive their major repair and reconstruction in later stage. This arrangement helped the HYF to have more ferries for maintaining the ferry service within a short period of time.⁵

At the same time, the HYF sent staff to different places in Hong Kong, Macau and China in search for the lost and scuttled ferries. With the effort of the HFY staff, six ferries were discovered in Hong Kong, Macau and China. Five more ferries were saved and tugged back to Hong Kong. Among these six ferries, some of them were not seriously damaged and were returned to service after receiving minor repair. As there was lack of resources and lack of skillful workers, the progress of the repair and reconstruction of the ferry vessels was very slow.⁶

During the course of the repair and reconstruction, the HYF converted all the engines of the ferries from steam engine to diesel engines. The reasons for the HYF to convert the engine were that there was a shortage of coal in the world which made the price of coal become very high.⁷

⁵“Yomadi xiaolun nainhui baogao油蔴地小輪年會報告 (Report of the HYF announced in the Annual General Meeting of the HYF)”, Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 27th May, 1947, 1, 4; “Yomadi xiaolun googsi xiang zhengfu zhechong yanchang piyue油蔴地小輪公司向政府折衝延長批約 (The HYF request the Government extend the licence)”, Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 29th May, 1947, 1, 3.

⁶Ibid.

⁷“Meihuang yingxiang bengang煤荒影響本港 (The shortage of coal affect Hong Kong)”, Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 27th April, 1947, 1, 4.

Moreover, as the diesel engine was much smaller than the steam engine; together with the cancellation of the storeroom for the coal, it helped to reduce the size of the engine room in the ferry which created more space for carrying more passengers.⁸

Furthermore, the using of diesel engine could reduce the running cost of the ferry as the cost of using diesel was only one third of using coal. After four years of effort, in 1949, the HYF completed the repair, reconstruction work and converted all the steam engine into diesel engine of its ferry fleet.⁹

Apart from repair and reconstruction of its ferry fleet, the resume of the ferry service to the pre-war standard was also an important task of the HYF during the rehabilitation period.

After the restoration of the British rule in Hong Kong, to facilitate the rehabilitation of Hong Kong, the HYF changed the fare charge of all the ferry service back to the 1941's standard for more than eight months until April

⁸“Yomadi gongsi xiaolun jiang zhujian gaizhuang 油蔴地公司小輪將逐漸改裝 (The ferries of the HYF would convert), Hong Kong Industrial and Commercial Daily 香港工商日報, 1st July 1948, 6; “Mindao xiaolun gaizhuang hou zuojuxing shihang 民道小輪改裝後昨舉行試航 (The ferry *Man To* was put in trail run yesterday)”, Hong Kong Industrial and Commercial Daily 香港工商日報, 29th June 1948, 6.

⁹The Hong Kong Government, *Hong Kong Annual Report 1949* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government, 1950), 105-106; Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, *The Hongkong & Yaumati Ferry Co. Ltd.: Golden Jubilee, 1923-1973* (Hong Kong: Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, 1973), 20-21.

1946.¹⁰

For the urban cross harbour service, throughout the rehabilitation period, the HYF repeatedly increased the number of departures. For example, the frequency of departures between the Sham Shui Po ferry service and Mong Kok ferry service increased from every 30 minutes to 1 hour in late 1945 to every 10 minutes to 20 minutes in 1950 with the extension of the operation time.¹¹

The vehicular ferry service between Hong Kong and Jordan Road resumed in January 1946 with only served eight times a day. With the completion of repair and reconstruction of more vehicular ferries, the HYF quickly increased the number of departures and the frequency of the vehicular ferry was increased to every twelve minutes in 1949. However, for the Kowloon City ferry service, as the ferry pier was totally demolished during the war, the Kowloon City ferry service could not be resumed.¹²

¹⁰“Gangjiu liangxian duhai xiaolun sandengwei shoufei wuxian 港九兩線渡海小輪三等位收費五仙 (The fare of the third class of the accomation of o ferry service between Hong Kong and Kowloon)”, Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 18th September, 1945, 3; “Yumadi xiaolun googsi xiang zhengfu zhechong yanchang piyue油蔴地小輪公司向政府折衝延長批約 (The HYF request the Government extend the licence)”, Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 29th May, 1947, 1, 3.

¹¹“Bengang wang wangjiao shenshuibu xiaolun jinri qi fenbie peichuen xianzou 本港往旺角深水埗小輪今日起分別派船行走 (There would be separate service for Mong Kok and Sham Shui Po ferry service)”, Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 1st November, 1945, 4; Zhang Yingfang 張英芳, *Xianggang mao yi zhi nan* 香港貿易指南 (Hong Kong Trading Guide) (Hong Kong: Zengerzhi chubanshe, 1950), 22-23.

¹²“Zaiche duhailun laizhoufuhang載車渡海輪來週復航 (The Vehicular Ferry Service

For the New Territories and Outlying Islands ferry service, the HYF quickly resumed the Tai O and Cheung Chau ferry service after the end of the Japanese Occupation.¹³

Both the Tai O and Cheung Chau ferry services were indirect service. The Tai O ferry service had the intermediate stop at Castle Peak. There were two routes for the Cheung Chau ferry service. One of the routes passed through two intermediate stop at Peng Chau and Silver Mine Bay and the other one passed through one intermediate stop at Yung Shu Wan of Lamma Island.¹⁴

The HYF made all the New Territories and Outlying Islands ferry routes to run in indirect service mainly because the HYF wanted to focus on resuming the urban service to the pre-war standard as its priority. Most of the ferry vessels were arranged to run the urban service so that there were not enough ferry vessels to run the New Territories and Outlying Islands ferry service separately.

resume next week)", Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 5th January, 1946, 4; The Hong Kong Government, *Hong Kong Annual Report 1949*, 105-106; "Bujiu dangke jiakai banci不久當可加開班次 (There would be additional service within a short period of time)", Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 27th November, 1945, 3; "Yomadi xiaolun zhounain baogao油蔴地小輪週年報告 (Annual Report of the HYF)", Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 31st May, 1947, 1, 4.

¹³"Gangjiu liangxian duhai xiaolun sandengwei shoufei wuxian 港九兩線渡海小輪三等位收費五仙 (The fare of the third class of the accomation of o ferry service between Hong Kong and Kowloon)", Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 18th September, 1945, 3.

¹⁴HKRS407-1-19, Harbour Master to Colonial Secretary, 10th February, 1947.

The residents in Cheung Chau and Peng Chau were dissatisfied with indirect ferry service while the residents in North Lantau area was dissatisfied with the HYF skip the intermediate stop at Tung Chung. They repeatedly sent petition letters to the Government to ask the HYF to improve the service.¹⁵

As there were more ferry vessels returning to service after maintenance and most of the urban ferry services resumed to pre-war standard, the HYF started to deal with the problem of the New Territories and Outlying Islands ferry services near the end of the rehabilitation period in 1948.

The HYF resumed the direct ferry service to Cheung Chau; Silver Mine Bay and Peng Chau and increased the number of departures. However, the HYF suspended the Lamma Island service as more ferry vessels were required in operating the Cheung Chau, Peng Chau and Silver Mine Bay ferry routes and the HYF could not provide spare ferry vessels to run the Lamma Island service. At the same time, the HYF added the intermediate stop at Tung Chung for the Tai O ferry service. In 1949, the HYF basically resumed its ferry service up to the pre-war standard.¹⁶

¹⁵HKRS407-1-19, Letter from Cheung Chau Resident Association to Sir Mark Young, Governor of Hong Kong, 10th February, 1947; HKRS407-1-19, Letter from S.F. Lee, Representative of Residents of Ping Chau Island, 8th January, 1949; HKRS407-1-11, Asking for Ferry calling at Tung Chung, 22nd February, 1946.

¹⁶The Hong Kong Government, *Hong Kong Annual Report 1949* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government, 1950), 105-106; HKRS407-1-19, Letter from Managing Director of HYF to J. Barrow, District Officer New Territories, 30th December, 1948; "Xianggang changzhou xiaolun ganggai hangxian shijian 香港長洲小輪更改航行時間 (The change of timetable of

After the end of the Second World War, due to the lack of resources, there was serious inflation in Hong Kong. Many people found that their wage was not capable to maintain life in Hong Kong.

Starting from 1946, as people wanted to increase their wage, many strikes in different industries occurred. In mid 1946, there was a wave of strike in the public utility companies. The employees of the HYF also started a strike together with the “Star” Ferry employees in July 1946. The reasons for the HYF employees to go into strike were that the employees wanted an increase of wage and the improvement of the treatment.¹⁷

In fact, the HYF had already increased the wage of its employees at the end of the Japanese Occupation. The new wage of high position staff was four times of their original wage and the new wage of low position staff was three and a half times of their original wage.

Even though the wage increased, the wages of the HYF’s employees were below the standard set by the Government. Their wages were the lowest among the nine public utility companies in Hong Kong. The employees of the HYF still found it difficult to survive as the inflation went on in Hong

Hong Kong and Cheung Chau ferry service)”, Hong Kong Industrial and Commercial Daily 香港工商日報, 12th July 1947, 1, 3.

¹⁷G. B. Endacott, *Hong Kong Eclipse* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1978), 301-302; HKRS163-1-250, The Present Labour Situation, 26th July, 1946.

Kong¹⁸

Before going on strike in July 1946, the HYF's employees used the rational way to negotiate with the management on the wage increase and improvement of treatments issue. In May 1946, the representative of the employees of the HYF sent the request which included eleven demands to the management of the HYF to demand for the increase of wage and the improvement of the treatments to its the employees.

Facing the request from the employees, the management of the HYF led by Lau Tak Po, the Managing Director repeatedly told their employees that the HYF was a Government owned public utility and the management could only help the employees to send their request to the Government for consideration. However, it was not really the case that the HYF was running into the commercial basis ever since the restoration of the British rule. The HYF really sent the request from the employees to the Government and asked for the Government decision.¹⁹

Since the Labour Department of the Government had the responsibility

¹⁸“Yomadi xiaolun yuangog souti tiaojian 油蔴地小輪員工所提條件 (The request of the HYF employees)”, Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 29th May, 1946, 4.

¹⁹Ibid. The eleven demands of the employees including increase the basic wage, to have eight hours working days, provide medical expense, provide overtime payment, provide dismissals and retiring remuneration, fair allocation of heavy workers' rice, provide rehabilitation bonus, to give priority for re-employing the old workers, to continue the previous privileges, provide ten per cent increase in pay for Diesel engine man, to clarify the duty and power of different position.

to help both the employers and employees to settle the labour dispute, the Labour Department provided assistant to the management of the HYF for solving the problem.

With careful consideration of the request from the employees, the Labour Department made a conclusion that the request of the employees was reasonable and suggested the HYF to increase the wage of employees according to the suggested wage made by the Labour Department.

However, the Labour Department did not provide any suggestion on the improvement of the treatment of the employees. The management of the HYF simply followed the suggestions of the Labour Department and increased the wage only. The management of the HYF did nothing to improve the treatment of its employees.²⁰

At the same time, the HYF announced that two workers from each ferry vessels had to dismiss in order to reduce the running cost. The employees were dissatisfied with the new arrangement of the HYF and they also turned to the Labour Department to ask for assistant.

The Labour Department met the HYF's employees for several times. The Labour Department then sent the wage increase suggestion and the

²⁰“Yomadi xiaolun gongyou shixing zhao xinguidin jiaxin油蔴地小輪船工友實行照新規定加薪 (The wage of HYF employees will increase with according to the new regulations)”, Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 17th June, 1946, 4.

employees' request on the improvement of treatment to the management personnel at the HYF and asked the management to consider.²¹

Unfortunately, there was no response from the management of the HYF and the HYF's employees sent an ultimatum to the management. The employees demanded the management of the HYF to give them reply within seventy-two hours in late July 1946.

The management of the HYF tried to negotiate with the employees and asked the employees to extend the ultimatum to 25th July, 1946, the date on which the Labour Department originally scheduled a meeting for both side to negotiate on the wage increase and the improvement of treatments. The employees quickly refused the request of the management and went on strike on the evening of 23rd July, 1946.²²

This strike was the first and the only general strike in the history of the HYF. The strike lasted for nearly one month until 21st August, 1946 when the Government decided to set up the Board of Arbitration to settle the problem. The employees of "Star" Ferry also went on strike three days later as they

²¹"Xiaolun gongsi yuangong 小輪公司員工 (The employees of the ferry company)", Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 18th June, 1946, 4.

²²"Xiaolun yu bashi gongyou qinggaishan daiyu jinxun 小輪與巴士工友請改善待遇近訊 (The recent news of the workers of ferry and bus of the improvement of the treatments)", Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 27th June, 1946, 3; HKRS 163-1-250, Labour Report – Star Ferry & Hong Kong & Yaumati Ferry Companies, 15th August, 1946; HKRS 163-1-250, Report on Labour, 30th July, 1946; HKRS 163-1-250, The report of strike of the employees of the "Star" Ferry Company, Ltd., and Hong Kong and Yaumati Ferry Company, Ltd, from 23rd July to 21st August 1946, September, 1946.

also could not reach an agreement with the management on the same issue.²³

When the strike was in progress, all the ferry service in Hong Kong was suspended and it caused great inconvenience for Hong Kong people. Thus, the Labour Department tried their best to arrange a number of meetings for the management and the employees of the HYF and “Star” Ferry to solve the problem so that the ferry service could be resumed as soon as possible.

Unfortunately, both the management and the employees of the two companies could not reach any agreement in all meetings as there was a significant difference between the wages suggested by the management and the employees. The management did not want to raise the wage to the same standard that other public utilities adopted. In addition, the management and employees could not reach the agreement on the improvement of the treatment especially the issue of eight-hour work.²⁴

Since there was no hope that the management and the employees could reach any agreement, the Government decided to set up the Board of Arbitration which consisted of three Government's officials (one of them would be from judiciary and would be the chairman); two representatives

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid; HKRS163-1-250, Letter from Guilds and Associations to the Colonial Secretary, 9th August, 1946.

nominated by the management of the two ferry companies, and the two representatives nominated by the employees of the two ferry companies to settle the problem.²⁵

After the Board of Arbitration was set up, the employees of both ferry companies agreed to return to service and the strike finally ended. The Board of Arbitration has held six meetings and finally settled the increase in wage and the improvement of treatments issue.

According to the report made by the Board, there was only a slightly increase in the basic pay for the HYF employees. However, the management of HYF agreed to offer a number of bonus and allowance such as the Safe Navigation Bonus, New Year Bonus, Typhoon Bonus, and Ferry Passenger Carrying Allowance.

In addition, the management agreed to grant the Retiring Remuneration, Death Gratuity, and Funeral Allowance. Moreover, the management agreed to adopt the eight-hour working days and agreed to have the overtime payment.

Furthermore, the management agreed to let the employee have eighteen

²⁵HKRS 163-1-250, Letter from the Acting Colonial Secretary to All members of Arbitration Board, 15th August, 1946; HKRS 163-1-250, The report of strike of the employees of the "Star" Ferry Company, Ltd., and Hong Kong and Yaumati Ferry Company, Ltd, from 23rd July to 21st August 1946, September, 1946; HKRS 163-1-250, Labour Report – Star Ferry & Hong Kong & Yaumati Ferry Companies, 15th August, 1946.

days annual leave and the leave on two Sundays every month. And the employees could apply for the sick leave with the medical certificate from the doctor designated by the HYF.²⁶

Both the management and the employees of the HYF accepted the report and the new arrangement commenced on 1st August, 1946. With the result from the Board, the wage and treatment of the employees were improved and the management of the HYF became more considerate on the wage and welfare of the employees. In the following decades, the HYF put more focus on improving the welfare of the employees such as building a hostel for the employees. It also established a recreational centre for the employees.

All these helped the management maintained a good relationship with the employees so that there was not any serious labour dispute between the management and the employees or general strike of the HYF's employees in the following decades.²⁷

Besides settling the strike of the employees, the other major task of the

²⁶HKRS 163-1-250, Report from the Board of Arbitration, 2nd September, 1946.

²⁷HKRS 163-1-250, The report of strike of the employees of the "Star" Ferry Company, Ltd., and Hong Kong and Yaumati Ferry Company, Ltd, from 23rd July to 21st August 1946, September, 1946; Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, *The Hongkong & Yaumati Ferry Co. Ltd.: Golden Jubilee, 1923-1973* (Hong Kong: Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, 1973), 24, 25, 31.

HYF in the rehabilitation period was the extension of the ferry licence. Most of the ferry licences that HYF gained in the pre-war period would be expired in 1948 and 1949. As the management of the HYF wanted to continue operating the ferry service, ever since 1946, they started some preparation works to make the HYF capable of gaining the extension of licence from the Government.

After the end of the war, all members in the Management Board serving during the pre-war and Japanese occupation period continued to serve in the HYF with Lau Tak Po continued to be the Managing Director of the HYF. The HYF continued to use the collective management with most of the members who were actively participating in the operation of the HYF.

Coincidentally, Kwan Sum Yin, the Chairman of the HYF during the pre-war and Japanese Occupation Period passed away at the end of 1945. The Director Board of the HYF elected Chau Tsun Nin to be the Chairman of the HYF.²⁸

The changing of the Chairman could help the HYF to gain the support from the Government. It was because Kwan Sum Yin was the head of the District Office during the Japanese Occupation Period. If Kwan Sum Yin

²⁸ “Guanxinyan yisheng buxing shishi關心焉醫生不幸逝世 (Dr. Kwan Sum Yin passed away)”, Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 15th December, 1945, 4; Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, *The Hongkong & Yaumati Ferry Co. Ltd.: Golden Jubilee, 1923-1973*, 20-21.

continued to be the Chairman of the HYF, it would remind the British authority of the fact that the HYF had a close cooperative relationship with the Japanese authority during the Japanese Occupation.

In contrast, Chau Tsun Nin had slipped to Macau and stayed there throughout the Japanese Occupation Period. He refused to cooperate with the Japanese authority. This gave the British Government great trust in him and the British Government appointed him to be the unofficial member of both the Executive Council and Legislative Council after the war.

David MacDougall, the Chief Civil Affair Officer of the British Military Government praised Chau Tsun Nin that “he was the only public figure who appears to have entirely clean hands”. By elected Chau Tsun Nin to be the Chairman of HYF, it could greatly improve the image of the HYF and it could help the HYF to get the extension of ferry licences. In fact, during the post war period, the HYF never mentioned that Kwan Sum Yin has been the Chairman of the HYF.²⁹

Apart from the changing of its Chairman, in order to gain the extension of licences, as mentioned above, the HYF put much effort to resume the ferry service as soon as possible. Whenever there were ferries completed the

²⁹Philip Snow, *The Fall of Hong Kong: Britain China and Japanese Occupation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 108, 284.

maintenance, the HYF would put these ferries back to service as soon as possible. The HYF tried hard to resume pre-war service standard. The effort of the HYF gave a good impression to the British authority.

Also, during the process of repairing its ferry fleet, the HYF decided to convert the engine of the ferry from steam engine to diesel engines. In addition, the HYF already placed order for building the new ferries for operating its service in 1949 when the negotiation of the extension of franchise was still undergoing.³⁰

These decisions were in fact a long term decision for the development of the HYF as the HYF required to invest a large amount of capital for both projects. If the HYF could not gain the extension of its licences, the HYF would suffer from great lost. On top of this, these decisions helped the HYF to show the Government that it was determined to gain the extension of licences and continued the ferry operation. The Government had been aware all these actions of the HYF and put these as the factors for considering whether to grant the HYF the extension or not.³¹

With this background and other factors such as there was no other ferry

³⁰The Hong Kong Government, *Hong Kong Annual Report 1949*, 105-106; “Youmadi gongsi xiaolun jiang zhujian gaizhuang 油蔴地公司小輪將逐漸改裝 (The ferries of the HYF would convert), *Hong Kong Industrial and Commercial Daily* 香港工商日報, 1st July 1948, 6.

³¹HKRS 163-1-1472, Reprint of Hong Kong and Yaumati Ferry Company (Service) Ordinances No.11 of 1951 and “Star” Ferry Company (Service) Ordinance No. 41 of 1951, 1951.

company which had the experience of managing the large number of routes and ferry fleets; after four years of negotiation, the Government, decided to grant the franchise to the HYF by passing the Hong Kong and Yaumati Ferry Company (Service) Ordinance in 1951 other than granting different ferry licences for it to operate different groups of ferry routes,.

This franchise gave the sole right for the HYF to operate all the existing urban area ferry service other than the Tsim Sha Tsui route of the “Star” Ferry for 15 years with effective from 1st January, 1950. The HYF had the right to extend the franchise for further 15 years after the end of the first 15 years. The fares and charges were set by the Government and any change of the fares and charge would require the approval of the Government.

Different from the pre-war ferry licences, the royalty that the HYF required to pay was no longer suggested by the HYF, the amount of royalty was set by the Government. According to the franchise, the HYF required to pay the royalty monthly by way of percentage of the HYF’s gross monthly receipts from the collection of fare. At the same time, the HYF would be responsible for the maintenance of the piers and was required to pay the pier rent to the Government.³²

³²HKRS 163-1-1472, Reprint of Hong Kong and Yaumati Ferry Company (Service) Ordinances No.11 of 1951 and “Star” Ferry Company (Service) Ordinance No. 41 of 1951, 1951; “Youmadi xiaolun gongsi nainhui 油蔴地小輪公司年會 (The Annual General Meeting

Two years later, the Colonial Government passed the Amendment Bill to the Hong Kong and Yaumati Ferry Company (Service) Ordinance in 1953. This Amendment Bill added all the New Territories and Outlying Islands ferry routes into the franchise of the HYF. It meant that the HYF got the right for solely operating the New Territories and Outlying Islands ferry routes for 15 years and also had the right to operate for further 15 years after the end of the first 15 years.

At the same time, this Amendment Bill changed the method for calculating the royalty. The HYF required paying 25 per cent of its annual net profit as the royalty. The HYF required paying the royalty monthly with the one twelfth of the estimated net profit and the Government would refund the excess of the royalty to the HYF or the HYF could require to pay the deficit of the royalty to the Government at the end of the year. The amount of the royalty paid by the HYF was reduced with the change of the calculation in fact. Apart from that there was also a reduction on the amount of pier rent.³³

The granting of franchise was an important milestone to the development of the HYF. It was because during the same period, the Government also

of the HYF)", Hong Kong Industrial and Commercial Daily 香港工商日報, 29th April, 1951, 6.

³³HKRS 163-1-1472, Hong Kong and Yaumati Ferry Company (Service) (Amendment Bill, 1953), 1953.

granted the franchise to the “Star” Ferry Company Limited by passing the “Star” Ferry Company Ordinance in 1951.

The Government stated clearly in the both Ordinance that the HYF and the “Star” Ferry would have similar terms and regulations in order to make the two ferries companies in equal status and tried to be fair to the two companies. The amendment of the calculation of the royalty for the HYF was also due to the issue of equal status.

According to the original calculation, it would be more favourable to the “Star” Ferry as the “Star” Ferry would pay far less than the HYF. The new calculation method would make the royalty for the HYF to be more reasonable. With these two Ordinances, it raised the status of the HYF to the equal root of the “Star” Ferry which had always occupied a higher status before the Second World War.³⁴

With settling of the extension of licence problem in early 1950s, the HYF was basically fully rehabilitated. As the HYF gained the control of the all ferry routes other than the “Star” Ferry for thirty years, it seemed that the future of the HYF would be prosperous. However, as the Government started to do research and consider the building of the cross harbour bridge or tunnel, it

³⁴HKRS 163-1-1472, Reprint of Hong Kong and Yaumati Ferry Company (Service) Ordinances No.11 of 1951 and “Star” Ferry Company (Service) Ordinance No. 41 of 1951, 1951; HKRS 163-1-1472, Hong Kong and Yaumati Ferry Company (Service) (Amendment Bill, 1953), 1953.

brought a shadow to the development of the HYF. The HYF prepared itself to face this challenge by continuously improving the service.

Out of the expectation of the HYF, the cross harbour tunnel project did not carry out and complete in early 1970s. The preparation work of the HYF for facing the challenge blessed the HYF with twenty years of unexpected golden period.

Through the development of the HYF during the Rehabilitation Period, it demonstrated again the adaptability of the people in Hong Kong. Once getting the permission from the British authority for running the ferry service, the HYF quickly got rid of the Japanese requirements.

By coincidence, when the HYF got the chance to change the Chairman who had a close relationship with the Japanese, it quickly elected a pro-British merchant, Chau Tsun Nin to be the new Chairman in order to improve the relationship between the HYF and the Government.

In addition, from the things that the HYF did during this period, it showed that the HYF was still keen on making profit. The HYF just launched a three day free of charge programme in September 1945 for facilitating the change of currency problem.

Moreover, from the course of the HYF dealing with the strike, it showed

that the HYF tried to earn as much as possible by lowering the wages of the HYF's employees. The employees were underpaid – below the common standard of the public utilities before 1946. And it was not willing to increase the wages of the employees until the Government set up the Board of Arbitration to settle the problem.

Similar to the pre-war period, as the HYF was keen on making profit, it put much effort on improving the service. The huge profit gained during this period facilitated the HYF to have a strong financial backup and the Government could also gain a huge royalty from the HYF. The HYF continued to fulfill the goals of the Government to regulate the ferry service and the good relationship between the HYF and the Government was eventually resumed.

CHAPTER 6

UNEXPECTED GOLDEN PERIOD, 1951 TO THE EARLY 1970S

Starting from 1951 to the early 1970s, it was an unexpected golden period in the development of the HYF. The reasons for describing this period as unexpected golden period were that: starting from the late 1940s, the Government had done a series of transportation studies especially on the ferry services and the cross-harbour transportation system such as the research on development of Hong Kong by Sir Patrick Abercrombie in 1948, the survey of the Harbour Ferry Services Advisory Committee in 1950, etc.

Most of these studies suggested the Government to build a bridge or a tunnel as the long term solution to the continuous growth of demand on the cross harbour vehicular transport. Later, as the vehicular ferry service repeatedly failed to satisfy the demand, the general public also started to urge the Government to build the road transport for crossing the harbour. There was an atmosphere that the Government would build the cross harbour bridge or tunnel very soon.

During this critical period, a number of the first generation of the management of the HYF including Lau Tak Po, Young Tsun Dart, Kwok Chuen, were either passed away or retired. They passed the leadership of

the HYF to a number of their own descendents such as Lau Chan Kwok, Lambert Kwok, Young Tsin Kiu progressively.¹

The second generation management of the HYF was eventually formed in late 1960s. Facing the possible challenge from the construction of cross harbour road transport, both the first and second generation management of HYF adopted a number of measurements such as establishing the second vehicular ferry service; build more vehicular ferries to reduce the waiting time for crossing harbour; improve the standard of service to deal with the challenge.

However, out of the HYF's expectation, it took nearly twenty years for the formal launch of the construction of cross harbour tunnel to begin. The preparation work of the HYF for facing the challenge contributed to the great expansion of the ferry fleet and ferry service of HYF and made the HYF the world's largest local ferry company. There was severe increase in the net profit and the number of passengers and vehicles travelled on the HYF during 1951 to the early 1970s.

This Chapter talks about the background and the course for the Government to adopt the idea of building cross harbour road transport. It

¹Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, *The Hongkong & Yaumati Ferry Co. Ltd.: Golden Jubilee, 1923-1973* (Hong Kong: Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, 1973), 24, 25, 31.

talks about the development of the HYF during this period and analyses the differences between the first and second generation in facing with the possible challenge from the construction of the cross harbour tunnel. It also analyses the intentions for the Government to build the cross harbour tunnel contributed to an unexpected golden period in the development of the HYF.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, as early as 1902, the Harbour Master, Commander Murray Ramsey had already suggested to build a bridge for connecting Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula. Even though the vehicular ferry was already established in 1933, many people still suggested building the cross harbour bridge or tunnel. The Government also continued to do the research on the possibility of building the road transport to connect Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula.²

In early 1941, the Harbour Department of the Government started the investigation for building a cross harbour tunnel. The Harbour Department finished the investigation work quickly and submitted the report in March 1941 to senior officials to consider. However, as the project required many resources and the construction cost was very high, the Government decided

²Victoria City Development Company Limited, *Report on a Proposed Road Crossing of Hong Kong Harbour Vol.1* (Hong Kong: Victoria City Development Company Limited, 1961), 2.

to postpone on the project after the end of the war period.³

Shortly after the Second World War in September 1945, Andrew Nicol, the Engineer in Charge of the Harbour Works of the Harbour Department wrote a memorandum on Cross Harbour Transportation to the senior officials of the Government to facilitate the rehabilitation of Hong Kong.

According to Nicol's memorandum, there had been already too many ships in the Victoria Harbour. He suggested three methods to improve the cross harbour traffic including increasing the number of ferries, building the bridge, and building the tunnel. Among the three methods, he recommended building the tunnel as it could provide service in all kinds of weather and the tunnel would be easy for maintenance. He pointed out that ferry could not deal with large amount of passenger as there was limitation of the capacity and both the ferry and the bridge would be affected by the weather.⁴

In 1948, the Government invited Sir Patrick Abercrombie, Professor of Town Planning at University College London and a famous town planner to make suggestions for the development of Hong Kong. Sir Patrick

³"Haidi suidao weineng xingjian海底隧道未能興建 (The Cross Harbour Tunnel could not be build at this moment)", Hong Kong Industrial and Commercial Daily 香港工商日報, 19th July, 1941, n.p; Andrew Nicol, *Memorandum on Cross Harbour Transportation*. n.p, 1943-1945.

⁴Ibid.; "Jianju haidi suidao建築海底隧道 (Construct the Cross Harbour Tunnel)", Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 26th January, 1947, 1,4.

Abercrombie also suggested building the tunnel for facilitating the development of Hong Kong in his report which was published in 1948. As the vehicular ferry service was not capable to deal with the growing demand on the cross harbour vehicular traffic, it took a long time for the people to cross the harbour with vehicles.⁵

Thus, when the Government appointed the Harbour Ferry Services Advisory Committee to conduct a research to collect opinions from the public on the development of the cross harbour ferry service in 1950, instead of giving opinions or suggestions to the development of the cross harbour ferry service, many people and associations urged the Government to follow the suggestion of Sir Patrick Abercrombie to build the tunnel or build the bridge to connect Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula.

As there were a considerable number of people who suggested building the cross harbour road transport, the committee finally suggested the Government to take it into consideration. The Government accepted the suggestion from the committee and started the research on the possibility for building the cross harbour road transport.⁶

⁵"Patrick Abercrombie." Wikipedia Free-content Encyclopedia; available on-line from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patrick_Abercrombie; internet; accessed on 20 May 2007; Patrick Abercrombie, *Hong Kong Preliminary Planning Report, 1948* (Hong Kong: Ye Olde Printerie, Ltd., 1948), 3-4..

⁶*Ibid.*, 13; The Harbour Ferry Service Advisory Committee. *Report of The Harbour Ferry*

With the Government accepting the suggestion to start the research of the construction of the cross harbour road transport, together with the continuous demand from the general public, it seemed that the Government would launch the construction of the cross harbour tunnel or bridge within a short period of time.⁷

After the success in gaining the thirty years franchise for operating all the ferry service other than the Tsim Sha Tsui route in Hong Kong in 1951, as the members of the first generation management lead by Lau Tak Po were getting old, they started to pass the leadership to the second generation management.

Shortly afterward, in 1954 and 1955, Young Tsun Dart and Lau Tak Po passed away respectively. Later in 1960, Kwok Chuen retired. Due to the traditional thought of the Chinese, the second generation management of the HYF was basically composed by a number of descendents of the first generation management such as Lau Chan Kwok, son of Lau Tak Po; Kwok Lam Po and Lambert Kwok, sons of Kwok Chuen; and Young Tsin Kiu, daughter of Young Tsun Dart. Unsurprisingly, the leading person of the

Service Advisory Committee (Hong Kong: Noronha & Company Limited, 1951), 6, 13-16, 19-20.

⁷The Harbour Ferry Service Advisory Committee, *Report of The Harbour Ferry Service Advisory Committee- Decision of Government* (Hong Kong: Noronha & Company Limited, 1951), 5.

second generation management was Lau Chan Kwok as he was the son of Lau Tak Po.

Different from the first generation management, except Lau Chan Kwok, most of the members of the Management Board in fact did not have interest in operating ferry business and were not concerned about the development of the HYF. The HYF eventually changed from the collective management by a group of directors to be the sole management by the Lau's family and the HYF became a family business.⁸

Even though there was the change of the management of the HYF, both the first and second generation which led by Lau Tak Po and Lau Chan Kwok understood very well that the HYF had to take some actions to prepare for the possible challenges that came along with the establishment of cross harbour road transport. Therefore, starting from the commencing of the franchise in 1951, the HYF launched a series of programmes to improve its services.

The HYF hoped that these programmes could help to gain the support from the public and made the public to continue to use ferry service even

⁸Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, *The Hongkong & Yaumati Ferry Co. Ltd.: Golden Jubilee, 1923-1973*, 24, 25, 31; Sing Lim Woo, *The Prominent Chinese in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Wu Chou Book Store, 1937), 25; "Yang junda nugongzi Yangzhanqiao pizhun zhiye dalushi楊俊達女公子楊展翹批准執業大律師 (Young Tsin Kiu, daughter of Young Tsun Dart was called to the Bar)", Hong Kong Industrial and Commercial Daily 香港工商日報, 17th October 1954, 6. Members of the first generation management included the founders of the HYF and those who joined the HYF in pre-war and early post war period. Kwok Lam Po and Lambert Kwok were focused on running the Wing On Company which was their family business. Young Tsin Kiu was the called in the Bar and focused on her own business.

when the cross harbour road transport was introduced.

Since vehicular ferry service would be greatly affected by the establishment of the cross harbour road transport, the HYF launched a series of programmes to improve the vehicular ferry service. As many people complained that it took a long time for crossing the harbour with the vehicular ferry service, the HYF quickly built three double decked passenger and vehicular ferries in 1951 relieve the long waiting time problem for the cross harbour vehicular service.⁹

The HYF increased the frequency of the vehicular ferry service to every seven minutes and extended the service to 1 A.M. mid-night. Unfortunately, the adjustment of the vehicular ferry service still could not meet the demand and the long queue for waiting the vehicular ferry service continuously existed.¹⁰

In order to solve the problem, the HYF repeatedly urged the Government to follow the suggestions of the Harbour Ferry Services Advisory Committee for establishing the Eastern vehicular ferry service. Finally, according to the Ferries Regulations, the Government called the tender for the Eastern

⁹Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, *The Hongkong & Yaumati Ferry Co. Ltd.: Golden Jubilee, 1923-1973*, 21.

¹⁰The Hong Kong Government, *Hong Kong Annual Report 1951* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government, 1952), 99-101.

vehicular ferry service between Kowloon City and North Point in 1959 and the HYF succeeded in gaining the franchise for operate this route for fifteen years.¹¹

Unfortunately, due to the delay of construction of the ferry pier in North Point, the Eastern vehicular ferry service could not be commenced until 1965. Thus, in the meantime, the Government approved the HYF to establish a temporary vehicular ferry service between the reclamation land in Central and Jordan Road in 1960.

Four single decked vehicular ferries, which were originally prepared for the launching of the Eastern vehicular ferry service, were arranged to run the temporary vehicular ferry service.

The HYF diverted trucks to travel with the temporary vehicular ferry service and left the original vehicular ferry service to serve the private car. The introduction of the temporary vehicular ferry service helped to reduce 50% of the waiting time for crossing harbour.¹²

In 1962, the Government approved the request from the HYF to build

¹¹“Youmadi gongsi toude zhuanyingquan shiwunian油蔴地公司投得專營權十五年 (The HYF gained the 15 years franchise)”, Dagongbao 大公報, 11th November, 1959, 4; Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, *The Hongkong & Yaumati Ferry Co. Ltd.: Golden Jubilee, 1923-1973*, 25; The Harbour Ferry Service Advisory Committee. *Report of The Harbour Ferry Service Advisory Committee* (Hong Kong: Noronha & Company Limited, 1951), 4;

¹²Ibid.; “Big speed-up in car ferry service”, The China Mail, 19th January, 1960, 1.

another vehicular ferry pier for increasing the frequency of the vehicular ferry service between Central and Jordan Road.¹³

Because of the continuous growth of population and vehicles in Hong Kong, the new vehicular ferry service could only solve the congestion problem for a while. The long queue for the cross harbour vehicular ferry service returned very quickly.

In 1964, the HYF decided to rebuild four single decked vehicular ferries into double decked. In order to facilitate the double decked vehicular ferry service, the HYF also decided to rebuild the vehicular ferry piers in Central and Jordan Road. The rebuild of the vehicular ferry piers and the rebuild of the vehicular ferries were completed in 1965 and 1966 respectively.¹⁴

With the launching of the long waiting Eastern vehicular ferry service in 1965, the HYF terminated the temporary vehicular ferry service in Central reclamation land to facilitate the reclamation project of the Government. Even though the temporary vehicular ferry service in Central had to suspend, with the rebuild of four vehicular ferries and the commencement of the Eastern

¹³Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, *The Hongkong & Yaumati Ferry Co. Ltd.: Golden Jubilee, 1923-1973*, 29.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 30; “Qiche daohailun matou juechongxing sheji gaijian 汽車渡海輪碼頭決重行設計改建 (The vehicular ferry pier would be rebuild in new design)”, Hong Kong Industrial and Commercial Daily 香港工商日報, 17th October, 1964, 7; “Shunagceng zaiche xiaolun tianqiao quanbu luocheng zuoshiyong 雙層載車小輪天橋全部落成昨試用 (The flyover for the double decked vehicular ferry completed and on trial run yesterday)”, Hong Kong Industrial and Commercial Daily 香港工商日報, 23rd October, 1965, 4.

vehicular ferry service, it greatly increased the capacity of the HYF vehicular ferry service. Unfortunately, the rapid growth of population during the 1960s contributed to growth in the number of vehicles in Hong Kong. It made the HYF always incapable of satisfying the demand on the cross harbour service.¹⁵

Apart from improving the vehicular ferry service, from 1951 to the early 1970s, the HYF also tried its best to improve and expand the passenger ferry service. Since the cross harbour tunnel or bridge would build at the centre part of Hong Kong, starting from 1951, the HYF established many urban ferry routes on the Eastern part of Hong Kong.

The HYF established the ferry service between Kowloon City and Wan Chai in 1956. In 1963, the HYF established the ferry services between North Point and Kwun Tong; Hung Hom and Wan Chai; North Point and Hung Hom; North Point and Kowloon City. Except the ferry service between Hung Hom and Wan Chai which was on the same route of the future cross harbour road transport, all other routes were operated on the Eastern part of Hong Kong. It

¹⁵Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, *The Hongkong & Yaumati Ferry Co. Ltd.: Golden Jubilee, 1923-1973* (Hong Kong: Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, 1973), 31, 34, 35; "Xinqiche chuen Minqunhao xiashui新汽車船民群號下水 (The launching of the new vehicular ferry *Man Kwun*)", Hong Kong Industrial and Commercial Daily 香港工商日報, 1st July, 1965, 4; Peter Frederick Leeds, *The Development of Public Transport in Hong Kong: An Historical Review 1841-1974* (Hong Kong: Government Printer, 1984), 60. The population in Hong Kong has grown from 2,070,000 in 1951 to 4,064,400 in 1971.

was because the HYF believed that it was more convenient and took shorter time to travel with the ferry between places in Eastern District of Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula.¹⁶

The introduction of the cross harbour road transport would not greatly affect these ferry services and would not lead to the serious decrease in the number of passengers. The HYF also started to develop the New Territories and Outlying Islands ferry service. The HYF resumed the ferry service between Hong Kong and Tsuen Wan; Hong Kong and Tsing Yi in 1958.

In 1955 and 1962, the HYF established the ferry services between Tap Mun, Villages in Tolo Harbour area and Tai Po; Hong Kong Island and Lamma Island respectively. By established these ferry services, the HYF hoped to gain more income for the company as it was very popular for people to travel to these areas for vacations.¹⁷

For the passenger ferry routes that already existed, the HYF also put much effort to improve the service. From 1951 to 1971, the HYF has built thirty one passenger ferry vessels which consisted of single ended double

¹⁶“Jiulongcheng xiaolun jiang fuhang九龍城小輪將復航 (The Kowloon City ferry service will resume), Dagongbao 大公報, 16th February, 1955; “Huoli yuqianwan獲利逾千萬 (Earn more than one million profit)”, Hong Kong Industrial and Commercial Daily 香港工商日報, 5th April, 1964, 4; Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, *The Hongkong & Yaumati Ferry Co. Ltd.: Golden Jubilee, 1923-1973*, 21, 24, 29.

¹⁷Ibid.; “Huoli yuqianwan獲利逾千萬 (Earn more than one million profit)”, Hong Kong Industrial and Commercial Daily 香港工商日報, 5th April, 1964, 4.

decked ferries, double ended double decked ferries, and triple decked ferries.

These new and large ferries helped the HYF provide more frequent ferry service to deal with the continuous growth of the population in Hong Kong. Apart from that, with according to the new franchise, the HYF was responsible for the maintenance of ferry piers. In order to provide better service, the HYF redecorated and improved the facilities of a number of ferry piers. The Jordan Road ferry pier was one of the earliest ferry piers to receive the redecoration.¹⁸

Besides the ferry service, the HYF also tried to maintain a good image to the Government and the general public. In mid-1950, the management of HYF requested the Government to grant a land to them for building the employees' hostel for improving the welfare to the employees. The Government accepted the request and granted a land in Tai Kok Tsui to HYF

¹⁸Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, *The Hongkong & Yaumati Ferry Co. Ltd.: Golden Jubilee, 1923-1973*, 21, 24, 25, 29, 30, 31, 34, 35; "Youmadi xiaolun xinlun minfeihao xiashuili 油蔴地小輪新輪民輝號下水禮 (The launching ceremony of the new HYF ferry *Man Fai*)", Hong Kong Industrial and Commercial Daily 香港工商日報, 29th March, 1951, 6; "Youmadi xiaolun gongshi nianhui 油蔴地小輪公司年會 (The Annual Meeting of the HYF)", Hong Kong Industrial and Commercial Daily 香港工商日報, 29th April, 1964, 6; "Huoli yuqianwan 獲利逾千萬 (Earn more than one million profit)", Hong Kong Industrial and Commercial Daily 香港工商日報, 5th April, 1964, 4; "Dayushan jiang jian xinjianyu 大嶼山將建新監獄 (New prison will build in Lantau Island)", Dagongbao 大公報, 16th April, 1964, 5; HKRS 163-1-1472, Introduction thereto by Chairman, 1953; The Hong Kong Government, *Hong Kong Annual Report 1951* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government, 1952), 100-101; The Hong Kong Government, *Hong Kong Annual Report 1952* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government, 1953), 140-141; The Hong Kong Government, *Hong Kong Annual Report 1953* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government, 1954), 143-144; The Hong Kong Government, *Hong Kong Annual Report 1955* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government, 1956), 154, 156; The Hong Kong Government, *Hong Kong Annual Report 1958* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government, 1959), 223-224; The Hong Kong Government, *Hong Kong Annual Report 1962* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government, 1963), 238-239; The Hong Kong Government, *Hong Kong Annual Report 1964* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government, 1965), 193-194.

for building the employees' hostel. The construction of the hostels was completed in 1960.¹⁹

Later in 1967, the HYF increased the salary of the employees. It also started to provide medical benefit to the employees and their family members. At the same time, it established the Recreation Centre to the employees and organized the training for helping the employees to get higher qualification.²⁰

The HYF also tried to assist the Government to provide emergency transportation service. For example, when the road transport between Aberdeen and urban area was blocked by the landslide in 1966, the HYF immediately provided a ferry service between Aberdeen and West Point until the road transport resumed.²¹

The actions of the HYF for improving the welfare of the employees helped to build up a good impression of the HYF to the Government and the general public. It also helped to gain support from the employees so that even though there was a number of riots and strikes of workers in 1950s and

¹⁹Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, *The Hongkong & Yaumati Ferry Co. Ltd.: Golden Jubilee, 1923-1973*, 24, 25, 30, 31.

²⁰Ibid., 31; "Yumadi xiaolun yuangong wuyuefen qi jiaxin 油蔴地小輪員工五月份起加薪 (The wage of the employees of the HYF increase)", Hong Kong Industrial and Commercial Daily 香港工商日報, 28th May, 1967, 5; "Qichechuen hangxian dou lunhou rongyi 汽車船航線多輪候容易 (It was not take too much time for waiting for the vehicular ferries as it has many routes)", Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 16th April, 1967, 2,1; "Liuda jihua 六大計劃 (Six important plan)", Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 27th April, 1969, 2,1.

²¹Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, *The Hongkong & Yaumati Ferry Co. Ltd.: Golden Jubilee, 1923-1973*, 30.

1960s, the HYF's employees did not join these riots or went in strikes as what they did in 1946. The willingness to provide any form of emergency service helped the HYF promote that the importance and the flexibility of the ferry service to the general public.

Apart from the above methods, when the Government planned to grant the franchise to the Victoria City Development Company Limited with the right for building and operating the Cross Harbour Tunnel in July 1965, the management of HYF lead by Lau Chan Kwok wrote a last-minute letter to the Colonial Secretary.

He expressed his opinion towards the plan to construct the Cross Harbour Tunnel including the rule for granting the franchise; the design of the tunnel; and the suggestions by the HYF on solving the traffic congestion problem for crossing harbour.

Lau Chan Kwok pointed out in the letter that it might be a problem in the future if the Government did not follow the suggestion from the Victoria City Development Company to build a five or six lane tunnel. He complained to the Government for promising the Victoria City Development Company that the Government would grant the franchise to the Company if the scheme was acceptable. He said that it was not fair as other companies such as the HYF

could not compete for the franchise.

Apart from the complaint, Lau Chan Kwok made a suggestion to the Government to allow the HYF to operate three more vehicular ferry routes in the Western and Eastern part of Hong Kong. He pointed out that it would mainly help to divert the traffic from the central area as the Cross Harbour Tunnel could only serve the traffic in the central area which might have a high possibility led to congestion.²²

Apart from writing the letter to the Colonial Secretary, the management of the HYF also made forty-three comments such as pointing out that the tunnel would led to the traffic congestion, etc, on the report done by the Victoria City Development Company Limited to the Advisory Committee on Public Transport.²³

Since the Government wanted to build the tunnel and wanted it to be completed as soon as possible, the Government did not consider those comments that made by the HYF in early July. The Government finally granted the franchise to the Victoria City Development Company Limited for

²²HKRS147-7-87, Letter from Lau Chan Kwok, the Managing Director of the HYF to Colonial Secretary on the issue of the Cross Harbour Tunnel, 23rd July, 1965.

²³HKRS147-7-87, Letter from Lau Chan Kwok, the Managing Director of the HYF to The Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Public Transport on the issue of the Cross Harbour Tunnel, 23rd July, 1965.

building the Cross Harbour Tunnel in August 1965.²⁴

According to the regulations in the franchise, the Victoria City Development Company required to give five per cent of shares to the HYF. At the beginning, the HYF had considered this offer and even asked the Victoria City Development Company to increase the number of shares for the HYF to twenty-five per cent.²⁵

After the careful consideration, the HYF decided not to join the construction and continued to urge the Government to allow the HYF to expand the vehicular ferry services. The main reason for the second generation management of HYF for rejecting the offer from the Victoria City Development Company Limited was that the Victoria City Development Company Limited could not provide the details on the construction cost and the operation cost of the tunnel to the HYF.

Without any details on the construction cost and operation cost, the HYF did not want to join the construction and operation of the tunnel as it might

²⁴“Haidi suidao gongcheng guiding wunian wancheng 海底隧道工程規定五年完成 (The construction of the Cross Harbour Tunnel have to completed in five years)”, Hong Kong Industrial and Commercial Daily 香港工商日報, 22nd August, 1965, 4.

²⁵“Xingjian kuahai suidao zhuanyingquan xiangxi tiaojian gongbu 興建跨海隧道專營權詳細條件公佈 (The details of the Cross Harbour Tunnel franchise announced)”, Hong Kong Industrial and Commercial Daily 香港工商日報, 28th July, 1965, 5; “Youmadi gongshi weijueding 油蔴地公司未決定 (The HYF has not made the decision yet), Hong Kong Industrial and Commercial Daily 香港工商日報, 5th August, 1966, 4; “Youmadi ying kaolu canjia 油蔴地仍考慮參加 (The HYF still thinking to join or not)”, Dagongbao 大公報, 5th August, 1966.

have the risk for suffering great lost. However, since it was uncertain to the change brought by the establishment of the Cross Harbour Tunnel and the Government required the HYF to report to them if there were any huge development programme, the HYF decided to suspend any developments plan until completion of the tunnel.²⁶

The choice made by the second generation management of the HYF showed that they were not as enterprising as the first generation management. They did not want to take any risk and in the following decades, it showed that the HYF missed the chance to gain more profit from the tunnel and lost the chance to have one more subsidiary company to make business of the HYF to be diversified.

As there was difficulty for the Victoria City Development Company to get enough financial support, the construction of the Cross Harbour Tunnel did not start until 1969 when the Company finally found the financial support. It meant that there were totally of twenty years that the HYF had controlled over the cross harbour transport starting from the Government's decision on doing the research on the cross harbour road transport to the start of the

²⁶“Youmadi xiaolun gongshi nianhui油蔴地小輪公司年會 (The Annual General Meeting of the HYF)”, Hong Kong Industrial and Commercial Daily 香港工商日報, 16th April, 1967, 6; “Youmadi ying kaolu canjia油蔴地仍考慮參加 (The HYF still thinking to join or not)”, Dagongbao 大公報, 5th August, 1966.

construction of the Cross Harbour Tunnel.

With the continual growth of the population in Hong Kong due to the unrest in Mainland China in 1950s and 1960s, the measures mentioned above that the HYF prepared for facing the challenge from the establishment of the Cross Harbour Tunnel had contributed to the great expansion of the HYF.

The number of ferry increased from of thirty-three in 1950 to sixty in 1971. The size of the ferry fleet was nearly doubled. The number of passengers and vehicles travelled on the HYF ferry increased from 65million and 818,000 respectively in 1950 to 190million and 6,800,000 respectively in 1971. The net profit of the company increased from \$5,447,000 in 1950 to \$16,350,000 in 1971. All these made the HYF the world's largest local ferry company from 1960s to 1980s. The delay of construction of the Cross Harbour Tunnel brought an unexpected golden period to the HYF.²⁷

From the development of the HYF from 1951 to 1971, it showed that there were differences between the first generation management and the second generation management in operating the HYF.

²⁷The Hong Kong Government, *Hong Kong Annual Report 1950* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government, 1951), 79-80; The Hong Kong Government, *Hong Kong Annual Report 1971* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government, 1972), 172; Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, *The Hongkong & Yaumati Ferry Co. Ltd.: Golden Jubilee, 1923-1973*, 21, 35.

During the early 1950s when the HYF was still under the control of the first generation management, the decisions and policies made by the first generation management of the HYF was far-sighted. For example, the first generation management decided to build the hostel for the employees in 1955 for improving the welfare to the employees. This measure helped to maintain harmony between the management and the employees in the following decades.

Apart from that, the first generation management had been aware that the only vehicular ferry service between Central and Jordan Road was not capable of satisfying the continuous growth of demand in the cross harbour vehicular traffic.

When the Harbour Ferry Service Committee suggested establishing the second vehicular ferry service, the first generation management of the HYF immediately supported the idea of the Committee and urged the Government to carry out the plan as soon as possible. This was because it would be definitely beneficial to the HYF if the HYF could establish the second vehicular ferry service. The HYF could gain more profit and it could prevent the Government from building the cross harbour road transport within a short

period of time.²⁸

In contrast, the second generation management of the HYF was more conservative and short-sighted. From the case of constructing the cross harbour tunnel, as the second generation management of the HYF was not willing to bear the risk and made a short-sighted decision for rejecting the offer from the tunnel company, it made itself losing the chance to gain the huge profit.

Besides showing the differences between the first and second generation management of the HYF, the development of the HYF in this period showed that it would be benefit to the development of the HYF if the Government had no long term development plan.

Before 1960s, the Government did not make any long term plan for the development of the transportation in Hong Kong. The Government just made plan for the development of transport whenever there was problem occurred.²⁹

For example, when there was congestion problem for crossing harbour with the vehicular ferry service in 1950s, the Government simply decided to

²⁸The Harbour Ferry Service Advisory Committee, *Report of The Harbour Ferry Service Advisory Committee* (Hong Kong: Noronha & Company Limited, 1951), 41-50; Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, *The Hongkong & Yaumati Ferry Co. Ltd.: Golden Jubilee, 1923-1973* (Hong Kong: Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, 1973), 24.

²⁹ Hong Kong Transport Department, *Hong Kong Transport Department 30th Anniversary* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Transport Department, 1999), 22.

introduce the second vehicular ferry service. It did not choose the long term solution which was to build the cross harbour tunnel.

Later, even though the Government agreed that it was necessary to build the tunnel to solve the problem of the congestion in cross harbour traffic, as the cost was very high and the Government did not want to build the tunnel on its own, the Government simply waited for the private enterprise to take over the construction work.

The short-sighted decisions contributed to the development of the HYF. It helped the HYF continue to have the total control of the cross harbour service for twenty years. It also helped the HYF gain a great profit in this unexpected golden period.

CHAPTER 7

DECLINING PERIOD, THE 1970S

After an unexpected golden period, the nightmare of the HYF finally came. The construction of the Cross Harbour Tunnel began in 1969 and was completed in 1972. Hong Kong Island was no longer separated from Kowloon Peninsula by the Victoria Harbour. Both the people and vehicles had the alternate methods to cross the harbour and no longer solely depended on the ferry service.

Facing the challenge from the establishment of the Cross Harbour Tunnel, the HYF carried out those programmes and the directions it adopted in 1950s and 1960s. It continued to establish the new ferry routes in the Eastern part of Hong Kong and build a number of new ferries to substitute the old ferries.

Apart from these old measures, in the 1970s, the HYF also tried to seek opportunities to operate the ferry service to Mainland China and the New Town in Hong Kong. It started to build and bought some high speed ferries, including the air-conditioned water taxis, water buses and hoverferries. The HYF hoped that the high speed ferries would help to shorten the travelling time so that it could attract people to continue to use its ferry service.

However, since the Government also announced that they would start to build the Mass Transit Railway in mid-1970s, shortly after the establishment of the Cross Harbour Tunnel, the HYF believed that there must be further declined in the number of passengers and vehicles travel on its ferry service. It would be very dangerous if the HYF continued to depend on the ferry service as the major business of the company.

Therefore, during the 1970s, the HYF put more efforts on developing a number of subsidiary companies and tried to make the company to be diversified. The management of the HYF hoped that those subsidiary companies would bring profit to the company that could cover the lost in the ferry service business.

This chapter talks about the measures that the HYF adopted to face the challenges from the establishment of the Cross Harbour Tunnel and Mass Transit Railway. It tries to analyse whether these measures were success or not. It also analyses those effects brought by diversification of the HYF and discusses how it affected the development of the HYF in the following decades.

After conducting a number of researches; getting opinions from the public and the negotiation with the Government; and getting enough financial

support, the Victoria City Development Company finally began the construction of the Cross Harbour Tunnel in 1969.

At the beginning of the construction, the HYF publicly announced that it would take some measures to face the challenges from the establishment of the Cross Harbour tunnel. In fact, measures that the HYF proposed were those that had been used since the 1950s. After three years of construction, the Cross Harbour Tunnel was opened in August 1972.¹

Few months before the opening of the Cross Harbour Tunnel, the HYF started to carry out its programmes for tackling the challenge. The HYF launched a series of programmes for improving the ferry service and tried to make the ferry service to be more attractive to the people.

Throughout the 1970s, the HYF adopted the policy of buying or building only three types of ferries, including the air-conditioned high speed ferries, the huge triple decked passenger ferries, and the vehicular ferries.

The reason for the HYF to adopt this policy was that the high speed ferries, including water taxis, water buses and hoverferries, could help to shorten the travelling time on both the urban ferry routes and the New Territories and Outlying Island ferry routes. It could make the ferry service

¹“Liuda jihua 六大計劃 (Six important plan)”, Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 27th April, 1969, 2,1; “Youmadi jingli liudingzhong tanhua 油麻地經理劉定中談話 (The speech of Lau Ting Chung, Manager of the HYF)”, Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 5th August 1972, 2, 1.

more competitive to other kinds of transport.

For the triple decked passenger ferries, they were very useful as they could perform multiple functions. The triple decked passenger ferries could be used as ordinary ferries to travel both the urban, New Territories and Outlying Islands ferry service. They could also be used as the harbour cruise to serve tourists at night as these ferries got the air-conditioned deluxe top floor. For the vehicular ferries built in this period, it was mainly use to substitute the old vehicular ferries.

In connection to policy on building and buying ferries, the HYF established the two regular high speed ferry services running between Central and Mei Foo; Central, Sheung Wan and Kwun Tong; Central and Tsuen Wan in 1974. It only took sixteen minutes to travel between Central and Mei Foo; twenty-nine minutes to travel between Sheung Wan and Kwun Tong; twenty-three minutes to travel between Central and Kwun Tong; and eighteen minutes to travel between Central and Tsuen Wan.²

These three regular high speed ferry routes attracted many people to

²“You meifu xincun zhi zhonghuan xiaolun mintian zeng xinbian由美孚新邨至中環小輪明天增新線 (The ferry service between Central and Mei Foo will established tomorrow), Dagongbao 大公報, 30th April, 1974, 3; “Youmadi xiaolun shipi xinhangxian油蔴地小輪試開新航線 (The HYF establish a number of trial service), Dagongbao 大公報, 31st August, 1974, 1, 4; “Haishang feixiangchuen qihang海上飛翔船啟航 (The launching of the hoverferry)”, Dagongbao 大公報, 18th December, 1974, 1,3; ; The Hong Kong Government, *Hong Kong Annual Report 1976 Review of 1975* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government, 1976), 139.

travel with as it was faster than travelling by cross harbour tunnel buses. The success of these ferry services made the HYF plan to establish more high-speed ferry services for connecting the urban area and New Territories.

In the same year, the HYF also established high speed ferry service which only ran on holidays to facilitate people who went on sight-seeing and vacation. These high speed ferry routes included the service between Hong Kong Island and Po Toi; Hong Kong Island and Tung Chung; Tsuen Wan and Tung Chung.³

Apart from establishing the high speed ferry service, the HYF continued to establish new ferry services running on the Eastern part of Hong Kong. The reason for the HYF to establish ferry service on the Eastern part was that it would be more convenient and faster for people and vehicles to travel from the Eastern part of Hong Kong Island to the Eastern part of Kowloon Peninsula directly by the ferry.

Therefore, the ferry service between Shau Ki Wan and Sam Ka Tsuen was established by HYF in 1973. Later in 1974, the HYF changed the Kowloon terminus of the Eastern vehicular ferry from Kowloon City to Kwun Tong. The reason for changing the Kowloon terminus was that it was too

³“Yomadi xiaolun shipi xinhangxian 油蔴地小輪試開新航線 (The HYF establish a number of trial service), Dagongbao 大公報, 31st August, 1974, 1, 4.

close to the Cross Harbour Tunnel. At the same time, the changing of Kowloon terminus could help to solve the traffic congestion problem between Kowloon City and Ngau Chi Wan.⁴

As there were many people going for vacation on the Outlying Islands during the weekend, the HYF arranged the triple decked passenger ferries for running the service. It was mainly because the triple decked passenger ferries could provide higher carrying capacity and better service as these ferries have an air-conditioned deluxe top floor.

For facilitating the operation of the triple decked passenger ferries, the HYF also announced that the improvement and expansion of the existing ferry piers would be carried out.⁵

During the late 1970s, with the effort of the third generation management of the HYF, the ferry routes between Hong Kong and Mainland China were resumed after the blockade of more than thirty years.⁶

Apart from the measures on improving the ferry service and tried to

⁴“Yomadi xiaolun shaojiwan sanjiacun matou油蔴地小輪公司筲箕灣三家村碼頭 (The Shau Ki Wan and Sam Ka Tsuen ferry pier of the HYF)”, Hong Kong Industrial and Commercial Daily 香港工商日報, 3rd July 1973, 7; Jiulongcheng zaiche xiaolun sanshiri wuye tinghang九龍城載車小輪廿日午夜後停航 (Kowloon City Vehicular ferry service would be cancelled on 30th mid-night)”, Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 28th June, 1974, 3, 2.

⁵“Matou jidai kuojian碼頭極待擴建 (The ferry piers need to be expand)”, Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 1st April, 1971, 3, 2.

⁶ “Liangdi zou jiuxing feixiangchuen qihangli兩地昨舉行飛翔船啟航禮 (There were ceremonies in both Hong Kong and Guangzhou for the launching of the hoverferry service)”, Dagongbao 大公報, 18th November, 1978, 4.

attract the people travel on ferry service, as the Government did a number of research on the establishing of the Mass Transit Railway and it seemed that the Government would also carry out this project, the HYF believed that the establishment of the Mass Transit Railway would lead to the further decrease in the number of passengers and vehicles travelled with its ferry service.

It would be dangerous to continue solely depending on the ferry service business as the major business of the Company. Therefore, the HYF decided to establish a number of subsidiary companies and tried to make the HYF became a diversified company.

The first subsidiary company of the HYF, the Hong Kong and Yaumati Ferry Company Development Company Limited was set up in 1970. This Company was responsible for developing the land own by the HYF and also act as a travel agent to organize the tours and harbour cruise.

In the early 1970s, the Hong Kong and Yaumati Ferry Company Development Company Limited built a number of Industrial Buildings in Tai Kok Tsui and made large amount of profit to the HYF. It also started to draw the plan for reconstructing the properties of the HYF in Silver Mine Bay and the plan for constructing the reaction centre in Cheung Sha in Lantau.

Apart from that, the Hong Kong and Yaumati Ferry Company

Development Company Limited also organized many tours for visiting the Outlying Island and organized the harbour cruise and round Hong Kong Island Excursion Cruise. As the tours and harbour cruises were very popular, it helped to bring profit to the HYF.⁷

Besides the Hong Kong and Yaumati Ferry Company Development Company Limited, the HYF also purchased the Hong Kong Shipyards Limited as another subsidiary company in 1972. The purchase of the Hong Kong Shipyards Limited could help bring more profit to the HYF by providing the repairing and maintenance service which was a great demand in Hong Kong.⁸

All the above measures done by the HYF in order to face the challenge from both Cross Harbour Tunnel and Mass Transit Railway were effective. The decrease in the number of passengers and vehicles was not as severe as the HYF expected before the opening of the Cross Harbour Tunnel and Mass Transit Railway. The number of passengers dropped from 179 million in

⁷Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, *The Hongkong & Yaumati Ferry Co. Ltd.: Golden Jubilee, 1923-1973* (Hong Kong: Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, 1973), 34, 35, 39, 52-57; “Jiji fazhan lidao shengdi積極發展離島勝地 (Actively developed the Outlying Island)”, Hong Kong Industrial and Commercial Daily 香港工商日報, 19th August, 1974, 7; “Xinlun minwei xiashui新輪民惠下水 (New ferry *Man Wai* launched)”, Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報, 19th August, 1974, 3,1; “Youmadi Xiaolun jiang gaizu 油蔴地小輪將改組 (The HYF would restructure)”, Dagongbao 大公報, 9th September, 1978, 5.

⁸Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, *The Hongkong & Yaumati Ferry Co. Ltd.: Golden Jubilee, 1923-1973*, 38; “Youmadi Xiaolun jiang gaizu 油蔴地小輪將改組 (The HYF would restructure)”, Dagongbao 大公報, 9th September, 1978, 5.

1972 to 142 million in 1979.⁹

Even though there was a continual decrease in the number of passengers and vehicles travelling with the HYF's ferry service, with the approval of the Government for raising the fare in 1974, 1976 and 1979, the HYF did not suffer a great loss as the profits gained from those subsidiary companies were able to offset the loss of ferry service.¹⁰

However, with the further expansion of the Mass Transit Railway and the construction of the Second and Third Cross Harbour Tunnel, the decline of the ferry service of the HYF continued throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Finally, it forced the HYF to change its major business from ferry services to the business of the subsidiary companies.

From the development of the HYF in the 1970s, it showed that after the Government adopted the long term planning, the HYF could no longer gain any benefit for developing its ferry service.

⁹Hong Kong Transport Department, *Hong Kong Annual Departmental Report by Commissioner for Transport 1977* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Transport Department, 1978), Appendix V; Hong Kong Transport Department, *Hong Kong Annual Departmental Report by Commissioner for Transport 1979* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Transport Department, 1980), Appendix V.

¹⁰“Youmadi xiaolun huozhun jiajia油蔴地小輪獲准加價 (The request of increase fare of the HYF approved)”, *Hong Kong Industrial and Commercial Daily 香港工商日報*, 18th July, 1974, 8; “Lidao Xiaolun jiajia huopizhun 離島小輪加價獲批准 (The fare increase of Outlying Island ferry service approved)”, *Dagongbao 大公報*, 23rd February, 1976, 5; “Paixi yin lianying gongshi you yinli 派息因聯營公司有盈利 (The bonus was given mainly due to the surplus from the subsidiary company)”, *Hong Kong Industrial and Commercial Daily 香港工商日報*, 19th August, 1976, 7; “Youmadi xiaolun jiajia油蔴地小輪獲准加價 (The increase fare of the HYF)”, *Wah Kiu Yat Po 華僑日報*, 18th August, 1979, 3,2.

After the Government conducted a number of researches and made the long term transportation development plans such as the Hong Kong Comprehensive Transport Study in 1976, the Government straightly followed the plan to develop the transportation system.

According to these long term plans, ferry service would no longer be the most important cross harbour transport in urban areas of Hong Kong. Ferry services would only continue to be significant in rural area and New Town in New Territories. The Government decided to let the Mass Transit Railway to be the backbone of the transportation system in Hong Kong.

However, the Government also encouraged the HYF to establish a number of high-speed ferry services which were similar to the routes of the Mass Transit Railway and Cross Harbour Tunnel buses in order to provide more choices for the public. Unfortunately, as the cost of operating the ferry service was much higher than the other means of transport, eventually the HYF suffered from loss in operating these ferry services.¹¹

What is more, the development of the HYF in the 1970s also showed that the second generation management did not perform well in leading the HYF. Even though the second generation of management finally went on right

¹¹Wilber Smith and Associate, *Hong Kong Comprehensive Transport Study 1976* (Hong Kong: Everbest Printing Co. Limited, 1976), 325-330, 382- 385.

track to make the HYF diversified, this decision was made too late.

After the commencing of the Cross Harbour Tunnel, there were many vehicles travelled with it and the Cross Harbour Tunnel company made much profit from the tunnel. If the second generation management joined the construction of the Cross Harbour Tunnel, the HYF could also earn more profit and started the diversification of the company earlier.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

During the 1980s and the 1990s, as there was continuous decrease in the number of passengers and vehicles travelled on the ferry service, the ferry service was no longer considered as the major business of the HYF. The business of the subsidiary companies, including property constructing, travel agents, the ship building, and maintenance, etc, eventually became the important businesses of the HYF. Unfortunately, the decline of the ferry service still put great pressure on the operation of the HYF.¹

In 1989, the third generation management led by Lau Ting Chung, son of Lau Chan Kwok decided to sell the HYF to the Henderson Land Development Company (here after, Henderson Land) which was owned by Lee Shau Kee. Through the acquisition of a major stake at the HYF, the HYF became the subsidiary company of the Henderson Land. Since there was no improvement of the ferry service business, the HYF finally decided to give up its major passenger ferry service business in 2000. It was a pity that the HYF, which used to be the world's largest local ferry company, had to continuously reduce

¹Hong Kong Transport Department, *Hong Kong Annual Departmental Report by the Commissioner for Transport 1981* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Transport Department, 1982), 18, Appendix IV; Hong Kong Ferry (Holdings) Co. Ltd., *Hong Kong Ferry (Holdings) Co. Ltd. Annual Report 1991* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Ferry (Holdings) Co. Ltd., 1992), 30. The number of passenger travelled on the HYF service dropped from 126.6 millions in 1981 to 46.8 millions in 1991. And the number of vehicles travelled on the HYF service dropped from 3.6 millions in 1981 to 2.5 millions in 1991.

its ferry service and even had to change their focus from running the ferry service to other kinds of businesses.²

The history of the HYF from 1923 to the 1970s showed that the HYF was a typical case which reflected a number of significant issues in the development of Hong Kong. The development of the HYF reflected the adaptability of the Chinese people in Hong Kong under the rule of the colonizer. It also showed how a lack of long term policy of the Government in terms of Hong Kong's developing the transportation system contributed to the success of the HYF. The history of the HYF reflected the different stages of development of urban expansion and rural development of Hong Kong.

First of all, the development of the HYF reflected the adaptability of the Chinese people in Hong Kong under the colonial rule. Ever since Hong Kong became a British colony, due to mutual goals of using Hong Kong for gaining profit, the Chinese people in Hong Kong were willing to work with the Colonial Government and Western merchants.

Among those Chinese who worked for the Westerners, a group of Chinese who received the Western education in Hong Kong and worked as compradors for Western merchants have further established the cooperation

²Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, *HongKong & Yaumati Ferry Company 70th Anniversary*. (Hong Kong: Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited, 1993), 42-43.

relationship with the British authority. These Chinese compradors used their wealth and their knowledge on both Western and Chinese cultures, practices and languages to start the social welfare for the Chinese people. For example, they set up the Tung Wah Hospital in 1872 and made themselves to be the Board of Directors to provide the medical and other help to the Chinese. The active involvement in the Chinese community affairs made them become very influential and they became leaders of the Chinese community.

As these Chinese leaders understood the goal of the Government and could assist the Government to solve the problem in Chinese community, the Government appointed some Chinese leaders to be Justice of Peace; members of Sanitary Council or Legislative Council. Whenever there was problem occurred in the society, especially in the Chinese Community, the Chinese leaders would provide assistance to the Government to solve the problem. One of the Chinese leaders that have a very good cooperative relationship with the Government was Lau Chu Pak. He was the father of the leading founder of the HYF Lau Tak Po.

The cooperative relationship between the British authority and Chinese leaders maintained strong from the second half of the 19th century to the first half of the 20th century. When the Government started to regulate the ferry

service in Hong Kong, similar to his father, Lau Tak Po and some other founders of the HYF such as Kwok Chuen and Lau King Cho were also Chinese leaders.

With their experience of cooperating with the Government, they understood that the main reason for the Government to regulate the ferry service was to gain the profit brought by the ferry licence royalty. Improving the quality of ferry service was less important to the Government. Thus, they provided the huge amount of royalty to the Government to get ferry licences and started to improve the ferry service progressively. They also actively participated in the establishment of the vehicular ferry service to assist the Government in solving the cross harbour transport problem. The actions of the founders of HYF conformed to the goals of the British. It showed that the founders of HYF were adaptable to the practice of the British authority and operated their business smoothly.

However, two weeks after the Japanese Occupation, the HYF's management had already approached the Japanese to request the resume of ferry service. As mentioned in Chapter 4, there were possibilities for the management of the HYF to take this action because they wanted to continue gaining profit; or because that they believe the Japanese authority would

continue the policy of the British in order to use the Chinese leaders for solving the problems over Chinese community. No matter what the real motive was, it showed that the management personnel of the HYF were only concerned of maintaining their business and did not care who the ruler was. It clearly showed that the Chinese people in Hong Kong were highly adaptable of living under the rule of different colonial rulers.

In 1945, after the surrender of the Japanese, the British authority quickly restored their rule in Hong Kong. Basically the British authority did not take action against the Chinese leaders who had cooperated with the Japanese authority. They allowed these Chinese leaders to participate in the rehabilitation programmes. At the same time, those Chinese leaders were also willing to work with the British authority again. Due to these reasons and as the HYF was the only ferry company survived after the war, the British authority simply granted permission to HYF to continue its operation. The relationship between the HYF and the British resumed. Since the most important concern of the HYF was to gain profit, to secure and continue running the ferry business, the HYF tried its best to resume its service to the pre-war standard as soon as possible in order to regain the support from the British. As the HYF fulfilled the requirements of the British authority, the good

relationship between the British and the HYF was fully resumed. In the following decades until the 1970s, the British authority provided many opportunities for the HYF to expand their service.

The development of the HYF from 1923 to the 1970s also showed that no long term planning and long-sighted decision from the Government facilitated the success of the HYF. Before the 1960s, the Government did not have any long term development planning for Hong Kong. It basically functioned to meet the immediate needs and to solve problems at a certain time. The main reason that the Government did not draw any long term plan to develop Hong Kong was that before the 1960s, Britain still had many other colonies in Asia such as Malaya and Singapore. Most of these colonies could perform many functions. For example, Singapore and Malaya were its trading centers and military bases. They also provided the British with the natural resources such as rubber.

Compared with other British colonies in Asia, Hong Kong was far less important strategically and economically to Britain. Thus, the British did not put much effort in developing Hong Kong and did not make any long term plan before the 1960s.

Without any long term plan but solve problems case-by-case, many

opportunities emerged for the HYF to expand their ferry service. In 1920s, in response to the strong public demands for the cross harbour vehicular transport, the Government conducted a research hoping to find out the solution. The research in fact has provided both the long term solution which was to build the tunnel or bridge for providing road transport to cross the harbour and the short term solution which was to establish the vehicular ferry service. However, the Government only considered the solution which could solve the problem immediately with the lowest cost. Thus, it finally chose to establish the vehicular ferry service. This had given the HYF an opportunity to expand their service and dominate both passengers and vehicular cross harbour transport.

In late 1940s, when there was a serious congestion in the vehicular ferry service, the Government established the Harbour Ferry Services Advisory Committee to conduct research to find out a solution. The Committee provided the same long term and short term solution as the Government's research in the 1920s for the Government to consider. Once again, the Government rejected the costly long term solution for building the cross harbour tunnel or bridge. The Government decided to have the short term solution to let the HYF improve and establish another vehicular ferry service.

The short-sighted decision of the Government contributed to the further expansion of the HYF.

In 1950s, as the Government found out that building a tunnel as the long term solution to the cross harbour congestion would be very expensive, the Government simply waited for the private enterprise to take over the project. Together with the difficulties of the private enterprise in finding the financial support to build the tunnel, there was nearly twenty years delay on the start of the construction of the Cross Harbour Tunnel. The delay gave the HYF an unexpected golden period from 1950s to 1970s and it did many improvements to the ferry service during this period.

Starting from the 1960s, as many British colonies in Asia became independent, Hong Kong eventually became the last British colony in the Asia. Thus, the British regarded the military base in Hong Kong as an important British military base in Asia Region. Also due to the political instability and the restrictions on trade to China, Hong Kong could trade with China. Therefore, the British decided to develop Hong Kong into an important manufacturing industry centre in Asia.

With all these reasons, the Hong Kong Government started to focus on internal comprehensive development of Hong Kong. They started to make

many comprehensive long term plans. Throughout the 1960s and the 1970s, the Government has done a number of transportation studies and made a number of long-term plans to develop transportation in Hong Kong such as the Hong Kong Comprehensive Transport Study in 1976. Unfortunately, the implementation of these long term plans has negatively affected the development of HYF.

Because of these long term plans, the ferry service could only function as a connection means to the Outlying Islands. It would not continue to be the major form of cross harbour transport in the urban area. The Government wanted the ferry service to take up the auxiliary role in the cross harbour transport in urban area and only wanted to use the ferry service to provide choice for the public to travel. Due to these reasons, in the 1970s, the Government encouraged the HYF to establish the high-speed ferry service on the similar routes of the Mass Transit Railways or Cross Harbour Tunnel Buses. However, as the operation cost was far higher than other means of transport, the HYF finally suffered from loss in its revenue and many of these routes were suspended. All these showed that the implementation of the long term transportation plans by the Government in fact restricted the development of the ferry service in Hong Kong, which led to the decline of the

HYF since the 1970s.³

From reviewing the development of the HYF during 1923 to the 1970s, it reflected three different stages of urban expansion and rural development in Hong Kong. In the first stage of development from 1923 to the 1950s, the HYF put more effort on operating and developing the urban ferry services, especially those ferry services between Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula, than the New Territories and Outlying Islands ferry services. The HYF continuously increased the frequency of different urban ferry routes and built new vessels to improve those urban ferry services. It also cooperated with the Government to establish the vehicular ferry service between Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula. In contrast, the HYF did not put much effort on developing the New Territories and Outlying Islands ferry services. The HYF only provided barely enough ferry services to the New Territories and the Outlying Islands.

The development policy of the HYF reflected the high urban development and low rural development in Hong Kong from 1923 to the 1950s. During this period, the Government only focused on developing the Hong Kong Island, the Kowloon Peninsula and started some development in the New Kowloon.

³The Harbour Ferry Service Advisory Committee, *Report of The Harbour Ferry Service Advisory Committee- Decision of Government* (Hong Kong: Noronha & Company Limited, 1951), 1-6; Wilber Smith and Associate, *Hong Kong Comprehensive Transport Study 1976* (Hong Kong: Everbest Printing Co. Limited, 1976), 325-330, 382-385.

This was because there were still plenty of lands in these areas which were capable for settling the continuous growth of population in Hong Kong. Because of these reasons, there was urban expansion on Hong Kong Island and in the Kowloon Peninsula. Many places such as Western District and Mong Kok were densely populated. As ferry was the only method for crossing harbour at this period, there was great demand from the public for ferry service between Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula. All these encouraged the HYF to put much effort on develop those urban ferry services to meet the high demand and to gain high profit.⁴ As there was enough space for development in urban area, the Government did not start any development in the New Territories and Outlying Islands during this period. Since there were not many people living in the New Territories and Outlying Islands, there was limited demand from these places for the ferry service. Thus, the HYF only provided barely enough ferry service to these areas in order to low down the cost for operating these ferry services.

In the second stage of development from the 1950s to the early 1970s, the HYF started to develop ferry services in the New Kowloon areas, Eastern part of Hong Kong. The HYF established ferry routes to Kwun Tong, Sam Ka

⁴New Kowloon means areas at the north of the Boundary Street of Kowloon Peninsula and the South of the Lion Rock.

Tsuen, North Point, Shau Ki Wan. At the same time, the HYF also tried to further improve urban ferry services by further increasing the frequency and building many large ferry vessels. Moreover, the HYF also made some improvement to the New Territories and Outlying Islands service by providing more direct services.

The development strategies of the HYF in this stage reflected the equal development of the urban and rural areas. The reasons why the HYF made such development policies was that, during the 1950s to the early 1970s, many refugees came from China to Hong Kong to escape instability. Also, there was rapid growth in the population in Hong Kong. To solve the overcrowding problem in urban areas, the Government started to develop New Kowloon and the Eastern part of Hong Kong. Many people moved to these areas. However, as these people still needed to go to work or do business in centre of the city such as Central, Tsim Sha Tsui, etc., it was necessary to provide public transport for people to travel between these areas and the city centre. In addition, the Government decided to build a cross harbour tunnel in the center part of Hong Kong. All these forced the HYF to focus on developing the Eastern ferry service and the service to New Kowloon. Apart from the urban expansion, the Government also started to establish the

New Town in the New Territories. At the same time, there was natural population growth in the Outlying Islands the HYF had to improve ferry services to these rural areas.

In the final stage starting from the mid-1970s, the HYF changed its focus from developing the urban ferry services to the New Territories and Outlying Islands service. The HYF increased the frequency for the New Territories and Outlying Islands ferry services. It also built the triple decked ferries which had the air-conditioner on the top floor and bought air-conditioned high-speed ferries to run the New Territories and Outlying Islands ferry services. This greatly improved the standard of the ferry service and attracted more people to travel with ferry.

The change of focus of the HYF in this stage reflected the further urban expansion and high rural development in Hong Kong. It also showed the improvement on the transportation system in Hong Kong. During the 1970s, the Government put great effort on developing New Towns in the New Territories to solve the serious overcrowded problem in old urban areas. In order to encourage people to move to these New Towns, the Government asked the HYF to provide frequent high-speed ferry service which only took half an hour to travel between these New Towns and city centre. Since there

was serious decrease in the number of passengers in urban ferry services after the establishment of the Cross Harbour Tunnel, the HYF was willing to operate these ferry routes. As there were many people travelled to the Outlying Island for leisure, there was continued growth in the demand for the Outlying Island ferry service. All these made the HYF change its focus to the New Territories and Outlying Islands service.

All in all, the HYF was a typical company reflecting a number of significant issues in the development of Hong Kong throughout the 20th century. The development of the HYF showed the interaction between the Colonial Government and the local Chinese people in Hong Kong. It demonstrated the flexibility of the local Chinese people in Hong Kong in facing challenges and showed the adaptability of the Chinese people under the rule of different colonial rulers. On the other hand, it showed that a lack of Government long term planning contributed to the success of the HYF. Last but not the least, the HYF reflected different stages of urban expansion and rural development in Hong Kong.

APPENDIX 1

FERRIES ORDINANCE 1917

THE HONGKONG GOVERNMENT GAZETTE, NOVEMBER 30, 1917. 677

HONGKONG.

No. 28 OF 1917.

I assent to this Ordinance.

CLAUD SEVERN,
Officer Administering the Government.

30th November, 1917.

An Ordinance to regulate Ferries.

[30th November, 1917.]

BE it enacted by the Governor of Hongkong, with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council thereof, as follows:—

1. This Ordinance may be cited as the Ferries Ordinance, 1917. Short title.

2.—(1.) In this Ordinance—

Interpreta-
tion.

- (a) "Ferry" means any service, conducted by means of a vessel or vessels propelled by any means except oars and sails, for the conveyance of persons or of persons and things, by water, for payment or reward, between two or more points within the Colony, whether such service be also to any point or points without the Colony or not, and whether the points between which the service is provided be varied from time to time or not, but does not include the hiring of any vessel to one person for a single journey, and does not include the hiring of any vessel to a single pleasure party.
- (b) "Ferry Vessel" means any vessel which is employed for the purpose of a ferry.
- (c) "Illegal Ferry" means a ferry which is maintained in contravention of section 3 of this Ordinance.

(2.) Every person who shall have been entitled to any share in the profits of an illegal ferry shall be deemed to have maintained such ferry during the period in respect of which he was so entitled, and every owner of a ferry vessel, or, if the vessel is under charter, every charterer of the said vessel, shall be presumed to have been entitled to a share in the profits of the ferry until he shall prove affirmatively that he was not entitled to any such share or that such vessel was employed as a ferry vessel without his consent or connivance.

(3.) Nothing contained in sub-section (2) of this section shall be construed as relieving from liability any person who, without being himself entitled to any share in the profits of the ferry, maintains any illegal ferry or counsels procures aids or abets the maintaining of any illegal ferry.

3.—(1.) No person shall without a licence under this Ordinance maintain a ferry in any area to which this section is by any regulation made under this Ordinance declared to apply. No un-
licensed
ferry to be
maintained
in certain
areas.

(2.) Any such regulation may provide that such declaration shall not have the effect of prohibiting the maintenance of a ferry between any single point or any particular points within the area declared and some point or points outside that area.

4. The issue of any licence under this Ordinance shall be subject to the absolute discretion of the Governor in Council. Issue of
licence dis-
cretionary.

Regulations. 5. It shall be lawful for the Governor in Council to make regulations :—

- (a) for licensing and regulating ferries and ferry vessels ;
- (b) for defining the conditions of any licence to be issued under this Ordinance ;
- (c) for prescribing the fees rent or premium to be paid in respect of any licence to be issued under this Ordinance ;
- (d) for declaring the areas to which section 3 of this Ordinance is to apply ;
- (e) for excluding from the operation of this Ordinance any specified ferry or any ferry plying to or from any specified point or points within or without the Colony ;
- (f) for granting exclusive rights of maintaining ferries ;
- (g) generally for the purposes of this Ordinance.

Offences. 6. Every person who shall contravene any of the provisions of this Ordinance or of any regulation made under this Ordinance, and every person who shall contravene any of the provisions of any condition of any licence issued under this Ordinance, shall be deemed to be guilty of an offence against this Ordinance.

Penalty. 7. Every person who shall be guilty of an offence against this Ordinance shall be liable upon summary conviction to a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars.

Seizure of ferry vessel. 8. Any police officer may seize any vessel which he may reasonably suspect is being used to commit any offence against this Ordinance and any vessel so seized may be detained by the Captain Superintendent of Police until the conclusion of any proceedings taken under this Ordinance and until the payment of any fine which may be imposed in such proceedings : Provided that the Captain Superintendent of Police may release any such vessel so seized upon security to his satisfaction being provided for the payment of any fine which may be imposed in such proceedings.

Exemption. 9. This Ordinance shall not apply to any ferry maintained by the Star Ferry Company Limited between the pier situate opposite to Ice House Street, Victoria, and the pier situate at Kowloon Point and known as to its western portion as the "Star Ferry Pier" and as to its eastern portion as the "Railway Pier", nor shall it affect any rights conferred on the said Company by the terms of the lease to the said Company of the said pier situate opposite to Ice House Street aforesaid.

Passed the Legislative Council of Hongkong, this 29th day of November, 1917.

E. BULLOCK,
Clerk of Councils.

Assented to by His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, the 30th day of November, 1917.

A. G. M. FLETCHER,
Colonial Secretary.

Source: Hong Kong Government, "Ferries Ordinance 1917," *The Hong Kong Government Gazette* 1917 (30th November, 1917), 677-678.

APPENDIX 2

FERRIES REGULATIONS

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THE HONGKONG GOVERNMENT GAZETTE, MAY 31, 1918.

NOTE (2).—Where a person or firm mentioned in the list has more than one address in the country or group of countries under which the name of the person or firm appears, all dealings in that country, or in any country in the group, with such person or firm are prohibited, even in cases where one only of the addresses or one only of the countries is specifically mentioned.

NOTE (3).—Under the Trading with the Enemy Proclamations of the 25th June, and 10th November, 1915, all Proclamations relating to Trading with the Enemy apply to all persons or bodies of persons of enemy nationality, resident or carrying on business in China, Siam, Persia, Morocco, Liberia or Portuguese East Africa, and consequently it is an offence to trade with any person or body of persons of enemy nationality resident or carrying on business in China, Siam, Persia, Morocco, Liberia or Portuguese East Africa, even though such person or body of persons is not included by name in the Statutory List, and the omission of the name of any such person or body of persons from such list is not an authority or licence to trade with such person or body of persons.

NOTE (4).—The above additions and removals were made in the United Kingdom on the dates which appear opposite to the respective names.

NOTE (5).—A consolidating statutory list, complete to the 4th January, 1918, may be obtained from the Government Printers, Messrs. Noronha & Co., No. 14A, Des Voeux Road Central, who can also supply copies of the Orders in Council made since that date. The Consolidating Statutory list contains on page 10, a list of all the Orders in Council up to and including the 4th January, 1918. The dates of the subsequent Orders in Council are as follows:—

25th January, 1918.	23rd May, 1918.
22nd February, 1918.	31st May, 1918.
8th March, 1918.	

NOTE (6).—It is not unusual for firms in Holland and the Netherland East Indies to be registered under names commencing with descriptive terms such as "Handel Maatschappij" (Trading Company) or "Naamloze Venootschap" (Limited Liability Company). In such cases it has been found more convenient to publish the firm under its proper name, followed by the general descriptive term "Handel Maatschappij" or "Naamloze Venootschap" (N.V.), as in the case of an English company. For instance, Handel Maatschappij Louvre and Naamloze Venootschap de Komeet v/h Dumoucau Frères will be found under Louvre and Komeet respectively, and not necessarily under "Handel" or "Naamloze," though cross references may be given.

No. 204.

Regulations made by the Governor in Council under Section 5 of the Ferries Ordinance, 1917, Ordinance No. 28 of 1917, this 30th day of May, 1918.

APPLICATION OF SECTION 3 OF THE FERRIES ORDINANCE, 1917.

1.—(1.) Section 3 of the Ferries Ordinance, 1917, is hereby declared to apply to the area bounded by the following lines and by the coast lines between the terminal points of those lines:—

East:—A line drawn from the south-western corner of Blake Pier to the north-western corner of Tsim Sha Tsui Wharf.

West:—A line drawn from Belchers Point to the eastern extremity of Stonecutters Island and thence to the north-western corner of Sham Shui Po Pier.

(2.) This declaration shall not have the effect of prohibiting the maintenance of any ferry between any single point within the said area and any point or points outside the said area.

LICENSING OF FERRIES.

2. No licence for the exclusive maintenance of any ferry, or group of ferries, or all ferries, to which the Ferries Ordinance, 1917, applies, shall be granted unless it has been put up to public tender.

3. Subject to these regulations the term for which any such licence shall be granted shall be 3 years or such longer period not exceeding 15 years as shall be stated in the notice inviting tenders.

4. The date at which such term shall be deemed to commence shall be stated in the notice inviting tenders which shall be published in the *Gazette*. The said notice shall also state whether the tenders shall be sealed or open.

5. Every tender shall state the monthly rent offered, which shall be payable in advance on the 1st day of each month from the commencement of the term.

6. No tender shall offer any premium or consideration for the licence other than the monthly rent.

7. A deposit of \$1,000 shall be made to the Treasurer with each tender.

8. Every licence shall be granted by the Colonial Secretary who shall first obtain the approval of the Governor in Council.

9. The Colonial Secretary shall not be bound to accept the highest or any tender.

10. The deposit shall be returned in the case of every unsuccessful tender after notice of the non-acceptance of the tender shall have been posted.

11. In the case of a successful tender the deposit shall not be returned until the tenderer shall have furnished such security as may be required by the Harbour Master in a sum equal to three months rent for the establishment of the ferry on the proper date and for its efficient maintenance during the term of the licence and for the compliance by the licensee with all the conditions of his licence and with the regulations for the time being in force relating to such ferry.

12. Such security shall be furnished within 14 days after the posting to the successful tenderer of a notice of acceptance of his tender.

CONDITIONS OF LICENCES.

13. Every licence shall be subject to the following conditions :—

- (i.) The licensee shall provide by a date stated in the notice inviting tenders ferry vessels of such number dimensions and designs as shall be specified in such notice, or as may be otherwise agreed on.
- (ii.) If during the term of the licence it shall be necessary in the opinion of the Governor in Council to increase the number of ferry vessels or to substitute other ferry vessels for any which may have been lost or withdrawn, or become unsuitable, the licensee shall within such period as the Governor in Council may think fit, provide additional or substituted ferry vessels of such number dimensions speed and design as the Governor in Council may approve.
- (iii.) The licensee shall maintain the said ferry vessels in a state of seaworthiness and efficiency to the satisfaction of the Harbour Master, and shall maintain on the said ferry vessels such life saving apparatus as the Harbour Master may direct.
- (iv.) The licensee shall provide such an additional number of ferry vessels of approved dimensions and design as shall be specified in either of the said notices. Such additional ferry vessels shall be maintained as a reserve for the due maintenance, but not for the increase, of the ferry service.
- (v.) The licensee shall provide for each ferry vessel other than a ferry vessel in reserve not less than two coxswains, two engineers, two stokers, and four seamen.
- (vi.) The licensee shall publish a schedule, subject to the approval of the Harbour Master, stating the intended times of departure from every ferry pier.
- (vii.) The licensee shall forfeit to the Crown a sum of \$25 for each occasion that a ferry vessel is more than 15 minutes later than the schedule time in departing from any pier, and an additional sum of \$25 for each additional period of 15 minutes after the first: provided that the delay or omission to run the ferry vessel is not due to accident or weather; and provided that, unless in the opinion of the Harbour Master such delay or omission to run is wilful, the total penalty for each default, shall not exceed \$250.
- (viii.) The licensee shall forfeit to the Crown a sum of \$25 for each occasion that a ferry vessel departs before the schedule time: provided that the early departure is not due to accident or weather.
- (ix.) The service provided by the said schedule shall provide for not less than the following departures daily from each of the ferry piers :—
 - (a) to and from Victoria and Yaumati every 30 minutes between 5 a.m. and 11 p.m.;

- (b) to and from Victoria and Mong Kok Tsui every 30 minutes between 5 a.m. and 11 p.m. ;
 (c) to and from Victoria and Sham Shui Po every 30 minutes between 5 a.m. and 10 p.m.

(x.) The licensee shall make use of, for the purposes of the ferry, the following piers :—

In Victoria :—

Jubilee Street Pier.
 Western Market Pier.
 Eastern Street Pier.

On the Kowloon side :—

Public Square Street Pier.
 Mong Kok Tsui Pier.
 Sham Shui Po Pier.

- (xi.) Should the Governor in Council decide at any time during the term of the licence, whether at the request of the licensee or of his own motion, to assign other piers for the use of a ferry in addition to or substitution for those hereinbefore specified the licensee shall be bound to include such piers in his service, on terms to be agreed upon or failing agreement to be determined by arbitration under the Ferries Regulations.
 (xii.) The licensee shall not assign or transfer his license without the permission of the Governor in Council.
 (xiii.) The licensee may temporarily suspend his service or any part thereof while the black typhoon signals remain hoisted or when the weather conditions are such as to render its continuance unsafe.
 (xiv.) This licence is subject to all regulations for the time being in force relating to ferries.

Provided that in the case of any licence covering a ferry or group of ferries to which conditions (ix) and (x) are inapplicable appropriate conditions of a similar nature approved by the Governor in Council shall be substituted and shall be notified in the notice inviting tenders.

FARES AND CHARGES.

14. The licensee of the aforesaid ferry or group of ferries may demand and take for every passenger fares not exceeding the following rates :—

Between Victoria and Yaumati :—

1st Class,	10 cents
2nd Class (where third class accommodation is also provided),...	5 cents
2nd Class (where no 3rd class accommodation is provided) and	
3rd Class :—	
before sunset,.....	3 cents
after sunset,	4 cents

Between Victoria and Sham Shui Po or Mong Kok Tsui :—

1st Class,	15 cents
2nd Class (where third class accommodation is also provided),...	10 cents
2nd Class (where no 3rd class accommodation is provided) and	
3rd Class :—	
before sunset,.....	4 cents
after sunset,	5 cents

The licensee of any other ferry or group of ferries may demand and take such fares approved by the Governor in Council as shall be notified in the notice inviting tenders.

Nothing in this regulation shall be deemed to limit the right of a licensee to issue season tickets or punch tickets covering a number of journeys.

15. The licensee shall permit any passenger to take with him on a ferry vessel as free personal luggage such small baskets, bags, or parcels as he may be able to carry by hand. Save and except such free personal luggage the licensee shall not be bound to carry any

animals, birds, goods, merchandise, minerals, or parcels. If he does carry them he shall do so at rates not exceeding those specified in his tender unless the Governor in Council shall have authorised a different scale of charges.

16. The licensee shall exhibit in a conspicuous situation in each class of every ferry vessel a list printed in the English and Chinese languages of all the fares and charges authorised to be taken.

REGULATIONS AS TO PASSENGERS, &c.

17. The purchase of a ticket shall not entitle any passenger to a passage by a particular ferry vessel or to travel in a superior class than that for which the ticket is issued if the class contains its authorised complement.

18. No person shall wilfully obstruct any person acting under the authority of the licensee in the lawful discharge of his duties.

19. No person shall travel on any ferry vessel with intent to avoid payment of his fare or proper charges. All tickets issued in exchange for payment (with the exception of season tickets) must be handed over to be punched by the licensee's collector before embarkation of the passengers. In the cases where no tickets are issued in exchange for payment each passenger shall, before embarking, pass through the turnstile provided on the ferry pier.

20. The licensee shall not carry or attempt to carry passengers in excess of the authorised complement of any ferry vessel.

21. The licensee shall not load any ferry vessel so as to cause danger to the vessel or persons on board.

22. No person shall travel or attempt to travel in any ferry vessel after being requested to leave it by any servant of the licensee.

23. No person shall trespass on any pier or part of a pier exclusively reserved for a ferry.

24. No person shall alight or attempt to alight from, or enter or attempt to enter, any ferry vessel while in motion or otherwise than by the proper entrances or exits.

25. All persons holding tickets shall on demand show them and deliver them up to any servant of the licensee.

26. No person shall embark on or disembark from any ferry vessel from or to any sampan, boat, or other craft.

27. No intoxicated person shall travel or attempt to travel on any ferry vessel.

28. No launch, sampan, boat, or other craft shall make fast to or use or embark or disembark passengers at any pier or part of a pier exclusively reserved for a ferry.

MAINTENANCE AND USER OF FERRY PIERS.

29. Piers employed for the purpose of a ferry shall be built (if necessary) adapted and maintained by the Government free of cost to the licensee who shall not subject as herein-after provided be required to make any payment for the use or repair thereof. Provided that in the event of any damage being caused to any pier or any structure erected thereon by the licensee his servants or vessels other than fair wear and tear of which the Director of Public Works shall be the judge then the licensee shall on demand of the Director of Public Works forthwith pay into the Colonial Treasury the amount of such damage as shall be certified by the Director of Public Works. Such piers shall be provided by the Government with such barriers, gates, turnstiles, ticket offices, and other superstructure as may be necessary for the efficient working of the ferry.

INSUFFICIENT USER OF A FERRY.

30. If it shall be represented in writing to the Governor in Council by the Harbour Master or by 50 inhabitant rate-payers that the public are not afforded the full benefit of a ferry, the Governor in Council may (if satisfied that *prima facie* the case is one for enquiry) appoint a person to enquire into the matter and report thereon, and if the truth of the representation shall be proved the Governor in Council may issue an order to the licensee requiring him to provide such a service as will afford to the public the full benefit of the ferry and such order may prescribe the number of ferry vessels which the licensee shall run and the times at which they shall be run. Every such order shall be posted to the licensee at his last known address and published in the *Gazette*: Provided that the Governor in Council shall before issuing any such order be satisfied that under good and economical management the prescribed service will be fairly remunerative to the licensee; and that, after the licensee shall have complied with such order for not less than 30 days the Governor in Council may on the application of the licensee revoke or modify any such order.

31. If for the period of three months after the posting of such order and its publication in the *Gazette* the licensee shall fail or neglect to comply therewith the ferry shall be deemed to have been discontinued and shall be dealt with accordingly.

DISCONTINUANCE OF A FERRY.

32.—(1.) If in the opinion of the Governor in Council the licensee shall have discontinued the working of the ferry or any part thereof for a period of fourteen days the Governor in Council may by order declare that the powers and privileges of the licensee in respect of the ferry or part thereof so discontinued shall from the date of the order be at an end and thereupon all the powers and privileges of the said licensee in respect of the said ferry or part thereof shall cease and determine.

(2.) If in the opinion of the Governor in Council the licensee shall have discontinued the working of the ferry or any part thereof for any period whatsoever it shall be lawful for the Governor in Council notwithstanding the existence of such licence to make such arrangements as he may think fit in the public interest for the temporary maintenance of such ferry or part thereof.

(3.) Any net loss incurred by or on behalf of the Government in consequence of the making of any such arrangement as is contemplated in paragraph (2) of this regulation shall be recoverable by the Government from the licensee.

(4.) The fact that any such arrangement as is contemplated in paragraph (2) of this regulation has been made shall not prevent the running of the period of fourteen days referred to in paragraph (1) of this regulation.

(5.) This regulation shall not apply to any discontinuance which in the opinion of the Governor in Council is due to circumstances beyond the control of the licensee, but the want of sufficient funds shall not for the purpose of this regulation be deemed to be a circumstance beyond the control of the licensee.

INSOLVENCY OF THE LICENSEE.

33. If it appears to the Governor in Council that the licensee is insolvent so that he is unable to maintain his ferry or any part thereof or to work the same with advantage to the public, the Governor in Council may enquire into the financial affairs of the licensee and if satisfied that the licensee is so insolvent as aforesaid may by order declare that the powers and privileges of the licensee shall at the expiration of three months from the making of the order be at an end and the powers and privileges of the licensee shall cease and determine at the expiration of the said period.

PURCHASE OF FERRIES.

34. The Governor in Council may, at the expiration of the term of the licence, or on the determination of the powers and privileges of the licensee under the foregoing regulations, or at any time during the term of the licence on giving six months notice in the *Gazette*, require the licensee to sell and thereupon the licensee shall sell to the Government his undertaking and all ferry vessels, materials, plant, and equipment suitable to and used by the licensee for the undertaking for and in consideration of the then value of the

same, without any addition in respect of goodwill, compulsory purchase, or of any profits which might have been made from the undertaking: Provided that if such notice during the term of the licence be given the amount payable for the ferry vessels, materials, plant, and equipment shall be not less than the original value of the same when acquired by the licensee less an allowance in respect of reasonable wear and tear. In the case of difference the value shall be determined by arbitration.

ARBITRATION.

35. Every arbitration under these regulations shall be heard and determined by a Board of Arbitrators which shall in each case consist of three members and be constituted in manner following:—

- (i.) The Chairman of the Board shall be such Judge as the Judges may mutually arrange.
- (ii.) The two other members of the Board shall consist of one member to be nominated by the Governor and the other by the licensee: Provided always that the member nominated by the Governor may be any member of the Colonial Civil Service.
- (iii.) Notice in writing of the nomination by the Governor of a member of the Board shall be forthwith given to the licensee and shall be published in the *Gazette* and if he does not nominate a member of the Board within seven days from the date of such publication it shall be lawful for the Chairman to nominate and appoint any person, other than a member of the Colonial Civil Service, on behalf of such owner.

36.—(1.) The constitution of any Board shall be notified in the *Gazette* and within 14 days from such notification it shall commence its sittings at such time and place as the Chairman may appoint.

(2.) The Governor may appoint some person to act as Clerk to a Board and the Governor in Council shall determine his remuneration.

(3.) The remuneration of any member of a Board shall be at a rate according to the amount of work, the time occupied, and the magnitude of the interests involved, and shall be determined in each case by the Chairman at the conclusion of the arbitration: Provided that nothing herein shall authorise the payment of remuneration to a public servant who is not permitted to receive remuneration as a member of a board.

TEMPORARY LICENCES.

37. Notwithstanding anything contained in these regulations it shall be lawful for the Harbour Master to grant a temporary licence, subject to such conditions as he may think fit, for the maintenance of any ferry in any declared area during such period as may be required for the steps necessary for the issuing of a regular licence as contemplated by these regulations.

NON-PAYMENT OF RENT.

38. If a licensee of any ferry in respect of which rent is payable fails to pay any instalment of the rent when due it shall be lawful for the Governor in Council by order to declare that the powers and privileges of the licensee in respect of the said ferry shall from the date of the order be at an end and thereupon all the powers and privileges of the said licensee in respect of the said ferry shall cease and determine.

A. G. M. FLETCHER,
Clerk of Councils.

COUNCIL CHAMBER,
30th May, 1918.

Form A.

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS.

No.—It is hereby notified that open tenders in duplicate, which shall be clearly marked "Tender for Ferries", will be received at the Colonial Secretary's Office until Noon on.....day, the.....of....., 191 , for a licence for the exclusive maintenance of Ferry Services between Yau-mai, Mong Kok Tsui and Sham Shui Po on the north, and on the south such part of the coast line of the Island of Hongkong as lies between the south-western corner of Blake Pier on the east and Belchers Point on the west.

The said licence shall be issued subject to the Regulations made by the Governor in Council from time to time under section 5 of the Ferries Ordinance, 1917.

Subject to the said Regulations the term of the licence shall be 3 years to commence from the.....day of....., 191 .

It is desired that the licensee shall provide and place in service fit and ready for use on and after the.....day of....., 191.... not less than twelve ferry vessels, of which two shall be ferry vessels in reserve, (duly surveyed and licensed under section 37 of the Merchant Shipping Ordinance, 1899), of not less than 70 feet overall measurement with suitable beam and depth and a speed of not less than 9½ knots, fitted with a navigation bridge, bulkheads, and grille to the satisfaction of the Harbour Master and painted in such colours as the Harbour Master may direct. The said number, length, and speed of the ferry vessels are here stated as a guide to tenderers, who may however submit with their tenders a list of suitable ferry vessels of different number, dimensions, and speed.

Every tenderer must submit with his tender a list of maximum charges for the carriage of animals, birds, goods, merchandise, minerals, or parcels.

Form of tender may be obtained on application at the Harbour Office.

Harbour Master.

Form B.

TENDER FOR FERRIES LICENCE.

To the Hon. Colonial Secretary,
The Colonial Secretary's Office,
Hongkong.

....., 191 .

SIR,

..... hereby tender and undertake to establish and maintain the ferry services notified in Government Notification No.....of 191 , for the monthly rent of \$..... and to comply with and be bound by the terms of the said Notification and the Regulations made by the Governor in Council under the Ferries Ordinance, 1917.

.....undertake to provide not less than.....ferry vessels, of which..... shall be ferry vessels in reserve, each fitted with a navigation bridge, bulkheads, and grille to the satisfaction of the Harbour Master and painted in such colours as he may direct. The following is a list of the said ferry vessels:—

No.	Name.	Overall length.	Guaranteed speed.

List of Charges.

Your obedient servant,

No. 205.

THURSDAY, 23RD MAY, 1918.

PRESENT :

(SIR FRANCIS HENRY MAY, K.C.M.G.).

The Honourable the Colonial Secretary, (CLAUD SEVERN, C.M.G.).

the Colonial Secretary, (ALFRED BEVER, C.M.G.).
 „ the Attorney General, (JOSEPH HORSFORD KEMP, C.B.E.).
 „ the Colonial Treasurer, (ALEXANDER MACDONALD THOMSON).
 „ the Director of Public Works, (WILLIAM CHATHAM, C.M.G.).
 „ the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, (EDWIN RICHARD HALLIFAX).
 „ the Captain Superintendent of Police, (CHARLES McILVAINE MESSER).
 „ Mr. HENRY EDWARD POLLOCK, K.C.
 „ Mr. EDWARD SHELLIM.
 „ Mr. DAVID LANDALE.
 „ Mr. LAU CHŪ-PAK.
 „ Mr. PERCY HOBSON HOLYOAK.
 „ Mr. HO FOOK.

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GLOSSARY

This list included the characters for the Chinese names, places and terms in the text.

Au Yeung lu Ming 歐陽耀明

Au Yeung Tso Sheung 歐陽藻裳

Castle Peak 青山

Chan Mau Kan 陳茂根

Chan Sau Fung 陳秀峯

Chan Shek Shan 陳碩臣

Chan Yat Chiu 陳逸樵

Chang Pui Kee 鄭培記

Chang Kam Man 鄭錦文

Chau King Chi 周瓊之

Chau Tsun Nin 周竣年

Cheuk Ming Shan 卓明珊

Cheung Chau 長洲

Cheung Sha 長沙

Chow Shouson 周壽臣

Chung Sau Chi 鍾秀芝

Fung Hon Chi 馮漢墀

Henderson Land Development Company 恆基兆業發展有限公司

Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited 香港油蔴地小輪船有限公司

Hop Yick Company 合益號

Hung Hom 紅磡

Kap Shui Mun 汲水門

Kau Lung Sze Yeuk Kai Fong Ferry Company Limited

九龍四約街坊小輪有限公司

Kwan Sum Yin 關心焉

Kwok Chuen 郭泉

Kwok Lam Po 郭琳褒

Kwok Lai Pun 郭禮斌

Kwok Lin 郭連

Kwok Fook 郭福

Kwong Fook Steam Launch Company 香港廣福小輪船有限公司

Kwun Tong 觀塘

Lambert Kwok 郭琳弼

Lamma Island 南丫島

Lau Chu Pak 劉鑄伯

Lau King Cho 劉景初

Lau Tak Po 劉德譜

Lau Ting Chung 劉定中

Lee Kee Steam Launch Company 利記輪船公司

Lee Shau Kee 李兆基

Leung Hing Wan 梁卿雲

Lo Chung Wan 盧仲雲

Man Chi 民智

Man Chung 民忠

Man Lai 民禮

Man Shun 民信

Man Tack 民德

Man To 民道

Man Wai 民慧

Man Yee 民義

Man Ying 民英

Mei Foo 美孚

Min 民

Mong Kok 旺角

Mong Kok Tsui 旺角咀

Mui Wo 梅窩

Ng Tsze Mei 吳子美

Ngau Chi Wan 牛池灣

Office of Hong Kong and Kowloon Ferry Service 香九連絡船辦公室

Peng Chau / Ping Chau 坪洲

Po Leung Kuk 保良局

Po Toi 蒲台

Robert Kotewall 羅旭龢

Sam Ka Tsuen 三家村

Sam Wo Company 三和公司

Silver Mine Bay / Silvermine Bay 銀礦灣

Sham Shui Po 深水埗

Shau Ki Wan 筲箕灣

Sheung Wan 上環

So Tsz Hang 蘇子衡

Tai Kok Tsui 大角咀

Tai Po 大埔

Tai O 大澳

Tai Yan Steam Boat Company 泰恩輪船公司

Tai Wing Steam Launch Company 泰榮輪船公司

Tak Kee 德記

Tak On Company 德安公司

The Hong Kong and Kowloon Wharf, Godown and Cargo Boat Company
香港九龍倉有限公司

The Hong Kong and New Territories Ferry Company 香港新界小輪公司

The Hong Kong and Whampoa Dock Company 香港黃埔船塢有限公司

Tolo Harbour 吐露港

Tsim Sha Tsui 尖沙咀/尖沙嘴

Tsing Yi 青衣

Tsuen Wan 荃灣

Tung Chun 東涌

Tung Kee Steam Launch Company 香港同記輪船公司

Victoria City 維多利亞城

Wai Kee 威記

Weing Hing Company 永興公司

Wing Hing Company 榮興公司

Wong Choi Ho 黃才浩

Wing Shun Steam Launch Company 永順輪船公司

Wong Kam Wan 黃錦雲

Wong Kwong Po 黃光甫

Wong Kwong Wa 黃光華

Wong Lan Sang 黃蘭生

Yaumati 油蔴地

Yau Sui Chi 尤瑞之

yi min wei bun 以民為本

Young Tsin Kiu 楊展翹

Young Tsun Dart 楊俊達

Yue Wai Pun 余偉賓

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