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\$260m contract signed for 3rd border crossing

By JOHN PARKER

The contract for the building of the third — and potentially the most important — road link into China, was signed between the Government and a Korean contractor yesterday.

The \$260 million contract includes a section of road and half of a bridge across the Shenzhen river at Lok Ma Chau — in the north-western New Territories.

The other half of the bridge will be built by the Chinese Government as part of a plan to build a major highway to Guangzhou.

The new cross-border link is intended to provide better access to Guangdong Province than the two existing road crossings at Man Kam To and Shataukok, further to the east.

Work on the \$260 million contract will begin next month and is expected to be completed by mid-1988.

However, only part of the new road to Guangzhou will be completed by that time and the rest is not expected to be completed before 1990.

Mr Harold Beaton, the Principal Government Highway Engineer who signed the contract on behalf of the Government, denied this would cause a problem for users of the new border crossing.

He said the Chinese Government had already started work on their side of the project and a sizeable section of new highway to Guangzhou would be ready by the time the bridge was completed.



Mr Beaton

Korea Shipbuilding and Engineering Corpn won the contract after an open tender which attracted 27 bids, most of them from local companies.

As well as building half of the bridge they will build a 1½ km approach road linking the bridge with the proposed New Territories ring road.

Three kms of that road are also included in the contract signed yesterday.

No contract exists between the Government and the Chinese authorities for the building of the other side of the bridge, but Mr Beaton said this would not cause problems.

He said the timetable had been agreed in formal talks, and both sides were co-operating together in a "very cordial" relationship.

The bridge was a joint design and both sides had exchanged know-how on the project, Mr Beaton said.

He said he was confident the Chinese would build their part of the bridge on time.

The Lok Ma Chau bridge will not be easy to construct because the Shenzhen River is navigable and enough clearance must be given to vessels passing below.

In addition the land on either side of the river is extremely soft and hard rock is more than 30 metres below the surface.

However, Mr Beaton said the position chosen was still the best site for the project.

Alongside the bridge the foundations for a second bridge will be built so that when the capacity of the first bridge is reached another bridge can be built quickly.

On the volume of traffic for the new bridge, Mr Beaton said this was very difficult to estimate because it could well create a lot of new road traffic into China.

When the bridge is near completion each side will build a cantilever out from the two centre pillars of the bridge. Then to complete the link the Korean contractors will drop in a pre-fabricated unit of about 20 metres long.

Mr Lee In-won who signed on behalf of the Korean company said the contract would provide 500 jobs for local people and only the most senior engineers would be Korean.