

~~\$1.5 billion plan to offset droughts is flowing well~~

About \$1.5 billion will be spent to improve the water supply network to prepare Hongkong for future drought seasons.

The 12-year programme, which started in 1981, involves the construction of seven pumping stations, 32 kms of tunnels and 31 km of pipelaying.

Construction of stage one work is progressing well, and design for stage two is well in hand with the approval of the Finance Committee last year to upgrade several items of works to category A (ready for contract award) of the public works programme and the remainder to category AB (projects under design).

The estimated cost for stage one works will be more than \$720 million for 12 major contracts, of which seven have been completed and work for the remainder is expected to meet the target date in 1986.

One of the biggest of stage one contracts is a \$220 million project for the construction of a large diameter aqueduct system from Muk Wu to Tai Lam Chung.

The project included the laying of 14 km of tunnels which can allow inspection vehicles to travel through, the building of a four-km access road and a 5.5 km-long pipeline.

The system will provide

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with
FRANCES LI
FRANK CHOI
DAWN LEONARD
MATTHEW LEUNG

an additional capacity of 910,000 cubic metres daily to the western region of the New Territories, delivering water from China to the Tai Lam Chung reservoir.

In close connection with this project, contracts worth \$98 million have also been awarded to provide reception facilities at Muk Wu.

Stage two of the programme is expected to cost \$725 million with another \$300 million to be allocated later to provide additional works on new pumping plants.

A \$384 million project will involve the construction

of pumping stations at Plover Cove and construction of an aqueduct between Plover Cove and Pak Kong.

This will provide a distribution link along the areas between Hongkong Island and the proposed Pak Kong treatment works.

Two contracts were awarded for this project in December and are expected to be completed in three years.

An aqueduct will be constructed between Taipo Tau to the proposed Au Tau treatment works estimated to cost \$89 million.

Work on the major components of stage two is expected to start later this year and be completed in 1987.

Additional works for the construction of pumping plants will start in 1988 at various new stations with an expected completion date in 1992.

For the coming fiscal year, the Water Supplies Department's estimated expenditure is about \$828 million from the Capital Works Reserve Fund, the Budget's appendix stated.

The sum will include expenditure on improving the distribution system for water from China.

The estimate covers the allocation of \$430 million for territory-wide improvement

projects and \$137.4 million for new projects to be started next fiscal year.

As for urban improvements, works on Hongkong Island will take up \$44.3 million while Kowloon will have a share of \$53.4 million.

The New Territories will again get the major slice at \$162.4 million.

By the end of this fiscal year on March 31, an estimated 64 per cent of the total planned projects to improve water supply in the territory will have been completed.