

Akers-Jones stresses need to expand port facilities 29

HONGKONG should expand and improve its port facilities by the mid 1990s if it is to cash in on the growing transit cargoes of mainland China, Sir David Akers-Jones said yesterday.

Speaking to delegates at the Asian Seatransport Conference 1987 at Sha Tin, Sir David, the special adviser to the Governor, added that to achieve economies of scale, extending the port should be combined with a new airport.

"Growth in our economy and growth in the economy of our neighbours whose cargoes transit Hongkong has placed great pressure on our facilities," he said.

Last year tonnage through the port increased by more

than 16 percent and the year-on-year growth this year was nearly 20 percent.

"Work is already in hand to provide extra container handling capacity," Sir David said.

"But we will need more than this if we are going to be able to contain the growth in our trade by the mid-nineties. We will need to create more sheltered harbours, more wharves, more mooring buoys, and more container terminals."

He pointed out that 15 years ago, Hongkong thought the container revolution would empty the harbour of little ships. But this has not proved to be the case.

Sir David said that in addition to the more than 14,000 ocean-going ships that called

at Hongkong last year, more than 80,000 ships of all kinds visited, and the number was growing.

"The ports and harbours of the Pacific Rim serve a third of the world's population," he said.

"The economies of the region, of course, are in various stages of development, but there is nevertheless a dynamism of growth everywhere and a determination to adjust, remedy and improve performance."

Meanwhile, Sir David said in an interview that berth No. 6 was still under construction. Planning for berth No. 7 was well advanced, while plans for terminals 8, 9, and 10 had yet to be ironed out.