

Airborne trade hits \$258b as re-exports rise

By GISELLE MILITANTE

A SURGE in value for Hongkong's re-exports boosted total airborne merchandise trade by 11 per cent to \$258.86 billion last year.

While re-exports, a big part of which came from southern China, accounted for only 16 per cent of total merchandise trade value last year, they recorded the fastest growth, helping push up the territory's yearly total.

Figures from the Census and Statistics Department released yesterday show that the value of airborne re-exports grew 18 per cent, domestic exports increased by only two per cent, and imports rose 13 per cent.

Domestic exports accounted for 30 per cent of the total value of airborne trade last year while imports contributed 20 per cent.

Hongkong's airborne re-exports to all major markets showed increases. Re-exports to Thailand showed the biggest percentage increase, up 86 per cent to \$2.9 billion, followed by re-exports to Germany which recorded an 80 per cent rise to \$4.2 billion, and Switzerland, which rose 39 per cent to \$1.4 billion.

Overall, however, the top three re-export markets for Hongkong were still the United States, accounting for \$13.2 billion of total re-exports; Taiwan, accounting for \$8.8 billion; and Japan, \$7.4 billion.

Analysed by commodity, notable increases in the value of re-exports were recorded for clothing which showed an increase of 33 per

cent; non-metallic mineral manufactures, a 35 per cent rise; and office machines and automatic data processing equipment, a 40 per cent rise.

In terms of tonnage, airborne imports recorded 352,887 tonnes, 15 per cent more than the previous year.

Airborne exports - including domestic exports and re-exports - totalled 449,052 tonnes, six per cent up on the total tonnage in 1989.

Among Hongkong's 10 biggest export markets, Singapore emerged as the fastest growing.

The territory's airborne domestic exports to Singapore rose 53 per cent in value. Exports to Taiwan rose 22 per cent in value; to Germany, 16 per cent; and to France, 13 per cent.

Although domestic exports to the US dropped six per cent in value last year, this market still accounted for the biggest chunk of Hongkong's total domestic exports in terms of value.

Germany is the second biggest market for domestic exports, accounting for \$6.97 billion. Japan is third, accounting for \$6.95 billion.

Among the top 10 export markets, Canada showed the sharpest drop of about 16 per cent. Other markets that showed decreases in terms of value were the UK, down seven per cent; Japan, down six per cent; and Switzerland, down one per cent.

Domestic export commodities that brought in the biggest value were still apparel and clothing accessories.

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cent, although the total contribution of this group dropped by seven per cent last year.

Photographic equipment and related goods were second in terms of value, followed by office machines and automatic data processing equipment.

The fastest growing domestic exports in terms of value were non-metallic mineral manufactures, textile yarn and fabrics, and electrical machinery and related items.

Imports carried by air from all major suppliers increased in value last year. Substantial growth was re-

corded in the value of airborne imports from Malaysia, which showed a 24 per cent increase; imports from Singapore, a 23 per cent increase; Switzerland, 23 per cent; Germany, 20 per cent; and Japan, 15 per cent.

In terms of contribution to total import value, however, Japan still ranked number one, accounting for \$27 billion of total value.

Airborne imports which showed the sharpest rise in value were telecommunications and sound recording equipment, posting 26 per cent growth; transport equipment, also 26 per cent growth; and textile yarn and fabrics, 20 per cent growth.