

S. C. M. P.

21 August 1982

## 1984 is another important date

I DO not consider that the recent local opinion poll will carry the slightest weight with the Chinese Government — nor with the Labour Party in Britain.

A pledge by the latter at the next general election, due in 1984, that it is prepared to "lose" Hongkong would win many thousands of friends and votes which could be instrumental in putting the Tories out of power.

Hongkong is a liability as far as the United Kingdom is concerned, and the only native Britons interested in the Colony are those who are adversely affected for a variety of reasons.

The latter were dealt with commonsensibly by your correspondent "Neutral" in his admirable letter (SCM Post, August 7).

A speaker at a recent public function here maintained that Hongkong would be a bankrupt place if and when the Chinese took over.

Was Shanghai a bankrupt place when the nationalist Government took over there in 1945?

Has Singapore become bankrupt since it was taken over by a largely Chinese administration?

A Chinese takeover of Hongkong would certainly mean the end of avaricious landlords and horrendous rentals, and with luck we should then enjoy a fairer cost of living.

In the concluding paragraph of your editorial on August 14, "What the people think of the future," you refer to "our people" and "their traditional way of life under an administration which gives them confidence, flexibility and independence." This is nonsense!

The bulk of the people in Hongkong today are legal or illegal newcomers who have crowded in since 1945, and who have absolutely no sense of, nor respect for, the tradition you so facilely make reference to.

Forget this month's opinion poll. Forget next month's visit by Mrs Thatcher to Peking. Let us wait and see what happens in 1984.

ANCIENT GWEILO