

\$30m centre ready to take trainee seamen

THE first trainees will arrive at the Vocational Training Council's new \$30m seamen's training centre early in the Lunar New Year.

And the council is now inviting applications for enrolment in pre-sea courses.

The courses are free and there is an allowance for entrants' travelling and meal expenses.

The training centre, located on 1.6 hectares of land by the sea between Tsuen Wan and Tuen Mun, is being given a final inspection before the trainees arrive.

The centre was set up at the Government's request to provide a proper training system for local seamen.

Graduates of the school will receive an internationally recognised certificate.

"Crew members of a high standard are essential to our shipping industry," said the manager of the centre, Captain Jack Haworth.

"They are one of the pre-

requisites for the successful implementation of our 'Independent Register' in the early 1990's."

The courses are open to all male Hongkong residents aged between 17 and 34, preferably with a form three education level.

The centre boasts facilities for training in seamanship, engineering, watch-keeping, fire-fighting, personal survival techniques, cargo handling, and other skills.

"The prime objectives of the training are to promote safety of life and property at sea and encourage the protection of the marine environment," said Capt Haworth.

Capt Haworth has managed the standards of training, certification and watch-keeping (STCW) course at the council's temporary centre in Little Sai Wan for almost four years.

He said the courses on offer at the new centre would enable seafarers to acquire technical skills of in-

ternational standards.

"With an internationally recognised qualification, the employment prospects of Hongkong seamen will be greatly enhanced," he said.

"It will be advantageous for new trainees to take the 23-week general purpose course as it combines the two 16-week courses for seamen and engine room ratings," said Capt Haworth.

"More job opportunities are available for sailors with an all-round training."

Serving seamen can enrol in refresher courses, such as fire-fighting and first aid, or in upgrading certificate courses leading to the necessary qualifications for senior posts.

The centre aims to train 440 new entrants and 600 in-service seafarers each year.

Those interested in making applications should contact the centre's recruitment and placement officer on 0-4583833.