

S. C. M. P.

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\$37m pumping station will be ready next year

By OPHELIA SUEN

A new water pumping station at the border town of Muk Wu is expected to be completed by the middle of next year.

Construction of the plant and associated reception facilities is costing some \$37 million, but the project forms just part of stage one of a three-stage scheme, the Director of Water Supplies, Mr Tom Tomlinson, said yesterday.

He was in the New Territories inspecting the progress of various projects in the \$1.75 billion scheme to draw and distribute additional water from China.

The Muk Wu station will house 10 sets of pumps with a capacity of 1.4 million cubic metres per day.

Mr Tomlinson said that when completed, it would boost daily reception capacity at Muk Wu to 2.1 million cubic metres — more than double existing capacity.

He said that from Muk Wu, Chinese water is pumped through aqueducts comprising tunnels and pipelines to Tai Lam Chung and Plover Cove reservoirs.

"Up to last month, Hongkong has received about 175 million cubic metres of water from China out of a total of 255 million cubic metres scheduled for this period," Mr Tomlinson said.

Water from China amounted to about 40 per cent of total estimated demand for 1983/84, he said.

He said a 15-year projection was made in 1979 which estimated that by 1994, about 620 million cubic metres of water — 60 per cent of the

total demand — will be supplied by China.

Mr Tomlinson explained that the forecast was based on the assumption of an annual six per cent rise in water demand.

He said there might be a need to increase water charges but this would have to depend very much on the price of water we buy from China.

At present, it is kept at one quarter of a yuan for each cubic metre. The last rise of 15 per cent was in February.

While there is no regular price adjustment between Hongkong and China, changes are usually made when China suggests it, he said.

But it is the Hongkong Government's policy to make small and frequent adjustments rather than one big one, he said.

A financial review of our water supply, which is expected to have a bearing on the level of future charges, will be submitted to the Financial Secretary, Sir John Bremridge, at the end of January.

While work on the review was underway, Mr Tomlinson stressed it was too early to say whether it would mean any rises.

Meanwhile, the 12-year scheme, which began in 1981, involves construction of seven pumping stations, 32 km of tunnels and the laying of 31 km of pipes.

Stage one, comprising 12 major contracts, will cost more than \$720 million. Seven of the contracts have been completed and work is progressing on the remaining five.

The largest element of stage one is a \$220 million contract for constructing a

large diameter aqueduct system from Muk Wu to Tai Lam Chung.

Upon completion — expected to be in early 1986 — the system will comprise 14 km of tunnels large enough for inspection vehicles to pass through, a four-kilometre access road and a 5.5-kilometre pipeline 2.2 metres in diameter, the largest in Hongkong.

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

Stage two of the scheme is estimated to cost \$725 million. Major work will begin next year and is scheduled for completion in 1987.

It will involve construction of new pumping stations at Plover Cove and the construction of an aqueduct between Plover Cove reservoir and Pak Kong, including a submarine pipeline across Tolo Channel, to supply more water to Junk Bay, Sai Kung and the eastern part of Kowloon and Hongkong.

An aqueduct will be constructed from Taipo Tau to Ngau Tam Mei and a pipeline laid between Sheung Shui and Tau Pass.

Stage three will be implemented between 1988 and 1992 at an estimated cost of \$300 million.

Work in this stage includes providing additional pumping plants at the new stations.