

four toys considered dangerous in Britain ending each accompanying anecdote with "this was made in Hong Kong," printed in bold type, and alleging that Hong Kong produced "cheap goods outwardly attractive, but made with less than scrupulous regard for the standards of safety and reliability insisted on by British manufacturers."

An Assistant Director of the Department of Commerce and Industry said it was quite unfair to castigate the entire Colony's industry on the strength of a few isolated incidents. Foreign buyers submitted most of the designs to Hong Kong's manufacturers, who then followed their specifications.

Also answering the charge, the Senior Manager of the Trade Development Council of Hong Kong said that Hong Kong could expect more of this kind of smear as the Colony's share of the international market grew. He added, "I say without any hesitation that line for line, our toys are as good as, if not better than, most other toys in the world—including Britain's . . . I strongly suggest that the article was inspired by vested interests in Britain and was designed to coincide with the beginning of the Christmas buying season."

I'm Nearly Bankrupt

T. O. EVANS

LIKE MANY of my generation I was taught the wisdom of Polonius: "neither a borrower nor a lender be." If a friend wanted help—then I should give, lest I make of him a borrower. A counsel of perfection these days, no doubt.

Most of us are borrowers nowadays in one form or another, even if we only borrow from a building society. But in most cases, at least as far as institutionalised borrowing is concerned, we have to offer security for a loan, and in these circumstances it can be strictly said that we are borrowing what we have already got.

This situation apart, I had always thought that I had kept out of debt. Alas for my sense of false security. I have recently been made aware that I am heavily in debt. And that is not all. I am likely to add to my debts by borrowing abroad as well as at home. I can't think how I got into this mess—but the facts are there in black and white—and red! The only consolation I have is that my fellow countrymen are in debt also.

We owe between us more than £300 million borrowed on our behalf by local authorities just for the quarter January to March 1969! Nearly half of this was for land and housing (not for my own house, I pay for that myself). I have borrowed money to pay for, among other things, cattle markets, small-holdings, civil aviation, national assistance, public baths, wash-houses and slaughter houses.

This is debt made on my behalf only by local authorities. My own particular local authority may not have borrowed money for me for slaughter houses, of course, but that doesn't make much difference — if they don't borrow for one thing they borrow for another.

As for the national debt, inherited and acquired, I daren't look into this; there are so many noughts that they run off the edge of the paper.

I really would like to get out of debt. A friend, trying to re-assure me, said: "It's not really debt because it's all in the family as it were; we all owe it to each other." But I'm not so sure this makes sense, although it might if we were all owed individually what we owe!

For my part, the Government (that's you chaps) owes me about £75 that it borrowed nearly thirty years ago—post-war credits the debt is called. When I do eventually get repaid the money will probably be worth about one fifth of its original value.

Of course, I don't understand politics or economics. I keep forgetting that the Government has a different set of rules to that which must apply to the individual—and a different morality too.

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