SUMMARY

This dissertation looks into the question of problem contractors relating to the management of construction projects. The problems frequently encountered are excessive and unreasonable claims, inferior quality, delay in construction progress, safety and health problems, coordination problems, and insufficient technical capability. Surveys on the severity and frequency of problem contractors both in Singapore and Hong Kong were conducted. It had been discovered that about one-third of the surveyed construction projects in Singapore suffered from appreciable problems generated by contractors whereas the situation was better in Hong Kong with only less than 10% of the surveyed projects having encountered sizable problems from contractors. The proportion of such surveyed projects having problem contractors that eventually had to resort to arbitration and/or court action was about the same in both cities, being 7% in Singapore as compared to 6% in Hong Kong.

The findings of the surveys proved the general validity of the dissertation hypothesis (cf. p. 7) except that the size of a project has a relatively insignificant correlation with the likelihood of having problems from contractors.
In order to avoid and/or cope with problem contractors, an integrated planning and control system is proposed. This requires the establishment of appropriate checks and balances using a number of techniques recommended.

In the event the proposed system is not followed, it may be necessary to terminate the building contract as a last resort. However, before this irreversible point of no return is reached, some measures would have to be taken and these are extensively discussed.

As a conclusion, the integrated planning and control system recommended should be able to reduce and/or alleviate problems generated by contractors. This has been advocated by 84% and 88% of the surveyed building professionals and developers in Singapore and Hong Kong respectively.

Other than just analysing the problems caused by contractors and generating possible solutions by the project management personnel, more research should be carried out from the corporate and industry perspectives to further mitigate these problems. Corporate strategies can be formulated by large property developers to team up with contractors in joint ventures. Alternatively, construction arms of the developers can be formed to impose full planning and control in the construction of their own projects. At the industry level,
the Singapore Contractors Association can join forces with government authorities and institutions to further improve and develop the performance of the construction industry.