



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

SUNDAY, APRIL 17, 1977

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'VERY, VERY GOOD' SAYS MRS. THATCHER
ON HOUSEWIFELY VISIT TO OI MAN FLAT

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MRS MARGARET THATCHER TODAY SAW FOR HERSELF HOW HIGH-DENSITY LIVING WORKS IN HONG KONG'S HOUSING ESTATES -- AND CONTINUALLY REMARKED ON THE +HAPPINESS, CLEANLINESS AND COMMUNITY SPIRIT+ SHE FOUND ON A MORNING VISIT TO ESTATES IN KOWLOON.

IN OI MAN ESTATE SHE CAST A HOUSEWIFELY EYE AROUND THE CHENG FAMILY'S FLAT ON THE 18TH FLOOR OF TAK MAN HOUSE, INSPECTED THE KITCHEN, THE TOILET, SAW THE FAMILY'S MOD CONS INCLUDING A WASHING MACHINE, COLOUR TELEVISION SET, TWO RICE COOKERS (WHICH AT FIRST SHE MISTOOK FOR PRESSURE COOKERS), HI-FI TAPEDECK, AND TOLD THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, MR. DONALD LIAO, +THIS IS VERY, VERY GOOD.+

MRS. THATCHER, LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION IN BRITAIN, BEGAN HER VISIT AT WHAT MR. LIAO DESCRIBED TO HER AS +THE VERY BOTTOM+ -- A SQUATTER AREA AT YAN OI BENEATH LION ROCK.

THE PARTY INCLUDED CONSERVATIVE MPS MR DOUGLAS HURD, A SPOKESMAN ON FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS, AND MR. JOHN STANLEY, MRS. THATCHER'S PARLIAMENTARY PRIVATE SECRETARY, AND HER SOLICITOR DAUGHTER, MISS CAROL THATCHER. AS THEY LEFT THEIR CAR AT YAN OI, MR. LIAO TOLD MRS. THATCHER: +WE ARE NOT HIDING ANYTHING. THIS IS A SQUATTER AREA WHERE YOU WILL SEE THE WORST ASPECTS OF THE HOUSING PROBLEM.+

LOOKING COOL DESPITE THE MUGGY WEATHER, MRS. THATCHER QUICKLY GOT INTO A CONVERSATION WITH A FAMILY OF TAILORS MAKING SKI-JACKETS, LATER TALKED WITH ONE OF THE LOCAL SHOPKEEPERS, WALKED DOWN A NARROW ALLEYWAY TO SEE THE LIVING QUARTERS OF ANOTHER FAMILY, AND THEN HELD A CONVERSATION ON THE ROADWAY WITH A YOUNG MOTHER CARRYING A BABY.

THE WOMAN SURPRISED EVERYBODY, INCLUDING MR. LIAO, BY REVEALING THAT SHE AND HER FAMILY WERE FROM THAILAND AND HAD LIVED IN THE SQUATTER AREA FOR TWO YEARS.

AT THE WONG TIN CHEUNG MARTIAL ARTS HALL AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SQUATTER VILLAGE ROAD, MRS. THATCHER WAS ATTRACTED BY THE RHYTHMIC BEAT OF DRUMS AND GONGS AND PAID ANOTHER IMPROMPTU VISIT, THIS TIME PAUSING FOR A GLASS OF CHINESE TEA AND A RUN-DOWN ON CHINESE BOXING AND BONE-SETTING BY AN INSTRUCTOR.

THE VISIT RAN 10 MINUTES OVER SCHEDULE AND AS SHE MOVED THROUGH A GROUP OF ADMIRING CHILDREN TO ENTER HER CAR MRS. THATCHER TOLD OFFICIALS: +THEY'RE SO HAPPY, SPECIALLY THE CHILDREN.+

BEFORE BEING DRIVEN OFF SHE PERSONALLY CONFIRMED FROM THE CHILDREN THAT THEY GO TO SCHOOL AND SHOOK HANDS WITH SEVERAL.

AT HER NEXT STOP-OVER, AT TUNG TAU ESTATE, MRS. THATCHER CHATTED TO SEVERAL SHOPKEEPERS, GLANCED AT THE ROOFTOPS OF THE ESTATE BLOCKS TO NOTE THE +FORESTS+ OF TV AERIALS, WALKED AMONG RESIDENTS, AND SAW TWO GARDEN AREAS WHICH MR. LIAO EXPLAINED HAD BEEN +RECLAIMED+ FOR THE PEOPLE FROM THE ILLEGAL STALL-HOLDERS WHO FORMERLY OCCUPIED THEM.

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SCORES OF PEOPLE LINED BALCONIES TO WAVE AND SMILE AT THE VIP VISITORS AND AS SHE WAS LEAVING A CROWD OF BARE-CHESTED LADS WHO HAD BEEN PLAYING FOOTBALL IN THE CARPARK SURROUNDED HER DAIMLER TO SHOUT IN ENGLISH: +HULLO -- HOW DO YOU DO? NICE TO SEE YOU.+

MRS. THATCHER HAD A JOLLY CONVERSATION WITH THE YOUTHS.

+WHAT DO YOU MAKE?+ SHE ASKED, WANTING TO KNOW WHAT WORK THEY DO.

HONG KONG-WISE, THEY REPLIED: +FOUR HUNDRED A MONTH -- SIX HUNDRED A MONTH -- MAYBE TWO THOUSAND A MONTH.+

AND EVERYBODY, INCLUDING THE VIPS' STOLID ESCORTS, HAD A GOOD LAUGH.

STILL SMILING, MRS. THATCHER SHOOK HANDS WITH SEVERAL AND AMID THE YOUTHS' CHEERS THEN DROVE OFF, COMMENTING TO MR. LIAO: +I CAN'T GET OVER THE HAPPY SPIRIT AMONG THE PEOPLE, SPECIALLY THE YOUNG PEOPLE. IT'S JUST MARVELLOUS.+

SHE WAS THEN DRIVEN THROUGH SOME OF THE OLDER KOWLOON ESTATES, SEEING AMONG OTHER THINGS THE IN-SITU CONVERSION TAKING PLACE AT LOK FU ESTATE, AND THEN AT OI MAN PAUSED ON THE FOURTH FLOOR OF TAK MAN HOUSE TO EXPERIENCE THE +CHIMNEY EFFECT+ OF THE COOL AIR CIRCULATING IN ALL TWIN-TOWER HOUSING BLOCKS.

+IT'S LIKE AIR-CONDITIONING,+ SHE SAID WITH A SMILE.

AFTER VISITING THE CHENG FAMILY'S 350 SQUARE FOOT FLAT AND TALKING WITH HUSBAND, WIFE AND CHILDREN, SHE COMMENTED ON THE FINISH OF THE FLAT, SPECIALLY THE MOSAIC TILES, AND THE CLEANLINESS OF THE BLOCK GENERALLY.

ESCORTED TO THE OI MAN COMMERCIAL COMPLEX, SHE BRIEFLY EXPERIENCED THE BUSTLE AND NOISE OF A LARGE CHINESE RESTAURANT SERVING DIM SUM TO PACKED TABLES, SAW A DEPARTMENT STORE AND WAS INVITED BY MR. LIAO TO WALK THROUGH THE MARKET STALLS +PROVIDED YOU DON'T MIND A BIT OF BLOOD.+

+WHY NOT?+ SHE SAID, AND WALKED WITH INTEREST AMONG STALLS SELLING GUTTED FISH, LIVE POULTY, PORK AND BEEF.

+MAY WE SEE ANOTHER FAMILY?+ SHE ASKED MR. LIAO, AND SOON WAS IN A LIFT ON HER WAY TO VISIT THE WONG FAMILY'S FLAT IN HONG MAN HOUSE, WHERE AGAIN SHE LOOKED AT EVERY ROOM AND ALL FACILITIES, CHATTED WITH MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY AND ASKED MORE QUESTIONS ABOUT INCOME, JOBS AND SCHOOL FOR THE CHILDREN.

THEN, PASSING THE COOKED-FOOD PAVILIONS WHERE MORE PEOPLE WERE HAVING AN EARLY LUNCH, SHE SMELT THE AROMA OF COOKING FOOD AND COMMENTED TO OFFICIALS: +SMELLS VERY TASTY.+

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AT THE EXHIBITION HALL AT HOUSING AUTHORITY HEADQUARTERS MR. LIAO; THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF HOUSING, MR. BERNARD WILLIAMS, AND OTHER OFFICIALS COMPLETED MRS. THATCHER'S ON-THE-SPOT BRIEFING ON THE HOUSING SITUATION.

SHE SAID SHE HAD BEEN IMPRESSED BY THE ATTRACTIVE DESIGN OF THE LATER ESTATES AND THE +IMAGINATIVE WAY+ THEY HAD BEEN LAID OUT.

SHE SPOKE TO MR. LIAO ABOUT THE SURPRISINGLY STRONG COMMUNITY SPIRIT WHICH HAD OBVIOUSLY GROWN UP IN HOUSING ESTATES, DESPITE THE COMPARATIVE NEWNESS OF SOME, AND HE POINTED OUT THAT THIS SPIRIT WAS FOSTERED BY HOUSING DEPARTMENT STAFF ON ALL ESTATES, WHO KEPT UP PERSONAL CONTACT AT ALL TIMES AND SAW EACH TENANT AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH, WHEN COLLECTING THE RENT.

SHE WAS KEENLY INTERESTED IN THE HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME, WHICH MR. LIAO EXPLAINED WAS THE NEXT PHASE IN HONG KONG'S MASSIVE PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAMME, AND WOULD GIVE TENANTS AN EVEN GREATER OPPORTUNITY TO FURTHER DEVELOP COMMUNITY SPIRIT BY ALLOWING THEM TO OWN THEIR OWN HOMES IN INDIVIDUAL ESTATES.

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WARNING AGAINST BOGUS LABOUR OFFICERS

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ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, MR. LIN HUO-FU, TODAY WARNED FACTORY PROPRIETORS TO BE ON GUARD AGAINST BOGUS LABOUR DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS.

HE SAID THE DEPARTMENT HAD RECENTLY RECEIVED SEVERAL COMPLAINTS FROM FACTORY PROPRIETORS WHO WERE APPROACHED FOR MONEY FOR ADVERTISEMENTS IN PURPORTED DEPARTMENTAL PUBLICATIONS BY PEOPLE WHO CLAIMED TO BE OFFICERS OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT.

+NO PUBLICATION OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT CARRIES ADVERTISEMENT,+ MR. LIN STRESSED.

+ALL SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT ARE FREE, AND FROM TIME TO TIME, THE DEPARTMENT PUBLISHES PAMPHLETS ON LABOUR LEGISLATION, IN ENGLISH AND CHINESE, WHICH ARE ALSO AVAILABLE FREE TO THE PUBLIC.+

HE REMINDED FACTORY PROPRIETORS THAT ALL LABOUR DEPARTMENT OFFICERS CARRIED WITH THEM GOVERNMENT IDENTITY CARDS AND WARRANTS BEARING THE PHOTOGRAPH AND NAME OF THE HOLDER.

+MEMBERS OF THE FACTORY AND LABOUR INSPECTORATES ARE UNDER INSTRUCTION TO IDENTIFY THEMSELVES BY PRODUCING THEIR WARRANTS WHEN VISITING FACTORIES,+ HE ADDED.

MR. LIN ADVISED FACTORY PROPRIETORS TO CHECK ON THE IDENTITY OF VISITORS CLAIMING TO BE OFFICERS OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT AND IF IN ANY DOUBT TO REPORT IMMEDIATELY TO THE NEAREST POLICE STATION.

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LESS THAN TWO MONTHS LEFT FOR NURSERIES TO REGISTER

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A TEAM OF TEN SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICERS HAS BEEN WORKING FOR ALMOST A YEAR NOW LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR BETTER STANDARDS OF CHILD CARE IN NURSERIES, CRECHES AND SIMILAR ESTABLISHMENTS FOR CHILDREN.

THEY WERE APPOINTED INSPECTORS UNDER THE CHILD CARE CENTRES ORDINANCE LAST YEAR AND THEIR ADVISORY INSPECTORATE HAS BEEN HELPING BOTH PROSPECTIVE AND EXISTING OPERATORS TO MEET THE STANDARDS REQUIRED FOR THE PROPER RUNNING OF CHILD CARE CENTRES UNDER THE ORDINANCE AND ITS SUBSIDIARY REGULATIONS.

THE ORDINANCE, WHICH CAME INTO OPERATION ON JUNE 1 LAST YEAR, REQUIRES NEW CENTRES TO REGISTER BEFORE THEY ARE ALLOWED TO ACCEPT CHILDREN, WHILE THOSE ALREADY IN EXISTENCE ARE GIVEN TIME UNTIL THE END OF MAY THIS YEAR TO REGISTER AND TO BRING THEMSELVES UP TO THE REQUIRED STANDARD BY STAGES TO MEET THE CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION.

REQUIREMENTS ARE COMPREHENSIVE AND INCLUDE DIETARY SCALES AND PROGRAMMES OF ACTIVITY FOR THE CHILDREN, STAFF QUALIFICATIONS, BUILDING SAFETY, SANITARY AND HEALTH STANDARDS AND STAFF TO CHILDREN RATIO.

THE CHILD CARE CENTRES ADVISORY INSPECTORATE IS HEADED BY A PRINCIPAL SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICER, MISS NANCY CHOW.

+ADVICE ON RUNNING CHILD CARE CENTRES, FROM REGISTRATION PROCEDURES AND LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS TO DIETARY PRACTICES IS ALWAYS AVAILABLE HERE,+ SHE SAID.

+AN ENQUIRIES TELEPHONE IS MANNED AT ALL TIMES BY THE INSPECTORS WHO ACT AS DUTY OFFICER BY TURN. ANYONE CAN ALSO COME IN PERSON TO OUR OFFICE AT 692 PRINCE EDWARD ROAD, SAN PO KONG GOVERNMENT OFFICES BUILDING, NORTH WING, 5TH FLOOR.

+A CHINESE TRANSLATION COPY OF THE CHILD CARE CENTRES ORDINANCE IS AVAILABLE FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO CONSULT IT. THOSE WHO ARE INTERESTED CAN FURTHER ASK FOR COPIES OF A CODE OF PRACTICE IN EITHER ENGLISH OR CHINESE TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE STANDARDS LAID DOWN BY THE GOVERNMENT.+

THE ADVISORY INSPECTORS ARE NOT AT ALL DESK-BOUND IN THEIR WORK. BESIDES REGULAR INSPECTIONS TO THOSE CHILD CARE CENTRES WHICH ARE ALREADY ESTABLISHED, THEY OFTEN GIVE ADVICE TO NEW OPERATORS ON SITE. IT IS NOT INFREQUENT THAT THESE OPERATORS WOULD WISH AN INSPECTOR TO ACCOMPANY THEM ON THEIR SEARCH FOR SUITABLE PREMISES AND THRASH OUT DETAIL POINTS OF LAY-OUT AND INSTALLATION TOGETHER.

+WE WOULD ENCOURAGE MORE PEOPLE TO DO THE SAME AND APPROACH US IN THE FIRST INSTANCE. THE REASON IS THAT WHEN THE ACTUAL APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION IS PUT FORWARD, IT CAN THEN GO THROUGH IN MINIMAL TIME,+ MISS CHOW SAID.

/TIME TAKEN

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TIME TAKEN BY EXISTING CHILD CARE CENTRES TO OBTAIN REGISTRATION USUALLY TAKES LONGER THAN NEW ESTABLISHMENTS. THIS IS BECAUSE IT IS EASIER TO PUT EVERYTHING IN ORDER IN THE VERY FIRST PLACE THAN TO HAVE EXISTING FACILITIES REPLACED OR ADAPTED TO FIT NEW STANDARDS.

FOR THOSE WHO NEED HELP IN IMPROVING THEIR FACILITIES AND THUS BETTER SERVICES, ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE FROM THE LOTTERIES FUND IN THE FORM OF CAPITAL GRANTS FOR RE-EQUIPMENT.

FURTHERMORE, FOR THOSE WHO HAVE GENUINE DIFFICULTY IN MEETING THE TIME LIMIT FOR REVAMPING THEIR FACILITIES, THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE MAY GRANT AN EXTENSION WITH OR WITHOUT CONDITIONS.

+ENACTMENT OF THE CONTROL LEGISLATION NOT ONLY SHOWS GOVERNMENT'S CONCERN FOR THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN ENTRUSTED TO CHILD CARE CENTRES, IT ALSO RECOGNISES THAT PHYSICAL CARE IS NOT SUFFICIENT FOR THE GROWING CHILD. HE MUST BE ABLE TO DEVELOP INTELLECTUALLY, EMOTIONALLY AND SOCIALLY AS WELL.

+THE TASK OF THE ADVISORY INSPECTORATE IS TO SEE THAT AT LEAST MINIMUM STANDARDS ARE OBSERVED. IN A MORE POSITIVE WAY, THE INSPECTORATE PUTS FORWARD A GUIDELINE AND ENCOURAGES ALL TO FOLLOW IT AND ACHIEVE A GOOD STANDARD OF SERVICE IN THEIR WORK OF CARING FOR OUR YOUNG,+ MISS CHOW SAID.

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WATER CUT
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WATER SUPPLY TO A NUMBER OF PREMISES IN CAUSEWAY BAY WILL BE TURNED OFF FOR FIVE HOURS FROM 1 A.M. ON TUESDAY (APRIL 19) TO ENABLE THE WATER SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT TO CARRY OUT A NIGHT LEAKAGE TEST.

THE AREA TO BE AFFECTED IS BOUNDED BY LAN FONG ROAD, LEE GARDEN ROAD, FOO MING STREET, AND PERCIVAL STREET FROM HENNESSY ROAD TO LEIGHTON ROAD.

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