



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1977

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\$2,400 MILLION TO BE SPENT ON THREE NT TOWNS  
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THE GOVERNMENT WILL SPEND NEARLY \$2,400 MILLION DEVELOPING THE MARKET TOWNS OF TAI PO, FANLING AND SHEK WUI HUI OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS, AN ASSISTANT TAI PO DISTRICT OFFICER, MR. THOMAS TSO, SAID TODAY.

TAI PO IS GETTING THE BIGGEST SLICE OF THE DEVELOPMENT FUND - ABOUT \$1,077 MILLION - WHILE \$900 MILLION IS EARMARKED FOR SHEK WUI HUI AND \$412 MILLION FOR FANLING, HE SAID.

MR. TSO WAS SPEAKING OF THE GENERAL DEVELOPMENT OF TAI PO DISTRICT ON THE SECOND EDITION OF RTHK'S NEWS MAGAZINE PROGRAMME +NEW TERRITORIES WEEKLY+.

HE SAID THAT UNDER THE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, THE POPULATION OF TAI PO WOULD INCREASE ALMOST 10-FOLD, FROM THE PRESENT 28,000 TO 200,000, AND THAT OF FANLING FROM 50,000 TO 170,000.

+TO ENSURE THAT THE AREAS ARE SUCCESSFULLY DEVELOPED, WE ARE CONCERNED THAT BOTH PRIVATE AND GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENTS MOVE AT ABOUT THE SAME PACE,+ HE SAID.

THE FIRST PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATE FOR TAI PO - TAI YUEN ESTATE - IS SCHEDULED FOR COMPLETION BY 1980. LAND FORMATION IS ALREADY COMPLETED AND PILING WORK IS ABOUT TO START, HE SAID.

FOR FANLING AND SHEUNG SHUI, MR. TSO SAID, IT IS PLANNED THAT THE FIRST PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATE WILL BE FINISHED BY 1981.

+AT THE SAME TIME, WE HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGING PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT IN TAI PO EITHER THROUGH AUCTIONS OR EXCHANGES OF LAND, AND MANY PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL BLOCKS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED,+ HE SAID.

+OF COURSE, THERE ARE ALSO PLANS IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR HOSPITALS, PLAYGROUNDS, COMMUNITY CENTRES AND OTHER RECREATIONAL AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES,+ HE SAID.

MR. TSO SAID THAT IN ORDER TO FACILITATE RAPID DEVELOPMENT, IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE SMOOTH TRAFFIC BETWEEN URBAN KOWLOON AND TAI PO DISTRICT.

TO THIS END, HE SAID, THE GOVERNMENT HAS EMBARKED ON A MAJOR ROAD IMPROVEMENT SCHEME WHICH FEATURES A COASTAL ROAD BEING BUILT FROM SHA TIN TO TAI PO, WITH A DISTRIBUTORY ROAD LEADING FROM TAI PO TO FANLING.

ON THE TAI PO INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, MR. TSO SAID THE FIRST PHASE RECLAMATION WAS COMPLETED AND THE SECOND PHASE HAS JUST STARTED.

THE INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN HONG KONG, IS EXPECTED TO CREATE JOBS FOR 8,000 TO 10,000 PEOPLE ON FULL DEVELOPMENT, HE SAID.

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SIR DENYS TO ACT AS GOVERNOR

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SIR DENYS ROBERTS, CHIEF SECRETARY, RETURNED TO HONG KONG LAST (SATURDAY) NIGHT. FOLLOWING THE GOVERNOR'S DEPARTURE FOR TALKS IN LONDON THIS (SUNDAY) AFTERNOON, SIR DENYS WILL ASSUME DUTY AS ACTING GOVERNOR WITH EFFECT FROM TODAY.

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P.W.D. SWIMMING GALA A SUCCESS

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THREE RECORDS WERE BROKEN IN THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT'S NINTH SWIMMING GALA HELD AT THE ABERDEEN SWIMMING POOL TODAY.

THEY WERE THE LADIES' 25 METRES FREESTYLE, MEN'S 200 METRES BREASTSTROKE AND THE MEN'S 100 METRES BREASTSTROKE.

YEUNG WAI-KEUNG OF THE WATERWORKS OFFICE STOLE THE SHOW BY WINNING THE INDIVIDUAL CHAMPIONSHIP.

THE ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL OFFICE WON THE TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP BY SCORING 220 POINTS.

SOME 300 SWIMMERS TOOK PART IN OVER 20 EVENTS.

MR. WILLIAM BELL, ACTING DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS= MRS. BELL= MISS HONG KONG 1977, MISS LOLLETA CHU, AND DIRECTORS OF VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS OF THE P.W.D. PRESENTED TROPHIES TO WINNERS.

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HER LIFE, MISS CHU FIRED A GUN TO START THE MEN'S 4 X 50 METRES DEPARTMENTAL FREESTYLE RELAY INVITATION RACE, WHICH WAS WON BY THE ROYAL HONG KONG POLICE FORCE.

EARLIER, MRS. BELL AND MISS CHU JOINTLY OPENED THE SWIMMING GALA BY PERFORMING AT A RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY.

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## PREVENTION AGAINST CHOLERA

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THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT HAS ADVISED THAT IN THE PREVENTION OF CHOLERA IT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO FOCUS ATTENTION ON ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANLINESS AND PERSONAL HYGIENE RATHER THAN TO DEPEND ON JUST THE INOCULATION.

OUTBREAKS OF CHOLERA HAVE RECENTLY BEEN REPORTED IN MANY COUNTRIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT TODAY EXPLAINED THAT EXPERIENCE IN THE LAST TWO DECADES FROM THE CHOLERA INFECTED COUNTRIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA SHOWED THAT THE USE OF CHOLERA VACCINE HAD NOT BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF THE DISEASE ALTHOUGH THIS, TO AN EXTENT, AFFORDS SOME PERSONAL PROTECTION.

+EXPERIENCE HAS ALSO SHOWN THAT THE MOST RELIABLE AND EFFECTIVE MEASURES ARE TO ENSURE CLEANLINESS IN THE PREPARATION AND CONSUMPTION OF FOOD AND WATER, AND GOOD PERSONAL HYGIENE,+ HE SAID.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID GOOD PERSONAL HYGIENE MEANT THE WASHING OF HANDS BEFORE MEALS AND AFTER VISITS TO THE TOILET.

+THESE SIMPLE RULES OF PERSONAL HYGIENE ARE VERY ESSENTIAL BECAUSE THE CHOLERA VIBRIO, OR DISEASE GERM, CANNOT ENTER THE HUMAN BODY UNLESS IT IS SWALLOWED.+

FOOD AND DRINK COULD BE CONTAMINATED BY DIRTY HANDS, AND THE DISEASE COULD ALSO BE TRANSMITTED BY A FLY CARRYING THE GERM IF THE INSECT WERE PERMITTED TO SETTLE ON FOOD, HE SAID.

+FOR THIS REASON, THE PUBLIC MUST ENSURE THAT FOOD IS THOROUGHLY COOKED AND WATER BOILED BEFORE CONSUMPTION. THEY SHOULD NOT BE LEFT IN THE OPEN AND SO EXPOSED TO CONTAMINATION.+

THE SPOKESMAN SAID WITH THE OUTBREAKS OF CHOLERA IN MANY NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES BOTH THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT HAVE INTENSIFIED PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES AGAINST THE DISEASE.

FOR INSTANCE, AIRCRAFT AND VESSELS COMING FROM INFECTED AREAS ARE INSPECTED AND PASSENGERS PUT UNDER SURVEILLANCE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE PORT HEALTH OFFICERS. Eatables arriving from infected territories, such as fruits, are carefully scrutinized by health inspectors while regular inspections of food stalls and restaurants are carried out to ensure a high standard of food hygiene.

IN ADDITION, THE TESTING OF NIGHTSOIL AND STOOL CULTURES, AND SAMPLES OF ALL CASES OF DIARRHOEA IS CONDUCTED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR SO THAT ANY SUSPECTED CASE OF CHOLERA WHICH COMES TO LIGHT WOULD BE IMMEDIATELY ISOLATED.

/THE SPOKESMAN .....

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THE SPOKESMAN SAID THERE IS SUFFICIENT STOCK OF ANTI-CHOLERA VACCINE FOR PEOPLE WHO WANT IT, AND ISOLATION FACILITIES ARE ADEQUATE TO DEAL WITH AN EMERGENCY SITUATION.

HOWEVER, HE EMPHASISED THAT ANTI-CHOLERA VACCINE BY ITSELF WOULD ONLY GIVE PARTIAL AND LIMITED PROTECTION INDIVIDUALLY AND INOCULATION AGAINST CHOLERA IS AN ADJUVANT MEASURE TO THE MUCH MORE IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENTAL AND PERSONAL HEALTH MEASURES WHICH ARE EFFECTIVE IN PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF THE DISEASE.

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CAMPAIGN AGAINST ILLEGAL STRUCTURES IN TAI PO  
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THE TAI PO DISTRICT OFFICE HAS STEPPED UP ITS CAMPAIGN TO RID THE DISTRICT OF ILLEGAL STRUCTURES AND TO DETER FURTHER SQUATTERS.

THE OPERATION IS ALREADY HAVING THE DESIRED EFFECT, THE TAI PO ASSISTANT DISTRICT OFFICER, MR. MARTIN WHITE, SAID TODAY.

HE POINTED OUT THAT SINCE THE CAMPAIGN STARTED SIX MONTHS AGO, AROUND 300 ILLEGAL STRUCTURES HAD BEEN CLEARED -- WITH ALMOST 20 PER CENT OF THEM BEING DEMOLISHED BY THEIR +OWNERS+.

+THE FACT THAT SO MANY MORE PEOPLE ARE NOW DEMOLISHING THEIR OWN STRUCTURES SHOWS THAT IT IS BECOMING BETTER UNDERSTOOD THAT ILLEGAL STRUCTURES WILL NOT BE TOLERATED IN TAI PO,+ HE SAID.

+ANOTHER ENCOURAGING POINT IS THAT THE NUMBER OF NEW ILLEGAL STRUCTURES BEING BUILT IS SLOWING DOWN IN APRIL= WHEN WE STARTED 106 NEW ILLEGAL STRUCTURES WENT UP AND IN THE FOLLOWING MONTH THERE WERE 109.

+BUT IN THE MONTHS AFTER THAT THE FIGURES DIPPED SIGNIFICANTLY AND HAVE LEVELLED OFF TO ABOUT 60 A MONTH.+

MR. WHITE SAID THE STRUCTURES WHICH SO FAR HAD BEEN HARDEST-HIT WERE ILLEGAL INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL PREMISES.

+PEOPLE HAVE QUITE ILLEGALLY ESTABLISHED INDUSTRIAL CONCERNS SUCH AS DYEING AND BLEACHING WORKS, TANNERIES, SHOPS AND FACTORIES OF ALL DESCRIPTIONS,+ HE SAID.

+SOME OF THESE ARE QUITE SUBSTANTIAL STRUCTURES BUILT OF PRE-STRESSED CONCRETE THAT MUST HAVE COST TENS OF THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS.

+THEIR PRESENCE IS MOST UNFAIR ON LEGITIMATE BUSINESSMEN WHO HAVE GONE THROUGH THE PROPER CHANNELS AND HAVE ACQUIRED LAND AT MARKET PRICES.

+IN SOME CASES, THESE ILLEGAL STRUCTURES ALSO SPOIL THE ENVIRONMENT, WHICH IS ONE OF THE BAD SIDE EFFECTS THIS TYPE OF BUILDING HAS ON LOCAL PEOPLE.+

FURTHERMORE, MR. WHITE SAID, THE DISTRICT OFFICE WAS NOW EXTENDING ITS DRIVE TO ALL TYPES OF STRUCTURES, AND WAS PREPARING TO BACK UP ITS DRIVE WITH NOT ONLY DEMOLITIONS BUT ALSO PROSECUTIONS.

+WE INTEND TO GO TO COURT WHERE THERE HAS BEEN A FLAGRANT BREACH OF THE LAW AND WHERE PEOPLE HAVE CONTINUOUSLY IGNORED OUR WARNINGS ABOUT BUILDING ILLEGALLY,+ HE SAID.

/+WHILE WE .....

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+WHILE WE ARE TAKING FIRM ACTION AGAINST ILLEGAL STRUCTURES, THE STAFF MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ADVISE PEOPLE WHO ARE IN BREACH OF THE LAW TO CORRECT THE SITUATION.

+THIS IS PART OF THE EDUCATIONAL SIDE OF THE CAMPAIGN AND WITH THE FALLING OFF IN THE NUMBER OF NEW STRUCTURES, IT IS CLEARLY HAVING SOME EFFECT.

+WE ARE ALSO PLANNING TO PRODUCE POSTERS AND LEAFLETS AS A FURTHER EDUCATIONAL AND PREVENTIVE MEASURE,+ MR. WHITE ADDED.

MR. WHITE WARNED SQUATTERS WHO MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO MOVE TO THE ADJOINING YUEN LONG DISTRICT NOT TO DO SO.

+THOSE WHO HAVE TRIED THIS HAVE DISCOVERED THAT THE SAME FIRM ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN AGAINST THEM IN YUEN LONG,+ HE ADDED.

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SURVEY OF EMPLOYMENT IN INDUSTRY AND BUSINESS SECTORS  
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THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT IS CONDUCTING A SURVEY OF EMPLOYMENT AND VACANCIES IN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES, IMPORT/EXPORT, WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADES, BANKING AND INSURANCE, AS WELL AS OTHER SELECTED TRADES AND SERVICES.

THE SURVEY REFERS TO THE EMPLOYMENT SITUATION IN THE THIRD QUARTER OF 1977 AND IS DESIGNED TO REVEAL THE LATEST EMPLOYMENT LEVELS AND TRENDS IN PRINCIPAL SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY.

SURVEY CARDS HAVE BEEN MAILED TO SOME 50,000 ESTABLISHMENTS IN THE VARIOUS ACTIVITIES, WITH A COMPLETE COVERAGE OF THE LARGE CONCERNS AND A RANDOM SAMPLE OF THE SMALLER ONES.

ON RECEIPT OF SURVEY CARDS, MANAGERMENTS OF INDIVIDUAL ESTABLISHMENTS ARE ASKED TO COMPLETE THEM WITH FIGURES ON PERSONS ENGAGED AND EXISTING VACANCIES AS AT THE DATE INDICATED ON THE CARDS, AND TO RETURN THEM PROMPTLY TO THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT USING THE POSTAGE-PAID REPLY ENVELOPE ATTACHED.

THE COMMISSIONER FOR CENSUS AND STATISTICS APPEALS TO MANAGERMENTS FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE AND CO-OPERATION IN THE SURVEY. HE EMPHASIZES THAT PROMPT RETURN OF SURVEY CARDS TO THE DEPARTMENT IS ESSENTIAL FOR EARLY RELEASE OF SURVEY RESULTS.

THE INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY INDIVIDUAL ESTABLISHMENTS WILL BE TREATED IN STRICT CONFIDENCE AND WILL BE USED SOLELY FOR COMPILING STATISTICAL TABLES.

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TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS FOR MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED TODAY (SUNDAY) THAT SPECIAL TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE IMPLEMENTED ON TUESDAY (SEPTEMBER 27) TO FACILITATE PEOPLE TO GO TO THE PEAK AND THE NEW TERRITORIES TO CELEBRATE THE MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL.

ON HONG KONG ISLAND, THE METERED PARKING SPACES IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT TO THE C.M.B. BUS STAND AT THE UPPER PEAK TRAM TERMINUS CAR PARK WILL BE SUSPENDED BETWEEN 2 P.M. ON TUESDAY AND 8 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY.

ALL OTHER PARKING FACILITIES AT THE PEAK CAR PARK WILL BE SUSPENDED FROM 6 P.M. ON TUESDAY TO 2 A.M. ON WEDNESDAY AND ONLY FRANCHISED PUBLIC OMNIBUSES, PEAK MAXICABS AND TAXIS WILL BE ALLOWED TO USE THESE SPACES.

ONLY RESIDENT'S VEHICLES WILL BE ALLOWED TO ENTER MOUNT AUSTIN ROAD BETWEEN 6 P.M. ON TUESDAY AND 2 A.M. ON WEDNESDAY.

ALL TRAFFIC PROCEEDING TO AND FROM THE PEAK AREA WILL BE DIVERTED FROM PEAK ROAD INTO THE UPPER PEAK TRAM TERMINUS CAR PARK AS AND WHEN REQUIRED BY POLICE OFFICERS. DIVERSIONS IN PEAK ROAD AND MAGAZINE GAP ROAD MAY ALSO BE IMPOSED AT ANY TIME, AS DIRECTED BY POLICE OFFICERS, WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

ALL MOTORISTS ARE ADVISED THAT PARKING FACILITIES IN THE PEAK AREA WILL BE EXTREMELY LIMITED AND THEY ARE THEREFORE REQUESTED TO MAKE FULL USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT. TRAFFIC POLICE OFFICERS WILL BE IN ATTENDANCE AND TEMPORARY SIGNS WILL BE POSTED. MOTORISTS ARE WARNED THAT ILLEGALLY PARKED VEHICLES WILL BE TOWED BY THE POLICE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

IN THE NEW TERRITORIES PARKING WILL BE STRICTLY PROHIBITED IN THE PASSING BAYS OF THE BEACH AREA BETWEEN MILESTONE 10 AND MILESTONE 12 ON CASTLE PEAK ROAD. MOTORISTS ARE ADVISED TO USE THE CAR PARK AT TING KAU FOR PARKING PURPOSES.

TRAFFIC IS EXPECTED TO BE HEAVY ALONG TAI PO ROAD AND MOTORISTS PROCEEDING TO OTHER PARTS OF THE NEW TERRITORIES ARE ADVISED TO USE THE ALTERNATIVE ROUTES OF CASTLE PEAK ROAD AND ROUTE TWISK.

A SECTION OF SHING MUN ROAD FROM THE PINE APPLE DAM TO THE JUNCTION OF A SIDE ROAD LEADING TO LO WAI VILLAGE WILL BE CLOSED TO ALL VEHICULAR TRAFFIC BETWEEN 6 P.M. AND MID-NIGHT ON TUESDAY. THE CLOSURE MAY ALSO BE APPLICABLE ON THE FOLLOWING DAY IF THE TRAFFIC SITUATION SO REQUIRES.

IN ADDITION, MOTORISTS ARE ADVISED THAT TSING YI BRIDGE IS AN URBAN CLEARWAY FOR ALL VEHICLES AND NO STOPPING ON THE BRIDGE IS ALLOWED.

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LACK OF RAIN BRINGS HIGH FIRE RISK  
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LACK OF RAINFALL THIS YEAR MAY PORTEND MORE THAN THE PROSPECT OF CONTINUED WATER RESTRICTIONS FOR HONG KONG.

FIRE SERVICES AND FORESTRY PERSONNEL, NOW BUSY PREPARING TO COUNTER THE TRADITIONAL FIRE RISKS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE OVER THE WINTER MONTHS, ARE BRACING FOR EVEN MORE HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS AS A RESULT OF THE DROUGHT.

THERE HAVE ALREADY BEEN A NUMBER OF HILL FIRES REPORTED IN RECENT WEEKS, AND WITH THE WEATHER TURNING COOLER AND DRIER, THE INCIDENCE IS LIKELY TO CLIMB RAPIDLY.

THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT, WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT, IS PREPARING ITS CONTINGENCY PLAN TO PROVIDE FIRE FIGHTING SERVICES WITHIN PLANTATION AREAS.

THESE SERVICES WILL TAKE EFFECT WHEN THE FIRE SEASON OFFICIALLY COMMENCES AT THE START OF OCTOBER, AND WILL CONTINUE UNTIL APRIL NEXT YEAR.

ADDING TO THE INFLAMMABLE CONDITIONS CAUSED BY LACK OF RAINFALL IS THE HIGHER INCIDENCE OF CAMPERS, PICNICKERS AND OTHER VISITORS GOING TO THE COUNTRYSIDE IN LARGE NUMBERS.

THEIR CARELESSNESS CAN START FIRES WHICH DESTROY THOUSANDS OF TREES AND BLACKEN HUNDREDS OF ACRES OF PLEASANT COUNTRYSIDE.

IN ADDITION TO DEFACING THE LANDSCAPE, THESE FIRES EXPOSE MORE SOIL TO THE RISK OF EROSION, WHICH IS ALREADY A VERY SERIOUS PROBLEM. THE RESULTING DESTRUCTION IS SO COSTLY THAT THE COMMUNITY CANNOT AFFORD TO LET IT CONTINUE UNCHECKED.

A SPOKESMAN OF THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT TODAY APPEALED TO THE PUBLIC TO EXERCISE EXTRA CAUTION AGAINST FIRE DURING PICNICS AND EXCURSIONS.

HE POINTED OUT THAT IT IS NOW AN OFFENCE TO LIGHT OR USE A FIRE IN OR NEAR A FOREST, PLANTATION, PROHIBITED AREA OR AREA OF OPEN COUNTRYSIDE. IT IS ALSO AN OFFENCE TO BE IN A GROUP OF PEOPLE USING SUCH A FIRE, WHETHER OR NOT IT WAS LIT BY A MEMBER OF THAT GROUP.

HE SAID, DURING THE FIRE SEASON EVERY YEAR, A HANDFUL OF DEDICATED FOREST WATCHERS ARE POSTED AT VARIOUS POINTS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES TO WATCH FOR THE OUTBREAK OF FIRE.

THESE MEN SPEND THE WINTER IN 'FIRE LOOKOUTS' WHICH ARE LOCATED ON THE TOPS OF HILLS OVERLOOKING LARGE AREAS OF WOODLAND MANAGED BY THE DEPARTMENT. AT TIMES BRAVING ZERO-DEGREE TEMPERATURES, THEY FACE A SPARTAN LIFE.

/THERE ARE .....

THERE ARE SEVEN SUCH LOOKOUT CABINS NESTLED ON PEAKS AT LEAST 1,200 FEET HIGH. THEY ARE LOCATED AT GOLDEN HILL, TAI MO SHAN, PAT HEUNG, LAM TEI, TIN FU TSAI, TAI PO KAU AND SHAP LONG.

EACH OF THESE LOOKOUT CABINS IS EQUIPPED WITH A FIELD TELEPHONE LINKING TO A FOREST MANAGEMENT CENTRE, A WALKIE-TALKIE RADIO TRANSCEIVER, A PAIR OF BINOCULARS AND A MAP.

FOUR EXPERIENCED MEN ARE ASSIGNED TO EACH LOOKOUT POST TO CARRY OUT FIRE SPOTTING DUTIES. THEY WORK ON TWO SHIFTS OF 24 HOURS EACH.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THESE WATCHERS AT THE LOOKOUT POSTS USUALLY HAD AT LEAST 10 YEARS EXPERIENCE IN PLANTATION PROTECTION WORK.

+THEY MUST ALSO KNOW ALL THE VARIOUS PARTS OF THE PLANTATION AREAS LIKE THE BACKS OF THEIR HANDS,+ HE SAID.

WITH THIS KNOWLEDGE, HE EMPHASISED, THE FOREST WATCHERS CAN IMMEDIATELY REPORT A FIRE AND PINPOINT ITS LOCATION WITHOUT HAVING TO RELY ON A MAP. THEREFORE, SPEED AND FAMILIARITY WITH THE LOCAL TOPOGRAPHY ARE OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE IN FIGHTING FOREST OR HILL FIRES.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID WHEN A FIRE WAS SPOTTED, IT WAS IMMEDIATELY REPORTED TO THE FOREST MANAGEMENT CENTRE WITH THE USE OF THE FIELD TELEPHONE.

ONCE THE FIELD ASSISTANT OF THE MANAGEMENT CENTRE RECEIVED THE MESSAGE, HE WOULD REPORT TO THE HEADQUARTERS FIRE CONTROL DUTY OFFICER BASED AT KOWLOON HILL FOREST OFFICE WHICH ACTS AS A FOREST FIRE CONTROL CENTRE. AND THE DUTY OFFICER THERE WILL AGAIN RELAY THE MESSAGE TO THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT FOR INFORMATION.

+THIS IS WHAT WE CALL THE FIRST STRIKE OPERATION,+ HE EXPLAINED, +AT THIS POINT, THE FIELD ASSISTANT WILL LEAD A 10-MAN CREW TO THE FIRE SCENE.+

THERE ARE 16 MANAGEMENT CENTRES AT WHICH FIRE CREWS ARE BASED. ALL CREWS ARE MOBILE AND ARE EQUIPPED WITH WALKIE-TALKIES, FIRE BEATERS AND HAND-OPERATED PUMPS. THE LARGER CREWS ARE ALSO EQUIPPED WITH MOTOR-DRIVEN HIGH PRESSURE PUMPS AND HOSES.

THE MANAGEMENT CENTRE MUST REPORT EVERY HILL FIRE TO THE FIRE CONTROL HEADQUARTERS IN KOWLOON HILL FROM WHERE ALL FIRE FIGHTING OPERATIONS ARE CO-ORDINATED.

+WHEN THE FIRE FIGHTERS CANNOT COPE WITH THE BLAZE AND REQUIRE REINFORCEMENT, THE REQUEST IS OFTEN MADE TO THE LOOKOUT FROM WHERE THE MESSAGE IS PASSED ON TO THE MANAGEMENT CENTRE,+ THE SPOKESMAN POINTED OUT.

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+IF THE FIRE HAZARD IS UPGRADED TO THE SECOND STRIKE, WHEN REINFORCEMENT IS REQUIRED, THE HEADQUARTERS CALLS IN THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT. SOME 40 FIREMEN WILL RUSH TO THE FIRE SCENE AND AN ASSISTANT DIVISIONAL OFFICER OF THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT WILL BE POSTED TO FIRE CONTROL HEADQUARTERS AT KOWLOON HILLS FOREST OFFICE.

+HE WILL MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH F.S.D. FIRE CONTROL TOGETHER WITH AN OFFICER FROM THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT (A.F.D.) TO FORM AN 'AFD/FSD' LIAISON TEAM.+

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT EXPLAINED THAT ONCE THEY WERE CALLED IN TO FIGHT THE FIRE, THE TACTICAL RESERVE UNIT STATIONED AT THE NEW TERRITORIES WOULD RUSH TO THE VICINITY TO ASSIST AND THE F.S.D. WOULD TAKE UP THE COMMAND OF FIRE FIGHTING OPERATIONS AT THE FIRE SCENE.

+THE ASSISTANT DIVISIONAL OFFICER WILL SET UP HIS OWN COMMAND UNIT AT KOWLOON HILLS FOREST OFFICE OR A STRATEGIC LOCATION TO COMMAND THE FIRE FIGHTING WHILE THE A.F.D. PERSONNEL WILL ASSIST AND ADVISE THE FIRE OPERATION,+ HE ADDED.

IF THE HILL FIRE HAZARD IS +EXTREME+ AND MIGHT ENDANGER LIFE OR PROPERTY, THE OPERATION WILL BE UPGRADED TO A THIRD STRIKE. HELP WILL THEN BE PROVIDED FROM SUBSEQUENT MOBILIZATION OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, I.E. HM FORCES, THE VOLUNTEERS, RHKAFF AND C.A.S. PERSONNEL.

+SOMETIMES THE HELICOPTERS OF THE ROYAL HONG KONG AUXILIARY AIR FORCE WILL BE CALLED OUT FOR WATER BOMBING,+ THE SPOKESMAN ADDED. +THIS INVOLVES UNLOADING LARGE VOLUMES OF WATER OVER THE FIRE AREA.+

IN ADDITION, SOME 60 CAS MEMBERS, TOGETHER WITH CADETS, WILL BE ON FULL ALERT DURING WEEKENDS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS IN PEAK FIRE SEASON. THESE ARE USUALLY STATIONED AT PAT HEUNG FIRE SERVICES TRAINING SCHOOL AND SAI KUNG FIRE STATION. THEY WILL BE UNDER THE DIRECTION OF F.S.D. WHO WILL ON HAND TO ASSIST WHEN NECESSARY.

THE SPOKESMAN OF THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT STRESSED THAT PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE, SO THAT MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL IS THE CO-OPERATION OF THE PUBLIC.

HE SAID, PRACTICALLY ALL THESE FIRES WERE CAUSED BY THE CARELESSNESS OF PEOPLE - THROWING AWAY LIGHTED CIGARETTE ENDS, LIGHTING BON-FIRES OR PICNIC FIRES ON WINDY DAYS OR CLOSE TO DRY LEAVES AND GRASS, LEAVING JOSS PAPER OR STICKS BURNING UNATTENDED AT HILLSIDE GRAVES.

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