



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

SUNDAY, JULY 27, 1975

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MORE PEOPLE USE PUBLIC TRANSPORT
THAN EVER BEFORE

THE FIRST HALF OF 1975 SAW AN ALL-TIME RECORD IN THE USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES FOR ANY SIX-MONTH PERIOD, WITH THE NUMBER OF VEHICLES, MOSTLY PRIVATE CARS, CONTINUING TO DROP.

OFFICIAL STATISTICS INDICATE THAT A LOT MORE PEOPLE ARE NOW USING PUBLIC TRANSPORT THAN EVER BEFORE, WHILE THE NUMBER OF REGISTERED VEHICLES HAS FALLEN TO 189,000 FROM THE HIGHEST OF 202,953 IN NOVEMBER 1973.

MORE THAN 588.2 MILLION PEOPLE USED BUSES, FERRIES, TRAMS AND TRAINS IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS THIS YEAR - 46.3 MILLION OR 8.5 PER CENT MORE THAN IN THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR.

COMMENTING ON THE DEVELOPMENT, MR. PETER MILLER, ACTING ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT, SAID TODAY MORE FREQUENT AND QUICKER BUS SERVICES, COUPLED WITH IMPROVED HIGHWAY AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SCHEMES, HAD MADE THE USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT MORE POPULAR.

BASED ON THE FIGURES FOR THIS YEAR, HE SAID, IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THE DAILY AVERAGE OF PASSENGERS USING PUBLIC TRANSPORT WOULD REACH A STAGGERING 5.1 MILLION BY THE YEAR'S END, OF WHICH 44.9 PER CENT WOULD BE BY BUS, 23.8 PER CENT BY MINIBUS, 12 PER CENT BY TAXIS OR HIRE CAR, 10.7 PER CENT BY FERRY, 7.9 PER CENT BY TRAM AND 0.7 PER CENT BY RAILWAY.

+AND IF THE PRESENT TRENDS CONTINUE WITH VEHICLE REGISTRATION, THE NUMBER OF VEHICLES ON THE ROADS COULD WELL DROP TO 113,000 BY DECEMBER THIS YEAR,+ HE ADDED.

MR. MILLER INDICATED THAT 1975 WOULD LIKELY BECOME A SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FULLY INTEGRATED AND EFFICIENT PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEM IN HONG KONG, WITH COMPREHENSIVE ALTERNATIVE MODES OF TRAVEL +THE ENVY OF ANY URBAN CENTRE IN THE WORLD.+

HE NOTED THAT THE COST OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT FARES IN REAL TERMS WAS IN FACT LESS THAN IT WAS THREE YEARS AGO, ALLOWING FOR THE RATE OF INFLATION.

ENCOURAGING STATISTICS SHOW THAT FROM JANUARY TO JUNE THIS YEAR, THE KOWLOON MOTOR BUS COMPANY CARRIED 307.3 MILLION PASSENGERS, WHICH REPRESENTS AN INCREASE OF 33.2 MILLION OR 12.1 PER CENT OVER THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 1974.

/THE CHINA

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THE CHINA MOTOR BUS COMPANY CARRIED MORE THAN 103 MILLION PASSENGERS, NEARLY 16 MILLION OR 18.1 PER CENT MORE THAN IN THE FIRST HALF OF LAST YEAR.

MR. MILLER SAID THE CROSS-HARBOUR ROUTES INTRODUCED BY THE TWO BUS COMPANIES WERE THE MAIN FACTOR FOR THE INCREASE IN PASSENGER FIGURES, ANOTHER REASON BEING THE INTRODUCTION OF URBAN EXPRESS SERVICES AND NEW COACH SERVICES FOR OFFICE WORKERS AND FORMER PRIVATE CAR USERS.

HE SAID THE NUMBER OF PASSENGERS USING CROSS-HARBOUR FERRY SERVICES DECLINED BY ABOUT 4.5 MILLION OR 4.7 PER CENT TO 90.7 MILLION IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS, BUT 9.3 PER CENT MORE, OR 7.4 MILLION PASSENGERS, USED SERVICES TO OUTLYING ISLANDS AND OTHER RESORTS.

ON PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES, HE SAID THERE WAS DOUBT AMONG TRANSPORT PLANNERS AS TO WHETHER AS MANY PEOPLE AS 1.2 MILLION, ESTIMATED IN 1973, WERE STILL USING THIS MODE OF TRANSPORT EACH DAY.

+THEIR FEELING IS THAT THE DAILY FIGURE IS NOW MUCH SMALLER AND THAT A MORE EVIDENT DECLINE WOULD SHOW IN THE NEAR FUTURE. HOWEVER, THERE WERE 4,308 PLBS LICENSED AT THE END OF LAST MONTH, COMPARED TO 3,943 IN JANUARY 1974,+ HE SAID.

THE REASONS THEY SUGGEST FOR THE REDUCTION IN PLB PASSENGERS ARE THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW BUS SERVICES IN URBAN AREAS WHERE MOST PLBS OPERATE, AND THE CHARGING OF ARBITRARY FARES BY OPERATORS DURING PEAK HOURS, HE SAID.

THE INCREASING POPULARITY OF THE CROSS-HARBOUR BUS ROUTES AT CHEAPER FARES COULD WELL BE ANOTHER FACTOR, HE ADDED.

AS REGARDS TAXIS AND HIRE CARS, MR. MILLER SAID THEY CARRIED A RELATIVELY SMALL PROPORTION, ABOUT 12 PER CENT, OF THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC, AND IT WAS FELT THAT THE REVISED STANDARD FARE OF \$2 FOR THE FIRST MILE MIGHT HAVE DISCOURAGED TAXI USAGE. AT PRESENT, THERE ARE 6,037 TAXIS AND PUBLIC HIRE CARS, AS COMPARED TO 2,164 BUSES.

IN THE TRAFFIC SCENE, ROAD CONGESTION HAS GENERALLY EASED. A RECENT SURVEY SHOWS THAT THE BAN ON KERBSIDE STOPPING BY VEHICLES AND THE PROHIBITION OF PLBS IN SOME PART OF CENTRAL DISTRICT DURING PEAK HOURS HAS IMPROVED TRAFFIC FLOW THERE.

MR. MILLER SAID: +THE INTRODUCTION OF 'BUS ONLY LANES' AND 'TRAM RESERVES' IN SOME SECTION OF CENTRAL DISTRICT, PARTICULARLY THE BLACK SPOTS BETWEEN QUEENSWAY AND CENTRAL MARKET, IS EXPECTED TO FURTHER IMPROVE TRAFFIC CONDITIONS.+

/HE POINTED

HE POINTED OUT THAT GOVERNMENT WAS ALREADY PUSHING AHEAD WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF BETTER AND WIDER DUAL-CARRIAGEWAYS AND FLYOVERS IN KOWLOON URBAN AREAS AND IN THE WESTERN NEW TERRITORIES.

HOWEVER, HE SOUNDED A NOTE OF CAUTION: +WITH THE PROGRAMME FOR NEW BUS TERMINI AND FERRY PIERS BEHIND SCHEDULE THUS AFFECTING SERVICE EXPANSION PROPOSALS, THE MARKED GROWTH IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT USERS MAY NOT CONTINUE AT THE PRESENT RATE.+

NOTE TO EDITORS:

COPIES OF A GRAPH SHOWING THE GROWTH OF POPULATION, PUBLIC TRANSPORT PASSENGERS AND VEHICLE REGISTRATION, ARE NOW AVAILABLE FOR COLLECTION FROM G.I.S. NEWS ROOM, 6TH FLOOR, BEACONSFIELD HOUSE.

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AMBULANCES TAKE ON DISTINCTIVE NEW LOOK
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THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT'S AMBULANCES ARE TAKING ON A NEW LOOK TO MAKE THEM READILY RECOGNISABLE AS EMERGENCY VEHICLES.

THE AMBULANCES ARE BEING DECORATED WITH A RED SASH PAINTED ROUND THE MIDDLE SO THAT MOTORISTS COULD IDENTIFY THEM FASTER AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION TO GIVE THEM A CLEAR PATH.

A FIRE SERVICES SPOKESMAN EXPLAINED THAT, WITH THE PRESENT NOISE LEVELS IN HONG KONG, IT WAS NOT ALWAYS EASY TO HEAR THE WAIL OF AMBULANCE SIRENS UNTIL THE AMBULANCE WAS QUITE CLOSE. AND WITH THE LARGE NUMBERS OF VEHICLES ON THE ROAD, AMBULANCES WERE SOMETIMES NOT READILY IDENTIFIABLE.

+THE RED SASH ON THE AMBULANCE WILL HELP MOTORISTS TO RECOGNISE IT IMMEDIATELY AND MAKE WAY FOR IT,+ HE SAID.

SO FAR, 12 OF THE 91 AMBULANCES HAVE BEEN PAINTED WITH THE RED LINE, INCLUDING FIVE NEW ONES PUT INTO SERVICE RECENTLY.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

COPIES OF A PHOTOGRAPH SHOWING THE 'NEW LOOK' AMBULANCE ARE NOW AVAILABLE FOR COLLECTION FROM G.I.S. NEWS ROOM, 6TH FLOOR, BEACONSFIELD HOUSE.

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HONG KONG VIRTUALLY FREE FROM SERIOUS OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES

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SERIOUS OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS AND DISEASES WHICH PLAGUED HONG KONG'S INDUSTRIAL WORKERS 20 YEARS AGO HAVE NOW BEEN ALMOST ENTIRELY ERADICATED - THANKS MAINLY TO EFFORTS OF THE INDUSTRIAL HEALTH DIVISION OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT.

HEADED BY A TEAM OF MEDICAL DOCTORS, THE DIVISION SPECIALISES IN SAFEGUARDING THE HEALTH OF THE LABOUR FORCE.

ITS WORK IS MAINLY CONCERNED WITH THE PREVENTION OF OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES, THE PROMOTION OF GOOD HEALTH THROUGH A BETTER WORKING ENVIRONMENT, AND THE SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION OF WORKING CONDITIONS IN INDUSTRIES KNOWN TO BE HAZARDOUS.

THE DIVISION IS HEADED BY DR. LAI SAU-SHUE WHO IS SECONDED FROM THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

HE SAID TODAY THAT THE MOST COMMON TYPES OF OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS - INCLUDING HIGH CONCENTRATIONS OF TOXIC GASES AND VAPOURS, DUST, RADIATION, EXCESSIVE NOISE, POOR LIGHTING AND VENTILATION -- HAD ALL BEEN BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL.

+THIS IS PARTLY BECAUSE PROPRIETORS HAVE BECOME MORE AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF A BETTER WORKING ENVIRONMENT, AND PARTLY BECAUSE OF THE CHANGING NATURE OF OUR INDUSTRIES AND THE WAY THEY ARE RUN,+ HE SAID.

DR. LAI SAID THAT HAZARDOUS AGENTS IN THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT, IF NOT CONTAINED WITHIN SAFETY LIMITS, COULD BRING ABOUT A VARIETY OF HEALTH PROBLEMS RANGING FROM SERIOUS BLOOD DISEASES TO SLIGHT VOMITTING AND NAUSEA.

+FACTORY INSPECTORS MAKE REGULAR VISITS TO FACTORIES AND WHEN THEY NOTICE ANY OCCUPATIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS, THE CASES ARE REFERRED TO US FOR ADVICE,+ HE SAID.

OFFICERS FROM THE DIVISION WOULD THEN VISIT THE FACTORY CONCERNED TO ASSESS THE SITUATION AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS.

MOST FACTORY OWNERS ACCEPTED THESE RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROMPTLY IMPROVED THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT. ONLY ON A FEW OCCASIONS HAD IT BEEN NECESSARY TO USE STATUTORY POWERS PROVIDED UNDER THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS REGULATIONS TO EFFECT IMPROVEMENTS.

+OUR DIVISION ALSO RECEIVES COMPLAINTS FROM FACTORY WORKERS WHO MAY REPORT ANY SUSPECTED HEALTH HAZARDS IN THEIR WORKING ENVIRONMENT,+ DR. LAI SAID. +EACH CASE IS INVESTIGATED THOROUGHLY, FOLLOWED BY APPROPRIATE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS.

/BESIDES

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BESIDES CHECKING THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT, THE UNIT ALSO CONDUCTS BIOLOGICAL MONITORING OF WORKERS ENGAGED IN HAZARDOUS INDUSTRIES.

MINERS, DIVERS, COMPRESSED AIR WORKERS, RADIATION WORKERS AND FLUORINATION WORKERS ARE EXAMINED REGULARLY TO SAFEGUARD THEIR HEALTH AND TO PREVENT THE OCCURRENCE OF ANY OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE.

THE DIVISION HAS PRODUCED A SERIES OF FREE PAMPHLETS, GIVING POINTERS FOR THE PROTECTION OF WORKERS AGAINST HARMFUL SUBSTANCES AND ADVERSE WORKING CONDITIONS. IT ALSO GIVES ADVICE TO SMALL FACTORIES ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF INDUSTRIAL MEDICAL SERVICES.

TO ASSIST ITS WORK, THE DIVISION RUNS AN INDUSTRIAL HEALTH LABORATORY WHICH IS EQUIPPED WITH A WIDE RANGE OF INSTRUMENTS FOR MEASURING CONCENTRATIONS OF TOXIC GASES AND VAPOURS, LEVELS OF DUST AND RADIATION, AND THE INTENSITY OF NOISE AND LIGHTING, AND FOR ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF VENTILATION SYSTEMS IN THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT.

THE LABORATORY, WHICH HAS ALREADY BEEN DESIGNATED BY THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION AS A COLLABORATING LABORATORY ON AIR POLLUTION, ALSO CONDUCTS AN AIR POLLUTION MONITORING PROGRAMME.

IT CONSISTS OF 37 STATIONS SCATTERED ALL OVER HONG KONG, FOUR OF WHICH ARE FOR DAILY MEASUREMENTS OF SULPHUR DIOXIDE AND SMOKE, AND THE REST FOR MONTHLY ASSESSMENT OF SULPHUR COMPOUNDS IN THE AIR.

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WELFARE BUILDING CELEBRATES FIRST ANNIVERSARY

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THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT'S ESTATE WELFARE BUILDING IN WESTERN LAM TIN ESTATE IN KOWLOON WILL BE CELEBRATING ITS FIRST ANNIVERSARY NEXT MONTH.

TO MARK THE OCCASION, A SERIES OF COMPETITIONS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WILL BE ORGANISED BY THE BUILDING'S MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE WHICH COMPRISES REPRESENTATIVES OF THE DIFFERENT WELFARE AGENCIES ACCOMMODATED IN THE BUILDING.

THESE WILL INCLUDE A CHINESE ESSAY COMPETITION FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY STUDENTS. THIS WILL BE IN TWO SECTIONS - ONE FOR STUDENTS IN FORM 3 OR ABOVE WHO WILL HAVE TO DO AN ESSAY OF 600 WORDS, AND THE OTHER FOR PRIMARY STUDENTS AND THOSE UP TO FORM 2 WHO WILL HAVE TO WRITE AN ESSAY OF 250 WORDS. EACH GROUP WILL BE GIVEN A CHOICE OF THREE SUBJECTS TO WRITE.

THE CLOSING DATE FOR ENTRIES IS AUGUST 10 AND ESSAYS SHOULD BE SENT TO THE ESTATE COMMUNITY WORK OFFICE ON THE FIRST FLOOR OF THE ESTATE WELFARE BUILDING IN KAI TIN ROAD, LAM TIN ESTATE.

WINNERS WILL RECEIVE THEIR PRIZES AT A CEREMONY TO BE HELD ON AUGUST 19.

IN ADDITION TO THE COMPETITIONS, INDIVIDUAL AGENCIES IN THE BUILDING, SUCH AS THE DEPARTMENT'S KAI YIN TRAINING CENTRE FOR MENTALLY RETARDED YOUNG PERSONS AND THE Y.M.C.A. CENTRE WILL ALSO BE ORGANISING SEPARATE GAMES AND ACTIVITIES FOR THEIR MEMBERS.

THE ESTATE WELFARE BUILDING IS ONE OF SEVEN OPERATED BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT IN HOUSING ESTATES.

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