



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Thursday, October 11, 1973

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SIR ALASTAIR'S SECOND REPORT PUBLISHED

The second report of the Commission of Inquiry conducted by Sir Alastair Blair-Kerr is published today (Thursday).

Commenting on this report the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Denys Roberts, said: "Sir Alastair has produced a lucid, comprehensive examination of corruption which goes into each aspect of the problem thoroughly and impartially.

"In spite of the complexity and legal nature of much of its subject matter, the report is written in language readily understood by the layman.

"It emerges clearly that corruption must be a matter of the utmost concern to all of us in Hong Kong, to private citizens and to civil servants equally. I am certain that the civil service as a whole is ready to play its part in taking vigorous and effective action against corruption.

"The report has been awaited with considerable interest, and no doubt it will stimulate much public discussion. Certainly we would welcome constructive comment.

"The Government entirely accepts the general objectives stated by Sir Alastair as being necessary to combat corruption more effectively. Of course, some of Sir Alastair's proposals raise difficult questions of law and procedure, some of which will need careful consideration. It may therefore, be a little time before definite decisions on all his proposals can be reached.

"However, the Governor, in his address to the Legislative Council at the opening of the new session on Wednesday, 17th October, will announce the Government's attitude towards the principal recommendations."

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EMPLOYERS CAN HELP STAFF BUY FLATS - HOUSING SECRETARY

Mr. Ian Lightbody, Secretary for Housing, today (Thursday) encouraged employers to lend their staff money to make substantial downpayments to buy flats in the private sector.

Speaking at the Personnel Management Club luncheon, Mr. Lightbody said that years ago the government introduced a scheme in which employers could buy land from the government at one-third the market value to build accommodation for employees. A few big firms took advantage of this concession but, over the years, the scheme had virtually died, mainly because of the scarcity of suitable sites and their high value.

"Today if employers seek to assist their staff in any way to get a decent roof over their heads, some other approach is needed," he said.

The Hong Kong Building and Loan Agency, he said, offered mortgage funds over a 12-year repayment period at 10 per cent interest. But land prices had shot up over the past year - although they had started to drift back - and building costs were now around \$90 a square foot of floor space.

"Although the sale price of small flats has dropped by 20 to 25 per cent since the peak reached by the beginning of the year, the price will still be beyond the means of many lower middle-income families who are too well-off to be eligible for public housing and not sufficiently well-off to be able to fend for themselves in the private sector," he said.

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Families with an income below \$3,000 a month could at most allocate a third of its income to mortgage repayments, he added. But on a purchase price of, say, \$100,000, repayments would amount to \$1,200 a month which was more than such a family could be expected to afford.

Mr. Lightbody suggested that a good employer could help his staff to narrow the gap and so bring a flat within his reach by assisting them to make substantial downpayments on concessionary terms with a longer repayment period and interest rates lower than 10 per cent.

"I can visualise that there could be problems to be overcome should it be necessary for the employer and employee to part company for some reason". He went on.

"In this event it would seem that the employee must refund the outstanding capital sum to his employer, failing which the latter would recover the premises from the employee. I am sure that all sorts of problems would emerge on closer inspection but it seems to me that these are matters which conscientious employers, seeking to retain the services of competent staff might well consider in their own interests", said Mr. Lightbody.

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INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL WORK TRAINING BEGINS CLASSES

The first classes at the recently established Institute for Social Work Training will begin on Monday (October 15).

Fifty students have been selected to attend the courses in the first academic year. An orientation programme will be held on Monday morning for the new students to introduce them to the Institute.

A tea reception will also be held at 11 a.m. that day in the gymnasium of the Lady Trench Training Centre, 44 Oi Kwan Road, Wanchai, in which the Institute is housed.

At this reception, students will have an opportunity to meet the Director of Social Welfare, Mr. K.W.J. Topley, the Principal of the Institute, Mr. L.B. MacQuarrie, and members of the Institute's staff and its Academic Board.

The official opening of the Institute will be held at a later date.

Representatives of the press, radio and TV are welcome to attend the reception to meet the students.

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WATER CUT

Water supply to a number of premises in Tsin Sha Tsui will be interrupted for five hours as from 1 a.m. on Saturday (October 13) to facilitate a test for leakage in the district.

The area affected is bounded by Nathan Road, Kimberley Road and Carnarvon Road.

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EXHIBITION OF CONTEMPORARY TIE-DYE CREATIONS

An unusual exhibition of modern tie-dye creations will be held at the City Museum and Art Gallery starting to-morrow (Friday).

Entitled "Fabric Vibrations", the exhibition consists of 26 unique works by 10 contemporary American artists. They are the result of a combination of ancient tie-dye skills and modern synthetic materials, producing a style of vibrating colours and patterns which relate directly to today's youth culture -- their music, their interest in the mystical and their life style.

Among the many attractive hangings and patterned garments on display are some three-dimensional structures. One such is called the "Meditation Tent" with a zipper to ensure complete peace and privacy, and another entitled the "Ceremonial Enclosure", a tall free standing structure with a joyous pattern inviting one to enter its space.

The exhibition is organised by the Museum of Contemporary Crafts, New York, and the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, and is jointly presented in Hong Kong by the Urban Council and the United States Information Service. It will remain on display at the City Museum and Art Gallery until October 28.

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Note to Editors: You are invited to cover the opening of the exhibition which will take place this (Thursday) afternoon at 6 p.m. in the City Museum and Art Gallery.

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EXPORT OF RESTRAINED SHIRTS TO CANADA

The Commerce and Industry Department today instituted a special shipment scheme in respect of restrained shirts to Canada. It will operate until October 29, 1973.

Under the scheme, shirt quotas totalling 11,664 dozen will be made available to all applicants, whether or not they are quota holders, for shipment on or before October 31.

All applications received by Monday (October 15) will be considered together and approved on a proportionate basis, if necessary. Any quantity remaining thereafter will be approved on a first-come first-served basis.

Anyone wishing to seek further information is invited to contact the following officers of the Commerce and Industry Department: Mr. D.L.S. Ip, Assistant Trade Officer, telephone 5-247317; Mr. C.K. Lai, Industry Assistant, telephone 5-445666.

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TRAFFIC CHANGE IN MIDDLE ROAD

Traffic along the section of Middle Road between Ashley Road and Hankow Road will be re-routed one-way westbound as from 10 a.m. on Saturday (October 13) to improve traffic circulation in the area.

Appropriate traffic signs will be posted to guide motorists.

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Release time: 6.30 p.m.