



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Monday, January 15, 1973

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DRAFT WHITE PAPER ON SOCIAL WELFARE

Social Welfare Planning Committee Considers Public Comments

Preparation of the draft white paper on social welfare in the years ahead and its accompanying five-year plan as "a joint exercise between the Government and the private sector" was generally endorsed by the public, according to a breakdown of comments received.

The draft white paper was tabled in the Legislative Council on October 18, 1972, and a foreword invited members of the public to submit their views to the Social Welfare Planning Committee.

In response to this invitation, Mr. F.K. Li, Director of Social Welfare and Chairman of the Committee, said today 167 comments had been received, including eight letters from government departments, 27 from various kaifong associations, 18 from voluntary agencies, 15 from the universities, colleges and schools, and 46 from individuals.

There was a general welcome for the draft white paper, which was recognised as the "most obvious sign that social welfare had come of age in Hong Kong," and which was "most explicitly seen in the fact that the Government accepted ultimate responsibility for the provision of satisfactory social welfare services."

Many comments were received on the proposed disability and infirmity allowance scheme. There was unanimous support for a non-means tested scheme. Some people felt that to define the infirm as over 75 was too high a limit, and the majority of these criticisms suggested 70 instead.

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The intention of the Government to extend its provision of social security was well received, and one comment was that this showed the people that their taxes were being spent "in a good and wise way."

Mr. Li said the role of volunteers in the provision of social welfare services had received considerable comment. Many correspondents felt the use of volunteers should be enlarged to include working youths, students, the retired -- in fact that volunteers should come from all areas of society.

The concept of the volunteer as a contributing member of the community was stressed in a number of letters. It was suggested that there was "a need to re-examine the uses to which volunteers are put." The volunteers ought to be grouped more closely according to their interests and skills, and they should "serve where possible in the districts where they live."

Volunteer Service

Training of volunteers also generated much comment, and training centres were proposed. Areas recommended for the expansion of volunteer service included work camps, hospitals, prison visiting, visiting and assisting the disabled and the elderly, and youth organisations.

Mr. Li said most correspondents had approved the proposals on the expansion of community services. Some had given them priority because of the impact they would make on keeping social order within the community.

More open spaces and sports facilities were urged, and some critics insisted that activities in centres must be carefully planned and researched because "it would be useless to have good buildings without conducting good programmes within them."

Other comments received covered the field of family welfare services, financing, training, research, statistics, and evaluation.

The Social Welfare Planning Committee met recently to consider these comments, and to decide how they should best be reflected in the white paper.

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RECORD NUMBER OF REGISTERED MARRIAGES IN 1972

City Hall Registry Remains Most Popular

The number of marriages registered in 1972 reached a new record total of 27,264, being 360 more than the previous record of 26,904 in 1971, the Registrar General, Mr. W. Hume, announced today.

These figures apply to all marriages in 1972, which was the first full year in which marriages might be contracted only in accordance with the Marriage Ordinance.

While this no doubt influenced the figures for the year, another influence was the fact that the early part of the year (up to February 14) fell within the preceding lunar year, which was a particularly auspicious year with two First Days of Spring (Lap Chun) according to the lunar calendar.

The current lunar year is a blind year, that is to say, a year in which there is no First Day of Spring.

"The record total of registered marriages included 2,795 marriages between parties already previously married in other ways as compared with 4,076 marriages of this category in 1971.

"The marked decrease in the number of these 'remarriage' cases is due to the impact of the post-registration provisions of the Marriage Reform Ordinance gradually tapering off.

"Excluding these 'remarriages', the total number of registered marriages actually increased by 2,641 from 22,828 in 1971 to 24,469 in 1972," Mr. Hume added.

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There was a slight decrease in the number of church marriages in 1972, the total being 2,258 as compared with 2,399 in 1971.

However, most of the registered marriages were, as usual, celebrated at the marriage registries, the total of such marriages reaching a new record of 25,006, an increase of 501 over the 1971 figure.

In the New Territories, registered marriages increased significantly with a total of 2,945 marriages celebrated, up by 501 or 20 per cent as compared with 2,444 in 1971.

There are now four full-time registries and 14 part-time registries operating in the New Territories.

Most Popular

The two principal marriage registries at the City Hall and the Kowloon Government Offices remained the most popular registries with 44 per cent of all marriages celebrated there.

Another popular registry was the Sung Wong Toi Registry, where 3,454 marriages took place during the year.

The new marriage registry opened at San Po Kong on June 26, 1972 has also proved to be very popular, with a total of 1,118 marriages celebrated by the end of the year.

The City Hall Marriage Registry continued to operate on Sunday mornings during the year, and a total of 564 Sunday morning marriages were performed.

In many cases, Sunday was chosen because it happened to be a lucky day according to the Chinese calendar; in others simply because of convenience for work or other reasons.

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NEW STAMPS TO MARK YEAR OF OX

On Sale From January 25

Two special stamps to mark the coming Lunar New Year, the Year of the Ox, will be on sale at all post offices from January 25.

The stamps, in denominations of 10 cents and \$1.30, are the seventh in the series of Lunar New Year stamps.

Special first day covers will also be on sale at the post offices at 20 cents each from Wednesday, January 17.

Members of the public are advised to obtain their requirements early to avoid disappointment.

Advance orders for servicing of first day covers will be accepted at the General Post Office, Pedder Street; Kowloon Central Post Office, Nathan Road; and Tsim Sha Tsui Post Office, Salisbury Road.

For this service, addressed first day covers must be handed in together with an order form and a remittance to cover the cost. The charge will be \$1.50 per cover which includes the cost of two stamps together with a service fee of 10 cents.

The covers must be fully addressed by the applicant, and not less than ten covers will be accepted with each order.

The order forms will be available at the General Post Office, Kowloon Central Post Office and Tsim Sha Tsui Post Office on Wednesday (January 17).

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Any person ordering serviced covers addressed to a local destination may collect them on January 26 from the office where the order was placed.

Covers addressed overseas will be sent by ordinary post, surface mail, unless sufficient stamps are affixed to cover airmail and/or registration charges.

The latest acceptance date for advance orders of serviced covers will be noon January 22.

A service will be provided on January 25 at all post offices whereby First Day covers will be accepted over the counter, impressed with the normal post office date stamp and handed back to the person presenting them.

No time type will appear in the postmark. The special conditions for this service are:-

- * only articles bearing an indication that they are 'First Day Covers' will be so treated;
- * the articles must be addressed to a local address;
- * the articles must not bear any other cancellation; and
- * no registered items will be processed by this method.

Special posting boxes will also be available at the General Post Office, Kowloon Central Post Office and Tsim Sha Tsui Post Office on January 25 for those who wish to have their first day covers carefully hand-postmarked before despatch to the address on the cover.

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OFFICE BEARERS OF RECREATIONAL COMMITTEE TO BE SWORN IN

The office bearers of the 5th Executive Committee of the Cultural and Recreational Committee of the Wong Tai Sin Community Centre will be inaugurated at a ceremony to be held at the Community Centre tomorrow (Tuesday, January 16).

The Cultural and Recreational Committee is formed by more than 60 member schools in the Wong Tai Sin District.

Its functions, carried out by the Executive Committee, are to promote cultural and recreational activities for children and youth in the district.

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Note to Editors:

You are welcome to have the event covered. The inauguration ceremony will be held at 5 p.m. tomorrow.

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INTERRUPTION OF WATER SUPPLY

Water supply to certain buildings in Sham Shui Po will be turned off for five hours from 1 a.m. on Thursday (January 18) to enable Waterworks Office staff to carry out a leakage test in the vicinity.

The area to be affected is bounded by Kweilin Street, Tung Chau Street, Kiu Kiang Street and Lai Chi Kok Road.

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LABOUR DEPARTMENT CONCERNED OVER WORKERS' "LOSS OF JOBS"

Following Watson's Estate Fire

The Labour Department today expressed concern over newspaper reports that more than 400 workers of the Taylor Radio Service at Watson's Estate had lost their jobs due to the recent fire and that certain injured workers and dependants of victims were doubtful of their chances for compensation.

A spokesman for the Department said: "The services of two specific units within the department are available to render these workers assistance. They are the Local Employment Service and the Workmen's Compensation Unit.

"Any worker who is unemployed as a result of the fire is invited to register with the Local Employment Service at any one of its five branch offices.

"Every effort will then be made to introduce him to suitable alternative employment. All he needs to bring is one passport size photograph and his identity card."

As far as workmen's compensation was concerned, the spokesman stressed that all manual workers irrespective of their earnings and all non-manual workers earning \$1,500 or less a month were entitled to compensation under the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance if they suffered injury by accident arising out of and in the course of employment.

"Any injured worker who through injury is away from work for more than three days or who suffers partial permanent incapacity or the dependant of a victim who has doubts about his entitlement to compensation is advised to get in touch with the Workmen's Compensation Unit", he emphasised.

The nearest Branch offices of the Local Employment Service, Tel. 5-249081 Ext. 70 and 77 and the Workmen's Compensation Unit, Tel. 5-249081 Ext. 97 are located in New Rodney Block, 99, Queensway, Ground floor, Hong Kong.

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CODE ON TRAFFIC LANE DISCIPLINE
For Public Light Bus Operators

A code of guidance on traffic lane discipline has been circulated to public light bus operators by the Transport Department.

"There have been recurrent complaints against public light bus driving habits and the code of guidance was drawn up with the purpose of improving driving techniques," a Transport Department spokesman said.

Copies of the code were given to the operators at a recent meeting with the Department.

The spokesman hoped that there would be better driving techniques and consideration for other road users in future among the public light bus operators.

The code, drawn up in consultation with the Police Traffic Branch, covers 10 essential points:

- * White lines on the road guide, warn and give orders.
- * Do not cross double white lines in the middle of the road, unless you need to get in or out of premises, are ordered to cross the lines by a policeman, or to avoid an obstruction.
- * Keep between the traffic lane markings - the short broken white lines which divide the road into lanes. Keep in the left-hand lane unless you are going to over-take, turn right, or pass parked vehicles.
- * Do not wander from lane to lane. If you need to move into another lane, first use your mirror. If it is safe to move over, signal before doing so. Make sure you will not force another driver to swerve or slow down.

/* When approaching

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- * When approaching junctions, obey any lane indication arrows marked on the road.
- * In a traffic hold-up, do not try to "jump the queue" by cutting into another lane, or by overtaking the vehicles waiting in front of you.
- * On a three-lane dual carriageway, you may stay in the middle lane where there are slower vehicles in the inside lane, but you should return to the inside lane when you have overtaken them. The outside lane is for overtaking only. If you use it, move back into the middle lane and then into the inside lane as soon as you can, but without cutting in.
- * In one-way streets, choose the correct lane for your exit as soon as you can. Never change lanes suddenly unless road markings indicate otherwise; choose the left-hand lane when going to the left and the right hand lane when going to the right. Remember - other vehicles could be passing on both sides.
- * Do not overtake unless you are sure it is safe for yourself and other road users. Before you start to overtake, make sure that the road is clear far enough ahead and behind. Use your mirror. Signal before you start to move out.
- * To summarise good lane driving, remember the sequence: MIRROR - SIGNAL - MANOEUVRE.

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Release time: 6.45 p.m.