



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Friday, December 1, 1972

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MASS TRANSIT "FOR THE MASSES"

The Assistant Commissioner for Transport, Mr. Richard Butler, today called for "rules of the road to displace anarchy" as interim measures to ease road congestion before the proposed mass transit system is completed.

However, he stressed that such rules should also be made a permanent feature even after the materialisation of the system because of the increasing demand for public transport.

Mr. Butler was giving a talk on the underground railway at the "Point of View" series organised by the YMCA in Salisbury Road.

The mass transit, he said, would be unlikely to cause large numbers of private motorists to give up their cars voluntarily.

However, he said: "If we are prepared to consider spending over \$6,000 million to ensure that one-third of our public transport is fast and reliable, surely it is worthwhile deliberately ordering our priorities for road-use and disciplining on-street activity to conform to these priorities."

He strongly believed that a speedy introduction of constraints aimed at promoting public transport and discouraging private transport would bring about agreed priorities in the use of the existing limited road space.

"In ordering our priorities the demands of the private car for road space, particularly in peak hours, must receive a priority which reflects its relative unimportance as a passenger-mover compared with public transport and that deliberate constraints should implement this," Mr. Butler said.

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"Some four million passengers travel on public transport today. By the middle 1980's the number is predicted to have risen to 7½ million and the engineers gloomily predict that even if we were really beastly to the private motorists our road could not cope with this demand.

"We estimate that the full mass transit system would account for 50 per cent of public passenger transport movement over the area which it would serve and that for Hong Kong as a whole it would carry one-third of all passengers using public transport," he said.

Mr. Butler added that it would surely be wrong for Hong Kong to allocate over \$6,000 million of resources to improve the lot of the "motoring minority" (private motorists). "So let there be no mistake, the mass transit is for the masses."

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NEW PRISON AND MAXIMUM SECURITY TRAINING CENTRE

Work will begin early next year on the construction of a maximum security training centre and a prison compound at Pik Uk in Sai Kung.

The maximum security centre will provide training facilities for 400 young offenders under the age of 21 who are found to be unsuitable for open centres.

The prison compound will have the same capacity as the training centre, but it will be a minimum security prison.

The training centre will comprise two four-storey cell blocks, a four-storey dormitory block, an assembly hall, administrative offices and a hospital.

For recreation there will be a mini-soccer pitch, a basketball court and a gymnasium.

A 16-foot-high perimeter wall will surround the centre compound. The inmates will be accommodated in individual cells or dormitories, and strict discipline will be imposed.

It will generally be run on the same lines as other training centres, but with less time for recreation and more emphasis on regular physical training.

The Pik Uk Prison compound will contain two two-storey dormitory blocks, a dining/assembly hall with kitchen and laundry facilities, and a two-storey administrative block.

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Recreation facilities will include a mini-soccer pitch and two basketball courts.

The prison will be surrounded by a 12-foot-high chain link fence, and prisoners will be allowed some freedom of movement within the compound.

The staff of the two institutions will share common quarters, and five blocks of flats varying in height from three to six storeys will be provided.

The whole project, estimated to cost more than \$16 million, is expected to be completed at the end of 1974.

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FURTHER MEASURES TO COMBAT CRIME

The Governor Sir Murray MacLehose, announced today that further measures would be taken to combat crime.

Speaking at the annual inspection of the Prisons Department at Stanley, Sir Murray described crime as "one of the problems that has most concerned the public and the government".

The following is the full text of the Governor's speech:

"One of my first engagements last year was to attend this annual inspection. A year has passed and now I am glad to see you all again.

"During that year one of the problems that has most concerned the public and Government has been that of crime. A number of measures have been, and more will be, taken. In these you play a considerable part, and I know that increasingly heavy demands are being made on the Prisons Department.

"One new measure has been the detention centre. It is too early to evaluate its success, but I would like to record my appreciation of all the hard work and imagination the Department has put into this project. We are concerned that its effect on young criminals will be lasting, and that those who have left the centre do not revert to crime. Some deterrent may prove necessary in addition to the extensive after-care which is a significant feature of the project. One such deterrent would be the construction of a maximum security training centre.

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"We are also studying the need for a special prison to provide a regime of strict discipline and firm training for young offenders between 18 and 25 years of age. We will be guided by experience, but our current belief is that the regime for young offenders should be sharper and more concentrated than that for older or more habitual criminals.

"A 120-bed psychiatric hospital for the criminally insane, and for those requiring observation and treatment for mental disorders was opened this week. Other proposals for improving our prison service include a prison for geriatrics.

"The success of these measures and of others that we may have to introduce before crime is mastered in Hong Kong, depends on all of you and on your colleagues who cannot be here today. Your work is difficult and demanding and requires a high standard of discipline, devotion to duty and a humane approach. But you belong to a fine service which has always been a credit to Hong Kong and I know you will meet whatever demands our fight against crime puts on you.

"I congratulate you on your turn-out and bearing, and wish you every success in the year ahead."

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HIGH LEVEL PROMENADE FOR PEDESTRIANS

Pedestrians will soon have through passage from the Yaumati Vehicular Ferry Pier right into the heart of Central District.

A high level promenade is to be built on the Central Reclamation linking the Yaumati pier, the bus terminus and the new Connaught Centre to the elevated walkway system on Connaught Road Central.

The project is a part of the Connaught Road widening scheme.

The structure will consist of two reinforced concrete decks. One will be 765 feet long and lead from the ferry pier to the Connaught Centre, with an 82-foot walkway branching off mid-way and leading down to the bus terminus.

The widths of the decks will be 30 feet and 25 feet respectively. They will be equipped with staircases supported by concrete columns.

From the Connaught Centre, pedestrians can proceed onto Union House via a footbridge constructed by the Hong Kong Land Company.

The promenade is connected to the proposed 1,600-foot-long elevated pedestrian way which will run above the northern footpath of Connaught Road Central between Pedder Street and Gilman Street.

From two branches of this walkway, pedestrians will be able to gain access to a point in front of the Fire Brigade Building and another point to the east of Gilman Street fronting No. 67 Connaught Road Centre.

Construction work for the high level promenade is expected to begin in January next year, and take about three months.

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TOXIC FOOD COLOURINGS TO BE PROHIBITED

New regulations have been introduced to prevent the use of toxic industrial dyes in the preparation of food in food premises in the New Territories.

The Urban Council has already introduced by-laws which have the same effect in the urban areas.

The regulations prohibit the presence on any food premises of non-permitted colouring matter which could be used in food.

A spokesman for the Urban Services Department said that during routine inspections of food factories and bakeries, staff from the department often find prohibited colouring matter being kept on the premises "and it can safely be presumed that these are used in food preparation."

These colourings are known to be highly toxic, but unless samples of food being manufactured are taken for chemical analysis, it is impossible to prove that they are used in food and no legal action can be taken.

Thus the amending regulations make it an offence for any person to keep in food premises any colouring matter which is not permitted under the Colouring Matter in Food Regulations.

The maximum penalty for this offence is a fine of \$2,000 and three months imprisonment. A fine of \$50 a day can also be imposed for a continuing offence.

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1972 AGRICULTURAL SHOW BEGINS NEXT FRIDAY

The triennial Agricultural Show will be held in the New Territories on the Sek Kong airstrip from next Friday (December 8) until Monday (11).

It will be officially opened by the Governor at 3.15 p.m. on the Friday and following this the public will be admitted free of charge.

Once again city dwellers and country people will have the opportunity of seeing the best products of agriculture in the New Territories. They will also be able to see farmers taking part in competitions to test their skills in handling farm machinery and in planting their crops.

Cattle, buffaloes, pigs, goats and poultry including hens, ducks and geese will also be competing for prizes.

On the crop side, the entries will include all types of vegetables grown in the New Territories together with fruit, cut flowers and pot plants.

Arrangements have been made for special bus services to the showground from Tsuen Wan, Tai Po (linking with the railway), Shek Wu Hui and Yuen Long. There will also be a large area set aside for car parking (fee \$2.50 per car) for those who wish to drive direct to the showground.

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Visitors will be able to obtain snacks on the showground.

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The Agriculture and Fisheries Department which has organised the show, has also arranged an entertainment programme for the benefit of visitors throughout the four days. It includes many different items, such as dragon dances, displays of horsemanship, military bands, judo and athletics demonstrations.

There will be 35 stands put up by commercial firms which supply the needs of the farming community. These firms will be displaying their merchandise, ranging from fertilisers and veterinary medicines to soya bean products and oyster sauce. There will also be stands put up by government department.

Other agencies participating in the Show will include the New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association, the Red Cross and the Action Committee Against Narcotics.

The Agriculture and Fisheries Department will be demonstrating some of the ways in which it helps farmers to improve farm management techniques.

In the same way that the importance of business management has been recognised, much attention is now being given to farm management as a means of improving the farmer's productivity. On display will be mechanisation systems designed to decrease labour costs, livestock husbandry methods to minimise losses and crop husbandry methods to increase the yield and decrease damages from plant disease.

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Note to Editors: Copies of the full programme of event is distributed separately in the G.I.S. press boxes this evening. Details of press arrangements for the opening ceremony will be announced later.

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MEDICAL DEPARTMENT'S METHADONE PROGRAMME BEGINS

The Medical and Health Department's methadone maintenance programme begins today when the first patients arrive at the pilot methadone study centre in Eastern Street, Sai Ying Pun, for clinical assessment.

They are expected to remain as in-patients for about two to three weeks, and will have to undergo simple laboratory examinations.

Eventually they will be put on methadone, to be taken orally in a mixture of fruit cordial. When they are well-established and maintained on the drug, they will be discharged from the centre, and the second phase of the programme will begin, with the addict coming daily as an out-patient for a dose.

Dr. G.H. Choa, Director of Medical and Health Services, says: "This phase of the treatment is intended to help the patient remain in gainful employment. His daily call at the centre will not impede or hinder his re-integration into society, his immediate family, his employers, and friends.

"Methadone will block his craving for heroin. The dosage planned will not induce euphoria. While admittedly a substitute drug, methadone will spare the patient the harmful, anti-social side effects of heroin."

Dr. Choa believes the daily attendance at the centre "need not be permanent." This means that, depending on progress made and the degree of confidence established, arrangements are possible at some future date that would permit patients on the programme to take a small supply home for daily use.

The Medical and Health Department's methadone maintenance programme is planned to last three years, and is expected to cover a total of 550 patients.

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The programme is strictly on an experimental basis, and its results are subject to continuous review, with the conclusions to be drawn at the end of the three years having a bearing on future policy.

Patients are referred to the centre from the Society for the Rehabilitation of Drug Addicts, the central registry of drug addicts in the Secretariat for Home Affairs, other government departments, and voluntary agencies.

They have to conform to certain house rules, such as a ban on gambling in any form.

The programme is entirely free for the patients, and entirely voluntary. It is costing the government an estimated \$2.1 million.

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FIRST DIVIDEND TO BE DECLARED FOR MING TAK BANK

The Official Receiver, Mr. W. Hume, who is the Trustee in Bankruptcy of the Ming Tak Bank, announced today that he proposes to pay a first dividend of not less than 20 per cent to all unsecured creditors before the next Chinese New Year provided the necessary arrangements can be made in time.

Creditors are not required to take any action at the present time in connection with this proposed payment. Notices will appear in the newspapers nearer the date informing creditors what they must do in order to receive their dividend.

In the fifth circular letter issued to creditors of the Ming Tak Bank since the commencement of the bankruptcy in 1965, Mr. Hume revealed that all government loans and interest on them had been finally cleared, and that at October 31, 1972 there was a surplus of about \$3 million in cash available for distribution to creditors.

"This dramatic improvement has been due to further sales, at favourable prices, of properties forming part of the bankrupt's estate. Sales from January 1971 to the end of October 1972 realised more than \$12 million," Mr. Hume said.

According to the Balance Sheet attached to the circular letter, the remaining assets of the bankrupt's estate are estimated to be worth \$9 million and the total liabilities have been reduced to a mere \$159,000, bringing out an estimated surplus of over \$8.8 million for unsecured creditors.

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This is subject to deduction of further costs and fees, and subject also, of course, to its being possible to sell the remaining properties at prices not less than the estimated values shown in the Balance Sheet.

Mr. Hume said that if any creditor does not receive his copy of the circular letter by December 9, he should apply to the Official Receiver, Sutherland House, 10th floor, Hong Kong.

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MORE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT NEEDED

It is absolutely essential to Hong Kong's well being that "we need to understand each other, and to share in, and identify in, our common hopes and aspirations", the Secretary for Information, Mr. Jack Cater said today.

Speaking at the opening of the new Ngau Tau Kok Centre of the Neighbourhood Advice Council, Mr. Cater suggested that we should not only urgently improve the flow of information and consultation between the government and the people, but "aim to improve communication between various sectors of our community" so that each of us understands how his neighbour lives and thinks.

He said the people of Hong Kong shared a highly competitive environment in which only "the key element of human understanding" could keep us working together, and he was convinced there was a "budding sense of identity" which united the wide extremes of the population.

Hong Kong, he said, had a preponderantly young population who were "more alert, more enquiring and more concerned about Hong Kong affairs."

"This youthfulness can be a tremendously valuable asset to our society". But if we failed to encourage their legitimate desire for commitment to and involvement in the community, it could lead to disillusionment and frustration, Mr. Cater said.

He said that faced with a challenge like this there was always the possibility that well-meaning, dedicated volunteers might come forward with misplaced zeal and mar the effectiveness of a concerted approach by working in isolation.

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"I am happy to say that we have avoided that situation, and the Neighbourhood Advice Council is an excellent example of a voluntary organisation, anxious to co-ordinate its efforts with the wider aims and policies of the overall programme," Mr. Cater said.

Note to Editors: Copies of the full text of Mr. Cater's speech are distributed in the press boxes this evening.

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CHANGE IN LAND POLICY FOR CERTAIN NEW KOWLOON LOTS

Land owners who split up their present holdings of the old village building and agricultural lots in New Kowloon, and people who buy the land from them, will not in future be entitled to any greater grant of land than they are entitled to under the existing policy.

A notice in today's Government Gazette calls the attention of the owners and intending purchasers of these lots to this change of policy regarding exchanges.

A government spokesman said today that since the end of the 1950's, owners of any of these lots which had been required for urban development had been enabled to exchange their lands for new building lots.

"Some owners did not have enough land for an exchange and government helped them by allowing them to purchase, at a fixed price of \$30 per square foot, sufficient new land to make up a minimum 1,000 sq. ft. site."

However, the spokesman said, as the price of land in New Kowloon was now very much higher than the fixed price charged for the additional land granted to these land owners, this concession had led to certain owners splitting up and selling their lands in very small lots so as to obtain a maximum grant in exchange.

"This has resulted in a shortage of land available for exchange and big loss of revenue to the government," he commented.

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"It has therefore been decided to withdraw the concession, and in future, it will be necessary that the applicant for an exchange to surrender sufficient entitlement of old lots to cover the whole of the exchange proposed," the spokesman explained.

"This decision does not of course reduce the entitlement of people whose lots are already too small to make up the entitlement to an exchange," he added.

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ANOTHER CENSUS REPORT PUBLISHED

The second in a series of publications on the results of the 1971 census has been published and is now on sale.

The booklet entitled "The 1971 Census : A Graphic Guide" was prepared by computer from questionnaires completed by census enumerators. The first publication, "Census Basic Tables" was published in June this year.

The latest booklet has been designed in such a way that it can be easily understood by readers with little or no knowledge of statistics.

It contains 27 coloured charts and graphs, with descriptions in English and Chinese, explaining the sex and age composition of Hong Kong's population; its distribution by place of birth and origin, language and education, marital status and number of children.

Figures also show the distribution of the work force by industry and occupation and explain how people are housed and how household income is distributed. A map showing the density of the population in each census district is also included.

The booklet can now be obtained from all Government publications centres at \$5 each.

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WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION BILL

A bill which seeks to bring existing percentages of loss of earning capacity for certain injuries more in line with international standards, will shortly be introduced into the Legislative Council.

The proposed legislation also enables an assessment of compensation for a combination of injuries to be based on the aggregate of the percentage of loss of earning capacity in respect of the injuries involved.

A government spokesman said today that the Accident Insurance Association of Hong Kong, which had been consulted on the proposal; did not intend to raise insurance premium if the proposed amendments are incorporated into the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance.

The Labour Advisory Board considered the bill last September and unanimously accepted it.

The contents of the bill are published in today's gazette for public information.

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BETTER ACCESS TO AGRICULTURAL LAND

About a quarter of a million dollars will be spent on widening the Shap Pat Heung Feeder Road (Tai Tong Road) which links Yuen Long Town and Tai Tong, to cope with the increasing volume of traffic in the area.

The project will involve the widening of about two miles of the road into a 20-foot-wide dual carriageway with footpaths and lay-bys. Footpaths in built-up areas will be six feet wide on both sides. Trees will also be planted along the roadsides.

The completion of the road will greatly facilitate the carrying of farm produce from the adjacent agricultural areas to Yuen Long and contribute to the development of the town.

The work is expected to start early next year and take 15 months to complete.

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TIME RUNNING OUT FOR PRACTISING NURSES

Practising nurses who wish to apply for recognition as Enrolled Nurses without an examination are reminded that they have one more month in which to do so.

If applications are delivered to the Secretary (Boards) in the Medical and Health Department headquarters in person, they must actually be received before 1 p.m. on Saturday, December 30, as December 31 is a public holiday.

Applications by post should be in the mail in time to be received by December 30, as there is no postal delivery on the Sunday.

So far, more than 1,100 applications have been received from practising nurses for recognition as Enrolled Nurses.

The Nurses Registration Ordinance was amended in 1970 to allow for applications from practising nurses who are not eligible to become registered nurses, because of the qualifications they held, to be recognised as Enrolled Nurses, if acceptable to the Nursing Board.

The amendment set the time limit of June 1, 1972, for the receipt of applications -- after which any practising nurse wishing to be enrolled would have to pass an examination.

As this deadline approached, it became obvious that there was some misunderstanding about the implications of the amendment, and the time limit was extended to December 31 -- a month from today.

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Release Time: 8.30 p.m.