

**HONG KONG
GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
SERVICES**

**DAILY
INFORMATION
BULLETIN**

Wednesday, July 5, 1972

FINANCIAL SECRETARY SPEAKS ABOUT FLOATING OF POUND

The Financial Secretary, the Hon. C.P. Haddon-Cave, said today Government has no intention of allowing the situation to drift in respect of the floating of the Hong Kong dollar in line with the pound sterling.

Quite the contrary, he said, Government will take a firm decision when the time is right.

He said this decision will be taken from a position of financial strength, not weakness, and it will be based on the most careful assessment that can be made of all the various and somewhat conflicting considerations that must be taken into account.

Mr. Haddon-Cave was speaking in the Legislative Council in reply to a question by the Hon. Wilfred Wong.

Mr. Wong had asked: "Will Government state its reasons for floating the Hong Kong dollar in line with the pound sterling and will Government state whether, in the light of experience, any modification of its decision is necessary in order to safeguard the Colony's economy?"

The Financial Secretary said the British Government's sudden and unexpected decision to float the pound sterling had created an entirely new situation.

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"At the time, the decision to leave unaltered the relationship between the Hong Kong dollar and the pound sterling was the only practicable immediate course open to us, since it was impossible to judge how events would develop and where Hong Kong's true interests would lie.

"We were anxious to avoid making a hasty decision about the future of the Hong Kong dollar which, as events unfolded, might not have been in our best interest," he said.

Mr. Haddon-Cave said that, in due course, he would hope that members of the Council would wish to debate the decision taken in the Council.

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'LUCKY' CAR NUMBERS TO BE AUCTIONED FOR CHARITY

Lucky or prestigious car number plates -- much sought after in Hong Kong -- are to be put on sale to the highest bidders with the proceeds going to the Lotteries Fund for charitable purposes.

This will be the eventual outcome of a bill now before the Legislative Council.

The main purpose of the bill, known as the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill 1972, is to enable the Governor in Council to make regulations for the sale of car registration numbers.

The Financial Secretary, the Hon. C.P. Haddon-Cave, told the Legislative Council today that the scheme "is not meant to be a hidden weapon of transport policy to make car ownership more expensive."

"The scheme which the bill before honourable members foreshadows, is that certain lucky or prestigious car registration numbers should be set aside and sold periodically at public auctions. The proceeds from these auctions would be paid into the Lotteries Fund and used for charitable purposes," he said.

The Financial Secretary added that with this arrangement the Transport Department would be rid of a continuing and considerable source of embarrassment, and the substantial sums of money now paid by car owners, one way or another, for 'good' numbers would be capable of being pooled together and used for the benefit of the community.

Mr. Haddon-Cave said it was a well known fact in Hong Kong that certain registration numbers were generally associated with good fortune or with prestige, and car owners are known to have paid hundreds or even thousands of dollars to obtain one of them.

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PUBLIC HAS VITAL ROLE TO PLAY IN KEEP HONG KONG CLEAN CAMPAIGN

The proposed changes in the Public Health and Urban Services Ordinance will facilitate the task of bringing home to the public the vital part they must play in the coming "Keep Hong Kong Clean" campaign, and to keep it clean.

This was stated in the Legislative Council today by the Chairman of the Urban Council and Director of Urban Services, the Hon. D.R.W. Alexander, when moving the second reading of the Public Health and Urban Services (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill.

Mr. Alexander reminded members of Legislative Council that cleaning up Hong Kong was not at all a question of providing his department with the necessary basic and mechanical resources to do the job.

"Rather it was a task of, first of all, enlisting the co-operation of the people of Hong Kong in understanding the problem and assisting to overcome it," he said.

"For the first three months then, from August to October, the staff of several government departments most closely involved will be undertaking this task by carrying out the programme set by the Keep Hong Kong Clean Campaign Committee and endorsed by the Environmental Hygiene Select Committee of the Urban Council - both under the chairmanship of Dr. Denny M.H. Huang."

Mr. Alexander said the publicity "run up" for this "major project", covering all of Hong Kong, was scheduled to start next month.

The amending Bill before Legislative Council was to make existing legislation dealing with public cleansing and the prevention of litter "more effective, stronger in certain aspects, and generally easier to enforce."

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IMPROVEMENTS TO IDENTITY CARD SYSTEM

The Acting Colonial Secretary, the Hon. M.D.A. Clinton, said today that the Governor-in-Council had approved in principle, the review of the need for improvements in the present identity card system for young persons under 17 years of age.

He was speaking in the Legislative Council in reply to Dr. the Hon. S.Y. Chung who had asked whether the review had been completed, and if so, what new measures were proposed.

Mr. Clinton said the main purpose was to provide for first registration at 11 years of age, and for the issue at that age of juvenile identity cards with photographs so that their holders could be readily identified.

The age of re-registration for an adult identity card is to be raised from 17 to 18 years, he added.

"In order to put the scheme into effect, amending legislation is necessary and drafting instructions are almost completed."

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TRAFFIC IN WANCHAI TO BE RE-ROUTED

The Commissioner for Transport today announced new arrangements in Wanchai to improve the flow of traffic.

As from 10 a.m. on Friday (July 7) Marsh Road between Hennessy Road and Lockhart Road will be re-routed from two-way to one-way northbound.

At the same time, Tin Lok Lane between Hennessy Road and Wanchai Road will be open for two-way traffic.

Appropriate signs will be placed to guide motorists.

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MOVES MADE FOR MORE COMPREHENSIVE COPYRIGHT LAWS

The Attorney General, the Hon. D.T.E. Roberts, said today a draft Order in Legislative Council seeking to apply Britain's Copyright Act of 1956 to Hong Kong with suitable modifications had been prepared and would be submitted to the Secretary of State in the near future.

He said if the 1956 Act was so applied and an Ordinance containing some necessary supplementary matters was enacted, the phonographic industry in Hong Kong would enjoy adequate protection in law.

Mr. Roberts was speaking in the Legislative Council in reply to a question by the Hon. P.C. Woo.

Mr. Woo had asked: "Is the Government aware that the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry passed a resolution on May 26, 1972, noting the growth of record piracy in Hong Kong and appealing for the necessary legislation to remedy the same; and will Government say whether such legislation is necessary in Hong Kong?"

The Attorney General said Government was aware of the resolution, and substantial protection of copyright in records and tapes was already given by the Copyright Act, 1911, which had been applied to Hong Kong, and the Copyright Ordinance.

He said the Copyright Act, 1956 provides a more comprehensive protection, but it is not yet applicable here.

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CAR PARKS FOR MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY

The Government will consider building underground car parks as a project allied to the Mass Transit Railway, but it is unlikely that they could be built on an appreciable scale as they are more costly than above-ground car parks.

The Director of Public Works, the Hon. J.J. Robson, stated this today in the Legislative Council in reply to the Hon. Szeto Wai who had asked whether Government would make such consideration.

Mr. Robson said there was little advantage to be gained in combining the construction of the Mass Transit Railway with underground car parks as the latter would occupy a very large area of ground compared with that required for the railway.

In association with the railway, he said there was little opportunity to build any kind of carpark in the existing urban areas because the railway routes followed the line of the heavily trafficked streets in the most intensively developed areas.

"However, in areas which are still developing such as Kwai Chung and Tsuen Wan, the opportunity has been taken to plan the immediate environment of the Mass Transit stations to include, wherever appropriate, a multi-storey carpark to cater for prospective park-and-ride passengers as well as other carparking needs."

For example, he said, four sites have been planned for multi-storey car parks adjacent to Mass Transit stations in Kwai Chung and Tsuen Wan.

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NEW SCHEME FOR MARRIED WOMEN IN GOVT. SERVICE

Necessary amendments to the pensions legislation in respect of married women in Government service have been drafted and should reach the Executive Council in about three weeks' time.

This was stated today by the Acting Colonial Secretary, the Hon. M.D.A. Clinton, in the Legislative Council in reply to a question by the Hon. Ellen Li.

Mrs. Li had asked when full details would be announced of the scheme for pensionability of married women in Government service and of the arrangements for their employment on contract, and when these schemes would be implemented.

Mr. Clinton said the Senior Service Council reached agreement at the end of April on the detailed scheme, the substance of which had been approved by the Finance Committee in January.

He said full details of the approved schemes, including the terms for employing married women on contract, would be announced when the Bill comes up for consideration by the Legislative Council.

"I hope that the schemes can then be implemented before the end of the year," he added.

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LAW ON DAMAGE TO PROPERTY BEING SIMPLIFIED

The Crimes (Amendment) Bill 1972, which deals with the law governing offences of damage to property, achieves "a considerable simplification of a complicated part of the criminal law," the Attorney General, the Hon. D.T.E. Roberts, said today.

In moving the second reading of the Bill at today's meeting of the Legislative Council, Mr. Roberts said it was based on the provisions of the English Criminal Damage Act 1971, which was enacted as a result of reports by the English Criminal Law Revision Committee and the English Law Commission.

Both bodies had described the previous English law, which was still substantially that in force in Hong Kong, as having "many unsatisfactory features."

The Attorney General said that under the new Bill, a high maximum punishment was provided for serious cases, though in practice most offences of criminal damage would be dealt with by the magistrates' courts, which would impose only moderate punishments.

The essence of the new offence of criminal damage contained in the Bill is the destruction of or damage to the property of another without lawful excuse.

Among other things the Bill creates the basic offence of destroying or damaging property belonging to another in very wide terms, designed to cover the majority of offences involving criminal damage.

Mr. Roberts said an order for compensation made under the Bill would not preclude the person who had suffered damage from instituting separate civil proceedings in connection with his loss, insofar as that might exceed the amount of compensation ordered by the court to be paid to him.

"Summary compensation in a criminal case is not intended to be a substitute for civil proceedings, but where small amounts are involved, it provides a simple and speedy relief," he added.

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ARRANGEMENTS FOR COLLECTION OF BELONGINGS FROM CLOSED FLATS

Special arrangements have been made to enable people to collect more of their personal effects from their homes in buildings in the Mid-Levels area, which are still subject to closure orders.

They will be allowed to enter at their own risk under police supervision during the next four days from tomorrow (July 6). A specific day will be allocated to collect belongings between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m.

The entry days are as follows:

- Thursday, July 6: For residents of Nos. 10 and 16 Po Shan Road.
- Friday, July 7 : For residents of Nos. 12 and 14 Po Shan Road.
- Saturday, July 8: For residents of Nos. 53 and 55 Conduit Road; Emerald Gardens Block II, Kotewall Road; and Mirror Marina, 47 Conduit Road.
- Sunday, July 9 : For residents of Skyline Mansion, 51 Conduit Road; and Emerald Gardens Block I, Kotewall Road.

In this connection, residents of Nos. 10-16 Po Shan Road and 53 and 55, Conduit Road should arrange to collect access permits for their car from the Commissioner for Transport's office at Blake Block, Queensway as from today. Applicants are to bring proof of their identity and residence.

Police check points will be set up to ensure that only bona fide residents and their employees are allowed entry.

Permission for entry is liable to be withdrawn if this becomes necessary for safety or any other reasons.

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RAINSTORM DAMAGED GRAVES

A number of memorials and enclosures over certain graves at the Colonial Cemetery in Happy Valley have been damaged as a result of the recent rainstorm.

The Chairman of the Urban Council said today that the responsibility for repair rested with the surviving relatives of the deceased.

Any people in Hong Kong who are aware of relatives surviving in places other than Hong Kong are asked to get in touch with Mr. Chan Sze-wing by telephoning H-95458, so that the matter can be taken up with the relatives concerned.

The following is a list of the damaged graves:

<u>Section</u>	<u>Grave No.</u>	<u>Name of Deceased</u>
9	11602	Cecile Madge Newcombe
12	9562	John George Swanstorn
15B	11168	Elizabeth Emma Yang
16F	10550	E.F. Malysheff
35	7064	Umanosuka Aoki

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TRIBUTES TO RETIRING LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS

The Governor, Sir Murray MacLehose, today paid tribute to the services rendered by Sir Yuet-keung Kan, Mr. G.M.B. Salmon and Mr. K.S. Lo each of whom retired from the Legislative Council at the beginning of this month.

In a valedictory speech in the Legislative Council before he adjourned the council sitting, the Governor spoke of the various services each former member had rendered during their appointments to the Council.

The following is the full text of Sir Murray's valedictory speech:-

"Honourable Members, before I adjourn this sitting I would like to pay tribute to the service rendered by Sir Yuet-keung Kan, Mr. Salmon, Mr. Lo, all of whom have retired from the Council as from July 1.

"Sir Yuet-keung was appointed a substantive member on July 1, 1961 having succeeded Mr. Ruttonjee as Senior Unofficial Member on July 1, 1968. We shall very much miss not only his stimulating and pertinent contributions to our debates in the full Council but also his contribution which is most frank and sincere in the Finance Committee. "He is no respecter of persons, he could always be relied on to say what is apposite and to say it very well. We are, fortunate that he will be remaining on the Executive Council and various other public bodies - notably the Trade Development Council, of which he is Chairman - to offer his usual sound contribution to the tackling of our problems present and future.

/Mr. Salmon

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"Mr. Salmon was appointed to the Council on July 1, 1970 and rendered valuable service on the Finance Committee and its Public Works Sub-Committee. In addition to the keen interest he has taken in such fields as public transport, trade, ecology, public works, social problems, he has served on the Select Committee of this Council which was appointed to enquire into the costs of running English-Speaking schools and also on the Chinese Language Committee.

"Mr. Lo also became a Member on July 1, 1970, and since that time he has made many a valuable contribution both in the Chamber and during the meetings of the Finance Committee and its Establishment Sub-Committee. His interests have ranged over such fields as preservation of the countryside, town planning, public welfare, Hong Kong's economy and last year he was a member of the Salaries Commission.

I am sure that honourable Members will wish to join me in regretting that poor health has impelled him to reduce the enormous amount of work he contributes to the public good, and thus deprive us of his services, and to wish him a speedy return to full health."

The Hon. P.C. Woo described Sir Yuet-keung Kan as a "fearless and forthright man" and said he "has done a great deal to show the Unofficial Members what part they should play" in the business of the Legislative Council.

Mr. Woo, who is now the Senior Unofficial, said: "I shall myself find it extremely difficult to shoulder his mantle which now falls upon me."

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He gave an assurance that the Unofficials would try to carry on in the way that Sir Yuet-keung "would want us to do: not by opposing for the mere sake of opposition, but by putting forward constructive criticism and suggestions in an endeavour to make more effective the steps taken by the legislature to make this Colony a better place to live in."

Mr. Woo also associated himself with the sentiments expressed by the Governor over the retirement of Mr. Salmon and Mr. Lo.

The Acting Colonial Secretary, Mr. M.D.A. Clinton, said: "Sir, on behalf of my Official colleagues, may I say how much we shall miss Sir Yuet-keung Kan, Mr. Salmon and Mr. Lo. Their wide-ranging contributions to the work of this council and its various committees have been of immense value. And Sir Yuet-keung Kan who in particular with his wise counsel and debating skill has won the respect of us all.

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EMERGENCY AMENDMENTS TO BUILDINGS ORDINANCE

An amending bill designed as an emergency measure to relieve pressure on the Buildings Ordinance Office following the recent rainstorm disasters was passed by the Legislative Council this afternoon.

In moving the second reading of the Buildings (Amendment) Bill 1972 at today's meeting, the Director of Public Works, the Hon. J.J. Robson, said the Buildings Ordinance Office was now heavily committed in inspecting and making safe properties endangered or damaged by the recent disasters.

"Over 300 requests for assistance or to inspect private buildings have been received by the Office since June 17 and around 70 orders closing buildings have had to be made," he said.

All staff of the Office previously processing plans and inspecting building schemes had been diverted to this emergency work, he added.

In consequence, Mr. Robson said, it was now quite impossible to approve plans or give consent to building or street works or to issue occupation permits within the statutory periods laid down under the Buildings Ordinance.

"If, however, these approvals, consents or permits are not given within the statutory periods then under the Ordinance they are deemed to have been granted by default," Mr. Robson said.

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The bill, he said, "sets out to remedy this situation."

If enacted, with effect from June 15, no approval of plans or consent to commence building works shall be deemed to have been given and no occupation permit shall be deemed to have been granted where these approvals, consents or permits have not been specially given within the time limits laid down.

Mr. Robson said the amendment of the principal ordinance would cease to have effect on September 30 unless some other date was specified by the Governor in Council by notice in the Gazette.

During the committee stage, Mr. Oswald Cheung moved that the date when the amendment would cease to have effect should be specified by resolution but he later withdrew this.

An amendment proposed by the Attorney General, Mr. D.T.E. Roberts, that the section concerned shall cease to have effect on September 30, 1972 or on such other date as may be specified by the Governor in Council by regulations was accepted and passed.

Earlier, the Director of Public works had assured the Council that Buildings Ordinance Office staff would be "diverted back to their normal duties just as soon as possible."

He said they would then concentrate, in order of priority, on (a) the issue of permits to occupy buildings; (b) authorities to commence building works; and (c) the approval of building plans.

Mr. Robson also gave an assurance that "temporary occupation permits will be issued by the Building Authority as freely as is reasonably possible in order to ensure that completed buildings do not remain unoccupied unnecessarily."

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SUPPORT FOR EMERGENCY BUILDINGS BILL

The Hon. Szeto Wai today gave his support to an amending bill designed to relieve the "tremendous strain" that had been imposed on the staff of the Buildings Ordinance Office as a result of the recent natural disasters.

Speaking on the Buildings (Amendment) Bill in today's Legislative Council meeting, he said the magnitude and extreme urgency of the emergency work the Office had been called upon to perform was indeed "staggering."

He felt sure that "no member of the public will reasonably expect them to find it possible at the same time to discharge their normal duties of examining and approving voluminous building plans and reports," as well as answering the many calls arising from the normal process of construction.

Referring to the priority placed on the various spheres and stages of the work of the B.O.O., Mr. Szeto hoped that special emphasis would be laid on new school buildings as most of these were usually scheduled for completion and occupation at this particular time of the year.

This, he said, was "to avoid adverse effects on the community through unnecessary delayed commencement of school term."

Mr. Szeto said that between commencement and completion of any building work, there were many operations for which the Building Authority's ready approval and response were needed to ensure non-interruption of building progress.

He hoped that during the emergency period, the B.O.O. could devise "expedient means" to entrust such duties to the architects or engineers responsible for the building works.

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THREE BILLS PASSED INTO LAW

Three bills passed their committee stage and third readings in Legislative Council this afternoon and became law.

They were the Loans (Asian Development Bank) Bill 1972; the Public Health and Urban Services (Amendment) Bill 1972, and the Buildings (Amendment) Bill 1972.

The Buildings (Amendment) Bill 1972 also had its first and second readings today and had an amendment before it was passed.

Three other bills had their first readings and debate on the second readings was adjourned.

They were the Crimes (Amendment) Bill 1972; the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill 1972, and the Public Health and Urban Services (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 1972.

Debate resumed on the second reading of the Nurses Registration (Amendment) Bill 1972.

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Release time: 8.00 p.m.