

**HONG KONG
GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
SERVICES**

**DAILY
INFORMATION
BULLETIN**

Thursday, June 22, 1972

HEALTH PRECAUTIONS FOLLOWING THUNDERSTORM

The Director of Medical and Health Services, Dr. G.H. Choa, today urged members of the public to take all possible health precautions to safeguard themselves against the danger of infection as a result of damage following the recent thunderstorm.

He warned that many wells and storage tanks had probably been affected by last week's excessive rainfall. Some pipelines had also been temporarily disrupted by landslides, and receding flood waters had left residues.

Dr. Choa added: "In normal circumstances, water from kitchen taps is pure and safe enough to drink without boiling. But in the extraordinary situation facing large sections on both sides of the harbour at present, I must advise all households to take every precaution possible."

He said officers of the department were keeping under constant review areas hit by landslides in Kwun Tong, Chai Wan, Ma Shan and Kotewall Road, and so far there was no danger to general health arising out of matter rotting under the rubble.

However the danger from rat and fly breeding existed, and for this reason residents in these areas should exercise extra care. He urged sightseers not to visit devastated areas out of morbid curiosity.

/Dr. Choa

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Dr. Choa repeated several warnings given earlier at the start of the hot weather on the importance of personal hygiene as the most effective way of preventing the outbreak or spread of infectious diseases such as dysentery and cholera.

"The thunderstorm has given these warnings additional urgency," he said.

The Director advised residents to keep themselves and their surroundings clean, and not to use food or water that had been exposed to contamination. Any suspect water should be boiled before drinking.

He urged that hands be washed after visits to the toilet. Food should not be exposed to flies, and food that had been so exposed, should not be eaten.

Dr. Choa said: "I must emphasise that these precautions have validity at all times, but particularly now when Hong Kong, as a whole, is recovering from one of the worst natural disasters in its history."

"This Department needs the co-operation of the public if it is to succeed in its task of keeping Hong Kong healthy, and containing any infectious disease should it break out."

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MAIL DELIVERIES AFFECTED

The Post Office announces that at present it is not possible to deliver mail to premises which have either been vacated or are inaccessible because of the recent landslides.

People affected are advised to notify the Post Office with regard to any re-direction of mail. Cards are available for this at all Post Offices and mail may be re-directed free of charge for any period up to three months.

However, as a special measure, people can collect their mail from their appropriate delivery office on production of proof of identity.

If anyone is doubtful where the mail can be collected or has any other difficulty in regard to this matter he should telephone the Enquiry Bureau of the General Post Office on H-247116 or 247117 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

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FEEES FOR ENGLISH-SPEAKING SCHOOLS

Parents of children at English-speaking schools will be given a term's notice of the new fee increases.

These increases will now be introduced on January 1, 1973.

Announcing this, a Government spokesman said today that the Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council, appointed to consider the cost of operating English-speaking schools, was tabled in the Council on April 26.

"Its full implications are being studied with a view to deciding on new fees."

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INCENTIVE PAYMENTS INCREASED

A number of disabled people presently looked after by the Social Welfare Department in its sheltered workshops are to receive an increase in "incentive" payments from \$1.50 to \$2.50 a day.

The increase, benefitting about 260 people, will be back-dated to April 1, this year.

"Incentive" payments are intended to encourage the disabled to earn a living by their own effort in the sheltered workshops, instead of relying entirely on public assistance or resorting to begging.

In presenting his case to the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council for an increase in payments, the Director of Social Welfare said the \$1.50 daily rate had proved insufficient as an incentive because the actual attendance at the sheltered workshops was only 260 as against the capacity of 325.

Of those who attend the workshops, the majority earn an average of \$50 a month excluding incentive payments, or \$90 including incentive payments. The increase enables them to earn about \$115 a month.

The additional expenditure arising from the increase is about \$97,500 a year if the sheltered workshops are full, or about \$78,000 on the basis of the present attendance.

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ENTRIES CLOSING FOR EXHIBITION

Entries for a special photographic exhibition at the City Museum and Art Gallery will close on Wednesday (June 28).

The exhibition, "The Changing Scene", is part of the celebrations marking the 10th anniversary of the City Hall.

Photographs taken during the past 25 years depicting trades, development and construction, customs and life in general are welcome.

Entries will be selected by the heads of five leading local photographic societies and the successful ones will be exhibited at the Exhibition Hall, City Hall between July 14 and August 12.

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NEW BIRTHS AND MARRIAGE REGISTRY AT SAN PO KONG

A new Births and Marriage Registry at San Po Kong will open on Monday (June 26).

The Marriage Registry will serve residents in the Wong Tai Sin/San Po Kong area, and services of the Births Registry will be available to residents living to the east of the railtrack in New Kowloon.

The registry has two well-decorated ceremony halls, a makeup room for brides and bridesmaids, and a spacious and furnished public area.

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STUDENT GROUPS TO INSPECT WELFARE FACILITIES

The Social Welfare Department has invited five student organisations to spend a few hours this summer inspecting departmental facilities for the young, the mentally-retarded and the disabled.

Invitations have been issued to the Hong Kong University Students' Union, the Chinese University Students' Union, the Baptist College Students' Union, the Hong Kong Federation of Students, and the Federation of Catholic Students.

The invitation says that as some of the students plan a career in social welfare, it is useful that they be given an opportunity to see for themselves the Department's staff in action in various fields.

Four or five tours are planned between the end of June and the end of August, and it will be possible to arrange transport for between 20 and 30 at a time. Each tour is expected to take in three or four institutions.

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CLEAN-UP BY SCHOOL CHILDREN

More than 200 primary school children from the Wong Tai Sin area will take part in a clean-up of litter in Lam Tsuen, Tai Po, during a picnic tomorrow (Friday).

The clean-up has been organised by the Wong Tai Sin Community Centre's Cultural and Recreational Committee. The Warden, Mr. Basil Leung, says the occasion, with its combination of recreation and instruction, amounts to "a kind of social education."

He believes it will not only create the setting for healthy outdoor activity, but will also induce among the participants a sense of civic responsibility by directly involving them in keeping the countryside clean and green.

The children will be divided into groups led by teachers. During the outing they will be encouraged to pick up litter left by other picnickers, using equipment made available for the day by the Urban Services Department's office in Tai Po.

Note to editors:

You are invited to have the clean-up and picnic covered. Transportation will be available at the Wong Tai Sin Community Centre in the Wong Tai Sin Resettlement Estate, on June 23, at 9.30 a.m.

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CROWN LAND AUCTION

Three lots of Crown land will be put up for sale by public auction on Friday (July 14) at 2.30 p.m. in the Lecture Room on the 8th floor of the City Hall.

All lots are for private residential purposes. They are:

(1) Shau Kei Wan Inland Lot No. 765 at Wai Hang Street, Shau Kei Wan, Hong Kong
Area: 2,153 square feet
Upset Price: \$300,000

(2) New Kowloon Inland Lot No. 5431 at Feesenden Road, Kowloon
Area: 20,310 square feet
Upset Price: \$2,800,000

(3) New Kowloon Inland Lot No. 5461 at Hong Lee Road, Kwun Tong
Area: 107,300 square feet
Upset Price: \$5,000,000

Full particulars and the conditions of sale may be obtained at the Public Enquiry Sub-office, Central Government Offices (West Wing), Ground Floor, Hong Kong and at the Crown Lands & Survey Office, Kowloon Government Offices, 405, Nathan Road, 10th floor, Kowloon.

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GOVERNOR BECOMES BLOOD DONOR IN HONG KONG

The Governor, Sir Murray MacLehose, today gave his first pint of blood in Hong Kong.

Sir Murray, a regular blood donor during his other postings, arrived at the Red Cross Blood Collection Centre at about 9.15 a.m. and was welcomed by Mr. Anthony Yue Tung-bick, Branch Officer and Miss S. Clarke, Secretary of the Centre.

The Administrative Secretary at Government House, Mr. G.A. Higginson, and Mr. Cheung Tin-loy, a domestic assistant at Government House, who accompanied the Governor, also gave blood during the visit.

Note to editors: A photograph showing the Governor giving his pint of blood at the Centre is distributed separately in the G.I.S. press boxes.

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TEMPORARY STOPPAGE OF WATER SUPPLY IN TAI PO

The water supply to an area in Tai Po will be turned off on Saturday morning (June 24) from 1 a.m. to 6 a.m. to enable leakage tests to be carried out.

The area affected is bounded by Plover Cove Road, Tung Cheung Street and Kwong Fuk Road.

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NO PROPOSED RENT CONTROL FOR BUSINESS PREMISES

The Government is not proposing to introduce any form of rent control for business premises at present.

This is contained in a letter from Mr. Akers-Jones writing on behalf of the Colonial Secretary to the Chairman of the Reform Club, Mr. Brook Bernacchi. It is in reply to the recent Reform Club petition to the Governor on the subject of Rent Restriction and Protection from Eviction especially of Business and Factory Premises.

Mr. Akers-Jones said that the degree of rent increases in business premises does not warrant interference with the free market economy of Hong Kong, nor do the estimates of the supply of new accommodation during the next two years indicate that this will be necessary.

Rent increases in business premises are not a major cause of inflation; the reverse is more likely to be true, he said.

"Your petition states that the value of the Hong Kong dollar is at present unstable and that Hong Kong itself is going through a period of inflation hitherto unknown in peace time. However, the facts do not bear out this contention."

Externally, he explained, the stability of the Hong Kong dollar has been well maintained because of Hong Kong's strong balance of payments position. The Hong Kong dollar, in fact, was upvalued against the United States dollar in line with Sterling in the recent realignment of currencies.

/Internally,

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Internally, there has been some inflation in recent years, the general consumer price index having risen by about 30 per cent over the last seven years and the modified consumer price index by about 35 per cent over the same period.

"Inflation is however a world-wide problem and Hong Kong's performance in this regard is better than that of most industrial countries during this period. It must also be recognised that incomes, including wages, have in general risen substantially faster than prices and that the standard of living of the community has therefore improve considerably.

"The petition also implies that the recent rise in commercial and industrial rents is the major cause of inflation and states that in order to reduce inflation it is necessary to control these rents. This statement seems to be based upon a misunderstanding of the current economic situation.

"The state of Hong Kong's economy is determined primarily by external influences, namely the demand for our exports in overseas markets and the prices of imported products, neither of which is under our control.

"In recent years there has been a very substantial rise in our exports, and this has led to increased demands on productive capacity and a shortage of labour, one consequence of which has been substantial increases in the wages of most workers. At the same time import prices have increased considerably.

"These are the two factors which have been mainly responsible for inflation in Hong Kong. Higher rents have therefore been a result rather than a cause of inflation."

/Mr. Akers-Jones

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Mr. Akers-Jones said the argument that high shop rents are having an adverse effect on the tourist trade also cannot be substantiated.

"The total number of visitors in 1971 was 907,295 and although this was 2.2 per cent less than in 1970 (an exceptional year because of Expo '70 in Japan) it represents an increase of 18.6 per cent over the 1969 figure," he pointed out.

Referring to another suggestion in the petition that rents for business and factory premises have increased from four to 10 times during the past two years. Mr. Akers-Jones said this is not borne out by the facts. The statistics prepared by the Commissioner of Rating and Valuation and published recently in his 1972 Property Review show that the rental index for shops in the metropolitan area rose over the three-year period from 1968 to 1971 from 100.00 to 129.62 (136.18 for Kowloon only). For flatland factories the rental index over the same period rose from 100.00 to 156.69, the highest increases being in Tsuen Wan where the index in 1971 was 187.64. Average rents for office accommodation of all grades rose from \$1.27 per square foot in 1968 to \$2.66 in 1971 - an increase of slightly over 100 per cent.

Referring to the fact that post-war domestic premises were subject to rent increase control in the early sixties and again since 1970, but post-war non-domestic premises have never been subject to any controls, apart from the Tenancy (Notice of Termination) Ordinance, which provides for six months' notice to quit, Mr. Akers-Jones said that the situation with regard to business premises is however quite different.

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/ "Not

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"Not only is there no question of people being made homeless because of inability to pay increased rents, but the imposition of any form of rent or rent increase control would represent a degree of interference with the interplay of economic forces which would be unacceptable in the free market economy of Hong Kong, and would amount to favouring one group of entrepreneurs (the shopkeepers and factory operators) against another (the building owners)," he said.

"In addition, the estimates of the amount of new non-domestic accommodation expected to become available during 1972 and 1973, as published in the Property Review 1972, indicate that we are moving into a period of much improved supply, when pressure on business rents is expected to ease."

Mr. Akers-Jones said that proposals have been made from time to time for some form of legislation which, while not controlling rents of business premises, would ensure security of tenure of such premises at a full market rent and such legislation may be introduced at a later date.

"It should be pointed out, however, that a system of this kind would not be intended to restrain rents below the market level."

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CROSS-HARBOUR BUS ROUTES

Passengers travelling on the new cross-harbour bus routes will be charged \$1 each irrespective of the distance travelled. The fare will include the toll fee.

The Commissioner for Transport, Mr. B.D. Wilson, said this afternoon that the Kowloon Motor Bus and the China Motor Bus Companies would operate joint services on three routes linking Kowloon and Hong Kong Island via the tunnel.

The routes are: Kwun Tong to Kennedy Town via Choi Hung, Hung Hom, and Central; Lai Chi Kok to Shau Kei Wan via Mong Kok, Yau Ma Tei, and North Point; and Kowloon Tong (Wang Tau Hom) to Pokfield Road via Yau Ma Tei, Central and Mid-Levels.

All routes will serve Causeway Bay. When necessary short-working journeys will also be operated between Choi Hung and Central; Mong Kok and North Point; and between Yau Ma Tei and Central to meet traffic requirements.

Mr. Wilson said that a total of 80 new double deck buses will be allocated by the two companies to operate the routes and each will show its destination in white characters on a red background.

The services, on a limited stop basis, will operate between 7 a.m. and 8 p.m. During peak hours the frequency on each route will be six minutes and at all other times 10 minutes, subject to duplication.

These facilities are to be provided on a trial basis for six months and will then be reviewed in the light of operating experience.

Full details of the exact routes, stopping places and timing will be published shortly and exhibited at main terminals.

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CLOSURE ORDERS BY BUILDING AUTHORITY

The Building Authority has applied for closure orders on a number of buildings following the recent rainstorm.

Up to and including today (June 22), the buildings involved are:

10, 12, 14, 16, 21, Po Shan Road
47, 51, 53, 55, Conduit Road
36, Kotewall Road, Blocks 1 and 2
60, 62, Plantation Road
22A, B, C and 31 Barker Road
24, Tin Hau Temple Road
17, 19, 21, Babington Path
130, 134, 136, Kennedy Road
21, Seymour Road
3, Severn Road
8, Shiu Fai Terrace (Blocks A - F)
2, 4, Bullock Lane
12, 13, 14, Lan Kwai Fong
33, 35, 37, 39, Wun Sha Street
226, 228, Queen's Road Central
IA and IB, Shouson Hill Road East
11, Shouson Hill Road East (Blocks E - J) 6 houses
39, Shouson Hill Road, Block A.

Occupiers of these premises may call at the Tenancy Inquiry Bureau (Hong Kong), Secretariat for Home Affairs, International Building, Des Voeux Road Central for information regarding the effect that these closures will have on their rights as tenants.

They may also telephone H-452845 or H-452802.

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CONTINUING RELIEF FOR RAINSTORM VICTIMS

About 6,000 victims of the thunderstorm whose homes or huts were substantially damaged by floods are to receive immediately an ex gratia payment of \$50 each from the Community Relief Trust Fund.

Announcing this today, the Director of Social Welfare, the Fund Trustee, said the payment would mean, in effect, that an average family of five members would receive \$250, with the cash outlay under this head totalling about \$300,000.

The payment brings relief to a category of thunderstorm victims not covered by yesterday's decision to allow ex gratia grants of \$200 each from the Fund for people whose homes had been destroyed by the disaster.

About 800 people registered with the Social Welfare Department fall into yesterday's category.

Urgent administrative measures have been taken, and payments can be collected from noon tomorrow (Friday) at the following localities on both sides of the harbour:-

- * Tai Hang Tung Community Centre;
- * Wong Tai Sin Community Centre;
- * Kwun Tong Community Centre;
- * Eastern District Office, Social Welfare Department, Causeway Bay.

"These ex gratia payments, amounting to about \$500,000," the Director said, "take into account numerous contributions flowing into the Fund as a result of public sympathy and generosity. The general wish is that the money go immediately to relieve hardship."

/Assistance

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Assistance from the Fund under other heads include \$500 burial grants, and \$6,000 grants for families on the death of the chief bread-winner.

Contributions to the Fund from members of the public received today reached \$357,374.80, bringing the total received since the thunderstorm began to \$772,342.80.

Meanwhile, the Agriculture and Fisheries Department, up to 9 a.m. this morning, has registered a total of 4,920 applications for relief from farmers who have suffered losses in livestock, crops and poultry.

Of these 4,920, the department has investigated 1,822 applications and has approved relief cash totalling \$218,695 for payment to farmers.

On the resettlement of rainstorm victims, a Resettlement Department spokesman said today that since Tuesday, more than 1,500 people affected by the Sau Mau Ping landslide had moved into their homes at the Sau Mau Ping Resettlement Estate.

The department is working at full speed on resettling the 600 people in Sam Kar Tsuen who had been evacuated from their homes because of possible landslide there.

The New Territories Administration has paid out more than \$36,000 for the relief of people in the New Territories whose homes or huts have been damaged in the rainstorm.

The payment is to enable these people to meet the costs of repairing their homes.

The New Territories Administration has so far registered some 860 applications for relief of which 158 have been approved, and the rest are under investigation. Of the approved applications, payment has been made in 52 cases.

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IMMEDIATE STEPS BEING TAKEN TO REDUCE HEALTH HAZARDS IN DISASTER AREAS

The two major disaster areas in Sau Mau Ping and Kotewall Road are now becoming a health hazard.

The areas were visited this afternoon by the Director of Medical and Health Services, Dr. G.H. Choa, the Director of Public Works, Mr. J.J. Robson, and the Director of Fire Services, Mr. A.E.H. Wood, who inspected the progress of the rescue work taking place.

The Director of Medical and Health Services said tonight that there was no further hope of anyone being alive under the debris in these areas.

"I regret we must give up hope of finding any more survivors. Normally, a person buried under these circumstances may survive for about two days or three days at the very most. After about four days, there is no likelihood of any life remaining.

"During my visit to Sau Ming Ping and Kotewall Road, a strong odour in these areas was most apparent and, under the circumstances, it is not surprising that they have become something of a health hazard. We are now tackling the problem of disinfecting the areas."

Following very careful consideration and in the light of this assessment by Dr. Choa, it has been decided that the task must now be to clear these areas as quickly as possible to prevent any health hazard from developing further.

Starting tomorrow morning, therefore, the Public Works Department will move in earth-moving equipment to speed up the clearance work. It is hoped this will cut the clearance time by about ten days, thereby minimizing the health risks.

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During the visit to the two areas today, the Director of Public Works, Mr. Robson said that with these new arrangements it would take a further week to complete the removal of the large quantity of earth and debris at Sau Mau Ping, but to reinstate the damaged slope above the area would take longer.

He also said that it will take about 14 days to clear Conduit Road but the clearance and other works at Po Shan Road with every effort being made will still take considerably longer.

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MEMBERS OF COMMISSION OF INQUIRY NAMED

The membership of the Commission of Inquiry appointed by the Governor to inquire into the recent rainstorm disasters was announced this (Thursday) afternoon.

The Chairman of the Commission is District Judge T.L. Yang and the two members are Professor S. Mackey, Professor of Civil Engineering at the University of Hong Kong, and Mr. Eric Cumine, an Authorised Architect, who is a partner of Eric Cumine and Associates.

The Secretary to the Commission is Mr. Mo Yiu-chor of the Colonial Secretariat.

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MID-LEVELS RESIDENTS OF DANGEROUS BUILDINGS

Allowed To Return To Collect Belongings

Special arrangements have been made to enable people to collect personal possessions from their homes in the mid-levels area which have been closed for safety reasons.

They will be allowed to enter at their own risk under police supervision at staggered intervals during tomorrow, Friday, June 23, and Saturday, June 24.

The items people will be allowed to collect are limited to small personal effects and valuables which can easily be carried.

Police barriers will be set up to ensure that only bona-fide residents are allowed entry.

They will be required to bring proof of their identity and residence. No agents will be allowed.

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

Entry times are as follows:-

Tomorrow, Friday, June 23: 10 and 16 Po Shan Mansions between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m.; 12 and 14 Po Shan Mansions between 2 p.m. to 7 p.m.; 53 and 55 Conduit Road between 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.; 17, Babington Path between 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.; 19 and 21 Babington Path between 2 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Saturday, June 24: Emerald Gardens, 36 Kotewall Road, block 2 between 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.; block 1 at the same address between 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.; Skyline Mansions, 51 Conduit Road, between 2 p.m. to 7 p.m.; Mirror Marina, 47 Conduit Road between 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

People whose homes have been closed in other areas can inquire whether entry will be permitted by contacting the Buildings Ordinance Office of the Public Works Department, telephone No. H-251111, Ext. 2324.

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Release Time: 9.00 p.m.