



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

SATURDAY, MARCH 5, 1977

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NEW RULES ON OVERSEAS DRIVING LICENCES

THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT TODAY ANNOUNCED REVISED RULES REGARDING THE DIRECT ISSUE OF FULL HONG KONG DRIVING LICENCES TO HOLDERS OF OVERSEAS DRIVING LICENCES.

FROM MONDAY (MARCH 7) THE HOLDERS OF DRIVING LICENCES ISSUED IN COUNTRIES WHERE IT HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED THAT THE DRIVING TESTS CONDUCTED BY THE AUTHORITY CONCERNED ARE OF A COMPARABLE STANDARD TO THOSE IN HONG KONG MAY BE GRANTED A FULL HONG KONG DRIVING LICENCE WITHOUT A TEST AFTER COMPLETING THE NECESSARY FORMALITIES AND ON PAYMENT OF THE PRESCRIBED FEES.

APPLICATION FORMS CAN BE OBTAINED FROM THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT LICENSING OFFICE ON THE GROUND FLOOR OF MURRAY ROAD MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT POINTED OUT THAT UNDER THE REVISED POLICY THE PREVIOUS DISTINCTION MADE BETWEEN THOSE APPLICANTS WHO HOLD OVERSEAS TRAVEL DOCUMENTS AND THOSE WHO HOLD HONG KONG DOCUMENTS HAS BEEN ABOLISHED.

THE OVERSEAS LICENCES THAT WILL BE ACCEPTED INITIALLY IN THE NEW SCHEME INCLUDE THOSE ISSUED IN BRITAIN, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, CANADA, MALAYSIA, SINGAPORE, THE UNITED STATES, JAPAN AND A NUMBER OF WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES BUT OTHER COUNTRIES WOULD BE ADDED AS APPROPRIATE TO THE APPROVED LIST AS INFORMATION ON THEIR DRIVING TEST STANDARDS IS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE DEPARTMENT TO DETERMINE THEIR ACCEPTABILITY.

IN SOME CASES, WHERE APPLICANTS ARE UNABLE TO FURNISH ADEQUATE SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO REFER BACK TO THE OVERSEAS ISSUING AUTHORITY CONCERNED FOR VERIFICATION.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT THIS POLICY CHANGE HAD BEEN DECIDED LAST YEAR AFTER DISCUSSIONS WITH UMELCO ARISING FROM COMPLAINTS FROM HOLDERS OF HONG KONG PASSPORTS.

THE CHANGE HAD BEEN FORECAST BY THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT IN ANSWER TO A LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL QUESTION ASKED BY AN UNOFFICIAL MEMBER ON APRIL 27 LAST YEAR.

IT WILL AVOID FURTHER ADDITIONS TO THE LONG WAITING LIST FOR DRIVING TESTS AND WILL HELP THE INCREASING NUMBER OF HONG KONG RESIDENTS WHO BECOME QUALIFIED DRIVERS IN OVERSEAS COUNTRIES AND WISH TO CONTINUE TO DRIVE WHEN THEY RETURN.

HE ADDED THAT ANY PERSON WHO HAS AT ANY TIME DURING THE PAST THREE YEARS HELD A LICENCE ISSUED BY ONE OF THE COUNTRIES ON THE APPROVED LIST COULD NOW APPLY FOR A HONG KONG DRIVING LICENCE WITHOUT TEST. THIS INCLUDED THOSE WHO NOW MEET THE REQUIREMENTS BUT WHOSE APPLICATIONS HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN REJECTED FOR NOT BEING IN POSSESSION OF AN OVERSEAS TRAVEL DOCUMENT.

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1976 -- BUSIEST YEAR FOR FIREMEN

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1976 WAS THE BUSIEST YEAR THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT HAS EVER EXPERIENCED.

ACCORDING TO STATISTICS RELEASED TODAY, THE DEPARTMENT RESPONDED TO 9,383 FIRE CALLS DURING THE YEAR, AN INCREASE OF 27 PER CENT OVER THE PRECEDING YEAR.

OF THE TOTAL, 2,454 WERE GRASS FIRES, 1,184 DOMESTIC FIRES, 484 VEHICLE FIRES AND 23 SHIP FIRES. THERE WERE 394 FIRES ASSOCIATED WITH FACTORIES AND 112 WITH FACTORIES IN DOMESTIC PREMISES.

FORTY-TWO PEOPLE DIED AS A RESULT OF FIRE AND 587, INCLUDING 41 FIREMEN, WERE INJURED. IN ADDITION, MORE THAN 720 PEOPLE WERE RESCUED BY FIREMEN FROM FIRES AND OTHER CALAMITIES AND HUNDREDS MORE WERE LED TO SAFETY FROM POTENTIAL DANGEROUS SITUATIONS.

JANUARY WAS THE BUSIEST MONTH FOR FIREMEN WHEN 1,454 FIRES OF VARIOUS MAGNITUDE WERE DEALT WITH, FOLLOWED BY NOVEMBER WITH 1,068 FIRES.

THERE WAS NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN THE PATTERN OF CAUSES OF FIRES LAST YEAR. CARELESSNESS IN THE HANDLING OR DISPOSAL OF LIGHTED CIGARETTES, MATCHES AND JOSS-STICKS (3,433 CALLS) AND DEFECTIVE ELECTRICAL UNITS (1,632 CALLS) ACCOUNTED FOR ALMOST 54 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL CAUSES.

OTHER COMMON CAUSES OF FIRES INCLUDED OVERTURNED KEROSENE STOVES AND OIL LAMPS (344), CHILDREN PLAYING WITH MATCHES (311), UNATTENDED COOKING STOVES, HEATERS AND IRONS (246) AND LIQUEFIED PETROLEUM GAS (172).

THERE WERE 52 CASES OF SUSPECTED ARSON RESULTING IN TEN DEATHS AND 30 PEOPLE BEING INJURED.

DURING THE YEAR, THE DEPARTMENT WAS ALSO CALLED UPON TO DEAL WITH 3,574 SPECIAL SERVICE INCIDENTS IN WHICH 316 PEOPLE WERE KILLED AND 1,349 INJURED.

THESE INCLUDED BRIEF LIFT FAILURES, HANGING, LANDSLIDES, HOUSE COLLAPSES, DROWNING, MOUNTAIN RESCUE AND TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS.

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POPULATION BOOM IN TAI PO
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PUBLIC HOUSING PROJECTS AND PRIVATE DEVELOPMENTS IN TAI PO WOULD SWELL THE TOWN'S PRESENT POPULATION OF 40,000 TO 100,000 IN THE NEXT 10 YEARS, THE SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, MR. DAVID AKERS-JONES, SAID TODAY.

LOOKING EVEN FURTHER AHEAD, MR. AKERS-JONES SAID THE PLANNED EVENTUAL POPULATION OF TAI PO WAS 220,000 PEOPLE - FIVE AND A HALF TIMES THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE NOW LIVING IN THE TOWN.

IN FACT, HE SAID, THE PROGRESS WAS ALREADY BEING REFLECTED IN PROPERTY VALUES IN TAI PO, WHICH HAVE RISEN 25 PER CENT OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS.

+THE FACT THAT TAI PO IS RELATIVELY FREE OF CRIME AND HAS A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT IS ALSO ATTRACTING MORE AND MORE YOUNG FAMILIES TO THE TOWN,+ HE SAID.

MR. AKERS-JONES WAS SPEAKING AT A CEREMONY IN WHICH HE UNVEILED A COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE TO MARK THE OPENING OF THE TAI PO RURAL COMMITTEE'S NEW \$500,000 TWO-STOREY OFFICE.

HE SAID THE FURTHER LARGE-SCALE DEVELOPMENTS PLANNED FOR TAI PO WOULD BRING GREATER PROSPERITY AND AMENITIES, BUT IT WOULD ALSO BRING DIFFICULTY AND DISRUPTION.

+BUT I AM SURE THAT THIS CAN BE KEPT TO THE MINIMUM AND RESOLVED THROUGH MUTUAL CO-OPERATION AND WE RELY VERY MUCH ON THE RURAL COMMITTEE TO ACHIEVE THIS,+ HE SAID.

MR. AKERS-JONES SAID THE TAI PO RURAL COMMITTEE, SINCE IT WAS FORMED IN 1959, HAD MADE SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS IMPROVING THE WAY OF LIFE OF THE PEOPLE OF TAI PO.

+NOW BECAUSE OF THE VAST DEVELOPMENTS THAT ARE TAKING PLACE IN TAI PO, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE COMMITTEE SHOULD HAVE AN OFFICE OF ITS OWN.

+I BELIEVE THAT WITH THE OPENING OF THIS OFFICE, THE RURAL COMMITTEE WILL PROVIDE AN EVEN GREATER SERVICE AND ASSISTANCE TO LOCAL RESIDENTS,+ HE SAID.

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WATER CUT
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WATER SUPPLY TO CERTAIN PREMISES IN ABERDEEN WILL BE TURNED OFF FOR EIGHT HOURS FROM 10 P.M. FROM MONDAY (MARCH 7) TO ENABLE STAFF OF THE WATER SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT TO PROVIDE A FRESH WATER TEE AT TIN WAN STREET AT THE JUNCTION OF SHEK PAI WAN ROAD.

THE AFFECTED AREA IS BOUNDED BY TIN WAN HILL ROAD, KA WO STREET, TIN WAN CLOSE, TANG FUNG STREET, NOS. 43-103 SHEK PAI WAN ROAD, NOS. 1-20 TIN WAN STREET AND NO. 25 HING WO STREET.

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TOPLEY TO ATTEND SEVENTH COMMONWEALTH EDUCATION CONFERENCE
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HONG KONG WILL BE REPRESENTED AT THE SEVENTH COMMONWEALTH EDUCATION CONFERENCE IN ACCRA, GHANA, FROM MARCH 8 TO 18 BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, MR. KENNETH TOPLEY.

THE DIRECTOR WILL BE PARTICIPATING AS A MEMBER OF THE BRITISH DELEGATION FOLLOWING PAST PRACTICE.

BEFORE HE LEAVES BY AIR FOR ROME TOMORROW EVENING ON HIS WAY TO ACCRA, MR. TOPLEY WILL LEAD THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S TEAM IN THE COMMUNITY CHEST'S +WALK FOR A MILLION+ IN KOWLOON ON SUNDAY MORNING.

DURING MR. TOPLEY'S ABSENCE, THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION (ADMINISTRATION), MR. COLVYN HAYE, WILL ACT AS DIRECTOR.

THE CONFERENCE WILL PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR DELEGATES TO EXCHANGE VIEWS AND TO REVIEW COMMONWEALTH CO-OPERATION IN EDUCATION.

THE MINISTERS WILL JOIN THEIR DELEGATIONS AT THE START OF THE SECOND WEEK DURING WHICH THE CONFERENCE THEME - +THE ECONOMICS OF EDUCATION+ - WILL BE DISCUSSED.

PREVIOUS CONFERENCES WERE HELD IN KINGSTON, JAMAICA (1974) CANBERRA (1971), LAGOS (1968), OTTAWA (1964), NEW DELHI (1962) AND OXFORD (1959).

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FIRING PRACTICE
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FIRING PRACTICE WILL TAKE PLACE ON CASTLE PEAK RANGE BETWEEN 8.30 A.M. AND 4.30 P.M. ON MARCH 10 (THURSDAY).

THE PUBLIC ARE REMINDED THAT IT IS DANGEROUS TO ENTER THE AREA WHEN THE RED FLAGS ARE FLYING DURING THE TIME OF THE PRACTICE.

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