



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1975

<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
1975-76 BUDGET ECONOMIC BACKGROUND PUBLISHED .....	1
KAM TIN RIVER IN YUEN LONG CLEARED OF ACCUMULATED RUBBISH BY JOINT DEPARTMENTAL EFFORTS .....	3
MORE PHONES INSTALLED AT OI MAN ESTATE'S ENQUIRY CENTRE TO FACILITATE CALLERS ENQUIRING ABOUT TENDER PROCEDURES FOR SHOPS .....	5
EDUCATION DIRECTOR TO VISIT KINDERGARTEN TOMORROW ..	6
NEW +HOT LINE+ FOR URGENT LABOUR RELATIONS PROBLEMS	7

—0—

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1975

- 1 -

BUDGET ECONOMIC BACKGROUND PUBLISHED  
\* \* \* \* \*

UNDER THE IMPACT OF THE OIL CRISIS, HONG KONG'S GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT INCREASED BY AN ESTIMATED 1-1/2 PER CENT IN REAL TERMS IN 1974.

THE 1975-76 BUDGET: ECONOMIC BACKGROUND PUBLICATION WHICH APPEARS TODAY, SHOWS THAT IN THE FIRST NINE MONTHS OF 1974, THE IMPORT BILL FOR FUELS WAS MORE THAN \$1,500 MILLION, COMPARED WITH A LITTLE OVER \$500 MILLION FOR THE SAME PERIOD IN 1973, AND WITH LITTLE CHANGE IN THE QUANTITIES IMPORTED.

NONETHELESS, IT IS NOTED THAT EVEN WITH THE INCREASE IN PRICES, THE IMPORT BILL FOR FUELS REPRESENTED ONLY SIX PER CENT, BY VALUE, OF TOTAL VISIBLE IMPORTS.

THE REPORT GOES ON TO SAY THAT THE MAJOR IMPACT OF THE INCREASE IN OIL PRICES ON HONG KONG WAS FELT IN A SLOWING-DOWN IN THE GROWTH OF DEMAND IN PRINCIPAL EXPORT MARKETS. THIS WAS THE RESULT OF A HIGHER PROPORTION OF NON-OIL PRODUCING COUNTRIES' FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS BEING APPLIED TO MEETING THE INCREASED IMPORT COST OF FUELS.

THE REPORT SHOWS THAT IN THE FIRST NINE MONTHS OF 1974, DOMESTIC EXPORTS, IN QUANTITY TERMS, ACTUALLY DECLINED BY ABOUT 1-1/2 PER CENT.

MANUFACTURING EMPLOYMENT IN THE SAME PERIOD DECLINED BY ABOUT 10 PER CENT. THERE WAS ALSO A LEVELLING-OFF IN WAGE RATES IN BOTH THE MANUFACTURING AND CONSTRUCTION SECTORS.

THE FACT THAT WAGE RATES IN HONG KONG ARE FLEXIBLE IN THIS WAY HAS ALMOST CERTAINLY MEANT THAT INCREASES IN UNEMPLOYMENT HAVE BEEN RATHER SMALLER THAN WOULD HAVE OTHERWISE BEEN THE CASE, THE REPORT NOTES.

FURTHERMORE, THE ABSENCE OF WAGE-COST INFLATIONARY PRESSURES HAS ENHANCED HONG KONG'S ABILITY TO RESPOND QUICKLY TO INCREASES IN OVERSEAS DEMAND.

THE BUDGET: ECONOMIC BACKGROUND, WHICH WILL BE ON SALE FROM TOMORROW (MONDAY) AFTERNOON AT THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS CENTRE, SAYS THE DECLINE IN DOMESTIC EXPORTS, IN QUANTITY TERMS, WAS ACCOMPANIED BY A REDUCTION IN THE QUANTITIES IMPORTED OF RAW MATERIALS, CONSUMER GOODS AND, TO SOME EXTENT, FOODSTUFFS.

/BUT WITH INCREASES .....

BUT WITH INCREASES IN THE QUANTITIES OF FUELS AND CAPITAL GOODS IMPORTED AND WITH BOTH IMPORT AND EXPORT PRICES CONTINUING TO RISE RAPIDLY, THE VISIBLE TRADE DEFICIT WIDENED CONSIDERABLY. FOR 1974 AS A WHOLE, THE VISIBLE TRADE DEFICIT WAS A RECORD \$4,084 MILLION.

HOWEVER, THE TERMS OF TRADE BEGAN TO IMPROVE AGAIN IN THE THIRD QUARTER OF THE YEAR WITH EXPORT PRICES INCREASING VERY SLIGHTLY OVER THOSE FOR THE SECOND QUARTER AND WITH IMPORT PRICES ACTUALLY DECLINING.

THE REPORT NOTES THAT THE EXTERNAL VALUE OF THE HONG KONG DOLLAR HAS BEEN RELATIVELY STABLE IN RECENT YEARS. IT APPRECIATED, IN TERMS OF THE CURRENCIES OF HONG KONG'S PRINCIPAL TRADING PARTNERS, BY ABOUT 4-1/2 PER CENT IN THE PERIOD FROM THE 'SMITHSONIAN' CURRENCY REALIGNMENTS OF DECEMBER 1971 TO THE END OF 1973 AND BY ABOUT 1-1/2 PER CENT IN 1974.

STILL IN THE MONETARY FIELD, THE REPORT POINTS OUT THAT ADVANCES AND LOANS BY THE LICENSED BANKS TO THE FINANCIAL SECTOR SHOWED LITTLE CHANGE IN 1974, BUT THOSE FOR THE GENERAL PURPOSES OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY CONTINUED TO INCREASE, ALTHOUGH AT A RATHER SLOWER RATE THAN IN 1973 AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THE SLOWING-DOWN IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND FURTHER INCREASES IN 1974 IN INTEREST RATES.

AMOUNTS DUE TO BANKS ABROAD IN 1974 INCREASED ON AN EXCEPTIONALLY LARGE SCALE, BY MORE THAN \$6,500 MILLION OR NEARLY 75 PER CENT. THIS INCREASE WAS PARTLY ASSOCIATED WITH BALANCES MADE AVAILABLE BY OVERSEAS HEAD OFFICES TO FACILITATE LENDING OPERATIONS IN HONG KONG, BUT IT WAS ALSO ASSOCIATED, MUCH MORE THAN IN THE PAST, WITH ADVANCES AND LOANS MADE OUTSIDE HONG KONG.

TURNING TO THE PROPERTY SECTOR, THE REPORT NOTES THAT THE SLOWING-DOWN OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IN 1974 WAS ALSO REFLECTED IN A DECLINE IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE YEAR IN OFFICE RENTS ON THE RENEWAL OF EXISTING TENANCIES AND FOR NEW LETTINGS, AMOUNTING TO EIGHT PER CENT. THIS COMPARES WITH AN INCREASE OF 21 PER CENT IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE YEAR.

THE REPORT SHOWS THAT THE GENERAL CONSUMER PRICE INDEX LEVELLED-OFF IN THE SECOND HALF OF 1974, FOLLOWING PARTICULARLY RAPID INCREASES EARLIER IN THE YEAR AND IN 1973.

OUT-OF-SEASON TROPICAL CYCLONES RESULTED IN INCREASES IN THE INDEX IN OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER, BUT IT DECLINED SHARPLY IN DECEMBER.

---

NOTE TO EDITORS:

---

COPIES OF THE BUDGET: ECONOMIC BACKGROUND ARE NOW AVAILABLE FOR COLLECTION FROM THE GIS PRESS ROOM 6/F BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, HONG KONG.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1975

- 3 -

### KAM TIN RIVER IS FLOWING AGAIN

\* \* \* \*

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YEARS, THE WATER OF THE KAM TIN RIVER AND ITS FIVE TRIBUTARIES IN YUEN LONG IS FLOWING ITS NATURAL COURSE AGAIN.

IN THE PAST, THE RIPPLING OF RIVER WATER WAS SOMETHING QUITE UNHEARD OF TO THE VILLAGERS AND PICNICKERS ALONG THE BANKS OF THE RIVER.

AND THEY HAD NOBODY BUT THEMSELVES TO BLAME. FOR IT WAS NOT A LONG DROUGHT THAT HAD BROUGHT ABOUT THIS SORRY SIGHT. IT WAS JUST INDISCRIMINATE DUMPING OF LAP SAP. SO MUCH REFUSE AND WASTES HAD ACCUMULATED IN THE RIVER THAT VERY OFTEN YOU COULD WALK RIGHT ACROSS IT WITHOUT KNOWING THAT THERE WAS WATER UNDERNEATH.

HOWEVER, A CHANGE OF SCENERY TOOK PLACE IN THE AREA LATE LAST YEAR WHEN A TEAM OF ABOUT 40 U.S.D. WORKERS MOVED IN AND EMBARKED ON THE ARDUOUS TASK OF REMOVING TONS OF LAP SAP AND CUTTING DOWN OVERHANGING VEGETATION ALONG THE RIVER BANKS.

FROM KO PO TO HA CHI, THE WORKERS COVERED THE WHOLE LENGTH OF THE KAM TIN RIVER, WHICH, INCLUDING ITS TRIBUTARIES, MEASURES SOME SEVEN MILES.

THIS BIG CLEANSING OPERATION, WHICH TOOK 33 WORKING DAYS, WAS INITIATED LAST OCTOBER AT AN INTER-DEPARTMENTAL MEETING HEADED BY THE SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES. THE DEPARTMENTS INVOLVED IN THE PLANNING INCLUDED THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT, THE NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION AND THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

A PILOT SCHEME WAS THEN DECIDED TO FIND OUT HOW MUCH COULD BE DONE BY EXISTING U.S.D. MANPOWER IN REDUCING THE EXTENT OF POLLUTION IN N.T. RIVERS. THE AIM OF THIS OPERATION WAS TO CLEAR OBSTRUCTIONS IN THE RIVERS TO ALLOW A FREE FLOW OF WATER AND TO PREVENT AND MINIMIZE SEDIMENTATION OF SOLID WASTES IN THE RIVER BEDS.

THE MAN IN CHARGE OF THIS CLEANSING OPERATION WAS MR. NG HON-WING, URBAN SERVICES OFFICER (YUEN LONG). AFTER HE WAS ASSIGNED THE JOB, HE CARRIED OUT A NUMBER OF SURVEYS AND FINALLY DECIDED ON THE KAM TIN RIVER AS HIS PILOT OPERATION GROUND.

THREE TEAMS, EACH COMPRISING ONE FOREMAN AND 10 LABOURERS, WERE MOBILISED UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF MR. WONG KOOM-CHUNG, A HEALTH INSPECTOR. EQUIPPED WITH RUBBER WADERS, JUNGLE KNIVES, DINGHIES AND A SAMPAN, THE MEN SET OUT FOR OPERATION +KAM TIN RIVER+.

FROM NOVEMBER 25 LAST YEAR TO JANUARY 4 THIS YEAR, THE MEN WENT ABOUT THEIR JOB FROM MORNING TO DUSK, CUTTING DOWN PRICKLY BUSHES AND BAMBOOS AND SCOOPING REFUSE FROM THE MUDDY RIVER.

/ACCORDING .....

ACCORDING TO MR. NG, EVERYTHING WENT SMOOTHLY AND THERE WERE NO INCIDENTS EXCEPT FOR SOME MINOR PROBLEMS SUCH AS VEHICLE SHORTAGE AND SLIGHT INJURIES TO STAFF.

+THE VILLAGERS WHO LIVE ALONG THE RIVER WERE ALL IN FAVOUR OF THE CLEANSING OPERATION AND OFTEN LENT A HELPING HAND,+ MR. NG SAID.

A TOTAL OF 248 LORRY-LOADS OF BAMBOOS AND BUSHES WAS REMOVED AND 2,235 BASKETS (ABOUT 50 LBS. PER BASKET) OF REFUSE, MAINLY MADE UP OF DEAD POULTRY, PIGS, AND AGRICULTURAL WASTES, WERE COLLECTED. SOME OF THIS REFUSE WAS DISPOSED OF AT THE NGAU TAM MEI REFUSE DUMP AND SOME BY ON-THE-SPOT INCINERATION.

COMMENTING ON THE PILOT CLEANSING PROJECT, A SPOKESMAN FOR THE YUEN LONG DISTRICT OFFICE SAID: +THIS IS A REMARKABLY SUCCESSFUL OPERATION. IN FACT WE ARE QUITE SURPRISED AT HOW MUCH CAN BE ACHIEVED BY A JOINT DEPARTMENTAL EFFORT.+

HE ADDED THAT THIS WAS ONLY THE BEGINNING AND THAT SIMILAR OPERATIONS WOULD BE CARRIED OUT ELSEWHERE IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

ONE OF THE IMMEDIATE RESULTS OF THE PROJECT IS THE ADDITION OF 15 REFUSE CONTAINERS AT STRATEGIC POINTS FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF PEOPLE LIVING IN THE 20 VILLAGES SCATTERED ON BOTH SIDES OF THE RIVER. EVENTUALLY, THEY WILL BE REPLACED BY PROPER REFUSE COLLECTION CENTRES.

-----  
**NOTE TO EDITORS:**  
-----

COPIES OF A PHOTOGRAPH SHOWING THE KAM TIN RIVER BEFORE AND AFTER ITS CLEANSING OPERATION ARE NOW AVAILABLE FOR COLLECTION IN THE GIS PRESS ROOM.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1975

- 5 -

MORE PHONES FOR OI MAN ESTATE'S ENQUIRY CENTRE  
\* \* \* \* \*

THE SPECIAL ENQUIRY CENTRE SET UP AT OI MAN ESTATE HAS BEEN FLOODED WITH CALLERS IN THE PAST FEW DAYS MAKING ENQUIRIES ABOUT TENDER PROCEDURES FOR SHOPS AND COMMERCIAL UNITS IN THE ESTATE'S COMMERCIAL COMPLEX.

SO FAR, ABOUT 1,600 TENDER FORMS HAVE BEEN ISSUED TO ENTERPRISES OR INDIVIDUALS.

AS THE CENTRE'S SPECIAL TELEPHONE LINE 3-036136 HAS OFTEN BEEN JAMMED BY CALLS, THREE ADDITIONAL LINES 3-030121, 3-030122 AND 3-030123 ARE BEING INSTALLED TO FACILITATE ENQUIRERS. THESE WILL PROBABLY BE PUT INTO SERVICE IN ONE OR TWO DAYS.

THE HOUSING AUTHORITY INVITED TENDERS FOR THE TENANCIES OF SEVEN SHOPS, TWO RESTAURANTS, A CAFE, A SUPER-MARKET AND A DEPARTMENT STORE IN THE COMPLEX ON FEBRUARY 17. CLOSING DATE FOR THE TENDERS HAS BEEN FIXED AT NOON ON FEBRUARY 23.

OI MAN COMMERCIAL COMPLEX IS A PIONEER PROJECT OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY. IT WILL HAVE MORE THAN 80 SHOPS WHEN FULLY OPERATIONAL.

AT PRESENT, OI MAN HAS A POPULATION OF ABOUT 23,000 PEOPLE. LETTING OF DOMESTIC UNITS IS PROCEEDING AND THE LAST 300-ODD UNITS COMPLETED SO FAR ARE EXPECTED TO BE FILLED WITHIN TWO OR THREE WEEKS. SIX MORE NOW BLOCKS IN THE ESTATE ARE NEARING COMPLETION AND SHOULD BE READY FOR LETTING SHORTLY. THEY WILL EVENTUALLY BRING THE ESTATE'S POPULATION TO A TOTAL OF 46,000.

- - - - 0 - - - -

/6 .....

## EDUCATION DIRECTOR TO VISIT KINDERGARTEN

MODERN IDEAS OF PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION ARE BEING USED AT A KINDERGARTEN WHICH THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, MR. KENNETH TOPLEY, WILL VISIT TOMORROW (MONDAY) MORNING.

THE CHILDREN AT LING LIANG PRIMARY SCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN IN LEIGHTON ROAD, HONG KONG, LEARN THROUGH PLAY AND FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE +CENTRE OF INTEREST+ PROJECT, INDIVIDUALLY OR IN GROUPS.

+THIS IS A KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN WHICH LEARNING ACTIVITIES ARE DEVELOPED ROUND A MAIN THEME AND THE TEACHER ADOPTS THE ACTIVITY APPROACH IN TEACHING THE CHILDREN,+ SAID MISS FRANCES HON, INSPECTOR (KINDERGARTEN) WHO WILL ACCOMPANY THE DIRECTOR DURING THE VISIT.

MISS HON SAID: +EACH CHILD AT THIS KINDERGARTEN LEARNS AT HIS OWN RATE, RELATES HIS LEARNING TO HIS INTEREST AND EVERYDAY LIFE, PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES FOR CREATIVE WORK AND FREE EXPRESSION WORK AND FOSTERS CLOSER CO-ORDINATION BETWEEN VARIOUS SUBJECTS IN THE CURRICULUM SO THAT THE CHILD MAY ACQUIRE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS READILY IN AN INFORMAL MANNER.

+THE TEACHERS HAVE ACHIEVED GOOD RESULTS BY ADOPTING THIS METHOD.+

THE HEADMISTRESS, MRS. ANGELA LUK CHIU KWAN-HUNG, WAS AMONG THE FIRST GROUP WHO COMPLETED THE IN-SERVICE TRAINING COURSE FOR KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS FROM 1956 TO 1958 ORGANIZED AND RUN BY THE KINDERGARTEN SECTION OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S ADVISORY INSPECTORATE.

THE COURSE IS WELL ATTENDED AND IS HELD ON TUESDAYS AT THE JOCKEY CLUB GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOL AND ON THURSDAYS AT THE MORRISON HILL TECHNICAL INSTITUTE.

THE LING LIANG PRIMARY SCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN OPERATES IN TWO SESSIONS AND HAS A TOTAL ENROLMENT OF 560 CHILDREN. IT IS A PRIVATE NON-PROFIT MAKING KINDERGARTEN SPONSORED BY LING LIANG WORLD-WIDE EVANGELISTIC MISSION, HONG KONG. THE SCHOOL CEASED TO OPERATE PRIMARY CLASSES IN SEPTEMBER 1972.

THE KINDERGARTEN IS VISITED BY LECTURERS AND STUDENTS FROM THE THREE COLLEGES OF EDUCATION, STUDENTS AND STAFF OF THE TWO UNIVERSITIES AND, AMONG OTHERS, NURSERY WORKERS FROM LADY TRENCH DEMONSTRATION NURSERY AND TRAINING CENTRE.

---

### NOTE TO EDITORS:

MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES ARE INVITED TO COVER THE DIRECTOR'S VISIT TO THE KINDERGARTEN AT 40A LEIGHTON ROAD, HONG KONG.

THE TOUR OF THE SCHOOL TOMORROW WILL BEGIN AT ABOUT 9.30 A.M. AND WILL LAST ONE HOUR.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1975

- 7 -

NEW 'HOT LINE' FOR URGENT LABOUR RELATIONS PROBLEMS

\* \* \* \* \*

THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT TODAY ANNOUNCED A NEW AFTER-HOURS TELEPHONE NUMBER TO DEAL WITH URGENT LABOUR RELATIONS PROBLEMS.

FROM TOMORROW (MONDAY), EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES CAN CONTACT MR. CHAN KWOK-KUEN, LABOUR OFFICER OF THE LABOUR RELATIONS SERVICE ON 3-640640 AFTER REGULAR OFFICE HOURS. THE FORMER AFTER-HOURS ENQUIRY NUMBER OF 5-755900 IS NO LONGER IN USE.

THE CHIEF LABOUR OFFICER OF THE LABOUR RELATIONS SERVICE, MR. TSUI TIM-FOOK, SAID THE NEW AFTER-HOURS NUMBER WOULD HANDLE URGENT AND IMPORTANT CONSULTATIONS ON LABOUR RELATIONS MATTERS IN HONG KONG, KOWLOON AND THE NEW TERRITORIES.

BUT HE STRESSED THAT ORDINARY DISPUTE COMPLAINTS SHOULD BE MADE TO DISTRICT LABOUR RELATIONS SERVICE OFFICES DURING NORMAL OFFICE HOURS.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE NUMBER WAS A RESIDENTIAL ONE. +IN THE PAST, PEOPLE HAVE RUNG OFF BECAUSE THEY WRONGLY THOUGHT THEY WERE RINGING A LABOUR DEPARTMENT OFFICE.

+PEOPLE SHOULD NOT BE PUT OFF BY THE FACT THAT THE NUMBER IS A PRIVATE RESIDENCE AND SHOULD CLEARLY EXPLAIN TO THE PERSON ANSWERING THE CALL THE PURPOSE OF THE INQUIRY.

+MR. CHAN, WHEN AVAILABLE, WILL BE HAPPY TO HELP WITH ANY URGENT CONSULTATION. BUT EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES SHOULD REALISE THAT A DISPUTE CANNOT BE SETTLED OVER THE TELEPHONE.+

- - - - 0 - - - -