



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Thursday, December 7, 1972

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1973 WILL SEE IMPROVEMENT IN TRADE AND INDUSTRY

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The Governor, Sir Murray MacLehose, said today he was "tolerably confident" that 1973 would see an improvement in trade and industry.

Thus, he added, he supported the continued improvement in Hong Kong's prosperity and the standard of living of the citizens "that is our object".

Sir Murray was speaking at the official opening of the 30th Exhibition of Hong Kong Products organised by the Chinese Manufacturers' Association on the Wan Chai reclamation.

In his address, he spoke of this year's problems for local industrialists, traders and bankers, future economic and industrial development and the parts played by organisations and government departments, the provision of industrial land and cranes.

The Governor said that as 1972 developed, it certainly did produce its problems for local industrialists and traders. "Bankers, traders and Government alike have also had to confront the completely unfamiliar range of problems arising from the floating of sterling, and the realignment of the currencies of our major trading partners," he added.

He said 1972 had therefore not been an easy year for Hong Kong, but he pointed out that "the sort of difficulties we have had are the common experience of all major exporting communities."

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He pointed to a "striking fact" that in spite of this unusually wide spectrum of difficulties, Hong Kong's exports had still expanded by 10 per cent as compared with 1971. "This is a very fine achievement in the circumstances, from which we can take considerable encouragement."

In other respects, Sir Murray said, Hong Kong's economy continued to boom to the extent that a shortage of labour was still one of the industry's bigger problems.

"This is a tribute to the persistence and ingenuity of our manufacturers, not just in textiles but in other industries as well; and it justifies the confidence I expressed last year in Hong Kong's ability to expand its economy in relatively difficult times as well as in good."

As regards future development, the Governor said there was a "quickenning of economic activity" in Hong Kong's major markets in North America and Western Europe, and hopefully this should lead to an increased growth in world trade in the course of 1973.

"There should therefore be better opportunities for our exporters which, provided they can take advantage of them, should lead to a further satisfactory growth in exports next year," he said.

Sir Murray said Hong Kong had to depend on the competitiveness, quality and sophistication of its products to keep ahead in the race, and he knew that industry was doing a lot in this respect.

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He said the institutional system which supports commerce and industry is also both strong and beneficial -- the Trade Development Council, the Productivity Council and Centre, the Export Credit Insurance Corporation and the many trade and industrial organisations, including the Chinese Manufacturers' Association, all play important parts in Hong Kong's economic development.

On Government's part, he said, much of the institutional support for commerce and industry has been established on Government initiative, and the institutions concerned continue to be assisted from the Government funds.

"Individual Government departments are also involved in many aspects of the development of trade and industry," he added.

On foreign participation in local industry, the Governor said its value was now estimated to have exceeded \$1,000 million, and "we hope and expect to see increased interest by foreign companies in establishing themselves in Hong Kong."

"The object is to see new, more sophisticated and more productive industries established here which can only serve to benefit our economic development as a whole."

However, he pointed out that the principal contribution of the Government must be the provision of the essential infrastructure -- housing, schools, hospitals, roads, water supplies and so on.

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With regard to the provision of industrial land, Sir Murray described land as "a very scarce resource in Hong Kong" and said that, other things being equal, it has to be put to its most productive use.

"The Government believes that generally speaking the best method to ensure this is through the mechanism of the market." However, he added, provision has always had to be made for restricted user conditions in certain circumstances.

He said consideration is now being given to making certain areas of land available for sale on a restricted user basis confined to certain types of engineering industry and perhaps other similar industries of an advanced technological character. It is hoped that one lot in Tsing Yi Island will be sold on this basis in the near future, he added.

Subject to such exceptions, the Governor believed the best contribution the Government can make is to provide good access to new areas, and to provide in these areas land for industrial and private development as well as housing and other facilities.

This has been done in Tsuen Wan/Kwai Chung/Tsing I, and it will be done in Sha Tin and Castle Peak, he said. There will be considerable quantities of prepared land for industrial use in these areas, and he advised industrialists to consider the advantage of moving to these new towns at an early stage in their development so as to get in on the ground floor.

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Referring to the problem of crimes, Sir Murray said the increase in violent crime is something about which "all of us in Hong Kong are **disturbed**, and rightly so."

However, he said, the trend will be mastered not by "wringling our hands, but by action" and he was therefore greatly encouraged by the enthusiastic response to the current recruiting campaign for the Royal Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force.

He said: "While I appreciate that crime is a complex problem, and that its causes are many sided, I believe that it is by much public spirit - and it can be used in many ways - together with the professionalism and devotion of our police and the wisdom and effectiveness of our courts that this problem will be mastered."

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Note to Editors: Copies of the full text of the Governor's speech are distributed **separately** in the G.I.S. Press Boxes this evening.

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#### FINANCIAL AIDS FOR MORE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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More needy students of the University of Hong Kong and the Chinese University of Hong Kong have benefited from the Government's provision of additional funds for the university students' financial assistance scheme this year.

Of the 6,000-strong university student population in Hong Kong, nearly 60 per cent are receiving financial aids from the Government.

A spokesman for the Joint Universities' Committee on Student Finance said that up to last month, roughly \$3.7 million had been awarded to more than 2,900 students as grants while nearly \$9½ million had been lent to some 3,200 students this year.

On the average, each student received almost \$1,250 for grants and \$2,900 for loans.

The spokesman said that in October this year, the Government allotted a supplementary amount of \$918,000 for grants and \$6.25 million for loans and a separate exercise was thereafter undertaken to ensure that the extra money could be given to the needy students.

As a result, a further 534 students obtained grants and 547 obtained loans, he said.

The spokesman added that the maximum for a loan had been raised to cover all students whether or not they might be in residence at their respective universities.

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He said: "The objective of increasing the provision of funds for student finance is to ensure that no student should be deprived of a place in the University for lack of means.

"It is Government's intention to help those needy and poor students so that they may not have to spend much time and effort in earning money during the course of their university education."

Commenting on the occasions in which some unscrupulous students tried to give distorted reports of their financial status in order to obtain government financial aids, the spokesman pointed out that legal action had been taken against the declarants submitting statutory declarations in support of the applications of the students concerned.

So far, the Joint Universities' Committee has referred 20 such cases to the Courts on charges of perjury and falsification of statutory declarations.

Seventeen of the cases had been heard by the Court to date and the fines imposed ranged from \$200 to \$3,000. Whatever amount of assistance previously given to the students concerned has been recovered by the Committee.

The student finance scheme was started in 1969. Under the scheme, grants are used to pay tuition fees and certain unavoidable expenses such as books and so forth while loans are for the students' living expenses.

The Joint Universities Committee on Student Finance is an independent and advisory body which administers the Government's scheme on university student finance.

Its composition comprises the Secretary to the University and Polytechnic Grants Committee, a representative from the Education Department and representatives from the staff and students of the two universities.

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POLICY ON BASIC QUALIFICATIONS FOR A.S.W.O. EXPLAINED

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The Social Welfare Department has begun to implement the 1971 recommendation of the Salaries Commission that the basic academic qualification for entry to the Assistant Social Welfare Officer grade should be a university degree in social work.

"Accordingly," said Mr. Thomas C.Y. Lee, Deputy Director of Social Welfare, "only applications from graduates with a degree in social work from a recognised university can be considered."

He was commenting on a statement by some students of the Baptist College that the Social Welfare Department was discriminating against them.

"These Baptist College students appear to take the view that they should be recognised as the equivalent of university graduates," Mr. Lee said, "but the College does not, in fact, at present possess university status."

He explained that as of now Baptist College graduates in social work were accepted into the Department as Welfare Assistants and Welfare Supervisors with good promotion prospects to the grade of Principal Welfare Assistants and Principal Welfare Supervisors.

Baptist College social work graduates were not treated as holders of school certificates because, on entry into the Department, their additional qualifications were recognised so that they could get a higher starting salary.

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"It is always open to them while in service to work for higher qualifications," he said. "Like other members of the Department, they will have opportunities for further training so as to make advancement possible.

"The evaluation of the social work training provided by the Baptist College is a matter on which the Social Welfare Department will wish to have the advice of the Advisory Committee on Social Work Training. The Committee will be considering this matter shortly."

It was, in fact, the Advisory Committee on Social Work Training who had recommended that an Institute for Social Work Training -- which was criticised by these students of the Baptist College -- be set up by the Government outside existing academic institutions. And this recommendation had been fully supported by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service.

The Committee was chaired by Miss Patricia Nye, and included representatives of the two universities, the Hong Kong Council of Social Service, and a number of voluntary agencies.

Mr. Lee said the Institute had also been fully supported by Dame Eileen Younghusband, an eminent social work educator in the United Kingdom and Dr. Irving Spergel, United Nations Adviser on Youth Work. It had been warmly welcomed by educational and welfare circles in Hong Kong.

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LANGUAGE COURSES FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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The Workshops of the English Language Teaching Centre has started a series of courses for secondary school teachers of Forms Four and Five.

The courses are designed to help them in preparing their students for the Reading Test in the Oral English Examination of the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination.

They are being held from 3.15 p.m. to 4.45 p.m. every Monday, Wednesday and Friday until December 18.

On Hong Kong Island, classes take place in the Centre at 28, Kennedy Road, while in Kowloon, at the Centre's Kowloon Unit on the 16th floor of the Kowloon Government Offices, 405 Nathan Road.

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FUND-RAISING LIVE ENTERTAINMENT SHOW AT MORSE PARK

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A live entertainment show will be held on Saturday (December 9) at the Morse Park open air theatre to raise funds for the Urban Services Department Schools Scholarship Fund.

Programmes of the show, organised by the Fund's Management Committee, will feature singing, magic show and a Chinese opera by the Lung Cheung Dramatic Troupe of the Radio Hong Kong. A raffle draw will also be held during the show.

The Director of Urban Services, Mr. D.R.W. Alexander, will address the gathering and present souvenirs to the artists from the Commercial Radio, Radio Hong Kong, R.T.V. and Hong Kong T.V.B.

The Scholarship Fund, which was started 10 years ago with a small capital donated by the staff of the department, provides financial assistance to needy children of the U.S.D. staff to help them pursue their secondary education.

The present assets of the Fund have accrued from holding raffles, variety shows, donations from members of the public and through investments.

The show will be held from 7.30 p.m. to 10.30 p.m. on Saturday evening.

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Note to Editors: You are cordially invited to send a reporter and/or photographer to cover the Show.

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LOTTERIES FUND GRANTS FOR NURSERY PROJECTS

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Grants totalling \$120,000 have been allocated from the Lotteries Fund in aid of three voluntary agencies setting up non-profit-making day nurseries in housing estates to meet the increasing demand for child care services and facilities.

The Gospel Preaching Group and the Christian Faith Hope Mission have been granted \$30,000 each to set up day nurseries in the Sau Mau Ping Resettlement Estate.

The Kindness Day Nursery set up by the Gospel Preaching Group can accommodate 100 children between the ages of two and six.

Premises with an area of 3,000 square feet has been granted to the Group on the fifth floor and roof area of the second Welfare Building in the estate.

The Christian Faith Hope Mission has been granted six bays on the ground floor of Block 29 of the estate to set up a nursery with an accommodation of 50 children.

The Mission expects the nursery to be ready for operation early next year.

In October, the Salvation Army started a day nursery in the Wah Fu Estate in Aberdeen which can accommodate 100 children.

This is the first day nursery to be set up within the estate.

Two floors have been rented in Wah Sang House as nursery premises, and a grant of \$60,000 had been allocated from the Lotteries Fund to help meet the cost of furniture, and other equipments, as well as fitting out.

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AIDS FOR PEOPLE AFFECTED BY FIRES

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The Social Welfare Department and the Resettlement Department have moved in to help the victims of yesterday's fires in Wan Chai Road and Tai Hom Village.

So far, the Social Welfare Department has contacted the family of one of the victims in the Wan Chai Road fire.

The family will be granted \$500 cash assistance from the Community Relief Trust Fund as soon as the burial order is issued. The grant for a child victim is \$400.

A spokesman for the S.W.D. said the department will approach the families of the remaining victims when they identify the bodies in the mortuary.

Up to now, about 2,800 people affected by the two fires have been registered with the Social Welfare Department and the Resettlement Department for emergency relief.

The Resettlement Department is also making arrangement for those who have lost their homes in the Tai Hom Village fire to be resettled in Lam Tin Estate.

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WATER SUPPLY INTERRUPTION IN CENTRAL

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Water supply to a number of premises in Central, Hong Kong, will be interrupted for five hours from 1 a.m. to 6 a.m. on Saturday (December 9).

The temporary stoppage is to enable the Waterworks Office to carry out a leakage test.

The area to be affected is bounded by Queen's Road Central, Murray Road, Seafront, Pedder Street, Des Voeux Road Central and Ice House Street.

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YEAR-END SPECIAL SHIPMENT SCHEME POSTPONED

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The Director of Commerce and Industry announced today that the Year-end Special Shipment Scheme in respect of export of restrained cotton textiles to the United Kingdom, has been postponed until Monday (December 11).

The Scheme was scheduled to be introduced tomorrow (Friday) as announced in Notice to Exporters, Series 1 (Britain) No. 24/72 of November 24, 1972.

This action has been taken in order that companies wishing to participate in the trade will have sufficient time to submit their applications.

Meanwhile, the Director has issued a Notice to Exporters regarding export of textiles to Norway.

The Notice concerns the extension of current control arrangements for restrained textiles, and current export authorisation scheme for certain garments until February 28, 1973.

Trade associations and companies on the Commerce and Industry Department's mailing list for the Notice will receive copies of the Notice shortly.

But persons who wish to seek advance notice of its content are invited to contact Mr. C.L. Li, Industry Assistant, at Tel. No. 5-247315.

Due to the Christmas postal rush, there may be some delay in the delivery of this Notice, additional copies of which are therefore made available from the Reception Counter on the ground floor of Fire Brigade Building.

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Release time: 8.00 p.m.