



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1975

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FIRE DANGER : EVERYONE MUST PLAY HIS PART OVER HOLIDAYS

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A FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN TODAY CALLED ON MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO TAKE EXTRA FIRE PRECAUTIONS DURING THE CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR HOLIDAYS.

HE SAID THAT SPECIAL ATTENTION SHOULD BE PAID TO ALL FESTIVE DECORATIONS.

+CHECK CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING SETS, ELECTRIC CANDLES AS WELL AS EXTENSION CORDS FOR FRAYED WIRES, LOOSE CONNECTIONS AND BROKEN SOCKETS,+ HE URGED.

+ALL ILLUMINATIONS SHOULD BE TURNED OFF BEFORE GOING OUT OR TURNING IN.+

THE SPOKESMAN ADVISED THE USE OF NON-COMBUSTIBLE DECORATING MATERIALS TO REDUCE THE RISK OF FIRE. USING WAX CANDLES TO DECORATE A CHRISTMAS TREE WAS HIGHLY DANGEROUS, HE STRESSED.

SMALL CHILDREN PLAYING NEAR CHRISTMAS TREES SHOULD BE SUPERVISED AND MATCHES, LIGHTERS AND CANDLES SHOULD BE KEPT WELL OUT OF THEIR REACH.

MEANWHILE, PICNICKERS ARE WARNED NOT TO LIGHT FIRES ANYWHERE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE EXCEPT IN PROPER BARBECUE GRILLS PROVIDED BY THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT POINTED OUT THAT IT WAS AN OFFENCE TO START A FIRE CARELESSLY ANYWHERE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. OFFENDERS ARE LIABLE TO A FINE OF \$2,000 AND IMPRISONMENT FOR ONE YEAR.

DURING THE WEEKEND, MORE THAN 360 ACRES OF 20 TO 30-YEAR-OLD PINE AND HARDWOOD PLANTATIONS WERE DESTROYED IN THREE MAJOR FIRES IN TAI LAM CHUNG AND TAI PO KAU. SOME 100 FORESTRY FIREFIGHTERS DRAVED RUGGED TERRAIN AND STRONG WINDS TO BATTLE THE FIRES, BUT BEFORE THEY SUCCEEDED, EXTENSIVE DAMAGE HAD ALREADY BEEN DONE.

SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE CURRENT DRY SEASON, THE DEPARTMENT HAS RECORDED OVER 300 HILL FIRES, OF WHICH 55 WERE IN THE FORESTED AREAS. SOME FOUR SQUARE MILES OF HILL LAND WERE AFFECTED AND OVER A QUARTER OF A MILLION TREES WERE DAMAGED.

+THE REPLANTING OF THESE AREAS REQUIRES LARGE SUMS OF MONEY, EFFORT AND TIME,+ THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

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HE GAVE THREE SIMPLE RULES FOR PICNICKERS TO HELP PREVENT HILL FIRES :-

- * ALWAYS HOLD MATCHES TILL COLD BEFORE DISCARDING THEM.
- * ALWAYS CRUSH CIGARETTE ENDS BEFORE THROWING THEM AWAY.
- * HOLD BARBECUE PARTIES ONLY IN DESIGNATED PLACES AND BE SURE TO EXTINGUISH ALL PICNIC FIRES PROPERLY BEFORE LEAVING.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA WHO WISH TO GET INTERVIEWS ON THE SUBJECT OR TO OBTAIN MORE INFORMATION SHOULD CONTACT THE FOLLOWING FORESTRY OFFICERS OF THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT :-

MR. J.W. WHOLEY (TEL. 3-688111 EXT. 153)

MR. K.C. IU (TEL. 3-688111 EXT. 154)

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ONE-WAY STREET

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THE UNNAMED ROAD ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE P.L.B. TERMINUS IN THE JORDAN ROAD FERRY CONCOURSE WILL BE MADE ONE-WAY FROM MAN SING STREET TO THE WAITING AREA FOR THE VEHICULAR FERRY FROM 10 A.M. TOMORROW (WEDNESDAY).

TRAFFIC SIGNS WILL BE PUT UP IN THE AREA TO GUIDE DRIVERS.

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TSIM SHA TSUI PEDESTRIAN PRECINCT SCHEME
TO END AS SCHEDULED
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THE SIX-MONTH EXPERIMENTAL PEDESTRIAN PRECINCT SCHEME IN HANOI ROAD AND CORNWALL AVENUE IN TSIM SHA TSUI, WHICH IS SCHEDULED TO END ON DECEMBER 31, 1975, WILL NOT BE EXTENDED, IT WAS ANNOUNCED TODAY.

THE STREETS WILL BE OPEN TO ALL TRAFFIC AT ALL TIMES WITH EFFECT FROM MIDNIGHT ON DECEMBER 31, 1975.

A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THE SCHEME PROVED SUCCESSFUL IN IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE AREA FOR PEDESTRIANS AND RESIDENTS, THE DECLINE IN BUSINESS EXPERIENCED BY SHOPKEEPERS IN THE TWO STREETS AT THE OUTSET OF THE SCHEME WAS NOT REVERSED.

SOME RECOVERY BY MOST BUSINESSES WAS REPORTED FOLLOWING THE MODIFICATION OF THE SCHEME IN SEPTEMBER WHEN TAXIS AND BUSES, INCLUDING TOURIST COACHES, WERE PERMITTED TO ENTER THE STREETS AT ALL TIMES.

THE EXPERIENCE IN OTHER COUNTRIES HAS BEEN THAT AFTER AN INITIAL DIP IN BUSINESS AFTER CONVERSION TO A PEDESTRIAN PRECINCT, BUSINESS HAS REVIVED AS PEOPLE HAVE COME TO APPRECIATE THE EASE OF MOVEMENT, AND HAS IN MANY CASES IMPROVED.

+THIS UNFORTUNATELY HAS NOT BEEN THE CASE IN HANOI ROAD AND CORNWALL AVENUE,+ THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

THE GREAT MAJORITY OF PEDESTRIANS INTERVIEWED IN THE PRECINCTS DURING THE EXPERIMENT DECLARED THEMSELVES TO BE GENERALLY IN FAVOUR OF PEDESTRIAN PRECINCTS. THE SPOKESMAN SAID: +ALTHOUGH THE SCHEME HAS NOT BEEN A COMPLETE SUCCESS IN THE TWO STREETS IN TSIM SHA TSUI AS FAR AS THE BUSINESSES ARE CONCERNED, IT DOES NOT NECESSARILY FOLLOW THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SHOPPING PRECINCTS IN OTHER CAREFULLY SELECTED AREAS WOULD NOT SUCCEED.

+A GREAT DEAL OF USEFUL INFORMATION HAS BEEN GATHERED FROM THE EXPERIMENT AND IT IS THE INTENTION TO ESTABLISH SUCH SHOPPING PRECINCTS IN OTHER AREAS OF HONG KONG AND KOWLOON WHERE THE DESIRED BENEFITS FOR BOTH PEDESTRIANS AND SHOPKEEPERS WILL BE REALISED.+

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N.T. WALK: SPONSORSHIP ENCOURAGED
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ORGANISATIONS IN TSUEN WAN WHO WISH TO SPONSOR PARTICIPANTS IN NEXT MONTH'S NEW TERRITORIES WALK BUT WHO DO NOT KNOW HOW THEY MAY DO SO, HAVE BEEN INVITED TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THE DISTRICT OFFICE, TSUEN WAN.

THE INVITATION HAS BEEN EXTENDED BY MR. JIMMY HAYES, DISTRICT OFFICER, TSUEN WAN, WHO IS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE N.T. WALK.

MR. HAYES SAID DISTRICT OFFICE STAFF WOULD BE HAPPY TO ACT AS +MIDDLEMEN+ BY PUTTING SPONSORS IN TOUCH WITH GROUPS OF WALKERS AND VICE VERSA.

HE HOPED THAT THIS WOULD ENCOURAGE BOTH SPONSORS AND WALKERS TO COME FORWARD.

HE STRESSED HOWEVER THAT THE DISTRICT OFFICE WAS ONLY ONE OF SEVERAL ORGANISATIONS CONCERNED WITH SPONSORSHIP.

+WE WOULD NOT LIKE POTENTIAL SPONSORS TO BE LEFT OUT SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT SURE WHAT THEY SHOULD DO,+ MR. HAYES SAID. +WE INVITE THEM TO CONTACT US AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.+

HE ADDED THAT THROUGH SPONSORSHIP IT WAS HOPED THAT LAST YEAR'S FIGURE OF \$422,000 RAISED FOR THE COMMUNITY CHEST BY 31,000 WALKERS WOULD BE +WELL AND TRULY BEATEN.+

MR. HAYES HAS WRITTEN TO OTHER DISTRICT OFFICES SUGGESTING SIMILAR ARRANGEMENTS TO ENCOURAGE SPONSORS AND GROUPS OF WALKERS.

THE WALK WILL TAKE PLACE ON SUNDAY (JANUARY 18), STARTING AND ENDING AT TAI WO HAU PARK, TSUEN WAN. THE GOVERNOR, SIR MURRAY MACLEHOSE, WILL OFFICIATE AT THE START AND ALSO TAKE PART.

TODAY (TUESDAY), STAFF OF THE DISTRICT OFFICE, COMMUNITY CHEST OFFICIALS AND POLICE OFFICERS WILL GO OVER THE ROUTE TO SEE WHERE IMPROVEMENTS MIGHT BE MADE. A CONTRACTOR HAS AGREED TO CARRY OUT THE IMPROVEMENTS FREE OF CHARGE.

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SNT REPLIES TO SHA TIN SHOPOWNERS INVOLVED IN CLEARANCE
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THE DEVELOPMENT OF SHA TIN IS DESIGNED TO BENEFIT PEOPLE LIVING IN +VERY POOR HOUSING CONDITIONS+, THE SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, MR. DAVID AKERS-JONES, HAS TOLD REPRESENTATIVES OF SHA TIN MARKET SHOP PROPRIETORS INVOLVED IN A CLEARANCE OPERATION TO BE CARRIED OUT IN JUNE NEXT YEAR.

THE CLEARANCE, WHICH AFFECTS 28 SHOPS, IS TO FACILITATE THE WIDENING OF TAI PO ROAD AND SHA TIN'S CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT INTO A LARGE MODERN TOWN WHERE CLOSE TO HALF A MILLION PEOPLE WILL BE LIVING AND WORKING EVENTUALLY. THE ROAD WIDENING WILL IMPROVE LINKS BETWEEN SHA TIN AND TAI PO.

MR. AKERS-JONES, IN A LETTER SENT TODAY (TUESDAY), SAID: +I HAVE TO REITERATE THE IMPORTANCE I ATTACH TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF SHA TIN WHICH IS DESIGNED TO BRING BENEFIT TO A GREAT MANY PEOPLE LIVING IN VERY POOR HOUSING CONDITIONS. THAT SOME 28 SHOPS WILL NOW HAVE TO BE CLEARED TO ALLOW THIS DEVELOPMENT TO PROCEED WITHOUT DELAY IS UNAVOIDABLE.+

THE NEW TERRITORIES SECRETARY WAS REPLYING TO A LETTER FROM THE REPRESENTATIVES DATED DECEMBER 1 IN WHICH AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE WIDENING OF TAI PO ROAD -- THE WIDENING OF SHA TIN BY-PASS ROAD -- WAS SUGGESTED. POINTING OUT THAT SHA TIN BY-PASS ROAD WAS ALREADY DUE TO BE WIDENED, MR. AKERS-JONES SAID THAT THIS IMPROVEMENT ALONE +WILL NOT BE SUFFICIENT TO COPE WITH THE INCREASED VOLUME OF TRAFFIC ENVISAGED IN TWO YEARS TIME.+

THE WIDENING HAD TO START AS SCHEDULED IN EARLY 1976 IN ORDER TO FIT IN WITH THE TIMING OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME. ANY DELAY WOULD CREATE DELAYS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE PLAN AND BE DETRIMENTAL TO SHA TIN'S GROWTH INTO A NEW TOWN.

THE REPRESENTATIVES' LETTER ALSO RAISED THE SUBJECT OF LOSS OF LIVELIHOOD, BUT MR. AKERS-JONES SAID THIS WOULD BE MINIMISED DUE TO +SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS+ WHEREBY THE HOUSING AUTHORITY HAD AGREED TO A RESTRICTED TENDER FOR SHOPS AT LEK YUEN ESTATE IN SHA TIN. BESIDES ELIGIBILITY FOR THE RESTRICTED TENDER, COMPENSATION WILL ALSO BE PAID TO THE SHOPOWNERS.

THE SHOPKEEPERS' LETTER SUGGESTED THAT THE LANDOWNER BE GRANTED LAND FOR COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT. MR. AKERS-JONES' REPLY HOWEVER STATED THAT LAND FOR PRIVATE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT WAS DISPOSED OF BY PUBLIC AUCTION, OPEN TENDER OR EXCHANGE.

/+LAND IS

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+LAND IS EXCHANGED ACCORDING TO THE LENGTH OF TIME
THE OFFER OF AN EXCHANGE HAD BEEN OUTSTANDING- IN SITU
EXCHANGE IS NOT PERMITTED SINCE THIS WOULD GRANT SOME
OWNERS MORE FAVOURABLE TREATMENT THAN OTHERS.+

MR. AKERS-JONES ENDED HIS LETTER BY STATING THAT THE
CLEARANCE ARRANGEMENTS WERE +A CLEAR INDICATION OF THE
EFFORT MADE BY THE HOUSING AUTHORITY AND VARIOUS GOVERNMENT
DEPARTMENTS TO ASSIST SO FAR AS IS POSSIBLE IN THE MOVE TO
LEK YUEN. THESE ARRANGEMENTS COMPARE VERY FAVOURABLY WITH
MANY OTHER SIMILAR CLEARANCES FOR DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES
ELSEWHERE IN HONG KONG FOR WHICH MANY SHOPS HAVE HAD TO
MOVE.+

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