



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Tuesday, September 4, 1973

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CALL FOR REAPPRAISAL OF OUTDATED CUSTOMS

The people of Hong Kong were today urged to shed "mistaken values" based on outdated traditions and to aim for "sensible goals" concerned with the needs of living rather than the preservation of appearances.

The appeal was made by Mr. Jack Cater, Secretary for Home Affairs, in his opening address to the Fifth Asian Regional Credit Union Training Conference being held at the University of Hong Kong.

Mr. Cater said credit unions in Hong Kong were flourishing, "but problems often arise because of the mistaken values which cloud some people's judgment when it comes to determining the goal of their aspirations."

They might be handicapped in this regard, he said, by the need to preserve 'face' -- an inheritance from the past which they accepted without question.

It was not uncommon to hear of families reduced to poverty because of excessive funeral expenses of a departed breadwinner, and of newly weds spending their hard earned savings, which might give them a valuable start in life, on exorbitant wedding feasts as is often demanded by custom.

"Needless to say, there are much cheaper and more realistic alternatives, no less reverent and dignified, but these are discarded because they do not comply with alleged traditional proprieties," he said.

He noted that other societies had managed to reappraise their traditions and social customs and adjusted accordingly.

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"It is time we in Hong Kong began to question ours," he said. "Surely we are all concerned with the need to improve the quality of life, to set ourselves sensible goals concerned with the needs of living rather than the preservation of appearances."

Referring to the credit unions movement in Hong Kong, Mr. Cater said it had broken ground in two ways. Members were mainly wage earners and the unions basically lend not for 'productive' but for 'provident' purposes -- a method of anticipating savings and then making those savings virtually compulsory by earmarking them as the service of a loan.

There were now 50 credit unions with a total membership of 8,200 while share capital was over \$2 million. Loans granted since the inception of the credit union movement totalled \$8 million.

Mr. Cater believed that the credit unions movement could identify itself with the Mutual Aid Committee scheme, as they were both prompted by similar motives and considerations.

He felt certain that in these neighbourhood associations they would find the potential for new membership and a wider interest in their activities.

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FAMILIES EVACUATE ESTATE BLOCK AS PRECAUTIONARY MEASURE

The Housing Department is helping 36 families, comprising 135 people, to move out from Block 51 Tsz Wan Shan Estate as a precautionary measure.

The families are living in units of the block facing the hill slope where a landslide occurred shortly before 6 a.m. this (Tuesday) morning.

Four shops on the ground floor of the block have also been closed but the shop tenants already have alternative units in the same estate and so no temporary accommodation is required for them.

Estate office staff and labourers are helping 45 people to move into Block 28, and 90 people into Block 53 of the same estate.

The Deputy Director of Estate Management, Mr. Ralph Husband, said that the landslide was posing a threat to the tenants' safety although it caused no damage to the structure of the block.

"The 12 families living in the lower four floors of the block will have to move into Block 28 on a permanent basis or at least for a period of a few months when work on strengthening the end wall of the column block is carried out," he said.

"Families living on the upper floors will be able to move back in about a week or two," he added.

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No immediate repair work to the slope is possible until a full inspection of it has been made by Housing Department technical staff in conjunction with consultant and P.W.D. highway engineers.

Meanwhile, a close watch is being kept on the landslide site near Block 43 which occurred last Sunday.

Remedial work on the slope will be carried out as soon as a full inspection and assessment has been made by the parties concerned.

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MORE INCINERATION PLANTS ON THE WAY

Four more major incineration plants will be built in Hong Kong to cope with the overflow from the existing incinerators and to further improve environmental hygiene.

One of the new plants is already under construction at Lai Chi Kok and a second is about to be built at Kwai Chung.

Planning for the other two plants, one on the island and the other in the Sha Tin Valley, New Territories, are now at an advanced stage.

Consulting engineers have been appointed by the government to carry out intensive investigations into the best sites for the fifth and the sixth plants.

The new plants, when fully operational by the end of this decade, will play an important role in the disposal of the large volume of daily refuse.

At present, the daily refuse collection averages 2,600 tons in the urban areas -- 800 tons on the island and 1,800 tons in Kowloon.

About 1,200 tons of the total are taken care of by the two incineration plants in Kennedy Town and Lai Chi Kok while the remainder is disposed of in Gin Drinker's Bay Refuse Dump and other controlled dumping areas.

Commenting on the new Lai Chi Kok plant, a government spokesman said that the construction of the incinerator proper at a site adjacent to the existing plant was progressing well.

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Work on the 300-foot chimney, which will provide better disposal of fumes and reduce the possibility of air pollution, began a few months ago and is expected to be completed later this year.

The chimney is 100 feet higher than the normal maximum height of any building allowed in the area under the Hong Kong Airport (Control of Obstructions) Ordinance.

In the meantime, erection of machinery and equipment of the \$41 million plant is also going smoothly.

This new plant will have four incinerator units of similar design as those already in operation at Kennedy Town and Lai Chi Kok. It will be able to dispose of 750 tons of refuse per day.

In Kwai Chung, site formation for an incineration plant on reclaimed land immediately to the North Pillar Island in the Rambler Channel is in full swing, the spokesman said.

Dredging for the seawall foundation has been completed and casting of seawall blocks is in progress.

This plant will dispose of 900 or more tons of refuse per day. It will be the first of its kind in the New Town in the New Territories.

Apart from the new projects to be built, a \$13.75 million expansion programme is now being carried out at the present Kennedy Town Plant to cope with the increasing volume of refuse collection on the island.

One more 250 tons/day unit with large grab crane will be put to the existing four-unit plant. It is expected that the new unit will come into operation by the end of 1975.

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NEW TRAINING SCHOOL FOR NURSES

A midwifery training school is to be built on the roof of Queen Elizabeth Hospital to provide better facilities for the training of student nurses.

At present, midwifery training is carried out in the dining/sitting room area of the sisters quarters, which is divided into two temporary classrooms by movable partitions.

The new training school will have four classrooms with accommodation for 140 students, a practical demonstration room, a library, a pantry, and three tutorial staff offices. It will cover a total floor area of 4,400 square feet on the roof over ward A-11 of the hospital.

It will provide proper accommodation for student nurses to undergo a 12-week training period in obstetric nursing, which will be included in the general nursing syllabus to ensure that locally trained nurses will qualify for training as sister tutors in England and Australia.

Besides initial courses, the new school will also run refresher courses for practising midwives once every five years, and provide other refresher courses for sisters and senior nursing staff to keep them abreast with the latest developments in general and midwifery nursing.

Work on the conversion of the roof is expected to begin early next year and should take about six months to complete.

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NEW MARKET FACILITIES AT MONG KOK

Work will start next month on a temporary market to accommodate present stallholders in the Mongkok Market which is to be rebuilt as part of the Urban Council's programme to provide better market facilities in urban areas.

The temporary market will occupy a 27,000-square-foot site at the junction of Mongkok Road and Shanghai Street, and will provide covered spaces for 87 stalls for the sale of meat, fish, vegetables and poultry. An office, ice stalls and a scalding room are also envisaged.

In addition, there will be an open hawker bazaar comprising space for more than 200 sites of standard size for the sale of grocery and sundry goods. A loading and unloading bay will cater for both the market place and the hawker bazaar.

The works are expected to be completed towards the end of March next year.

The reconstruction of Mongkok Market will involve the building of a two-storey structure to house the existing stallholders and about 100 additional hawkers in the vicinity.

The roof of the building will be used as a playground for children living in the neighbourhood.

Construction of the building is expected to commence in April next year for completion in 1975.

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SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL MEDICAL SERVICE URGED

The number of pupils who took part in the School Medical Service last year passed the 70,000 mark -- nearly double that of the previous year.

A spokesman for the School Medical Service Board said that the increase was mainly due to the support given to the scheme by headmasters of various schools throughout the Colony.

This also indicates that the pupils now have more knowledge about the objective of the medical scheme.

The spokesman expressed the hope that headmasters would continue to give their support by encouraging the pupils to join the scheme.

The School Medical Service is a scheme designed to provide economical medical treatment among normally healthy children.

"The procedures are very simple and pupils can join the scheme any time," he added.

By paying \$5, the spokesman said, the participant is allowed to pay an unlimited of visits to a doctor.

As the schools may be very busy at the beginning of the new term, anyone who wishes to obtain a list of doctors practising in the area of the school is asked to direct his enquiries to tel. No. 5-764765.

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Release Time: 7.30 p.m.