



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Wednesday, April 11, 1973

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STEPS TAKEN TO MAKE ALL MAJOR LANDSLIDE AREAS  
SAFE BEFORE COMING RAINY SEASON

Consultants To Carry Out Comprehensive Study Of Potential Landslide Areas

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All major landslide areas affected by the rainstorms in June last year will be rendered safe before the coming rainy season.

The Director of Public Works, the Hon. J.J. Robson, gave this assurance in the Legislative Council today when tabling the final report of the Commission of Enquiry appointed to look into the disasters.

In general, said Mr. Robson, the Government accepted the specific recommendations of the Commission but there were certain matters "about which the Government takes a somewhat different view."

Reviewing remedial work undertaken by the Government following the rainstorm tragedy, Mr. Robson said: "All those areas damaged in the 1972 June rainstorm, for which private owners are responsible, have been surveyed in detail and necessary action taken where appropriate to make sure these sites are safe."

He added: "In the event that remedial work cannot be completed ahead of this year's expected rainstorms, a warning system has been devised to safeguard the public should this be necessary."

The Director also disclosed that in addition to the current repair works, steps had been taken to investigate the general landslide problems in Hong Kong.

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In this regard, approval would shortly be sought from the Finance Committee for the employment of private consultants to carry out a comprehensive study of potential landslide areas in urban areas.

"This study will not only consider measures which may be required to make the areas less susceptible to landslides but also whether any restrictions on development need to be imposed."

An interim guide on the problems of hillside stability in Hong Kong, with particular reference to both temporary and permanent site formation work, was also being prepared by consultants in conjunction with the Building Ordinance Office, he said.

#### Private Consultants

This guide was expected to be ready by next month at the latest and would be distributed to both government and private architects and engineers involved with these problems.

Agreement had also been reached with other private consultants who had very specialised equipment available in Hong Kong, said Mr. Robson.

Together with a geophysicist, backed by an experienced civil engineering team, they would be engaged to identify any specific building site that might be suspect so that, if necessary, works could be ordered to make them safe.

In addition, proposals were now being considered to strengthen the Civil Engineering Unit seconded to the Buildings Ordinance Office and to make it a permanent feature.

Reporting on the progress of remedial work at the landslide sites, Mr. Robson said that for all practical purposes, all work carried out by his department had been completed, except at Sau Mau Ping and at Po Shan Road.

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On the Island, the sites at Tai Tam Road, Shouson Hill, Repulse Bay Road and the Peak had also been completely reinstated.

He said that at Po Shan Road, where the problems were "more complex," 95 per cent of all earthworks would have been finished by the end of next month, as would repair work at Sau Mau Ping in Kowloon.

"The remaining areas are the concern of private developers and have either been made safe or work is progressing satisfactorily."

Mr. Robson said that in-depth investigations by consultants at squatter, resite and licensed areas so far indicated that there was no danger, but further detailed work was in hand to make doubly certain.

#### Detailed Investigation

All known suspected landslide areas adjacent to public highways had also been inspected, he went on and certain areas of doubtful stability along Ching Cheung Road and at Tai Wor Ping were being subjected to detailed investigation.

Turning to the Commission's report, Mr. Robson noted that the Commission did not think it necessary to set up a panel of civil engineering specialists to which design problems could be referred.

"Government, however, feels that while a possible adequate reservoir of local specialists may exist, it is necessary to safeguard the public by appointing a special panel of civil and soils engineers so as to utilise this reservoir to the fullest extent and to prevent any inexperienced engineers and architects attempting sophisticated earthwork design," Mr. Robson said.

In this regard the Government had recommended that this matter be left in abeyance for the time being pending the result of the further studies carried out by the Buildings Ordinance and its consultants.

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Arising from this study, he added, a Manual of Practice would be compiled which would eventually replace the interim guide now being prepared for the use of architects and engineers.

The Director also denied statements in the Commission's report which implied that the main reasons for intensive development of hillside sites were a desire for greater revenue from land sales, Government's yielding to commercial pressure and the prospect of filling for reclamation being provided cheaply.

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ARRANGEMENTS FOR MAINTAINING MATERNITY SERVICES

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Dr. G.H. Choa, Director of Medical and Health Services, announced this morning that because a number of midwives had stopped working on call duties, some maternity clinics would be closed tonight, and staff reposted to other clinics so as to maintain normal services.

Notices have been posted in all clinics giving details of the nearest clinic available for maternity services.

On Hong Kong Island, all maternity clinics are closed with the exception of those at Shaukiwan and Aberdeen. Residents in need of maternity services in all Hong Kong Island areas will be admitted either to these two clinics or the Tang Shiu Kin and Tsan Yuk hospitals.

In Kowloon, all maternity clinics are closed with the exception of those at Li Kee (Kowloon City), Wang Tau Hom, Kwun Tong, Li Po Chun (Shamshuipo), and Cheung Sha Wan. All Kowloon cases will be admitted either to these five clinics or the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

In the New Territories, Dr. Choa said normal services would be maintained. On outlying islands, because of the presence of resident doctors and nurses, normal services would also continue.

"Midwives from all maternity clinics which have been closed will be posted to the clinics that are being kept open," Dr. Choa said. "They will do shift duty."

In a reference to developments last (Tuesday) night, Dr. Choa said reports coming to him from 26 maternity clinics throughout the Colony showed that midwives had worked normally in five.

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COMPENSATION FOR RESUMED LAND

Changes In Zoning To Be Disregarded

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Land owners whose land are rezoned in draft town plans will be awarded appropriate compensation under the Crown Lands Resumption (Amendment) Bill 1973.

This was stated by the Director of Public Works, the Hon. J.J. Robson, when he moved the second reading of the Bill at the Legislative Council meeting today.

The Bill amends the compensation provisions in the existing ordinance to ensure that no land-owner suffers because his land is rezoned in a draft town plan.

Mr. Robson said the amendment was necessary so that the Compensation Board would disregard changes of zoning when assessing compensation resulting from compulsory acquisition.

At present, he explained the Crown Lands Resumption Ordinance provided that a Compensation Board in assessing compensation must take the value of the land to be the amount which the land, if sold in the open market, might be expected to realize.

"This value would normally be based on the development obtainable in accordance with any restrictions contained in the Crown Lease," said Mr. Robson.

However, under the Town Planning Ordinance, if a private lot was rezoned for a public purpose, the compensation had to be related to the use of the lot for that purpose.

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Citing an example, Mr. Robson said that if a resumed lot formed part of an area zoned for open space, the Compensation Board could only take this use into account when assessing the value of the land even though development for commercial or residential purposes might be allowed by the Crown Lease.

He pointed out that this obviously bears unfairly on the land owner affected.

Speaking in support of the motion, the District Commissioner, New Territories, the Hon. D.C. Bray, said the question of resumption of land in the New Territories was an extremely sensitive one.

#### Anxiety

He recalled that when the Bill was published it gave rise to considerable anxiety as it was thought that the Bill emphasised that the compensation for agricultural land must be assessed without regard to the development potential of that land.

"The Bill has no bearing on this vexed problem. Nor does the Bill, as some in the New Territories thought, give new powers under the Town Planning Ordinance to resume land," he stressed.

He said the question of compensation had been the subject of prolonged discussions between himself and the Heung Yee Kuk.

"These discussions stand adjourned, with agreement of the Kuk, pending the formulation by the Government of specific proposals which will take into account the range of problems discussed with the Kuk," said Mr. Bray.

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In the meantime, agreement had been reached on a scheme under which any owner of land within a new town who felt frustrated in his development aims could surrender his land in exchange for the grant of land outside layout areas.

Mr. Bray said that this opportunity to exploit the development potential of agricultural land in new towns by exchange grants outside had been welcomed.

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CALL TO BOLSTER NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION

To Meet Rural Development Problems

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The District Commissioner, New Territories, the Hon. D.C. Bray, said today two new Administrative Districts should be created to cover the new towns of Sha Tin and Tuen Mun to cope with the development in those areas.

The two towns are now part of Tai Po and Yuen Long Districts.

Speaking at the Legislative Council meeting, Mr. Bray also said that the New Territories Administration should be reorganised and strengthened to meet the two major types of development problems -- new town development and rural development.

He said proposals on these lines would be submitted shortly.

In reply to a question by the Hon. Q.W. Lee, Mr. Bray said he would ask the Finance Committee shortly to consider an increase of 67 per cent of geographically deployed Land Assistants and supporting staff.

Mr. Bray said he had just completed an examination of additional Estate Surveyor posts required, in conjunction with the Crown Lands and Survey Office.

These proposals, he said, would now be reviewed centrally before a submission was made to the Finance Committee.

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"The next tasks will be to assess technical land staff requirements specifically geared to the ten-year development programme," Mr. Bray said.

In addition, the role of liaison staff in the districts -- particularly in existing urban areas and in the new towns -- would also be reviewed.

This, he added, should complete the re-structuring of the department to deal with rapid urban development, re-development of rural slums, and exploitation of the opportunities for recreational and resort development and conservation of the countryside.

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DISAPPOINTING RESPONSE TO LOAN SCHEME

By Small Industries

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Recommendations aimed at making the loans scheme for small industries more attractive were submitted today to the Government for consideration.

This was disclosed by the Director of Commerce and Industry, the Hon. E.P. Ho, at the Legislative Council meeting in reply to a question by the Hon. Q.W. Lee.

The proposals, endorsed by the Trade and Industry Advisory Board on Monday, were made by the re-constituted Loans for Small Industry Committee following "disappointing response" to the new facility.

Mr. Ho said that since the launching of the scheme in July last year, five hundred enquiries were received.

But after this first flush, he said, the numbers of enquiries dropped to a mere handful a month.

He pointed out that these enquiries were only for information and could not be classified as applications for loans.

"In fact, the number of actual applications received to date is twenty-four," said Mr. Ho.

Of these, fourteen applicants eventually decided against proceeding further.

Of the remaining ten cases, six loans totalling \$914,500 had been approved, three applications totalling \$287,000 had been rejected or abandoned and one for \$120,000 was being processed.

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FULL-SCALE INVESTIGATION INTO RECENT POWER FAILURE IN PROGRESS

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The Director of Public Works, the Hon. J.J. Robson said today he was confident that the two electricity companies would take the necessary measures to prevent a repetition of the recent widespread power failure in Kowloon and the New Territories.

The China Light and Power Company was currently holding a full-scale investigation into the power failure, he said and would keep the Government informed of its findings.

Mr. Robson was speaking in the Legislative Council in reply to a question by the Hon. P.C. Woo as to whether the Government would take steps to ensure that similar failures would not occur again.

Both companies, said Mr. Robson, had always been aware of their responsibility to provide the public with an adequate and reliable supply of electricity, as shown by their records which "compare favourably with electricity generating undertakings elsewhere."

The only control which Government had over the operations of the two electricity companies, he added was through the Electricity Supply Ordinance and the associated Regulations.

These regulations were solely concerned with safety standards for the protection of the public, he explained.

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DANGEROUS BUILDINGS

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The Building Authority today declared No. 2 Lok Hing Lane to be in a dangerous condition and Nos. 4-6 Lok Hing Lane and 38-40 Pottinger Street liable to become dangerous.

In a statement issued this morning the Principal Government Building Surveyor said that No. 2 Lok Hing Lane was inspected following a complaint received from one of the tenants.

Inspection revealed serious settlement at the rear of this building and there was a risk of collapse.

The adjoining buildings at Nos. 4-6 Lok Hing Lane and 38-40 Pottinger Street were also inspected and because of extensive fracturing of the party walls, together with advanced decay to timber work, it was considered they were liable to become dangerous during or after the demolition of No. 2 Lok Hing Lane.

Notices of intention to apply for Closure Orders in the Victoria District Court at 9.30 a.m. on 15th May 1973 were posted today.

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TEXTILE FACTORY SPONSORS APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING SCHEME

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One of Hong Kong's leading textile manufacturers, the South Sea Textile Manufacturing Company Limited, today (Wednesday) signed contracts with a number of its apprentices in line with the apprenticeship training scheme sponsored by the Apprentice Training Unit of the Labour Department.

Under the contracts signed between the company and apprentice textile technicians and textile mechanics, the apprentices will receive planned on-the-job training and related technical education on a day-release basis. The technician apprentices will receive technical training at the Hong Kong Polytechnic, and the craft apprentices will receive tuition at the Morrison Hill Technical Institute.

Mr. H.R. Knight, Senior Training Officer of the Labour Department, was present at today's ceremony at South Sea's Tsuen Wan factory, to explain to the apprentices and their parents the terms of the contracts.

Mr. Knight said: "There are now about 150 firms running apprenticeship training along the lines of our proposed scheme. The Apprentice Training Unit will give every assistance and advice to any employer who wishes to start proper training."

Under the scheme, the apprentices will get a certificate of apprenticeship from the company on completion of their training. The certificates will be countersigned by the Commissioner of Labour and the principal of their technical institution.

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After today's signing ceremony, the mill manager of the South Sea Manufacturing Co. Ltd., Mr. Ditman Chang said: "Although this is the first time we have set up apprenticeship training on this basis, we have for many years been in the forefront as far as training in the textile industry is concerned."

He said the lack of technical manpower-well-trained in both practice and theory--was one of the most serious problems confronting the textile industry. Without a ready and adequate supply of such people, it would not be possible to increase productivity, improve quality standards and upgrade products while keeping prices competitive.

"Organised apprentice training is, I believe, the answer to Hong Kong's acute shortage of technicians, "Mr. Chang said, "industry as a whole must embark on a concerted training effort."

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Release time: 8.00 p.m.