



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, 1977

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INCREASE IN MEANS TEST LIMITS FOR LEGAL AID
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THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL YESTERDAY (TUESDAY) APPROVED AMENDMENTS TO THE LEGAL AID (ASSESSMENT OF CONTRIBUTIONS) REGULATIONS, WHICH PRESCRIBE THE METHOD OF ASSESSING THE DISPOSABLE INCOME AND CAPITAL OF APPLICANTS FOR AID AND THE CONTRIBUTIONS THAT THEY WILL BE LIABLE TO PAY TO THE LEGAL AID DEPARTMENT, DEPENDING ON THEIR FINANCIAL RESOURCES.

THIS FOLLOWS A RESOLUTION THAT WAS PASSED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL RECENTLY INCREASING THE MEANS TEST LIMITS FOR APPLICANTS FOR LEGAL AID FOR CIVIL (NON-CRIMINAL) CASES.

THE NEW LIMITS AND THE AMENDMENTS TO THE ASSESSMENT OF CONTRIBUTIONS REGULATIONS WILL BOTH COME INTO EFFECT NEXT WEDNESDAY (JUNE 1).

PERSONS WITH A MAXIMUM DISPOSABLE INCOME OF \$1,000 PER MONTH AND A DISPOSABLE CAPITAL NOT EXCEEDING \$10,000 WILL BE FINANCIALLY ELIGIBLE FOR LEGAL AID UNDER THE NEW LIMITS. UNTIL NOW, THE LIMITS HAVE BEEN \$700 MONTHLY DISPOSABLE INCOME AND \$4,000 DISPOSAL CAPITAL.

A LEGAL AID DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN EXPLAINED THIS MEANT MORE PEOPLE WOULD BE FINANCIALLY ELIGIBLE FOR LEGAL AID SO THAT ABOUT TWO-THIRDS OF THE POPULATION OF HONG KONG WOULD COME WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE SCHEME.

HE ALSO EMPHASISED THAT IN ASSESSING THE DISPOSABLE INCOME AND CAPITAL OF APPLICANTS FOR AID VARIOUS ALLOWANCES WERE MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RELEVANT LEGAL AID LEGISLATION, SO THAT PEOPLE WITH REAL MONTHLY INCOMES MUCH IN EXCESS OF \$1,000 OR WITH REAL CAPITAL ASSETS OF OVER \$10,000 MIGHT BE FINANCIALLY ELIGIBLE FOR LEGAL AID.

FURTHERMORE, THE SPOKESMAN EXPLAINED THAT WITH THE AMENDMENTS TO THE ASSESSMENT OF CONTRIBUTIONS REGULATIONS MANY OF THE LESS WELL-OFF AIDED PERSONS WHO WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE BEEN REQUIRED TO PAY GRADUATED CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE LEGAL AID DEPARTMENT WILL PAY EITHER NO CONTRIBUTIONS AT ALL OR SMALLER CONTRIBUTIONS.

FOR EXAMPLE, AT PRESENT A LEGALLY-AIDED PERSON WITH A MONTHLY DISPOSABLE INCOME OF \$500 AND A DISPOSABLE CAPITAL OF \$3,000 HAVE TO PAY CONTRIBUTIONS TOTALLING \$1,440 (\$840 IN RESPECT OF INCOME AND \$600 OUT OF HIS DISPOSABLE CAPITAL).

AFTER JUNE 1, HE WILL NOT HAVE TO PAY ANY CONTRIBUTION AT ALL.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT IN ORDER TO AVOID FINANCIAL HARDSHIP TO THOSE LEGALLY AIDED PERSONS WHO WERE REQUIRED TO PAY PRESCRIBED CONTRIBUTIONS, THE DEPARTMENT WOULD NORMALLY ALLOW THESE TO BE PAID BY INSTALMENTS SPREAD OVER A PERIOD OF TIME.

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HE ADDED THAT CIVIL LITIGATION WAS A VERY COSTLY AFFAIR. EVEN THE SIMPLEST, SHORT DEFENDED HIGH COURT ACTION WOULD PROBABLY COST A PERSON WHO DID NOT HAVE LEGAL AID \$15,000 OR MORE, SOMETIMES VERY MUCH MORE, FOR HIS OWN LAWYERS' FEES.

MOREOVER, THE PROCEDURE IN SUCH CASES WAS TOO COMPLICATED TO ENABLE A LAYMAN TO CONDUCT HIS OWN CASE WITHOUT THE SERVICES OF A SOLICITOR AND A BARRISTER.

ACCORDINGLY, MANY PEOPLE IN THE MIDDLE INCOME GROUP WHO UNTIL NOW HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO AFFORD THE HIGH COST OF LITIGATION COULD TURN TO THE LEGAL AID SCHEME FOR ASSISTANCE AND OBTAIN THE BEST AVAILABLE LEGAL REPRESENTATION AT LITTLE OR NO COST TO THEMSELVES.

APPLICATIONS FOR LEGAL AID FOR CIVIL CASES MAY BE MADE AT THE OFFICES OF THE LEGAL AID DEPARTMENT ON THE 18TH FLOOR OF SINCERE COMPANY BUILDING, 173 DES VOEUX ROAD, CENTRAL.

IF BY REASON OF SERIOUS INFIRMITY OR GOOD CAUSE A PERSON WISHING TO APPLY FOR LEGAL AID IS UNABLE TO GO IN PERSON TO THE DEPARTMENT'S OFFICE, AN AUTHORISED REPRESENTATIVE, SUCH AS A CLOSE RELATIVE OF THE APPLICANT, CAN MAKE THE APPLICATION ON HIS OR HER BEHALF.

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FACTORY OWNERS URGED TO RETURN INDUSTRY CENSUS FORMS
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INDUSTRIALISTS WHO HAVE NOT YET COMPLETED THEIR QUESTIONNAIRES FOR THE 1976 CENSUS OF INDUSTRY ARE URGED TO DO SO WITHOUT DELAY AND RETURN THE FORMS TO THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT.

FROM RECORDS KEPT BY THE DEPARTMENT, IT APPEARS THAT A NUMBER OF INDUSTRIAL ESTABLISHMENTS HAVE FAILED TO RETURN THE QUESTIONNAIRES BY THE CLOSING DATE.

THE COMMISSIONER FOR CENSUS AND STATISTICS APPEALED TO THOSE CONCERNED WITH THIS CENSUS FOR THEIR CO-OPERATION.

HE EMPHASISED THAT THE SUPPORT OF INDUSTRIALISTS WAS ESSENTIAL TO PRODUCING TIMELY STATISTICS ON INDUSTRY PERFORMANCE, AND THIS IN TURN WOULD BE OF BENEFIT TO HONG KONG'S INDUSTRY.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CENSUS ORDER, 1977, ALL INDUSTRIAL ESTABLISHMENTS IN RECEIPT OF THE CENSUS QUESTIONNAIRE ARE REQUIRED TO FURNISH DATA RELATING TO EMPLOYMENT, LABOUR COST, MATERIAL PURCHASES AND OTHER OPERATING EXPENSES, SALES AND WORK DONE, STOCKS AND CAPITAL EXPENDITURE FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 1976, OR A PERIOD OF 12 MONTHS NOT LATER THAN MARCH 31, 1977.

IN CASE OF ANY DIFFICULTY, INDUSTRIALISTS MAY CONTACT THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT AT 5-444716 SO THAT THE DEPARTMENT COULD ARRANGE FOR AN OFFICER TO CALL ON AND OFFER ASSISTANCE TO THEM.

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CONTROL OF OIL DISPERSANT CHEMICALS

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THE MARINE DEPARTMENT WILL BE INTRODUCING CONTROL OVER THE USE OF OIL DISPERSANT CHEMICALS WITHIN THE TERRITORIAL WATERS OF HONG KONG.

UNDER THE UNITED KINGDOM'S DUMPING AT SEA ACT 1974 (OVERSEAS TERRITORIES) ORDER 1975, WHICH WAS EXTENDED TO HONG KONG LAST YEAR, THE MARINE DEPARTMENT HAS THE POWERS TO REQUIRE THE USERS OF OIL DISPERSANT CHEMICALS INTENDED FOR DEPOSIT IN HONG KONG WATERS TO OBTAIN A LICENCE.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE MARINE DEPARTMENT SAID TODAY THAT THE OBJECTIVE OF THESE LICENSING PROCEDURES WAS TO RESTRICT THE USE OF SUCH CHEMICALS TO THOSE PRODUCTS THAT WERE OF LOW TOXICITY TO MARINE LIFE.

ALTHOUGH MANY NEW METHODS ARE BEING DEVELOPED, THE USE OF MODERN LOW TOXICITY CHEMICALS PRESENTS THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY OF DEALING WITH OIL SPILLS AND THIS IS LIKELY TO BE SO FOR SOME YEARS TO COME, HE ADDED.

AS AN INTERIM MEASURE, THE DEPARTMENT WILL LICENCE THOSE OIL DISPERSANT CHEMICALS APPROVED BY THE UNITED KINGDOM DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY'S WARREN SPRING LABORATORY AS BEING SUITABLE FOR OIL SPILL CLEAN-UP OPERATIONS AT SEA, ON COASTAL WATERS AND BEACHES.

AN INITIAL LIST OF WARREN SPRING LABORATORY APPROVED OIL DISPERSANT CHEMICALS WILL BE PUBLISHED BY THE MARINE DEPARTMENT NEXT MONTH. IT WILL COME INTO EFFECT FROM JANUARY 1, 1978.

IN THE MEANTIME, THE SPOKESMAN SAID THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT WOULD BE SETTING UP ITS OWN TESTING FACILITIES FOR THESE CHEMICALS AND DRAW UP ITS OWN LIST OF OIL DISPERSANT CHEMICALS TO REPLACE THE +INTERIM MEASURE+.

THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT'S LIST WILL BE PUBLISHED BY THE MARINE DEPARTMENT WITH EFFECT FROM JANUARY 1, 1979. ONLY PRODUCTS CONTAINED IN THE LIST WILL THEN BE ALLOWED TO BE USED WITHIN HONG KONG WATERS, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THEY HAVE PREVIOUSLY BEEN APPROVED FOR USE BY THE WARREN SPRING LABORATORY.

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44 BUILDING PLANS APPROVED IN APRIL

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THE TOTAL DECLARED COSTS OF NEW BUILDINGS COMPLETED IN APRIL AMOUNTED TO \$119.16 MILLION, ACCORDING TO FIGURES ISSUED BY THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

THE TOTAL USABLE FLOOR AREA OF THE NEW BUILDINGS COMPLETED LAST MONTH AMOUNTED TO 122,668.5 SQUARE METRES, COMPRISING 99,257.2 SQUARE METRES OF NON-DOMESTIC FLOOR AREA AND 23,411.3 SQUARE METRES OF DOMESTIC FLOOR AREA.

PLANS FOR A 46-STORY APARTMENT/COMMERCIAL BUILDING AT A PRIME SITE ON WAN CHAI RECLAMATION BETWEEN GLOUCESTER ROAD AND HARBOUR ROAD, A 33-STORY APARTMENT BUILDING AT GARDEN TERRACE, A 31-STORY APARTMENT/COMMERCIAL BUILDING AT FERRY STREET, A CHURCH/KINDERGARTEN AT TAI PO AND A TELEPHONE EXCHANGE AT TSING YI ISLAND WERE AMONG 44 BUILDING PLANS APPROVED LAST MONTH BY THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE.

OF THESE PLANS APPROVED DURING THE MONTH, 11 WERE FOR PROJECTS ON HONG KONG ISLAND, 11 FOR KOWLOON AND 22 FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES.

DURING THE MONTH, THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE GAVE CONSENT FOR WORK TO START ON 46 NEW BUILDING PROJECTS, INCLUDING ONE SOCIAL SERVICES CENTRE AT FUK TSUN STREET, A SWIMMING POOL AT THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC, THE SPORTS CENTRE OF THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG AND A SCHOOL/APARTMENT/COMMERCIAL BUILDING AT CASTLE PEAK ROAD, TUEN MUN.

THIRTY-SEVEN COMPLETED BUILDINGS WERE CERTIFIED FOR OCCUPATION LAST MONTH. THEY INCLUDED A SCHOOL OF SIX STOREYS AT NAM CHEONG STREET, A TELEPHONE EXCHANGE AT SHA TAU KOK, A CONTAINER FREIGHT STATION AT KWAI CHUNG CONTAINER TERMINAL AND A MULTI-STORY CARPARK AND SHOPPING CENTRE AT WO YI HOP ROAD, KWAI CHUNG.

THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE ALSO CONSENTED TO THE DEMOLITION OF 28 BUILDINGS.

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REGISTRATION TEAM TO OPERATE IN LAM TIN ESTATE

A TEAM FROM THE REGISTRATION OF PERSONS OFFICE WILL CONDUCT REGISTRATIONS IN LAM TIN ESTATE FOR RESIDENTS AND PERSONS LIVING NEARBY FOR FIVE DAYS FROM MAY 30 (MONDAY).

THE VISIT IS TO ENABLE PARENTS AND GUARDIANS TO REGISTER THEIR CHILDREN OR WARDS 11 YEARS OF AGE FOR JUVENILE IDENTITY CARDS AND HOLDERS OF JUVENILE IDENTITY CARDS TO REGISTER FOR ADULT IDENTITY CARDS ON REACHING 18 YEARS OF AGE.

REGISTRATIONS WILL BE CONDUCTED BETWEEN 9.30 A.M. AND 4.30 P.M. DAILY.

ALL PEOPLE LIVING IN THE AREA ARE REMINDED OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITY TO REGISTER THEMSELVES AND THEIR CHILDREN FOR IDENTITY CARDS. THEY SHOULD REPORT CHANGES OF EMPLOYMENT OR RESIDENTIAL ADDRESSES, MARITAL STATUS, OR ANY OTHER PARTICULARS WHICH HAVE CHANGED SINCE REGISTERING FOR THEIR IDENTITY CARDS.

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INTERNATIONAL AND HONG KONG PORT SIGNALS

THE FACT SHEET ON INTERNATIONAL AND HONG KONG PORT SIGNALS, WHICH HAS BEEN SOLD OUT RECENTLY, IS NOW ON SALE AGAIN. IT IS OBTAINABLE AT \$1 A COPY FROM THE MARINE DEPARTMENT'S INFORMATION DESK AT 102, CONNAUGHT ROAD CENTRAL.

THE FACT SHEET IS IN FULL COLOUR AND IS OF INTEREST TO LOCAL MASTERS.

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