



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Wednesday, January 17, 1973

## CONTENTS

	<u>Page No.</u>
The Financial Secretary speaks on the stock market and its effect on Hong Kong's economy .....	1
Information is to be collected before new legislation to control nurseries is implemented .....	3
Proceedings in Legco have been recorded .....	4
Responsibilities of architects and building contractors have been outlined .....	5
Professional driving test examiners will be recruited within the next few months .....	6
The Director of Audit's report is tabled in Legco today .....	6
People affected by the Western District Urban Renewal Scheme have taken up public housing .....	7
The Government is asked to give concession to owners of prewar buildings in rate payment .....	8
Proposed law to reduce road accidents wins support .....	12
Legislation giving the Government power to take over land in private streets is being drafted .....	15
Copyright Bill wins support from Unofficials in Legco .....	16
Three bills were passed in Legco today .....	18
The Governor opens new Mercury House .....	19
More students are to take part in this year's School Gymnastic Competitions .....	21
Warning has been issued to shipowners about the handling of boiler safety valves .....	23
Unofficial Legislative Councillors call for an extension of the retirement age for civil servants .....	24

Wednesday, January 17, 1973

- 1 -

CONFIDENCE EXPRESSED IN HONG KONG'S ECONOMY

Financial Secretary Speaks On The Stock Market

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The Government has complete confidence in the underlying strength of all sectors of Hong Kong's economy and of the great majority of public companies.

The Financial Secretary, the Hon. C.P. Haddon-Cave, said this in the Legislative Council today in reply to a question from the Hon. James Wu.

Mr. Wu had asked for a Government statement on the effects that the phenomenal rise in shares and real-estate prices would have on the cost of living, prices, wages, industries and the economy as a whole.

Mr. Haddon-Cave said the continuing strength and further development of Hong Kong's economy was not helped -- indeed was put at risk -- by the existence of conditions and practices on the stock exchanges which inhibited the orderly marketing of shares.

He also commented on recent actions by the Government following the flurry of activity on the stock market last week.

Neither the Government nor the managements of the stock exchanges took, or had taken, a view as to what was the "right" or "proper" level of prices. "We have been concerned with a more fundamental aspect, namely, the working of the market mechanism. We have been concerned to see that the market mechanism works - and is allowed to work - correctly without artificial stimulants."

/Mr. Haddon-Cave .....

Wednesday, January 17, 1973

- 2 -

Mr. Haddon-Cave stressed that the Government was solely concerned to see that orderly marketing conditions prevail; and not disorderly conditions which distort the forces of supply and demand based on rational considerations.

"It is true that the stock market is a market," he said. "But it is a market in paper and if the velocity of circulation of that paper becomes such that it begins to be traded without regard to its underlying worth then the conditions necessary for the conduct of an orderly market are no longer present."

Orderly Marketing Conditions

The situation that had developed by the middle of last week placed in jeopardy the possibility of orderly marketing conditions prevailing, he said.

"Orderly marketing conditions continue to be our objective and I am sure the decision by the stock exchanges, acting in concert, to limit trading hours this week by closing for three half days and to close every Wednesday afternoon for the time being will assist towards this objective in the short term.

"Likewise, I am sure that the Securities Advisory Council, which is now holding its first meeting, will be concerned to suggest reforms in trading practices designed to secure this objective in the longer term," Mr. Haddon-Cave said.

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Wednesday, January 17, 1973

- 3 -

PROGRESS ON STEPS TO CONTROL NURSERIES

Mr. Li Tells Council Of Consultations Now Going On

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The Hon. Li Fook-kow, Director of Social Welfare, said today steps were being taken to find out how many privately-run profit-making nurseries and centres existed in Hong Kong, and how many children were in their care.

He told the Legislative Council this information was necessary before he could estimate what sort of staff would be required for the implementation of proposed legislation to control such nurseries.

Of the non-profit-making nurseries and day-care centres and creches, he said they number 113. The majority were sponsored by welfare organisations, and assisted by the Government.

Mr. Li was replying to a question by the Hon. Mrs. Mary Wong Wing-cheung who had asked for a progress report on a statement last August by Mr. G.T. Rowe, the former Director of Social Welfare, that urgent consideration was being given to the setting up of machinery to control all residential and day nurseries.

He assured Mrs. Wong that there had been "no loss of momentum," and that for the last six months, the Social Welfare Department had had consultations with various government departments, including the Education, Medical and Health, Fire Services, and Public Works departments, on the minimum standards of health and safety considered necessary in residential and day care centres for children.

/There were .....

Wednesday, January 17, 1973

- 4 -

There were already a number of qualified child care officers in the Social Welfare Department, and suitable officers were being sent for overseas training in child care "in order to build up a competent and qualified inspectorate."

In addition, the provision of adequate facilities for the training of nursery workers was also being actively considered.

Mr. Li said the Lady Trench Training Centre was at present providing a one-year full-time pre-service training course in nursery work for prospective nursery workers, and short but intensive courses for the staff of non-profit-making nurseries.

As proposed in the five-year plan, all these courses would be considerably expanded.

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LEGCO PROCEEDINGS RECORDED

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Note to Editors: The proceedings in today's Legislative Council meeting have been recorded. You are welcome to consult the tapes at the Press Room, Government Information Services.

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Wednesday, January 17, 1973

- 5 -

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ARCHITECT AND CONTRACTOR OUTLINED

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The appointed authorised architect and registered contractor are responsible for providing the necessary supervision to ensure that builders comply with the standards of building materials laid down in the Building Regulations.

The Director of Public Works, the Hon. J.J. Robson, said this today when replying to a question raised in the Legislative Council by the Hon. Wilfred Wong.

"In this connection," he said, "it remains the responsibility of the authorised architect and registered contractor to arrange the carrying out of the tests and to ensure that the samples being so tested are truly representative of the materials used on the site."

Mr. Robson said that in each case where high-grade concrete was used, the Building Authority required the examination of concrete cubes at all stages of construction work.

These cubes would also have to be tested by an independent laboratory.

In all cases, he added, samples of steel reinforcement used in construction work had to undergo a full range of tests by an independent testing laboratory.

The Director also pointed out that under recently revised legislation architects and contractors who allowed the use of defective building materials were liable to a fine of \$50,000 and two years' imprisonment.

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Wednesday, January 17, 1973

- 6 -

PROFESSIONAL DRIVING TEST EXAMINERS TO BE RECRUITED

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Recruitment of professional driving test examiners will start within the next three or four months, the Financial Secretary, the Hon. C.P. Haddon-Cave, told the Legislative Council today.

He said that selected volunteer civil servants were now being used to conduct driving tests after office hours on weekdays and at weekends and holidays under a temporary accelerated programme.

"The number of these examiners varies," he said, "but it is usually about 120."

During normal office hours, he went on, driving test examinations on the road are carried out by 35 Government officers.

Thirty of these were Executive Officers who were temporarily posted to these duties in August last year, "pending the creation of a new grade of specialised officers." he said.

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DIRECTOR OF AUDIT'S REPORT

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Note to Editors: The Director of Audit's Report and Certificate on the Accounts of the Hong Kong Government for the year ended March 31, 1972 was tabled in the Legislative Council this (Wednesday) afternoon. Copies of the report will be distributed in the Press boxes, G.I.S. this evening.

This report should be read together with the comments by the Finance Branch of the Colonial Secretariat, copies of which will also be distributed in the Press boxes, in order that criticisms raised may be read in their proper perspective.

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Wednesday, January 17, 1973

- 7 -

2,300 PEOPLE AFFECTED BY RENEWAL SCHEME HAVE TAKEN UP PUBLIC HOUSING

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A total of 369 families, comprising 2,300 people, affected by the Western District Urban Renewal Scheme, have accepted public housing and 209 families or 1,300 people have already moved in.

In reply to a question by the Hon. Wilfred Wong at today's meeting of the Legislative Council, the Secretary for Housing, Mr. I.M. Lightbody, said that a further 125 families comprising 700 people declined the offer of public housing.

He said the renewal scheme, involving some 1,800 families, or 12,000 people, was "definitely to go ahead as originally conceived."

"This leaves," he added, "some 1,300 families, or about 9,000 persons, still to be offered rehousing as and when Government acquires their properties for clearance."

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Wednesday, January 17, 1973

- 8 -

OWNER OF PREWAR BUILDINGS SHOULD HAVE CONCESSION IN RATES

Debate Resumes On Rating Bill

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The Hon. P.C. Woo today urged the Government not to deprive the owners of prewar premises of the two per cent concession in the payment of rates.

Speaking at the resumed debate on the Rating Bill 1973 in the Legislative Council, Mr. Woo said the existing rateable value was 17 per cent whereas under the Bill the rateable value was reduced to 15 per cent.

However, he said the two per cent reduction was not available to owners of prewar buildings, as the Commissioner of Rating and Valuation now made new assessments of these premises by increasing their rateable values to almost the same as before, that is, no reduction was made.

The Commissioner increased the rateable values of these premises although the rents had not been increased and could not be increased as the rents were controlled by the Landlord and Tenant Ordinance.

"In my opinion such assessment can be challenged in a Court of Law in that it cannot be shown that the rental has been increased recently and, therefore, the assessment of the Commissioner is wrong."

Mr. Woo also suggested that these prewar buildings should be decontrolled under this ordinance.

The Government should amend the ordinance to the effect that once the landlord had recovered possession from the tenant, the premises should not be subject to the provisions of the ordinance.

/This, .....

Wednesday, January 17, 1973

- 9 -

This, he said, would save the expenses of the landlord and the tenant in applying to the Tenancy Tribunal if he re-let the premises, after recovering possession of the building, to a new tenant at the market rental for a term of not exceeding five years.

This would also save the time of the Tenancy Tribunal and other administrative expenses.

On post war domestic premises which were now subject to the control of the Rent Increases (Domestic Premises) Control Ordinance, Mr. Woo said it would seem unfair to increase their rateable value while their rent was still controlled by the ordinance.

#### Actual Rent

He added that it was only "fair and reasonable" that the rateable value of such buildings should be assessed at the actual rent received by the landlord and not on the rent which he might have received if the premises were not under control.

Also commenting on this Bill was the Hon. Dr. S.Y. Chung who said that the current valuation list was assessed in accordance with market rents in 1968, almost five years ago.

The rateable values of these new buildings constructed in the intervening years were, however, based on market rents at the time when they were assessed.

Consequently, this practice had created some serious unfair and unjust burden on tenants and, particularly, owner - occupiers of new buildings constructed after 1968.

/There are .....

There are many instances in which two similar neighbouring buildings are paying totally different rates.

"In future, if there is any delay by the Commissioner to update the valuation list in line with increased rental values, the assessment of rateable values of newly constructed buildings will be based on the market rents prevailing at the time when the current valuation list was prepared.

"Thus, ratepayers for new buildings will not have to bear an undue proportion of the rate burden, as the honourable Financial Secretary said two weeks ago, even if rents continue to rise.

"On the other hand, in the unlikely event, if rents go the other direction and fall, I presume rate payers for new buildings will then have to bear an undue proportion of rate burden," he said.

On the maximum five per cent surcharge on non payment at specified date, Dr. Chung renewed a proposal which the Financial Secretary had turned down earlier.

"A two-step penalty could be equally effective and simple on the one hand but less harsh on ratepayers on the other.

"In other words, Government could, for example, impose a two per cent surcharge for payment overdue within the first two weeks and five per cent surcharge after two weeks," Dr. Chung said.

In reply, the Financial Secretary, the Hon. C.P. Haddon-Cave, said that regarding the valuation of premises subject to the Landlord and Tenant Ordinance, the two per cent concession on the rate charge was, a concession to mitigate the effect of the revaluation on the community as a whole and it was not intended as a special concession for this particular class of ratepayer.

/The Bill, .....

Wednesday, January 17, 1973

- 11 -

The Bill, he said, provided the necessary safeguards for ratepayers, and any person who objected to his rateable value had a right of appeal to the District Court against the assessment by the Commissioner of Rating and Valuation.

"This is a matter which, I think, we must leave to the Courts to decide."

If a concession was to be made to the owners of pre-war premises it should be effected by amendment of the ordinance and not through the rating system.

In regard to the exclusion of such premises from the ordinance, Mr. Haddon-Cave said proposals on this point had been made and were being actively considered by the Government together with other proposals concerning this legislation.

The Financial Secretary agreed with Dr. Chung that, because of the present definition of rateable value, there were disparities in values between premises included in the list prepared in 1968 and those assessed to rates since then.

Clause 7 of the Bill would prevent this situation from occurring in the future.

On the question of surcharge for late payment, Mr. Haddon-Cave said the initial surcharge would have to be sufficiently high to ensure that payments were not deliberately delayed in order that the money could be utilised elsewhere.

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/12 .....

Wednesday, January 17, 1973

- 12 -

SUPPORT FOR NEW LAWS TO CUT DOWN ON ROAD ACCIDENTS

Traffic Situation Described As Serious

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Strong support was voiced in the Legislative Council today for proposed new legislation designed to reduce traffic accidents and safeguard road users.

Speaking during the resumed debate on the Road Traffic (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 1973, the Hon. Szeto Wai said: "Traffic congestion and traffic accidents in Hong Kong have reached such a serious state, more effective measures of detection and deterrent penalties are imperative to cope with the situation."

He said he and his unofficial colleagues in general supported the Bill which would make it compulsory for motorcyclists and their pillion passengers to wear crash helmets.

Mr. Szeto noted that fatalities among motorcyclists and their passengers had increased by 26 per cent last year while the growth rate of motorcycles and scooters already outstripped that of the fast-growing private cars.

"These statistics," he stressed, "justify the legislation for compulsory wearing of protective headgears for motorcyclists and their passengers, notwithstanding the opposition of those enthusiasts defending personal freedom."

He noted that general regulations already required civil servants, when on Government business, to wear crash helmets when riding motorcycles.

/Referring .....

Wednesday, January 17, 1973

- 13 -

Referring to other measures being considered by Government to protect the safety of road users, Mr. Szeto said he hoped that next in line would be legislation for the fitting of safety belts in all private cars.

If necessary, he added, the wearing of safety belts should be made compulsory as is the case in some overseas countries.

Mr. Szeto suggested that on-street parking should be curtailed to essential needs so as to facilitate traffic flow but added that this could only be achieved if considerably more off-street parking facilities were available.

"I consider that a review is long overdue of Government's existing outdated and ostrich-like policy of building multi-storey car parks in commuter areas only," he said.

While he agreed that restraints on private car ownership, universal inspection of vehicles and enforcement of traffic regulations were important to achieve maximum use of Hong Kong's limited road space, Mr. Szeto felt that many extraneous obstructions on the roads must be removed.

"These include the multitudes of hawkers who should be confined to off-street bazaars, and the many motor-repair shops whose polluting operations should not be allowed to obstruct road space."

The Hon. Oswald Cheung also spoke in support of the Bill and suggested that it may also be desirable to make it compulsory for drivers and passengers to use seat belts.

In reply, the Financial Secretary, the Hon. C.P. Haddon-Cave, said he entirely agreed with the view that the reduction of on-street parking, and its replacement by off-street parking facilities, was an important aspect of making the most efficient use of road space.

/But he .....

But he added that he could not agree "that this should be to the extent of providing so much off-street parking that the number of cars seeking to use the roads grows even faster."

The Financial Secretary conceded that there was a shortage of off-street car-parking spaces within and on the outskirts of the central business areas, but said the Government was widening its definition of "commuter areas" to take in more districts where people go to work in large numbers.

There were two projects in Category A of the Public Works Programme, he said, providing for 1,300 spaces at Murray Road and Yau Ma Tei, and four projects in Category B providing for 4,700 spaces at Kwun Tong Ferry Pier, Causeway Bay Magistracy, Tsuen Wan Ferry Concourse and Garden Road.

"When these six projects are completed the number of car parking spaces in Government multi-storey car parks alone will be 9,600," he said.

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/15 .....

Wednesday, January 17, 1973

- 15 -

SURRENDERING PRIVATE STREET LAND TO THE CROWN

New Law In Advanced Stage Of Drafting

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The Government may, in future, obtain possession of any land in the private streets where there is no obligation under the lease for the owner to surrender the land to the Government.

Disclosing this at the Legislative Council today, the Director of Public Works, the Hon. J.J. Robson, said legislation giving the Government this power "is now in an advanced stage of drafting."

He was replying to a question by the Hon. T.K. Ann whether any progress was being made in vesting private streets in the Crown, now that the Crown Land Ordinance had been enacted.

The Crown Land Ordinance 1972 and associated Regulations, which became effective on October 1, 1972, provide for Government taking over private streets where there is provision in the lease that the lessee shall, when required, surrender the land needed for this purpose.

Mr. Robson said: "There are about 300 private streets in the Colony and checking the Lease Conditions of all the lots fronting these streets to see whether they contain such provision will be a lengthy task."

"First priority," he said, "has therefore been accorded to 16 roads which are used as traffic thoroughfares so that, wherever the Lease Conditions permit, early action can be taken to obtain surrender of the land occupied by the road."

He added it was planned to deal next with roads now so blocked by hawkers or parked cars that fire appliances could not get access to buildings and fire hazards had been created.

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/16 .....

Wednesday, January 17, 1973

- 16 -

NEED FOR ORIGINAL DESIGNS STRESSED

Unofficials Support Copyright Bill

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Dr. S.Y. Chung said today that in view of Hong Kong's fast-rising cost of production, manufacturers would have to depend more and more on original and innovated designs to maintain their competitiveness in the world markets.

"Unfortunately," he said, "the lack of adequate protection against local infringement of designs has hampered the movement on promotion of industrial design and design competition in Hong Kong."

Dr. Chung was speaking in support of the Copyright Bill 1973 in the Legislative Council.

As Chairman of the Hong Kong Industrial Design Council, he mentioned one important change in Hong Kong's manufacturing industries which, he said, seems to be less well known.

Dr. Chung said: "In the past, we were basically producing products to the designs, specifications and brands provided by our customers. There was little emphasis on product development and design in Hong Kong."

But today, he said, there were increasing number of industrial companies which produced products of their own designs, specifications and brands and which had their own departments of development and design.

Referring to the bill, Dr. Chung said he particularly supported the "teeth" provided in it which put the burden on the defendant to prove his innocence and gives senior police officers and authorised officers of the Commerce and Industry Department very wide powers of investigation of suspected offences.

/However, .....

Wednesday, January 17, 1973

- 17 -

However, he suggested that the maximum term of imprisonment stipulated in the Bill be increased from six to 12 months for a second or subsequent offence as the light sentence term seemed contrary to the intention of the Bill.

In reply, the Attorney General, Mr. D.T.E. Roberts said he had no objection to amending the bill as proposed by Dr. Chung.

Speaking in support of the bill, Mr. T.K. Ann hoped that with its introduction, local talent would from now on "have no fear of their brain child being pirated from or after the day of its birth".

"Like the need to protect Hong Kong designs from being copied, so is there the need to afford protection to Hong Kong's reputation as a manufacturing centre, against local infringement of right of others' artistic authorship in foreign countries," Mr. Ann added.

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/18 .....

Wednesday, January 17, 1973

- 18 -

THREE BILLS PASSED IN LEGCO

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Three bills passed their committee stage and third readings in Legislative Council this afternoon and became law.

They were the Urban Council (Amendment) Bill 1973; the Workmen's Compensation (Amendment) Bill 1973; and the Import and Export (Amendment) Bill 1973.

Five bills had their first and second readings. They were the Evidence (Amendment) Bill 1973; the Administration of Justice (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 1973; the Merchant Shipping (Amendment) Bill 1973; the Merchant Shipping (Recruiting of Seamen) (Amendment) Bill 1973; and the Dangerous Drugs (Amendment) Bill 1973. Debate on them was adjourned.

Debate was resumed on the second readings of the Urban Council (Amendment) Bill 1973; the Copyright Bill 1973; the Inland Revenue (Amendment) Bill 1973; the Rating Bill 1973; the Road Traffic (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 1973; and the Import and Export (Amendment) Bill 1973.

Two sessional papers were also tabled in the Council. They were the Director of Audit's Report and Certificate on the Accounts of the Hong Kong Government for the year ended March 31, 1972; and the Despatch dated January 9, 1973 to the Secretary of State on the Report by the Director of Audit for the year ended March 31, 1972.

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/19 .....

Wednesday, January 17, 1973

- 19 -

GOVERNOR OPENS NEW MERCURY HOUSE

New C. & W. Premises Called A Monument To Enterprise

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The Governor, Sir Murray MacLehose, today officially opened New Mercury House in Gloucester Road where the Cable and Wireless Company's new premises are located.

He described the building as " a monument to the enterprise and expertise" of the company and welcomed it as a pledge of the company's determination to continue to provide good communications for Hong Kong.

Following is the full text of the Governor's speech at the opening ceremony:

"I am most honoured that you have asked me to open New Mercury House.

"I have listened with awe to your description of its contents. I have watched it take shape and wondered what mysteries it contains. It is, I realise, a monument to the enterprise and expertise of your company.

"You have told us something of the marvels of this building, I should like to add one striking item. The services enable computers in Hong Kong to "talk" to computers in other countries, and thus exchange information at a rate no human could imitate. This is indeed knocking on the edge of science fiction.

/"It also .....

Wednesday, January 17, 1973

- 20 -

"It also illustrates the high technical qualifications that your staff will require. I do thank you for your Company's donation of scholarships to the polytechnic, which is as generous as it is far-sighted. It is for the polytechnic to service industry, and it is for industry to encourage the polytechnic to do so.

"Hong Kong is a great centre of commerce, finance and tourism and must have good communications. These Cable and Wireless provide today. I welcome this building and all it contains as a pledge of your company's determination to continue to provide good communications in the tomorrow of Hong Kong's expanding economy and the multiplicity of communications which it will demand.

"Sir, I congratulate you on the enterprise contained in this building New Mercury House, and on the services which it will bring to Hong Kong, and I have the greatest pleasure in declaring it open."

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- 21 -

MORE STUDENTS TO TAKE PART IN SCHOOL GYMNASTIC COMPETITIONS

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More schoolboys and girls will participate in this year's Inter-School Gymnastic Competitions for secondary and primary schools throughout Hong Kong.

The annual competitions, to be held in March and April, are jointly organised by the Education Department and the Hong Kong and the New Territories Schools Sports Associations.

Forty-six teams from 19 schools have entered this year's Annual Gymnastic Competition for Secondary Schools.

Events will include floor, horse, horizontalbars, paralldbars, and rebound tumbling for boys and floor, horse, unevenbars, balance-beam and rebound tumbling for girls.

There are more than 100 students taking part in individual events.

The competition will be held on April 4 and 6.

This year's Inter-School gymnastic Competition for primary schools is to take place on March 22 and 30.

A total of 33 teams including ten girls' teams, have entered for the competition.

This competition will be divided into three areas -- Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories.

The first, second and third teams of each area will be eligible to participate in the overall championship.

/A spokesman ....

Wednesday, January 17, 1973

- 22 -

A spokesman for the Physical Education Section said today that not very many schools were taking part in the competitions.

Perhaps one of the reasons was the expensiveness of gymnastic equipment.

However, he said it was encouraging to note that so many students from secondary schools were going to compete in individual events which were introduced this year to raise young people's interest in gymnastics.

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/23 .....

Wednesday, January 17, 1973

- 23 -

BOILER SAFETY VALVES SHOULD BE HANDLED BY SKILLED STAFF

Warning Issued To Shipowners

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The handling of boiler safety valves should be done by skilled and experienced personnel under the close supervision of ship officers.

The Director of Marine, Mr. A. Fletcher, today issued this reminder to shipowners, shipyard managers and others concerned with such work.

He cited a recent case where the setting of boiler safety valves after overhaul was left in the hands of relatively unskilled personnel employed by shore contractors.

"Their actions were insufficiently supervised by the ship's officers.

"As a result, too high a pressure was developed in the boiler which failed instantaneously ejecting several tons of boiler water and steam into the engine room.

"This and the resulting flying debris caused the death of four persons, injuries to numerous others and considerable material damage to the ship," Mr. Fletcher said.

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/24 .....

Wednesday, January 17, 1973

- 24 -

UNOFFICIALS CALL FOR EXTENSION OF RETIREMENT AGE

Present 55-Year Limit Called Outdated

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Unofficial Members of the Legislative Council today tabled a motion calling for an extension of the retirement age for civil servants from 55 to 60 years.

Five Members spoke in support of the motion with all of them sharing the view that the present compulsory retirement age was outdated and constituted a loss to the public service in terms of expertise and talent.

In moving the motion, the Hon. Wilfred Wong noted that in most South-East Asian countries the retirement age for civil servants varied from 60 to 65, while Hong Kong still retained the 55-year limit established years ago at a time when it was considered a "hardship area."

The overwhelming majority of public servants, he said, favoured an extension in the maximum age with an option to retire at 55, but some younger staff felt this might block their chances of earlier promotion.

Mr. Wong pointed out, however, that a later retirement age would also apply to the younger staff and said that "if they look ahead a few years, on the grounds of security it is a proposal which would be fair all round."

The Hon. P.C. Woo urged the Government to make a decision on the issue and expressed the opinion that the change would not cost "much more." He added: "Conceivably it could be even less."

Mr. Woo made it clear that no change was proposed in the retirement age for members of the disciplined services and senior members of the Judiciary or that of officers recruited on contract terms of appointment.

/He said .....

Wednesday, January 17, 1973

- 25 -

He said the proposed extension would not interfere with the current arrangements for those who wished to retire early, nor would it result "in the retention of deadwood."

"What it will do," he stressed, "is to strengthen many cadres of the civil service with seasoned, mature and experienced officers with whose talents the community can ill afford to dispense at the young age of 55."

He added that a later retirement age would also help to reduce the number of vacancies in the civil service.

#### Research

Mr. Woo continued that research conducted by the UMELCO Office clearly showed that the average life span in Hong Kong was rapidly rising and Government pensioners were also living longer.

Expanding on this point, the Hon. Mrs. Mary W.C. Wong told the Council that many private and government organisations had found they were making payments to increasing numbers of retired people over much longer periods than ever before.

"As a result their financial estimates and reserves were getting out of line," she said.

Mrs. Wong emphasized that before a conclusion was reached on the issue, consideration must be given to the younger officers who would be affected if the proposal was implemented.

/"If the

Wednesday, January 17, 1973

- 26 -

"If the retirement age is to be extended," she said, "so must procedure for promotion be correspondingly adjusted."

She suggested that promotion should be based on "quality of performance as against length of service."

The Hon. Wilson Wang warned that as long as 55 remained the age of compulsory retirement, many civil servants would plan ahead for their post-retirement period, and this might affect their working efficiency.

The fact that many retired officers had gone to work for private firms, he said, showed that they were still fully capable of "meeting challenge and competition."

#### Expatriate Officers

As regards expatriate officers, Mr. Wang said they were "unfamiliar" with the local situation when they first arrived and consequently might not be capable of contributing fully to their work.

"By the time they have familiarised themselves with the surroundings, many expatriates soon find themselves retiring and leaving Hong Kong," he asserted.

This had created doubts in the minds of the public as to whether expatriates were truly working towards the welfare of Hong Kong, Mr. Wang, said adding: "It is high time to remedy the situation by extending the retiring age for civil servants."

/The Hon. H.J.C. Browne .....

Wednesday, January 17, 1973

- 27 -

The Hon. H.J.C. Browne stressed the urgency for a change and said the present retiring age of 55 "is out of step with the practice in the private secotr."

In moving for the adjournment of the debate, the Colonial Secretary, Sir Hugh Norman-Walker, said the issue had been the subject of consultation between the Government and the Staff Side of the Senior Civil Service Council for a considerable time.

He said "a joint and unanimous proposal" had only last week been received from the three staff associations and this would be placed before the Governor-in-Council very shortly.

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Release time: 8.30 p.m.