



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Tuesday, March 6, 1973

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NEW VALUATION LIST EFFECTIVE FROM APRIL 1

Available For Inspection At Treasury

A new valuation list, effective from April 1, has been completed and will be officially declared this Friday, the Commissioner of Rating and Valuation, Mr. R.A. Fry, announced today.

Addressing a Rotary Club luncheon, he said the list would be available for inspection at the Treasury for three weeks during which any aggrieved person could appeal to the District Court against the new assessments.

The Commissioner advised, however, that anyone contemplating an appeal should first speak to the area valuer concerned and find out just how he or she stood.

"It can be a complicated and expensive business, and any person making an appeal should understand fully what is involved," he said.

The new valuation list will contain just over 310,000 tenements having an assessed annual value of \$3,250 million, compared with \$2,150 million a year ago.

"This increase is not, of course, entirely due to the revaluation, for the list is growing all the time as new assessments are added year by year," Mr. Fry explained.

He envisaged that revenue from rates was likely to increase from \$384 million this year to \$542 million in 1973/74.

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This would make his department the second biggest revenue earner, although nearly two-fifths of the expected revenue from rates in the new financial year would go to the Urban Council to cover the cost of most of the services it would provide.

Mr. Fry said that although rates had been criticized because of their association with rents, and the fear that increased assessments would mean increased rents, "they are a very sure tax, easy and cheap to administer and very difficult to avoid."

"Rating assessments are based on rents and generally follow the trend of rents, so that they do not in themselves provide a lead to increased rents," he explained.

Assessments

If assessments were low, he added, a landlord gained by the greater profit he could take out of the premises. "There is no good reason, therefore, for landlords' attempting to use increased assessments as an excuse for increasing rents this year."

Referring to the average overall increase in rateable values of just over 40 per cent as a result of the valuation, the Commissioner said this figure had been disclosed "merely to indicate the overall trend."

Ratepayers, he stressed, should not try to apply it to previous assessments as a factor by which to measure the proper level of the new rateable values.

"In regard to the lower-rental domestic accommodation," he said, "average increases in rateable values have generally been in the order of 30 to 35 per cent and up to 65 to 70 per cent for large flats, while the assessments for many houses have doubled," he said.

/"Increases

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"Increases for offices, and shops in the prime tourist areas have also doubled in many cases, whereas for factories increases on average are closer to 50 per cent."

In the case of low-cost housing, increases were also substantial in percentage terms.

The Commissioner noted, however, that there had been no revaluation since 1968, "and rentals at that time were, in many cases, below the levels of the early Sixties."

"As a matter of fact, a number of the new assessments are no higher than they were in the 1964 valuation list, that is, nine years ago," he said.

Moreover, the reduced rate charge of 17 per cent to 15 per cent in the urban areas would cushion to some extent the effect of increased assessments, and in some cases ratepayers would actually pay less, he added.

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HUNG HOM INDOOR STADIUM COMPLEX

Got Holding Sports Events And Exhibitions

Work on the foundation for the \$60 million Hung Hom Indoor Stadium Complex is progressing smoothly.

The works include piling and the construction of caissons and caps for a large podium slab which will support the indoor stadium.

They also include foundation works for minor buildings in the complex, a spokesman for the Public Works Department said today.

The stadium will be fully air-conditioned and is designed to seat 15,000 spectators. But the maximum seating capacity may be increased to 17,000 by the addition of temporary seats on part of the arena.

The spokesman said that the number of seats could also be reduced to suit smaller gatherings by means of curtain partitions.

The arena of the stadium can be used for sports events such as basketball, volleyball, tennis, badminton, boxing, weigh lifting, fencing, and gymnastics.

The arena will accommodate eight badminton courts at one time, or two courts for tennis, basketball, or volleyball matches.

It will also be used extensively for a variety of non-sports functions, such as skating, singing, dancing and variety shows, as well as theatrical and circus performances.

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In addition, the planning of the project allows for the arena to be used for large and medium scale exhibitions and conventions.

In the building complex, there will be five meeting rooms, each catering for gatherings for up to 50 people.

Additional meeting space can be obtained by conversion of the 200-seat restaurant.

Round the stadium, there will be 200,000 square feet of open space where open-air exhibitions can conveniently be staged.

"The stadium is expected to be fully utilised throughout the year," the spokesman said.

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URBAN COUNCIL ANNUAL FLOWER SHOW

This year's Urban Council Flower Show will take place on the 23rd of this month, and will last three days.

It will be opened by Mrs. Hilton Cheong-Leen, wife of a senior Urban Councillor, at the City Hall at 2.30 p.m. on March 23.

Competitions, open to all, will be run in seven sections of the display.

These sections are entitled: Cut Flowers, Pot Plants, Orchids, Bonsai-type Plants, Floral Arrangement by adults and Floral Arrangement by children.

Mrs. Huang, wife of Dr. Denny Huang, Urban Councillor, will present prizes at the end of the show.

Closing date for entries is March 13, 1973.

A special event, "U.S.D. Garden Competition," will be run for members of the Urban Services Department's Recreation and Amenities Division.

A number of societies, clubs and a government department, the Agriculture and Fisheries Department, will also have display at the show.

Many of the flowers which will be on exhibition are being flown in from different countries by the airlines of those countries.

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There will also be a demonstration of flower arrangement (Ikebana) by Mrs. Janice Ding, Director of the Hong Kong branch of Sogetsu Teachers' Association in the City Hall Theatre on the last day of the show (Sunday, March 25) from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Admission is free

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MR. BROWNE CEASES TO BE TEMPORARY EXCO MEMBER

The Hon. H.J.C. Browne, an Unofficial Member of the Legislative Council, ceased to be temporarily an Unofficial Member of the Executive Council with effect from March 3, 1973, on the return to Hong Kong of the Hon. G.R. Ross, a Government spokesman announced today.

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SECOND "MEET THE MEDIA" SESSION

The second of a series of "Meet the Media" sessions arranged for members of the press by the Government Information Services will be held on Thursday (March 8).

The Director of Urban Services, Mr. D.R.W. Alexander, and three of his Assistant Directors -- Mr. Augustine Kam Chui (Abattoirs, Hawkers and Markets); Mr. R. Oblitas (Cultural Services); and Mr. David Lan (New Territories) -- will be present for this session.

During these "Meet the Media" sessions, newsmen have an opportunity to meet senior Government officers and question them directly about the work of their departments.

The meetings are on the record and T.V. and radio coverage facilities are provided.

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Note to Editors: You are cordially invited to send a reporter and/or photographer to cover the press conference, which will be held at 12 noon in the G.I.S. 35 mm theatre on the 5th floor of Beaconsfield House.

Television stations covering this session are requested to be there early so that they will have ample time to set up their equipment.

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EDUCATION EXPERT TO MEET PRESS

Note to Editors: Mr. K.G. Lavender, Principal of Wandsworth Technical College, will be meeting the press at 3 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday) in the Conference Room of the Education Department, third floor, Lee Gardens.

Mr. Lavender is currently on a three-week visit to pre-vocational and secondary technical schools in Hong Kong.

He will make a report to the Director of Education on the development of pre-vocational and secondary technical schools.

Mr. Lavender's visit is sponsored by the British Council at the request of the Director of Education.

He arrived in Hong Kong on February 17 and will be returning to London on March 10.

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TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF TONG SHUI ROAD

The western section of Tong Shui Road will be closed to traffic for about four weeks starting from Thursday (March 8) because of road reconstruction.

This section of Tong Shui Road runs from Chun Yeung Street to King's Road.

The operation of trams will not be affected.

Traffic from Chun Yeung Street will be able to proceed north along Tong Shui Road to Java Road.

Appropriate traffic signs will be put up to guide motorists.

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VILLAGE TO BE BUILT ON LANTAO ISLAND

With Land Grant From Government

The Association of Round Tables in Hong Kong is to build a village at Mui Wo on Lantau Island, for squatters with a piece of land granted by the Government.

The village will be situated in a four-acre area near the water treatment works.

The Government will build footpaths and carry out drainage works for the village.

A contract for site formation works was signed this morning in the Island District Office between the Association and the contractor.

When completed, the \$1 million village will have 82 flats in eight single-storey blocks. It will provide homes for more than 400 people.

So far, the Association has collected donations amounting to \$620,000 locally and from associations overseas.

Site formation is expected to be completed in June. The whole village will be ready for occupation a year later.

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Release Time: 7.00 p.m.