



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Friday, November 30, 1973

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ALLOWANCE FOR 50,000 CIVIL SERVANTS

Some 50,000 civil servants on the master pay scale and the disciplined scales will receive an allowance from December 1.

The allowance in the male scale range from \$75 a month to \$200 a month and will be included in the December pay packets. They will not be back-dated. Apprentices will receive between \$35 and \$75 a month.

The allowance extends to officers on salaries up to approximately \$4,000 a month. It does not apply to staff on the MOD 1 scale, mainly labourers and skilled tradesmen, who already receive \$75 a month cost of living allowance under the scheme which provides a changing allowance relating to Consumer Price Index movements.

A Government spokesman said today that the decision was made because of the difficulties experienced by staff in the lower income groups who had been most affected by the rise in the cost of living since April. It also recognises the movement of pay rates in the private sector.

Consideration is also being given to increasing pensions for similar reasons.

The allowance was approved by the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council at its meeting yesterday (Thursday).

The spokesman emphasised that government's policy in reviewing pay and allowances takes into account changes in private sector pay rates and cost of living movements.

The cost of this allowance for the remaining four months of the current financial year will be about \$25 million.

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TRADE BOOM CONTINUES

Hong Kong's external trade continued to expand during the month of October with the total value of domestic exports climbing to \$1,900 million -- a \$412 million or 27.7 per cent rise over October 1972.

At the same time, the value of imports increased by 58.3 per cent and re-exports by 89.4 per cent over the same month last year, according to provisional trade figures released by the Census and Statistics Department.

Commenting on these figures, Mr. M.D. Sargant, Assistant Director of Commerce and Industry, said that during the three-month period - August to October - domestic exports increased by 31.3 per cent over the same period last year, imports by 43.8 per cent and re-exports by 87.6 per cent.

The period January to October 1973, which is more indicative of trade trends, showed increases of 22.8 per cent for domestic products, 28.2 per cent for imports, and 56.8 per cent for re-exports over the same ten-month period last year.

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Note to Editors: A statistical table of October's provisional trade figures is given below with comparative tables.

<u>MERCHANDISE</u> :	Domestic Exports :	\$1,900 million
	Imports :	\$3,003 million
	Re-exports :	\$ 746 million

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COMPARATIVE FIGURES

	October 1973 \$ Mn.	October 1972 \$ Mn.	Increase or decrease	
			\$ Mn.	%
Domestic Exports	1,900	1,488	+ 412	+ 27.7
Imports	3,003	1,897	+ 1,106	+ 58.3
Re-exports	746	394	+ 352	+ 89.4
	Aug.-Oct. 1973 \$ Mn.	Aug.-Oct. 1972 \$ Mn.	Increase or decrease	
			\$ Mn.	%
Domestic Exports	5,766	4,391	+ 1,375	+ 31.3
Imports	8,192	5,697	+ 2,495	+ 43.8
Re-exports	2,171	1,158	+ 1,014	+ 87.6
	Jan.-Oct. 1973 \$ Mn.	Jan.-Oct. 1972 \$ Mn.	Increase or decrease	
			\$ Mn.	%
Domestic Exports	15,580	12,689	+ 2,891	+ 22.8
Imports	22,899	17,865	+ 5,034	+ 28.2
Re-exports	5,249	3,348	+ 1,901	+ 56.8

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TOURIST TRADE ASKED TO CONSERVE FUEL

In response to the government's appeal to the public to reduce industrial and domestic consumption of fuel and electricity, the Hong Kong Tourist Association has written to hotels, travel agents, tour operators and others in the tourist trade, requesting them to co-operate.

The Association is also conducting a questionnaire survey on the fuel requirement of the tourist industry so that a report can be made to the government if and when the situation warrants oil controls or other restrictive measures.

The survey also aims at finding out how the tourist trade can help cut down the consumption rate and by how much.

Meanwhile, a government spokesman re-iterated today that there is no shortage of oil in Hong Kong at the present time. But he urged industry and the public to keep consumption rates to the minimum as a matter of prudence.

The government has called for a voluntary cutback on electricity consumption of up to 15 per cent in view of the uncertainty in the world oil situation. Government departments have already adopted power and fuel saving measures.

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\$105 MILLION DEFICIT RECORDED

The government accounts for the month of August 1973 show a deficit of \$106 million compared with a deficit of \$16 million in August last year.

This has resulted in a total deficit of \$105 million for the first five months of this financial year.

Total revenue for the month at \$275 million was \$23 million more than in August 1972. The total revenue for the first five months of the financial year was \$1,657 million - \$294 million more than the same period last year.

Expenditure amounted to \$381 million, an increase of \$113 million over the same month last year.

This brings the total expenditure for the first five months of the financial year to \$1,763 million - \$382 million more than the same period last year.

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RENT SURVEY - TENANTS URGED TO CO-OPERATE

A selected group of some 5,500 tenants will shortly be receiving a questionnaire on their rent situation from the Rating and Valuation Department.

The information they provide will be used to compile rental movements for the department's Annual Property Review.

The Acting Commissioner for Rating and Valuation, Mr. T.F. Edwards explained that the reason for collecting information through a questionnaire this year, rather than by personal calls, was to save time and effort and to avoid bothering tenants with such calls.

"The questionnaire is not a statutory form, and once the statistical information has been recorded, the forms will be destroyed," he emphasised.

He said that the collection and analysis of information asked by questionnaire was of considerable importance to the government and he hoped that tenants would co-operate by completing all questions fully and accurately and returning them as quickly as possible.

The questionnaire has only five simple questions and may be answered in either Chinese or English.

It may be returned to the department in the pre-addressed envelope enclosed with the questionnaire, which requires no postage stamp.

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SURVEY OF NON-INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT AND VACANCIES

The Census and Statistics Department is again conducting a survey of employment and vacancies in selected non-industrial trades and services.

The survey covers import and export businesses, restaurants and hotels, banks, insurance, air and water transport and related services, education services, medical and health services, cinemas, advertising companies, solicitor's firms, accounting and auditing firms and department stores.

Printed employment return cards were sent out last week to managements of all known establishments in these trades and services.

They were requested to report on employment and vacancies as on November 30, 1973 and to return the cards to the Census and Statistics Department on or before December 4.

A spokesman of the Census and Statistics Department appealed to all recipients for co-operation in filling the cards fully and accurately and returning them promptly in the reply-paid envelopes provided.

"During the last survey responses from managements were most encouraging and I look forward to the same degree of cooperation in this survey," he said.

The spokesman stressed that the information provided on the cards would be kept strictly confidential and only statistical summaries would be released to the public.

"The cards will be destroyed under supervision when all the relevant information is extracted and summarised," he added.

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TELEVISION TRANSMISSION TESTS

The Telecommunications Authority today thanked those members of the public who have telephoned in reports of reception conditions in their area during the period when Rediffusion Television, the licensee for the second broadcast television service, has been carrying out test transmissions on channel 23 from their main transmitter at Temple Hill.

The Telephone Reporting centre, which was organised to record viewer's comments, has been in operation each evening for the past twelve days and details have been examined in conjunction with the other engineering checks which have been taking place.

The present assessment of the situation is that the new service from the first of the main transmitters is satisfactory and that Rediffusion Television will be in a position to introduce their Chinese Language broadcasts as from tomorrow (Saturday). The English language service is expected to be available to viewers in April, 1974.

The Telecommunications Authority has emphasized two points:

First, because Rediffusion broadcasts are initially restricted to a main transmitter only, satisfactory reception of the new service will be, most probably, in those areas which already receive a good signal from Television Broadcasts main transmitters on channels 21 and 25, that is generally in the harbour area. Rediffusion's service should, therefore, initially reach between 60 per cent and 70 per cent of television viewers. The subsidiary transmitters serving the outlying districts will be brought into service during the next few months and further announcements will be made as each of these comes into operation.

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Second, it is important that for satisfactory reception of all television services it is necessary that receiving sets should be properly aligned and equipped with suitable aerials. Many of the complaints which were investigated by the technical staff of the Postmaster General's office indicated that the faults complained of were caused by incorrect installations or in those receivers which had not been adequately maintained. Viewers are therefore recommended to obtain the advice of a reputable television engineering service or their retailer if they encounter any difficulties in reception.

The temporary Telephone Reporting centre is now closed and all further communications should be in writing to the Telecommunications Authority, c/o General Post Office, Hong Kong.

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TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF PARKING SPACES IN WANCHAI

Parking meters along the north side of Johnston Road between Luard Road and O'Brien Road will be temporarily suspended from midnight tomorrow (Saturday) to midnight on December 7.

The temporary suspension is to facilitate trench works.

Traffic signs will be posted to guide motorists.

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CLEAN-UP AT WONG TAI SIN ESTATE

An environmental improvement exercise was carried out at Lower Wong Tai Sin Estate today to tidy up the public housing estate where more than 75,000 people live.

About 80 illegal hawker stalls and other structures at the side of Block 11 and the area west of Ching Tak Street were demolished in the operation.

Most of the hawkers have been re-sited into properly marked out stalls at the open courtyard of Block 11. A few others will be allocated sites near Blocks 26 and 27 when the area is cleared.

A spokesman for the Housing Department said that apart from giving the estate a better and tidier appearance, the exercise had also helped clear a site needed for the Mass Transit Railway project.

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NEW BUILDING FOR RADIO HONG KONG

Office and storage facilities at Radio Hong Kong in Broadcast Drive will be expanded next year with the construction of an annex.

The two-storey annex will be built on the existing podium adjacent to Broadcasting House. Seventeen offices will be provided in the annex which will have a total floor area of about 2,500 square feet.

The design and structure of the annex will be similar to that of Broadcasting House. The rooms on the ground and lower ground floors of Broadcasting House are to be converted into store rooms for television equipment.

Security gate kiosks will be erected at the entrance and exit to the premises.

Tenders are now being invited for the construction work. Work is expected to begin in January next year, and will take about six months to complete.

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YOUTH CENTRE'S ANNIVERSARY

The Social Welfare Department's Youth Centre in Sham Shui Po will hold a variety show tomorrow (Saturday) night to celebrate its ninth anniversary. It will begin at 8.15 p.m.

To start off the celebrations, a short ceremony will be held at which Mr. Kwok Ka-chi, Senior Principal Social Welfare Officer of the department's Group and Community Division; Mr. Chan Hon-kwong, City District Officer, Sham Shui Po; and Mr. K.H. Lomas, Divisional Superintendent, Sham Shui Po Division, Royal Hong Kong Police, will officiate.

There will also be a presentation of certificates to volunteers and those who have attended training courses organised by the centre as part of its regular programmes for youth.

The variety show will consist of a Chinese lion dance, folk singing, a Chinese Classical music concert and other performances by the centre's youth groups.

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Note to Editors: You are welcome to cover the function.

The address of the Sham Shui Po Youth Centre is
88 Yu Chau Street, first floor.

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CONSUMER ADVISORY SERVICE

Daily Guide To Wholesale Market Prices And Supplies

The following prices were realised today (Friday) at sales under the Rice Control Scheme and at the Vegetable Marketing Organisation Wholesale Market and the Fish Marketing Organisation Wholesale Market at Cheung Sha Wan, Kowloon:

Supplies And Wholesale Prices of Rice

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Availability of Supply</u>	<u>Wholesale Price (\$/catty)</u>
<u>China Rice</u>		<u>Average</u>
See Mew - old crop	Good	1.64
- new crop		1.72
S.C. Jier-old crop	Good	1.58
Po Ngai	Good	1.42
Chu Cho	Good	1.22
<u>Thai Rice</u>		
100% Whole	Good	1.52
10-15% Broken	Good	1.50
A1 Super Extra	Good	1.45
A1 Super	Good	1.37
Whole Glutinous	Scarce	1.52
U.S. Rice	Good	1.62

Supplies And Wholesale Price of Marine Fish

<u>Species</u>	<u>Availability of Supply</u>	<u>Wholesale Price (\$/catty)</u>		
		<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Average</u>
Golden Thread	Limited	5.80	2.80	3.80
Big-Eyes	Good	2.60	0.80	1.80

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<u>Species</u>	<u>Availability of Supply</u>	<u>Wholesale Price (\$/catty)</u>		
		<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Average</u>
Squid	Limited	5.50	1.60	4.00
Hair-Tails	Good	2.70	1.50	2.00
Lizard Fishes	Good	3.50	1.00	2.30
Croakers	Good	2.40	0.60	1.60
Conger-Pike-Eels	Limited	2.90	1.80	2.40
Melon Coat	Good	2.80	1.30	1.80
Breams	Limited	5.20	3.50	4.40
Yellow Belly	Limited	1.45	0.60	1.10
Mackerels	Limited	5.50	3.00	4.50
Red Goat Fish	Good	2.45	0.65	1.80
Fork-Tail	Good	1.70	1.00	1.50
Horse-Head	Scarce	5.00	4.20	4.50
Melon Seed	Limited	3.00	1.80	2.50
Pomfrets	Scarce	9.00	7.50	8.50
Garoupas	Scarce	7.20	6.50	7.00
Yellow Croaker	Limited	6.50	3.40	4.50

Supplies And Wholesale Prices of

Locally Produced Vegetables

<u>Type</u>	<u>Availability of Supply</u>	<u>Wholesale Price (\$/catty)</u>		
		<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Average</u>
Flowering cabbage	Normal	1.60	0.70	1.20
White cabbage	Good	0.40	0.10	0.25

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<u>Type</u>	<u>Availability of Supply</u>	<u>Wholesale Price (\$/catty)</u>		
		<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Average</u>
Chinese lettuce	Good	0.50	0.15	0.35
Chinese kale	Normal	0.80	0.30	0.50
Spring onion	Limited	1.20	0.40	0.80
Spinach	Limited	1.20	0.50	0.80
Water cress	Normal	1.10	0.30	0.70
Leaf mustard cabbage	Scarce	0.50	0.15	0.35
Tomato	Scarce	2.40	1.60	2.00

Supplies And Wholesale Prices of Pork (Live weight)

	<u>Availability of Supply</u>	<u>Wholesale Price</u>
		<u>(\$/picul)</u>
		<u>(Average)</u>
Pork	Good	285

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Release time: 7.30 p.m.