



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

RETIREMENT OF WATERWORKS CLERICAL OFFICER

ONE OF THE LONGEST SERVING CLERICAL OFFICERS OF THE WATERWORKS OFFICE, MR. WONG MING-TACK, IS RETIRING THIS WEEK AFTER 31 YEARS' SERVICE.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1976

MR. WONG BEGINS HIS WELL-EARNED RETIREMENT ON SUNDAY WHEN HE CELEBRATES HIS 55TH BIRTHDAY.

TO MARK HIS RETIREMENT, THE DIRECTOR OF WATER SUPPLIES, BILL KNIGHT, WILL PRESENT HIM A MEMENTO ON BEHALF OF COLLEAGUES AT A SPECIAL CEREMONY ON MONDAY.

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NOTE TO EDITORS

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MOST CMB FARES TO GO UP IN MARCH
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BUS PASSENGERS ON HONG KONG ISLAND WILL HAVE TO PAY MORE ON MOST ROUTES FROM NEXT MONTH.

ANNOUNCING THIS TODAY A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THAT THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL HAS APPROVED AN APPLICATION FROM CHINA MOTOR BUS COMPANY, FIRST SUBMITTED IN SEPTEMBER 1974, TO REVISE ITS SCALE OF FARES AS FROM MARCH 1, 1976.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT THE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE CONSIDERED THE APPLICATION IN DETAIL AT ITS MEETING LAST DECEMBER AND ADVISED IN FAVOUR OF THE REVISION BECAUSE OF THE STEEP RISE IN CAPITAL AND OPERATING EXPENSES SINCE 1972.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT WHILE INCREASES ARE OBVIOUSLY NOT WELCOME THEY COULD NOT BE AVOIDED WHEN THE COST OF SPARE PARTS AND MACHINERY HAD RISEN 207 PER CENT, FUEL 125 PER CENT, TYRES 81 PER CENT, STAFF WAGES 79 PER CENT AND THE COST OF NEW VEHICLES 75 PER CENT IN THE PAST FOUR YEARS.

+IF THE COMPANY IS TO CONTINUE TO EXPAND ITS SERVICES AND REPLACE THE OLDER VEHICLES WHILE MAINTAINING REASONABLE WAGE LEVELS, THIS FARES REVISION IS INEVITABLE,+ HE SAID.

CMB FARES WERE LAST REVISED IN JULY 1972 WHEN 132 FARES WERE INCREASED, 42 REMAINED UNCHANGED AND SIX WERE REDUCED. ON THAT OCCASION, THE 20 CENT FULL DISTANCE FARES ON URBAN ROUTES (NOS 2, 5, 5A, 5B, 5C AND 10) ALONG THE NORTH SHORE ROUTES BETWEEN SHAU KEI WAN AND KENNEDY TOWN WERE KEPT AT THE SAME LEVEL AS THEY WERE JUST AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR.

FROM MARCH, THE FARES ON THESE ROUTES WILL RISE TO 30 CENTS - THE SAME AS FOR TRAMS OVER SIMILAR ROUTES.

OVERALL, THE IMPACT OF THE FARES REVISION WILL BE GREATER ON THOSE ROUTES WHERE FARES WERE UNCHANGED OR REDUCED IN 1972. ON THIS OCCASION, 72 FARES WILL BE INCREASED, 25 WILL REMAIN UNCHANGED AND TWO WILL BE REDUCED. MOST SUBURBAN ROUTES WHERE FARES ARE NOW 30 CENTS WILL INCREASE TO 50 CENTS. THE FARES ON CROSS HARBOUR ROUTES WILL NOT BE AFFECTED.

THE SPOKESMAN ADDED THAT SINCE MID-1973, WHEN THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED THAT IT WOULD NOT RENEW THE CHINA MOTOR BUS COMPANY'S FRANCHISE ON THE OLD TERMS, THE COMPANY HAS UNDERTAKEN A SUBSTANTIAL EXPANSION PROGRAMME TO CATER FOR EXISTING AND ANTICIPATED TRAFFIC DEMANDS.

+IN CONSULTATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT, THE COMPANY HAD DRAWN UP A PLAN OF VEHICLE ACQUISITION BOTH TO REPLACE EXISTING BUSES AND ADD MORE TO THE FLEET TO REACH A TOTAL OF 800 HIGH-CAPACITY VEHICLES BY 1981,+ HE SAID.

/AT PRESENT

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AT PRESENT, THE COMPANY HAD AN IN-SERVICE FLEET OF 525 BUSES OPERATING ON 62 ROUTES WHICH IN 1975 CARRIED AN ALL-TIME RECORD OF 215.8 MILLION PASSENGERS.

ACCORDING TO THE SPOKESMAN, A FURTHER 10 NEW ROUTES ARE PLANNED BY CMB FOR 1976 TO IMPROVE FACILITIES IN EXPANDING AREAS SUCH AS CHAI WAN, ABERDEEN AND THE MID-LEVELS AREA OF NORTH POINT. TWO MORE CROSS-HARBOUR ROUTES WILL ALSO BE INTRODUCED THIS YEAR.

THE COMPANY WAS GRANTED A NEW FRANCHISE IN SEPTEMBER 1975 UNDER THE PUBLIC OMNIBUS SERVICES ORDINANCE TO OPERATE ON SPECIFIED ROUTES LAID DOWN BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT, IN ADDITION, A PROFIT CONTROL SCHEME WAS EVOLVED WHICH FIXED THE COMPANY'S ANNUAL PERMITTED RETURN AT 15 PER CENT OF THE AVERAGE NET FIXED ASSETS. ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THIS PERMITTED RETURN AND THE NET REVENUE AFTER TAX IS TRANSFERRED TO A DEVELOPMENT FUND. +THIS WILL ENABLE THE COMPANY TO BALANCE GOOD YEARS WITH LEAN ONES AND ENSURE PROPER LONG TERM FINANCIAL PLANNING,+ HE ADDED.

WITHOUT A FARES INCREASE IN MARCH, THE COMPANY'S RETURN FOR THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR WOULD BE ONLY 8.7 PER CENT, THAT IS CONSIDERABLY LESS THAN THAT PERMITTED UNDER THE FRANCHISE, AND THERE IS NOTHING AS YET IN THE DEVELOPMENT FUND TO DRAW ON.

+UNDER THE NEW FARES, CMB SHOULD BE ABLE TO EARN A FAIR RATE OF RETURN AND FINANCE ITS BUS PURCHASE PROGRAMME WITHOUT EXCESSIVE LEVELS OF BORROWING,+ HE SAID. THE SPOKESMAN EMPHASISED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE COMPANY'S FINANCIAL POSITION.

FULL DETAILS OF THE REVISED SCALE OF FARES WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE GOVERNMENT GAZETTE NEXT WEEK AND ALL NEW ROUTES SUBSEQUENTLY INTRODUCED WILL CONFORM TO THE NEW SCALE. THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT IS, HOWEVER, PERMITTED TO AUTHORISE UP TO A 50 PER CENT INCREASE IN FARES IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES SUCH AS ALL-NIGHT OPERATIONS, FESTIVAL DAYS AND OTHER OCCASIONS WHEN SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS APPLY.

WHEN ASKED WHETHER THE CMB INCREASE WOULD TRIGGER OFF A SIMILAR CLAIM FROM KMB, THE GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN REPLIED THAT THE COMPANY WAS STILL IN A HEALTHY POSITION WITH AN OPENING BALANCE IN THE DEVELOPMENT FUND. +A FARES REVISION SHOULD NOT BE NECESSARY THIS YEAR,+ HE SAID.

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GROWING INTEREST IN SETTING UP
FACTORIES IN TUEN MUN
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AMONG SIGNS OF RECOVERING BUSINESS CONFIDENCE IN HONG KONG IS THE GROWING NUMBER OF ENQUIRIES FROM BOTH LOCAL AND OVERSEAS CONCERNS ABOUT SETTING UP PLANTS IN THE TUEN MUN NEW TOWN INDUSTRIAL AREA.

ESTATE STAFF IN THE DISTRICT OFFICE THERE HAVE RECEIVED AT LEAST A DOZEN ENQUIRIES DURING THE PAST TWO MONTHS WHILE ONLY A HANDFUL WERE RECEIVED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE OF 1975.

+WE'RE GETTING CALLS BOTH FROM LOCAL FIRMS WANTING TO EXPAND OPERATIONS AND ALSO FROM EUROPEAN, JAPANESE AND AMERICAN FIRMS,+ SENIOR ESTATE SURVEYOR MR. BOB POPE SAID.

HE FELT THAT APART FROM THE ENDING OF THE RECESSION, THERE WERE TWO MAIN REASONS FOR THE SUDDEN REAWAKENING OF INTERESTS AMONG INDUSTRIALISTS IN TUEN MUN. THE HIGHWAY LINKING THE NEW TOWN TO TSUEN WAN IS DUE TO BE COMPLETED BY LATE 1977, AND THE TAI HING ESTATE HOUSING 29,000 PEOPLE ULTIMATELY WILL BE COMPLETED IN ABOUT ONE YEAR FROM NOW.

+WITH THE OPENING OF THE ROAD,+ SAID MR. POPE, +TUEN MUN WILL BE ONLY 20 MINUTES' DISTANCE FROM THE CONTAINER TERMINAL IN KWAI CHUNG.+

HE ADDED : +WHEN THE ESTATE IS READY AND FAMILIES BEGIN MOVING IN, WORKERS FOR THE VARIOUS INDUSTRIES WILL BE READILY AVAILABLE.+

MR. POPE DESCRIBED AS +MOST EXCITING+ THE PROJECT OF A EUROPEAN FIRM WHICH IS SOON TO START BUILDING A FABRIC PRINTING FACTORY.

+THIS IS AN ENTIRELY NEW PROCESS FOR HONG KONG,+ HE SAID, +AND THE FIRM'S INITIAL INVESTMENT IS IN THE REGION OF \$25 MILLION.+

THE COMPANY BOUGHT TWO SITES TOTALLING 96,000 SQ. FT. BY PRIVATE TREATY GRANT UNDER A SCHEME WHEREBY GOVERNMENT IS ENCOURAGING HIGH TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRIES TO COME TO HONG KONG. CONSTRUCTION OF THE FACTORY WILL BEGIN IN MARCH AND WILL BE COMPLETED IN SIX MONTHS WHEN PRODUCTION IS DUE TO COMMENCE. THE FACTORY, WHICH WILL EMPLOY INITIALLY 300 TO 400 WORKERS, WILL BE THE COMPANY'S SOUTHEAST ASIAN PRODUCTION CENTRE.

ANOTHER FACTORY NOW UNDER CONSTRUCTION IS FOR AN AMERICAN TOY COMPANY WHICH WILL PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT FOR UP TO 1,200 WORKERS. THE 24,500 SQ. FT. SITE WAS PURCHASED 20 MONTHS AGO.

ONE OF THE BIGGEST SITES WAS SOLD TO A JAPANESE COMPANY WHICH MANUFACTURES ZIPPERS. THE LAND, MEASURING 155,000 SQ. FT., WAS BOUGHT IN 1973. KOWLOON MOTOR BUS HAS A SITE FOR A BUS DEPOT AND WORKSHOP.

/MR. POPE

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MR. POPE SAID INDUSTRIAL LAND WAS AT PRESENT SELLING FOR ABOUT \$50 PER SQ. FT. LOWER THAN THE PRICES BEING PAID FOR SIMILAR LAND IN SHA TIN AND TSUEN WAN NEW TOWNS. PURCHASERS ARE GIVEN 10 YEARS TO PAY WITH INTEREST AT 5 PER CENT.

AT PRESENT, FIVE FACTORIES ARE OPERATING ON THE INDUSTRIAL AREA, EIGHT ARE BEING CONSTRUCTED AND A FURTHER EIGHT COMPANIES HAVE SUBMITTED FACTORY PLANS. ELEVEN SITES TOTALLING MORE THAN 160,000 SQ. FT. REMAIN TO BE SOLD.

MR. POPE EMPHASISED THAT ANYONE CONSIDERING SETTING UP AN INDUSTRIAL PLANT IN TUEN MUN WOULD BE WELL ADVISED NOT TO DELAY TOO LONG IN VIEW OF THE CLOSENESS OF THE DATES FOR COMPLETION OF THE TAI HING ESTATE AND THE HIGHWAY LINKING TSUEN WAN AND TUEN MUN.

TUEN MUN NEW TOWN WILL EVENTUALLY HOUSE CLOSE TO HALF A MILLION PEOPLE. THE SALE OF SITES IN THE INDUSTRIAL AREA BEGAN IN 1970 WHEN SEVEN WERE SOLD. BETWEEN 1971 AND 1974, 28 SITES WERE AUCTIONED. THERE WERE NO SALES IN 1975.

+LAST YEAR WAS VIRTUALLY A DEAD YEAR FOR TUEN MUN,+ MR. POPE SAID, +BUT THE PROSPECTS FOR 1976 ARE LOOKING VERY MUCH BETTER.+ HE SAID THE FIRST AUCTION OF INDUSTRIAL LAND DURING THE YEAR WAS EXPECTED TO TAKE PLACE IN ABOUT TWO MONTHS.

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CHANGE OF LANES ON PRINCESS MARGARET ROAD FLYOVER

TRAFFIC ON PRINCESS MARGARET ROAD FLYOVER WILL BE CHANGED FROM TWO LANES NORTHBOUND AND ONE LANE SOUTHBOUND TO ONE LANE NORTHBOUND AND TWO LANES SOUTHBOUND FROM 10 A.M. TOMORROW (SUNDAY).

APPROPRIATE TRAFFIC SIGNS WILL BE PUT UP THERE TO GUIDE MOTORISTS.

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FIRE PREVENTION INSPECTIONS

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THE FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU OF THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT CONDUCTED INSPECTIONS ON 130 VEHICLES USED FOR CARRYING INFLAMMABLE LIQUIDS AND COMPRESSED GASES IN JANUARY.

THIS IS THE LARGEST BATCH OF SUCH VEHICLES INSPECTED IN A SINGLE MONTH AND BRINGS TO 676 THE TOTAL EXAMINED SINCE APRIL LAST YEAR.

DURING THE MONTH, ALMOST 16,000 INSPECTIONS, RE-INSPECTIONS AND FOLLOW-UP VISITS WERE MADE BY THE BUREAU TO BUILDINGS THROUGHOUT HONG KONG. AS IN THE PAST, THE MAJORITY OF INSPECTIONS (9,003) RELATED TO COMPLAINTS CONCERNING MEANS OF ESCAPE, FOLLOWED BY INSPECTIONS OF FACTORIES AND OTHER INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS (2,427).

BUREAU EXPERTS INVESTIGATED 45 FIRES AND 1,436 GENERAL COMPLAINTS IN DETAIL. THERE WERE 958 ROUTINE INSPECTIONS OF MEANS OF ESCAPE TO ENSURE THEY WERE FREE OF OBSTRUCTIONS, 528 INSPECTIONS OF PREMISES USED FOR STORING OR MANUFACTURING DANGEROUS GOODS AND 419 INSPECTIONS OF FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT IN RESIDENTIAL AND INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS.

OTHER INSPECTIONS INCLUDED BUILDING VENTILATION SYSTEMS (376), RESTAURANTS AND NIGHT CLUBS (257), SCHOOLS (141), PLACES OF PUBLIC ASSEMBLY (107), TIMBER YARDS AND STORAGE (14), NEON SIGNS (6) AND MISCELLANEOUS (123).

A TOTAL OF 700 NEW BUILDING PLANS SUBMITTED TO THE BUREAU FOR CONSIDERATION OF THE MEANS OF ESCAPE AND THE INSTALLATION OF FIRE SERVICE INSTALLATIONS WERE FINALISED. DANGEROUS GOODS AND TIMBER STORE LICENCES ISSUED AND RENEWED NUMBERED 310.

IN ADDITION, 853 FIRE HAZARD ABATEMENT NOTICES WERE ISSUED AND 176 PEOPLE WERE PROSECUTED RESULTING IN THE IMPOSITION OF FINES AMOUNTING TO OVER \$97,000.

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TO MARK HIS RETIREMENT, THE DIRECTOR OF WATER SUPPLIES, MR. BILL KNIGHT, WILL PRESENT HIM WITH A MEMENTO ON BEHALF OF HIS COLLEAGUES AT A SPECIAL CEREMONY ON MONDAY.

MR. WONG IS THE LAST CLERICAL OFFICER IN THE WATERWORKS OFFICE WHO JOINED THE GOVERNMENT SERVICES BEFORE THE WAR.

HE FIRST ENTERED THE CIVIL SERVICE AS A JUNIOR CLERK IN 1941 AND AFTER THE WAR JOINED THE WATERWORKS OFFICE IN 1945.

DURING HIS CAREER IN THE WATERWORKS OFFICE HE ACTED AS SENIOR CLERK ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS IN 1970 AND 1971 AND WAS CLERK-IN-CHARGE OF THE CONTRACTS AND PAYLISTING SECTION WHERE HE DEVOTED HIMSELF TO CONTRACT AND PAYMENT MATTERS RELATING TO SUCH MAJOR WATERWORKS PROJECTS AS THE SHEK PIK AND PLOVER COVE RESERVOIRS, THE LOK ON PAI DESALTER, AND THE HIGH ISLAND WATER SCHEME.

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