



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Friday, June 8, 1973

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GOVERNMENT STRENGTHENS CONTACT WITH THE PUBLIC

Mr. Augustine Chui Kam, a former Assistant Director of Urban Services, has been appointed to a newly created post of Principal Assistant Colonial Secretary (Public Affairs) and will head a small research department to assist the Secretary for Home Affairs.

In this job he will be co-ordinating the work of collecting and assessing public opinion for consideration by the government in its decision-making process.

Speaking about his new appointment today, Mr. Chui stressed that the main objective of his work would be to plan and establish regular machinery through which can be obtained a pattern of public opinion at all levels of the community.

Emphasis, however, will be placed on seeking the opinions of those people at the grass roots level, particularly groups which are not normally articulate, he said.

The feelings and thoughts of young people will also be one of the main aspects he will be looking into.

Mr. Chui explained that the first phase of the work will involve consultations with government departments and various community organisations to determine the best methods of getting an accurate and realistic assessment of public reaction to government policies.

This should lead to a strengthening of existing channels of contact with the public and the creation of new sources of information.

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"There are recognised ways of doing these things, such as sampling surveys and gallup polls, but these may also have limitations as it may be difficult to make them comprehensive and for them to measure reliably the intensity of feeling by mere question and answer methods.

"The machinery of assessment has to be systematic, but the approach will need to remain basically through personal contact," Mr. Chui said.

He recognised, however, that the success of personal contact and discussions depends on many factors, particularly the aptitude of staff doing the work.

The people who are doing the surveys will not only have to be able to mix well with people they must also be intelligent and objective to reflect the views and opinions they have assessed without being influenced by their own personal views.

Mr. Chui said sounding out public reaction to government policy will be a continuing process and will be carried out before and after the policies are formulated.

"The real way of closing the gap between the government and its people relies on genuine mutual understanding. The government has always taken public opinion seriously, but it is essential for it to be accurately informed as what the community generally feels and wants," he said.

Mr. Chui is 40 and is married with one son and one daughter.

He graduated with two degrees from the London University and took postgraduate studies in government and public administration at Trinity College, Oxford. He has been with the Government for 21 years mainly in posts where he has been in contact with the public.

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MR. CATER AND MR. ROBSON ASSUME NEW POSTS

Mr. Jack Cater has formally assumed his new post as Secretary for Home Affairs.

He succeeds Mr. D.C.C. Luddington who left Hong Kong last Saturday to take up his new appointment as High Commissioner for the Western Pacific.

Mr. Cater takes up his duties in the new framework of the Colonial Secretariat recommended by the management consultants, McKinsey and Co.

He will be responsible for policy and programmes covering information services, public relations, broadcasting, television, information on public attitudes, cultural activities, tourism and City District Offices.

Another appointment made in connection with the McKinsey reorganisation is Mr. J.J. Robson, Director of Public Works, who is now Acting Secretary for the Environment.

Mr. Robson will be responsible for policy and programmes covering land matters, town planning, the design, construction and timing of new towns, pollution, urban services, roads, road transport, traffic railway, car parking, mass transit (construction, engineering and land aspects) and operational and works aspects of the airport and harbour.

He will be assisted by Mr. A.T. Armstrong-Wright, Government Civil Engineer, who has been appointed as Acting Principal Assistant Colonial Secretary in the new Environment Branch.

Mr. A.S. Robertson, Deputy Director of Public Works, has been appointed to act as Director in Mr. Robson's place.

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NGAU TAU KOK OPERATORS START TO MOVE OUT

More than 30 factory operators in the Ngau Tau Kok area, due for clearance to make way for the main maintenance depot of the Mass Transit Railway, have moved or are beginning to move out. Some have begun to demolish their buildings.

The clearance of this stretch of land along Kwun Tong Road will begin on Tuesday (June 12) so that essential site preparation can start early next month.

More than 100 families have been living in the area. All have been offered accommodation in public housing or licenced areas by the Housing Department.

Seventy eight of the 148 industrial undertakings which occupied sites on Crown Land permits - cancelled last year - have been allocated Housing Authority flatted factory units.

Fifteen of the 29 shopkeepers in the area who are eligible for assistance will be paid ex-gratia sums totalling \$156,076.

Staff from the Housing Department and the City District Office, Kwun Tong, have been visiting the area giving advice to factory owners and shopkeepers on removal problems. Labour Department staff have also been available to help workers find other jobs.

The Housing Department has put several operators, who approached them for help, in touch with the New Territories Administration which in turn is offering guidance to those wanting to find alternative sites in the rural area.

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Proprietors of large concerns, such as steel rolling mills have been advised to negotiate for sites in Junk Bay where private land is available.

The Ngau Tau Kok operators have been aware of the government's need to recover this land for over two years and permits in the area were cancelled between January and April last year.

Typical of the proprietors who have begun to move out from the area is a foundry owner who occupied 3,000 square feet of land for which he paid the former Crown Land permittee - who had left the area - \$1,700 a month.

He has now been allocated seven Housing Authority factory units, with a total floor area of 1,800 square feet and is changing his trade to plastics as founderies cannot operate in flatted factories.

Another operator, running a workshop turning out wooden furniture and planks, has found himself an alternative site in Yuen Long where he will be able to continue his furniture business.

Other operators have bought land in the New Territories and are seeking permission to use it for industrial purposes.

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MORE RESIDENTIAL LAND TO BE FORMED

Some five-and-a-half acres of land (about 270,000 square feet) is to be carved from the North Kowloon foothills for future residential development.

The land will be formed in connection with the development of areas off Lung Cheung Road and will cover the whole of Tai Wor Ping Cottage area to the north of the Shek Kip Mei Service Reservoir.

Formation work will start next month and is expected to be completed in early 1975, at a cost of some \$5.2 million.

The site will be formed in tiers of varying sizes each fitted with proper drainage facilities, and will be served by a 2,000 foot dual carriageway running through it.

About 500,000 cubic yards of earth will be removed from the site. The excavated materials will be dumped in Kowloon Bay for the formation of the Kwun Tong mass transit depot.

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OLD COMPOUND CONVERTED TO TRAINING / DETENTION CENTRE

Some 250 young offenders will be transferred to the former Chatham Road Compound tomorrow in a Prisons Department move to relieve overcrowding at the Stanley Training Centre.

Announcing this today, a spokesman for the department said the old compound has been renamed the Chatham Training / Detention Centre.

The new centre, which will be used for two years, will have accommodation for up to 500 inmates, compared to 191 at Stanley.

It will also relieve the chronic overcrowding at the Victoria Reception Centre as those now remanded there for training or detention centre reports will be housed in the Chatham Road centre.

The spokesman stressed that the move is purely a temporary measure to solve the problem of overcrowding before the completion of new centres.

"Two such centres have been planned -- one at Lai Chi Kok and another at Pik Uk," he said.

No final decision has yet been made on the future of the vacated Stanley Training Centre.

"But it is certain that the Prisons Department will be making use of this centre in the very near future," the spokesman added.

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MORE PLAYGROUNDS FOR WONG CHUK HANG

Eight playgrounds have been planned in the Wong Chuk Hang Estate by the Urban Council to complement the existing playground between blocks 1 and 2.

The new playgrounds, with a total area of about 2.5 acres, will be built on the open spaces among the various blocks.

Three basketball courts, a roller skating rink, a volleyball court and two badminton courts will be included in the plans. Swings, slides and roundabouts will be installed for the children of the estate.

A covered rest area, concrete benches and flower beds will also be included in the construction to provide residents with pleasant sitting-out areas.

Construction of the playgrounds is expected to begin in the middle of next month, and should be completed in February, 1974.

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TRAFFIC CONGESTION AT AIRPORT

Members of the public are advised not to take their cars to the airport on weekends from about midday to 6 p.m. during the airport's peak operating hours.

Serious traffic problems have been encountered during recent weekends because of the limited parking facilities, and some motorists have even abandoned their cars in areas where they block the entrances or exits.

The situation is also aggravated by large numbers of mini buses, particularly from the New Territories, bringing people to meet or farewell friends and relatives booked on charter flights during the week.

The existing open-air car park in front of the terminal building has space for only about 350 cars and this is usually fully occupied every day.

A new multi-storey car park with accommodation for more than four times that number has been included in the current expansion of the airport to cater for the present and projected requirements, but the first 800 spaces will not be available for use until 1975.

In the meantime, to avoid unnecessary congestion for genuine users of the airport people are advised to leave their cars at home when visiting the terminal.

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Release time: 7.00 p.m.