HKGIS 香港政府新聞處

DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Tuesday, March 20, 1973

CONTENTS

	Page No.
Air pollution in Hong Kong has dropped dramatically	1
The stamp duty concessions announced last month by the Financial Secretary will come into effect on April 1	3
A computerised study is being made of the Urban Services Department's refuse collecting services	6
Signing of the contract for the Castle Peak desalting plant will take place tomorrow	7
Money and postal order services at the Post Office resumed today	8
A $37-million contract for road improvement works in Kowloon is to be signed tomorrow	9
All Government swimming pools have been opened in advance of the summer season	10
Eighty nine buildings were certified for occupation in January	11
The Urban Council's annual flower show opens at the City Hall on Friday	12
More than twenty disabled persons found employment last month with help from the Social Welfare Department	12
The wife of the Director of Social Welfare is to continue her visits to voluntary welfare agencies this week	13
New traffic arrangements will be introduced in North Kowloon as from Thursday	14
The Labour Relations Service last month helped settle more than 250 labour disputes	15

Issued by Government Information Services, Beaconsfield House, Hong Kong. Tel: 5-233191

Tuesday, March 20, 1973

MARKED IMPROVEMENT IN AIR POLLUTION SITUATION

Industrialists Now More Aware Of Problem

****

There has been a dramatic drop in air pollution throughout Hong Kong, according to Mr. K. Higginson, the Smoke Abatement Advisor of the Labour Department.

Figures just released by the department's Air Pollution Control Unit show that sulphur dioxide concentrations and smoke densities in the atmosphere have fallen by as much as 80 per cent since the beginning of 1970, when the Unit went into full operation.

Mr. Higginson said the Unit's figures were based on moving 12 months averages, to make allowance for the effects of weather conditions.

He said readings of sulphur dioxide concentrations at the Hung Hom monitoring station had shown a steady improvement from a count of 1,429 micrograms per cubic meter in January, 1970 to 279 micrograms per cubic meter in December 1972 - a drop of more than 80 per cent.

At the Queen Elizabeth Hospital monitoring station, there had been a fall of 48 per cent in the same period.

Mr. Higginson said much of the credit for these two improvements should go to the China Light and Power Company for its use of low-sulphur fuels during adverse wind conditions.

The monitoring stations at Sham Shui Po and at Central Market had shown a gradual climb in sulphur dioxide readings to a peak in the early half of 1972. Since then there had been a gradual fall in readings.

/At .....

At Sham Shui Po the readings had fallen by 27 per cent in the past eight months. At the Central Market monitoring station, the fall had been 36 per cent in eleven months.

Mr. Higginson said there had also been dramatic falls in smoke pollution in Hong Kong during the period.

During 1972, the monitoring station at Queen Elizabeth Hospital had shown a fall of some 45 per cent in smoke readings.

The readings in Central, after remaining steady for more than two years, had now shown a 40 per cent improvement in 12 months.

At Hung Hom there was a fall of 27 per cent last year.

But Sham Shui Po had shown little change in smoke pollution readings in the past three years. "There is unlikely to be any real change in this situation until the area is declared a smoke control area," said Mr. Higginson.

Mr. Higginson attributed the improvement in the air pollution situation to increased awareness of the problem among industrialists as a result of the work of the Air Pollution Control Unit.

The Unit gives free technical advice to fuel users on the most effective and economical way to operate furnaces, ovens and chimneys.

"It seems we've succeeded in converting a lot of former offenders into law-abiding citizens without too many prosecutions," he said.

- - - - 0 - - - -

/3 .....

STAMP DUTY CONCESSIONS COME INTO EFFECT ON APRIL 1

Budget Proposal To Be Implemented

****

Certain stamp duties will be abolished or reduced from April 1.

These stamp duty changes were announced by the Financial Secretary in his budget speech on February 28.

The Governor has made an order, under Section 2 of the Public Revenue Protection Ordinance, to implement these concessions.

Among the heads of charge to be abolished are the $3 fixed duty on Affidavit, Statutory Declaration or Declaration in writing on Oath or Affirmation; and the 15 cents stamp duty on receipts for amounts exceeding $20.

The duties on insurance policies are also to be abolished as follows: life policies -- 25 cents for every $1,000 or part thereof insured; all other policies and renewals -- fixed duty of 50 cents; life policies, renewal receipts for amounts exceeding $20 -- fixed duty of 15 cents.

The remaining items on the abolition list are:

Agreement, or any Memorandum of Agreement made under hand only, not otherwise specifically charged with duty ($3); agreement or contract for hire-purchase ($5); bill of lading (15 cents or 40 cents);

Attested copy of any instrument chargeable with duty ($3); Charter Party ($20); Godown Warrant (20 cents); Letter of Hypothecation ($3 or $6);

Note of Protest of a bill of exchange or promissory note ($1); Notarial Act ($3); and Shippers Books (Chinese) and other receipts for goods shipped where bills of lading are not used (15 cents or 40 cents).

/Documents .....

Documents of the above classes made or executed on or after April 1 will accordingly be exempt from all duty under the heads of charge referred to.

Letters of Renunciation are to be exempted from the 15 cents fixed duty. However, they will continue to attract ad valorem duty.

The public will no longer be able to rely on the provisions of the Stamp Ordinance when they ask to be given receipts for sums paid of over $20. But their rights against those to whom they pay the money will otherwise remain unaffected.

The largest part of receipt duty is paid by the 15-cent Receipt Stamps obtained from Post Offices. An announcement will be made at a later date regarding refunds for unused Receipt Stamps.

Refund Claims

Pre-stamped documents of the above classes which remain unused when the abolitions take effect may be the subject of claims for refund just as they are under present arrangements, that is, on surrender to the Stamp Office.

The duty on certain Conveyances on Sale of Land and Buildings will be reduced.

The full rate of duty chargeable is two per cent.

But under present arrangements this is restricted to fixed duty of $20 where the value of the consideration given does not exceed $20,000 and to one per cent where it lies between $20,000 and $40,000, with marginal duty for cases where the consideration is slightly in excess of $20,000 and $40,000 respectively.

/The budget .....

The budget will restrict duty to $20 in cases where the value of the consideration does not exceed $75,000 and to one per cent where it lies between $75,000 and $150,000, with marginal duty for cases where the consideration is slightly in excess of $75,000 and $150,000 respectively.

As a result, Conveyance on Sale Duty will be reduced for all land and buildings in the range of values lying between $20,000 and $151,500.

Also to be reduced will be the Duty on certain Voluntary Dispositions of Land and Buildings.

The full rate of duty chargeable is two per cent.

But under present arrangements there are reliefs for properties which do not exceed $20,000 in value, and for those with values between $20,000 and $40,000.

The budget raises the limits set for the reliefs in voluntary disposition cases from $20,000 and $40,000 to the new limits set for relief in the case of sales, that is, to $75,000 and $150,000.

.....

Note to Editors: A statement listing in detail the stamp duty changes will be distributed separately in the G.I.S. press boxes this evening.

- - - - 0 - - - -

/6 .....

COMPUTERISED STUDY OF REFUSE COLLECTING SERVICES

To Further Increase Efficiency In Rubbish Collection And Disposal

****

A computerised study is being made into the refuse collecting services of the Urban Services Department to determine the future development of refuse collection and disposal in Hong Kong.

Preliminary data on available resources and methods of operation are now being collected by a team of Australian consultants, who are expected to submit a report within two months.

The information gathered will be processed by computer and used to predict as near as possible, the probable vehicle requirements in the new financial year.

At the same time, forecasts -- based on present trends -- will also be provided of the provisional requirements for each year up to 1978.

The Director of Urban Services will be supplied with a forecasting and planning model with which to update the provisional forecasts each year.

At present, estimates of vehicle requirements are based on past experience and the expected growth in the quantity of refuse.

However, a spokesman for the Urban Services Department said that this method was no longer practicable in view of the increasing volume of refuse collected daily.

"The survey," he added, "will give us a better defined plan for maximising the use of our existing fleet and an accurate system for estimating the additional vehicles required to meet increasing needs."

The department's cleansing fleet presently comprises 626 vehicles, of which 413 are refuse collecting vehicles.

- - - - 0 - - - -

/7 .....

CONTRACT FOR CASTLE PEAK DESALTING PLANT

Will Be Signed Tomorrow

****

A $49.8 million contract for the plant foundations and site buildings for the Single Purpose Desalter at Lok On Pai, Castle Peak, will be signed tomorrow (Wednesday) in the Waterworks Office of the Public Works Department.

Signing for the contractors will be Mr. J.E. Ward, Managing Director of Gammon (Hong Kong) Ltd., Mr. Li Hin-wing, Chief Engineer, Construction & Planning, Waterworks Office, will sign on behalf of the Government.

When completed, the Lok On Pai desalting plant will be the largest in the world, producing 40 million gallons of fresh water per day to supplement Hong Kong's existing water supplies.

Consulting engineers for the project are Binnie & Partners (Hong Kong). The main evaporator and boiler plant is being supplied by the Sasakura Engineering Company of Osaka under separate contract.

Preparatory work at the site is already well advanced. Gammon (Hong Kong) Ltd. are at present undertaking the $25-million site formation and marine works.

The new contract will involve the construction of foundations and reinforced concrete sub-structures for six evaporator/boiler units, which will rest on 270 cast-in-situ concrete piles.

The construction of the auxiliary plant building will involve the placing of about 30,000 cubic yards of reinforced concrete. About 1,800 tons of structural steelwork and cladding will be used in erecting its superstructure.

/Other .....

Other works included in the contract will be a seawater intake screen building, a chemical house and a fuel control building.

Two chimneys will be constructed - each 400 feet high - to operate in conjunction with the boilers.

The fresh water produced by the plant will be pumped under pressure to the existing Tai Lam Chung reservoir through steel pipelines, and a mile-long tunnel, which are also being constructed by Gammon.

Work on the new contract has already begun, and the major part will be completed during the first 15 months of the projected 36 months completion time.

The first evaporator unit at the plant is scheduled to begin trial operations in December, 1975.

.....

Note to Editors: You are invited to send a reporter/photographer to cover these signing, which will take place at 2.30 p.m. in Room 412, Fourth floor, Murray Building.

- - - - 0 - - - -

RESUMPTION OF REMITTANCE SERVICES

****

The Post Office today resumed its money order and postal order services which were temporarily suspended on March 2.

- - - - 0 - - - -

MULTI-MILLION-DOLLAR CONTRACT FOR KOWLOON ROAD WORKS

To Be Signed Tomorrow

****

The contract for the construction of a $37.4 million elevated road link designed to speed traffic flow along Waterloo Road and connected roads will be signed tomorrow (Wednesday, March 21).

The scheme provides for a system of improved links between Waterloo Road, Prince Edward Road and Boundary Street by means of a flyover and ramps which will replace the existing intersections.

The signing will take place in the Public Works Department Headquarters in Murray Building. Mr. B.H. Newman, of the Public Works Department's Highways Office, will sign on behalf of the Government while the contractor, Gammon (Hong Kong) Ltd., will be represented by Mr. John Ward.

.....

Note to Editors: You are invited to send a reporter/photographer to cover the signing, which will take place at 10.00 a.m. in the Public Works Department Headquarters Conference Room on the 21st floor of Murray Building.

- - - - 0 - - - -

/10 .....

ALL GOVERNMENT SWIMMING POOLS NOW OPEN

****

With the approach of the summer season, all Government swimming pools are now open to the public.

These are the Victoria Park, Kowloon Tsai, Morse Park, Kwun Tong, Lei Cheng Uk and the Morrison Hill Swimming Pools.

They were closed from December 1 to February 28 during the winter season, with the exception of the heated pools at Morrison Hill.

This heated pool complex has proved to be very popular since its opening last November.

Attendance for the last four months totalled over 102,000, an average of over 2,550 a month.

The heated pools are open throughout the year for three periods every day --- from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m.; from 12 noon to 5 p.m.; and from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Like the Morrison Hill complex, all other government swimming pools will be open for three periods a day between April 1 and October 31.

In the months of March and November, they will be open for two sessions a day only --- from 7 a.m. to 12 noon and from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.

- - - - 0 - - - -

/11 .....

89 BUILDINGS CERTIFIED FOR OCCUPATION IN JANUARY

****

The six-storey library building of The Chinese University of Hong Kong was among the 89 buildings which were certified for occupation by the Building Authority in January.

The total declared construction cost of these buildings was more than $108 million.

At the same time, 64 plans for new buildings were approved, including that for a seven-storey school building in Aberdeen.

The Building Authority also gave permission for work to start on 53 building projects. One of these projects on Lantao Island, was for a commercial building with a cinema.

A total of 36 buildings was approved for demolition. Nine had been declared dangerous.

- - - - 0 - - - -

/12 .....

FLOWER SHOW OPENS ON FRIDAY

****

Members of the public will have a chance to see flowers from all over the world at the annual Urban Council flower show opening at the City Hall on Friday (March 23).

The three-day show will be opened by Mrs. Hilton Cheong-Leen, wife of the elected Urban Councillor, at 2:30 p.m. on Friday.

Trophies will be presented to winners of the flower show competition by Mrs. Denny M.H. Huang at 5.30 p.m. after the opening ceremony.

.....

Note to Editors: You are invited to have the opening ceremony and the presentation of trophies covered. Press badges will be available for collection from the G.I.S. Press Room.

- - - - 0 - - - -

JOBS FOUND FOR 21 DISABLED

****

Twenty one disabled persons were helped to find employment last month by the Social Welfare Department's Job Placement Unit.

They included six blind who were accepted for assembly work by Rover Electronics Ltd., which headed a list of 12 industrial and commercial firms providing jobs for the disabled.

The others found employment comprised five who were crippled, five deaf, four formerly mentally ill and one recovered tuberculosis patient.

They were engaged for a variety of occupations, such as sweeper, lift operator, metal worker, packer, thread cutter, painting worker and labourer.

- - - - 0 - - - -

/13 .....

DIRECTOR'S WIFE CONTINUES SOCIAL WELFARE VISITS

****

Mrs. Li Fook-kow, wife of the Director of Social Welfare, will continue her series of visits to voluntary social welfare agencies on Thursday, March 22.

At 10:15 a.m. she will be taken on a tour of St. James' Settlement, Kennedy Road, Wanchai, by the warden, Mrs. Lee Wai-ngan.

The Settlement provides day care for children and various services for youth, mothers and the aged. A new sheltered workshop for the mentally handicapped will be brought into operation shortly.

At 11 a.m. Mrs. Li will be visiting the Women's Welfare Club Nursery at 11 Tin Hau Temple Road, Causeway Bay. It accommodates 50 children between the ages of three and six.

On arrival, Mrs. Li will be met by the Club president, Mrs. Katie Kitchell; the chairman, Mrs. Lung Fung-sang; and the nursery superintendent, Miss Mok Sau-san.

.....

Note to Editors: You are invited to send a reporter and photographer to cover Mrs. Li's visits.

----0----

/14 .....

TRAFFIC DIVERSIONS IN NORTH KOWLOON

****

The section of Waterloo Road north of Cornwall Street will be closed to all traffic for about three months starting from 10 a.m. on Thursday (March 22).

The temporary closure is to facilitate road works in connection with the Lion Rock Interchange.

Traffic to Lion Rock Tunnel and Wong Tai Sin will be diverted via Junction Road, Fu Mei Street, Fung Mo Street and Lung Cheung Road.

Traffic to Tai Po Road will be diverted to Cornwall Street which is now open to two-way traffic.

A spokesman for the Transport Department urged motorists driving to the New Territories to travel via Tai Po Road, because the diversions were likely to result in congestion in the area.

Temporary traffic signals will be in operation at the Tunnel Approach Road.

- - - - O - - - -

/15 .....

255 LABOUR PROBLEMS IN FEBRUARY

With Help Of Labour Relations Service

****

The Labour Relations Service of the Labour Department helped employers and employees settle 255 labour problems in February.

As a result of agreements reached, 769 employees received a total of $435,482.

Of this total, 28.5 per cent were paid by employers as outstanding wages, payment in lieu of notice, statutory holiday pay and bonuses of a contractual nature under either the Employment Ordinance or the Industrial Employment (Holiday with Pay and Sickness Allowance) Ordinance.

The remaining 71.5 per cent or $311,152 were paid, apart from legal entitlements, as severance pay and other ex gratia payments to employees.

Fresh nominal claims made by employees in the same month amounted to $704,824.

Officers of various district branches of the Labour Relations Service also handled 1,643 consultations and enquiries about labour laws, industrial relations and personnel management.

They visited seven establishments to help employers introduce joint consultative machinery to strengthen communication between labour and management.

- - - - 0 - - - -

Release Time: 7.00 p.m.