



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Tuesday, October 3, 1972

REHOUSING FOR HIGH ISLAND VILLAGERS

Preparations for the rehousing of villagers who will be affected by the High Island Water Scheme are now under way.

The District Officer, Sai Kung and his staff are contacting the 90 odd families individually, explaining the implications of the terms of removal in detail and discussing any special problems which the removal from the reservoir area may bring. At the same time they are verifying the status of the family and each of its members.

This follows the completion of discussions between the District Officer and representatives of the villagers at a meeting last Saturday (September 30).

During the talks, the District Officer answered a few remaining questions put by the villagers to clarify the removal terms which the government has finally worked out after more than a year of discussions.

The terms distinguish between two basic groups of villagers.

The biggest of these groups consists of 70 out of the 90 odd families affected who have existed in three villages in the Lan Nai Wan area, near the western dam site, for several generations.

The remaining 15 or so families are from Sha Tsui, near the eastern dam site, who moved there comparatively recently from their original village, Long Ke, which is situated outside the reservoir area.

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The Lan Nai Wan people will have no chance of continuing village life in future and expanding their village in the normal way as all their village land will be submerged by the reservoir.

The Sha Tsui people, however, will be able to continue village life even after the completion of the reservoir, as they may move back to their original village, Long Ke. Furthermore, the High Island Water Scheme is likely to leave Long Ke much more accessible.

Under the terms for removal the villagers of both groups will be treated the same in most respects but, since the water scheme will spell the end of village life for one group but not the other, some distinction between their removal terms is clearly justified.

All the families affected will be provided with flats in rehousing blocks at Sai Kung town to replace not only accommodation lost in the reservoir but also to some extent means of livelihood lost. The 15 or so Sha Tsui families will between them receive more than 40 flats.

In addition, a cash allowance of \$10,000 will be paid by the Government for every flat or shop unit to cover the cost of fitting out and decorating.

The basic difference between the terms of the two groups is that while the Lan Nai Wan families will receive ground floor shop units, roughly one per family, in addition to their flats, the Sha Tsui families will only receive flats.

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RUN ON TRANSPORT DEPT. FOR TAXI TENDER FORMS

The Transport Department has handed out more than 18,000 tender forms since it was announced last Friday that 350 new taxi licences will be issued.

The demand has, in fact, been so heavy that the department has virtually run out of forms, prompting an appeal to prospective tenderers not to apply for them until Friday (October 6).

A spokesman for the Transport Department gave an assurance that the staff would be working at full speed to produce a further supply by then.

"Those who still haven't obtained the forms need not panic as they still have plenty of time after October 6 to submit their tenders," the spokesman said.

"The tender does not close until Friday, October 20."

Due to the heavy demand, only one copy of the form will be issued to each applicant.

The spokesman warned eager tenderers not to obtain forms from anybody other than from the department's offices nor to pay anyone for them.

"The forms are all free of charge," he said.

If they were asked to pay, they should report this to the Transport Department headquarters.

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CANCELLATION OF CERTAIN DRIVING TESTS

Driving tests which were to have been held from October 9 for all goods vehicles, public light buses, and public and private omnibuses - except those of the two public bus companies - have been cancelled.

In announcing this today, a spokesman for the Transport Department apologised for any inconvenience caused to candidates. He explained that the cancellations were due to the current shortage of staff.

However, new appointments will be arranged and candidates will be notified of the revised dates by letter.

At the same time, the spokesman said it may not be possible for some driving tests set before October 9 to be conducted on schedule. This would affect candidates for licences for the above vehicles as well as motor cycles.

Any candidate who may be affected will also be informed of new appointments.

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BRITISH AWARD FOR DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS

The Director of Public Works, Mr. J.J. Robson, has been awarded a Telford Premium by the British Institution of Civil Engineers (I.C.E.) for a paper he submitted on "Overall Planning in Hong Kong".

The 36-page article, which deals with, among other things, housing, road, traffic and transportation, was presented to the Conference on Civil Engineering Problems Overseas in London in June last year.

As its name implies, the bi-annual conference is designed to study these problems.

Telford Premiums were instituted following a bequest made by Mr. Thomas Telford, the first President of the I.C.E. In addition to the premium, which is worth £50, Mr. Robson will receive a certificate.

The Director of Public Works began his article with a description of the barrenness of Hong Kong when it was proclaimed a British Colony in 1841.

He then recalled how Hong Kong has been transformed since the war from an entrepot port to an overcrowded manufacturing community, and the influx of refugees whose presence had given rise to problems such as housing, schools and hospitals.

Referring to housing, Mr. Robson said the Government began a resettlement building programme following a disastrous squatter fire in 1953 in which 53,000 people lost their homes.

In addition, the Government has financed two other programmes for providing accommodation for residents living in overcrowded and unsatisfactory conditions.

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To date, there are about 1,620,000 people or 40 per cent of the population living in government-aided housing of one sort or another.

The construction programme for the period mentioned in the paper of April 1, 1969 to March 31, 1975 was resettlement housing for 300,000 people and low cost housing for 290,000 people. The latest programme for April 1, 1971 to March 31, 1977 is to provide government housing for 875,000 people.

On Transport, Mr. Robson said it became apparent in early 1965 that there was a need for a detailed study of public mass transport, and a preliminary study was put in hand by a Transport Survey Unit headed by staff from the British Roads Research Laboratory.

He added that the Government then contracted with Freeman Fox, Wilbur Smith and Associates to undertake the detailed study necessary to formulate a functional plan for mass transportation based on demands anticipated in 1986.

The Hong Kong Mass Transport Study was thereafter carried out in conjunction with the Public Works Department Transport Survey Unit which, after investigating existing public transport facilities, development plans and travel characteristics, assessed travel desires and the traffic volumes for that year.

Mr. Robson said: "An analysis of these volumes by the consultants showed that Hong Kong's transportation requirements could best be met by a 40-mile (later recommended to be reduced to 32½-mile) mass transit standard gauge underground railway comprising four separate lines, in combination with a complete surface network of public service vehicles."

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The system, it was predicted, would carry 2.5 million passengers a day, representing about one-third of Hong Kong's public transport trips.

Turning to the water situation, Mr. Robson described how the first waterworks scheme at Pokfulam was designed for an estimated population of 90,000, but by the time the first section was completed it was already outdated as the population had reached 125,000.

"In spite of the best endeavours of its engineers this has been the history of the waterworks ever since: a succession of crises caused by demand outstripping supply," he said.

In conclusion, the Director says "the important point is that all planning is made on the basis of private enterprise playing its part without coercion and dictated only by the law of the market. It is the Author's view that, in the light of Hong Kong's development throughout its history, this system works".

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CO-OPERATION, THE KEYNOTE OF LOCAL PUBLIC WORKS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES

Villagers in the New Territories, with the help of the Government and the Army, have accomplished hundreds of local public works projects which contribute to their daily requirements.

Last year the Government allocated a sum of nearly \$5 million to facilitate these projects, either in the issuing of construction materials or in the appointment of building contractors.

Nearly 30 per cent of the total number of projects undertaken in Tai Po were related to traffic, including van tracks, footpaths and bridges.

Other projects included drainage channels, rain shelters, playgrounds and minor seawalls.

The largest project in Yuen Long was the Sik Po Tsuen playground. Constructed on a site of 33,000 square feet, the playground is equipped with a min-soccer pitch, a children's playground and a rest area.

During the year, the Sai Kung area received public works funds amounting to \$640,000, almost double that received in 1970-71.

With the help of the Army, Navy, various organisations and student bodies, the local villagers extended the Hang Hau Pier and installed generators in five villages.

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Villagers of Tsuen Wan district completed the building of pathways, van tracks, water supply pipelines, village offices, rain shelters, village squares and benches with material provided by the District Office.

On the Islands, great improvements were achieved through the efforts of the villagers with the support of the Army and donations from abroad.

The 34 Field Squadron of the Royal Engineers were specially flown out from England, and in their three-month stay they completed the extension of a village pier, the electrification of the Pak Mong, Ngau Kwu Long and Tai Ho villages in North Lantau, and the building of a playground.

A third CARE village housing 40 needy fishing families was built in Sai Wan on Cheung Chau. Building costs of the village was met by donations from abroad, the villagers themselves and the Local public works funds.

Other major projects include the strengthening of the dyke at Ham Tin on South Lantau, and the reinstatement of the seawalls at Pak Wan on Peng Chau and at San Hing Street on Cheung Chau.

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SOCIAL WELFARE AT AGRICULTURAL SHOW

The Social Welfare Department stall at this year's Agricultural Show will stress the theme of departmental services and facilities in the New Territories.

The department will be among eight others taking part in the Show. The group will be joined by about 30 commercial organisations, making a total participation of about 40.

The Social Welfare Department's contribution will be in two parts.

One is a stall where items produced by trainees at various homes and centres will be on display, along with photographs illustrating departmental activities such as family services, rehabilitation, public assistance, and probation and corrections.

The latest mobile library to operate in the New Territories will form a separate display. The Group and Community Work Division maintains such vehicles, and their task is to bring simple books and the pleasures of reading to the young in remote rural areas.

Together, the two exhibits will convey the message that the department is as active in promoting social welfare among the needy in the country as in the town.

The Agricultural Show, from December 8 - 11, will be held on the Sek Kong Airstrip. It will be officially opened by the Governor, Sir Murray MacLehose.

The last show was held in 1969.

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NEW ROAD FOR SHAU KEI WAN

The Government is to build a new road adjoining a large building development site near the junction of Shau Kei Wan Road and Chai Wan Road.

The new road will be 600 feet long, and the carriageway will vary in width from 24 to 32 feet. An eight-foot wide concrete footpath will be laid on either side of the road.

Ancillary drainage work will be carried out and a section of the Aldrich Street nullah will be culverted in conjunction with the roadwork.

Construction work for the entire project, estimated to cost about \$380,000, is expected to start in November and be completed within seven months.

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PRESENTATION OF INSIGNIA

Note to Editors: The Governor, Sir Murray MacLehose will present insignia to 43 members of the community at a ceremony at Government House tomorrow at 11.30 a.m. Copies of a list of recipients and citations will be available for collection from the G.I.S. press room at 11.30 a.m. tomorrow. No press photographers other than those provided with special passes will be admitted to Government House. Press representatives assigned to cover the ceremony are requested to assemble at the guard room of Government House not later than 11 a.m. G.I.S. officers will be on hand to give assistance. Newspapers not receiving passes will be able to obtain photographs by making arrangements for the supply of prints in the ordinary way with Cambridge Wong's Studio, China Building, 1st floor, Hong Kong, H-237808.

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Release time: 7.00 p.m.