



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Wednesday, August 8, 1973

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DIRECT PARTICIPATION IN FAMILY PLANNING

Finance Committee Approves \$2.4 Million Expenditure

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Direct government participation in family planning is to begin on a phased basis from October 1 this year, with the gradual integration of family planning services in government clinics.

Family planning will then become available within the maternal and child health service of the Medical and Health Department.

The Finance Committee of the Legislative Council recently approved a sum of \$2.4 million to cover the cost of this participation between October this year and the end of March 1975.

The overall aim is the Medical and Health Department's assumption of full responsibility for the family planning clinics in 28 government clinics now being run by the Family Planning Association.

But the Association and other voluntary agencies in the field of family planning will continue to have a significant role to play by concentrating their clinical, educational and research efforts in housing estates and other areas, where they are most needed, particularly in the New Territories, not served by the Medical and Health Department.

The government's direct participation in family planning was foreshadowed by the Governor, Sir Murray MacLehose, on October 18 last year when he told the Legislative Council that it was "clearly in the public interest and family health, having regard to the pressure generated by people on services such as housing and education, that the blessing of children should be bestowed at a rate that is planned and not <sup>dissolute</sup> profligate."

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Since the middle of the 1950s, the government has supported family planning mainly by subventions to the Family Planning Association and the Catholic Marriage Advisory Council. During the past decade, the decline in Hong Kong's birthrate has been significant, falling from 40 per 1,000 of the population in 1962 to 19.4 in 1971.

The level of financial support to the Family Planning Association has increased over the years from \$5,000 in 1955/56 to \$1.5 million this year. All the evidence available suggests that the Association's work has been beneficial to the community, and that its services have met a real demand.

The need for direct government involvement in family planning falls under three main heads:-

- \* The number of women in the most fertile age group, aged between 25 and 29, will increase from 95,400 in 1971 to about 220,000 by 1981 and 260,000 by 1991. The total number of births and the crude birth rate will inevitably rise, and the present downward trend in the population growth will not be maintained unless there is a steady decline in fertility over the period.
- \* The Family Planning Association feels it should not carry the main burden of a problem that should properly be a government concern. It has requested the development of a government family planning programme because it holds the view that only together with the Government can it work effectively towards the development of a comprehensive service suited to the needs of the Hong Kong community.
- \* Family planning is not only a means of population control, but also a community health and welfare measure. By making it possible to plan family size, it is possible to lower perinatal, infant and childhood mortality, to safeguard the health of both mother and child, and to secure various other improvements.

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The government programme is in three phases, beginning this October. In the first phase, four part-time Association clinics will become the direct responsibility of the Medical and Health Department. The second phase will begin in January covering four Association full-time clinics.

The third phase, involving the remainder of Association clinics in the urban areas and those in government clinics in the New Territories, will begin in April next year and should be completed by the end of 1974.

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#### SENIOR CLERK RETIRING

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Mr. Lau Chi-chuen, senior clerical officer of the Marine Department, will retire shortly after 33 years of service in the government.

To mark the occasion, the Director of Marine, Mr. A. Fletcher, will present him with a gift on behalf of his colleagues at a ceremony on Friday (August 10).

Mr. Lau first joined the public service in 1940 as a Clerk Class III. He was promoted to Clerk Class II in 1949. In 1953 he was transferred from the New Territories Administration to the Marine Department where he has been serving for the past 20 years.

He was promoted to his present rank in 1970.

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Note to Editors: You are invited to have the presentation ceremony covered. It will be held at 10.30 a.m. on Friday in the Director of Marine's office at 102 Connaught Road Central, 1st floor.

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## 200,000 VEHICLES ON ROADS

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A station wagon today became the 200,000th vehicle to be registered in Hong Kong. The licence was issued at 2.30 p.m. at the Transport Department's Vehicle Registration Office at Rumsey Street.

There are now just over 300 vehicles for every mile of road -- giving Hong Kong one of the highest traffic densities in the world.

Commenting on this record, the Commissioner for Transport, Mr. B.D. Wilson, said: "We are heading for a crisis on our roads much quicker than many people realise and measures to restrain the use of private transport and to improve public transport facilities must be introduced as a matter of urgency."

He said that since the present registration system was introduced immediately after the Second World War, 21 years had gone by before the number of vehicles reached the first 100,000 mark.

"But from 1967, it has taken only six years to reach the second 100,000," he said.

Over the past few years, vehicle registrations have been increasing at a rate of about 14 per cent compound per year, "and there is no sign so far of any slackening in this rate of increase," the Commissioner said.

The first vehicle registered in Hong Kong was in July 1909 and a total of five motor vehicles were registered in that year.

The registration fee at that time was \$24 per annum.

It is believed that one of the first vehicles on the roads in Hong Kong belonged to a Dr. Noble in 1904.

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EXPATRIATES URGED TO PARTICIPATE MORE IN COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

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The Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr. Jack Cater, today called on expatriates living in Hong Kong to become more involved in community affairs.

A number of expatriates, including Americans, were already serving on mutual aid committees, "but I should like to see a great many more -- people who by helping themselves in this way would also be helping the community and the government," he said.

Addressing members of the American Chamber of Commerce at a luncheon meeting, Mr. Cater said the people of Hong Kong were rapidly gaining "a new awareness" of how things were done locally.

"We are beginning to take a critical look at the machinery of our administration, scrutinising its methods, questioning its objectives, and pronouncing judgment."

There were signs too that the public was once again beginning to act and react as a community outside emergency situations, he added.

Mr. Cater emphasised that the term 'community' meant everyone living in Hong Kong, including citizens from the United States.

He said that considering their long association with Hong Kong, he found the actual physical presence of American expatriates "surprisingly low-key."

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"It is time we got rid of the idea that Hong Kong is some kind of stopover on an interrupted journey to other places," he said.

Americans were welcome in Hong Kong which owed a great debt of gratitude to the American missionary bodies and other voluntary agencies who had done so much in the field of social welfare.

Mr. Cater stressed, however, that in addition to the rights and privileges Americans enjoyed in Hong Kong, they also have "certain responsibilities to Hong Kong."

"It is a personal choice, there can of course be no coercion," he said.

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REACHING OUT TO ESTATE RESIDENTS

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One feature of this year's summer activities organised by the Tai Hang Tung Community Centre is its "reaching-out programmes" aimed at providing various types of services for people in the estate.

"The concept behind these programmes, as the name suggests, is to reach out to those who live in the estate," said Miss Lillian Wong, Warden of the Tai Hang Tung Community Centre, one of the five which the Social Welfare Department operates.

"While the community centre serves a large part of the community, the fact is that there are still some people who could benefit from the services provided but are not doing so because these are unknown to them or for other reasons. It is in this connection then that we have designed the reaching out programmes to bring the services to these people," she said.

Miss Wong explained that youth volunteers from different parts of Hong Kong would help in these programmes. Their involvement would include direct services to people living in the blocks and stimulating residents to help their neighbours.

She said the reaching out programmes will be carried out on an experimental basis in some of the blocks in the estate to test the possibility of adopting such an approach on a wider scale.

Two schemes to be conducted will be a mobile children service and a block work service.

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The mobile children service will consist of a group of young volunteers who will plan a three week project for children in three of the 14 blocks in the estate.

This group hopes to recruit another 25 young people from the estate to help run the programme from August 13 to 31.

The programmes will take place in the afternoons during week days with the overall theme on "child development". This will include points on cleanliness, getting to know Hong Kong, mutual co-operation and developing creative talents.

For the block work service, an earlier survey showed that certain types of services involving children, family and the elderly were much needed. Consequently, the group of volunteers who are arranging this block work service are considering ways to meet this need.

Some of the events they plan will be evening programmes for family entertainment and picnics for families.

One already organised was a picnic for 70 residents and another will be a social evening on August 18 for some 400 people living in block 10 of the estate.

"The emphasis will be on keeping the family as an integral unit by developing relationships between children and their parents," Miss Wong said. "Volunteers are also planning services for the elderly in co-operation with the Salvation Army as another part of their service."

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GOVERNMENT DENTAL SCHOLARSHIPS

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Scholarships for five-year dental courses are being offered to local residents under the age of 35.

The courses, to be undertaken either at the University of Otaga in New Zealand or the University of Sydney, will begin early next year leading to the degree of Bachelor of Dental Surgery.

Scholarships will be at the rate of \$8,400 a year, with an additional allowance of \$3,750 towards the cost of books and instruments. Out-going and return air passages will also be provided.

Applicants should have a pass in physics, chemistry and biology (or zoology) at advanced level in the Hong Kong University Advanced Level Examination, and at grade "C" or above in English in the school certificate examination, or their equivalent.

Successful applicants will undergo a medical examination. They must also sign an agreement to return to Hong Kong for at least four years after graduation, with a requirement of serving as a government dental officer.

Application forms may be obtained from the General Registry, Medical and Health Department, Lee Gardens, 4th floor, Hong Kong, and must be completed and returned by August 25.

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#### TECHNICAL TEACHER TRAINING COURSE

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There are about 20 places in the two-year full-time technical teacher training course which begins in late September at the Morrison Hill Technical Institute.

Young men and women who wish to enrol for the course can do so by going to the Institute to obtain application forms. The course for women is chiefly in the commercial studies field.

All applications must be returned to the Institute by August 24.

The minimum entry qualifications are:

- \* A Hong Kong Certificate of Education (English) with Grade E or above in English, Mathematics, Technical Drawing and either Woodwork, Metalwork or Practical Electricity; or
- \* A Hong Kong Certificate of Education (English) with Grade E or above in at least five subjects including English, Mathematics, and Principle of Accounts or Shorthand and Typing.

The Acting Vice Principal of the Morrison Hill Technical Institute, Mr. P.S. Chiu said today that prospects for those who completed the course are bright.

"They will be able to apply for employment as technical teachers in technical institutes, secondary technical, pre-vocational and vocational schools as well as in grammar schools where they will teach technical subjects."

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During their training, the students will be attached to industrial establishments for three to five weeks in the summer of the first year.

The tuition fee is \$400 a year payable in ten monthly instalments as well as a welfare fund of \$15 a year.

"Students can apply for interest-free loans of up to \$1,200 a year," Mr. Chiu said.

"Needy students can also apply for a maintenance grant of up to \$1,600 a year. But this is repayable if the applicant does not take up a teaching post approved by the Director of Education on completion of the course," he added.

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#### TEMPORARY POOL CLOSURE

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The Victoria Park swimming pool will be closed for two days, starting tomorrow (Thursday), between the hours of 6.45 p.m. and 9.15 p.m.

The temporary closure is to facilitate the Hong Kong Amateur Swimming Association's swimming gala.

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Release Time: 7.00 p.m.