



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Thursday, March 28, 1974

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Daily guide to wholesale prices and supply of basic food commodities

Release time: 8 p.m.

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CONSULTANTS TO UNDERTAKE MAJOR TRAINING PROGRAMME

The McKinsey consultants will be returning to Hong Kong next month on the first of two follow-up assignments.

Announcing this to-day, a government spokesman said that one of their main tasks would be to undertake a major training programme, which they were unable to do last year because of their pre-occupation with the overhaul of administrative procedures and recommendations for the reorganisation of the central government machinery.

"Before they left last year, they conducted four seminars for a total of some 60 senior officers who were to be principally involved in setting up and working the new management machinery envisaged," he said.

"It has become clear that it is desirable that they should continue and expand this initial training programme, at an opportune time, to include more staff at senior and middle management levels. The object will be to ensure that the changes introduced, and the principles and practices involved, are fully understood and properly applied.

"The new machinery of government has now been set up, and the policy and resource branches in the Secretariat are functioning along the lines recommended. But much remains to be done to ensure that everyone concerned is thoroughly familiar with the new procedures."

The spokesman said that each of the two visits planned for this purpose would last three months. The first would commence in mid-April and the second at the end of September.

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During these visits, the team will also formulate a number of long term programme plans in conjunction with Secretariat Branches and the various departments involved. Two such plans will deal with "Law and Order", and "Communication between Government and People".

"These programme plans will deal with matters of great public concern, involving many government departments. They are designed to co-ordinate our efforts and make the best use of the resources available to us," the spokesman said.

"A major Annual Operating Plan, designed to ensure greater cost effectiveness by relating the input of resources to the output of services, will also be produced, probably in the field of Hong Kong's medical services.

"This will give us a model on which we can in future base other plans, to be prepared by government officers. These plans provide a useful means of monitoring the performance of our services to the public, on an annual basis," he explained.

In addition, the team will be available to advise Secretariat Branches and the Management Unit on progress made in the implementation of last year's recommendations and on the programme plans and personnel resource plans now being drawn-up.

The spokesman said that two consultants from McKinsey and Co. Inc., London, Mr. Roger Holland and Mr. Mark Weedon, both of whom were in last year's team, will arrive in Hong Kong in the first half of April. Dr. Alcon Copisarow, who will be in overall charge of the study, will pay the first of a series of periodic visits at the end of April.

These two follow-up visits by the McKinsey team, lasting six months in all, will cost a total of \$725,000.

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BUSINESS REGISTRATION FEE DOUBLED

The Business Registration fee is to be doubled from \$25 to \$50 with effect from next Monday (April 1), Mr. Victor Ladd, Assistant Commissioner of Inland Revenue, announced today.

The revision of the fees is in line with the changes made by the Financial Secretary in his Budget speech on February 27.

Mr. Ladd said the opportunity was also taken to simplify the existing penalty system for late payments of Business Registration fees.

At present, \$3 is charged for late payment in the first month and \$2 each month thereafter. However, the new penalty rate will be a flat \$15 once-and-for-all surcharge.

Two other increases will also take effect from next week, namely, the fee for the issue of a certified copy or extract of documents under Section 19 of the Business Registration Ordinance which will go up from \$10 to \$15, and the fee for the issue of a duplicate business registration certificate from \$2 to \$5.

At the same time, the limits below which a person carrying on business might apply for exemption from payment of the registration fee has also been raised as follows:

- * Any business establishment, except a new business or one whose profits derive primarily from the sale of services, with a total sales of less than \$1,500 a month can apply for exemption. The present limit is \$1,000.

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- * Any business, whose profits derive primarily from the sale of services, with a total sales or receipts of less than \$450 a month (currently \$300) can also apply for exemption.

Mr. Ladd said details of these changes would appear in advertisements of leading English and Chinese newspapers tomorrow (Friday).

Explaining the revision, he said it reflected the fact that the fees had remained unchanged for many years while the costs for running this had gone up. Thus, the revision was merely in line with the general trend of rising costs.

In his Budget speech, Mr. Philip Haddon-Cave said that the Finance Branch had completed the first stage of an exercise to revise fees and charges, covering a multitude of services and of permits, licences, certificates and other official documents.

The rates, he said, were originally designed either to recover full costs, or to raise revenue or to keep administrative costs within bounds by deterring frivolous applications. Many of these rates had remained unchanged for many years, 30 years in some cases.

The Finance Branch had identified 40 original documents and a miscellany of duplicates, copies and extracts for which higher rates could be introduced virtually straight away in 1974-75.

The doubling of Business Registration fees, he added, would yield an additional \$5 million a year.

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PREPARATION FOR MTR CONSTRUCTION

Major Site Clearance Soon

A major move forward in preparations for the construction of the Mass Transit Railway will take place soon with the clearance of a key site of about 34,000 square feet at the junction-to-be of Argyle Street and Tong Mi Road.

The clearance and demolition will ensure the further progress of another very big transportation scheme, the construction of the West Kowloon Corridor route.

The site is urgently needed in order to provide for an essential diversion of traffic when work on the underground railway begins in Nathan Road. The pre-war buildings on the site form an obstruction preventing a traffic link between Argyle Street and Tong Mi Road.

This link is needed not only for traffic-diverting purposes. It will also be a vital component in the Tong Mi Road extension project, which is part of the West Kowloon Corridor scheme and on which work is already under way. It was for this purpose that the clearance was originally required.

A government spokesman explained today that preparatory work on clearance of the area is now well advanced.

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Notice was given last May that the land was required and the land was resumed in August. Since then, all of the 60 families who used to occupy flats there have left, new accommodation having been arranged by the Housing Department. Nearly all of these families opted for rehousing in the Ho Man Tin Estate.

Other people affected by the clearance include the occupiers of seven industrial structures and of seven shops or trading premises. The shops are located on the ground floor of the tenements buildings from which the residents have moved. Letters were sent to the occupiers advising them that all the premises will have to be vacated by March 31 at the latest, to enable demolition to proceed.

Compensation will be awarded under the terms of the Crown Lands Resumption Ordinance and a Compensation Board is now hearing the various claims.

In addition, the commercial and industrial occupiers, from whom the government has demanded no rent since it took over the land last August, have received substantial advances on their prospective compensation entitlements in order to assist them in moving to new premises.

The former domestic tenants, in addition to being rehoused, will also receive compensation.

There will be an impact on two further categories of people, although they do not occupy premises on the site and cannot claim compensation.

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The first of these consists of about 20 hawkers and stall-operators in adjoining streets, who will have to move. Any licensed fixed pitch hawkers will be found new pitches by Urban Services Department, which in a parallel operation will this year be supervising the removal of Mong Kok Market from its Argyle Street site to its new location on a site abutting Shanghai Street.

The second category is the employees in the seven factory buildings on the site. The Local Employment Service of the Labour Department will help workers to find new jobs if necessary. A temporary office with a team of registration officers from the Local Employment Service will be set up nearby to assist workers in finding alternative employment.

The spokesman said that so far the clearance moves had proceeded smoothly and with the co-operation of those involved. "We are confident that the industrial and commercial occupiers will show the same co-operation as the residents have displayed.

"Of the need for this clearance there can be absolutely no doubt. Both the West Kowloon Corridor project and the Mass Transit Railway are vital to the economic development of Hong Kong, and are closely linked with major housing and social developments in Kowloon and the New Territories," the spokesman said.

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EMPLOYMENT BILL EFFECTIVE FROM MONDAY

The Employment (Amendment) Ordinance 1974, which provides non-manual employees the same statutory protection currently enjoyed by all manual workers, will come into force on Monday (April 1).

It increases by a third the wage ceiling on non-manual workers, from \$1,500 to \$2,000, covered by Hong Kong major labour legislation.

The new legislation provides, among other things, maternity protection, paid statutory holidays and sickness allowance. It governs the payment of wages and restricts deduction of wages.

Also passed in the Legislative Council yesterday was the Workmen's Compensation (Amendment) Bill 1974, which also boosts workmen's compensation payment scales by a third, from \$1,500 to \$2,000.

Under the new legislation, which will become effective on July 1, dependants of a worker killed in the course of his employment will receive not less than \$9,600 or more than \$60,000 — compared with a minimum of \$7,200 and a maximum of \$45,000 under the existing ordinance.

The compensation payment to worker who suffers permanent incapacity will be increased from not less than \$9,600 or more than \$60,000 to a minimum of \$12,800 and a maximum of \$80,000.

The additional compensation payment for a worker who requires constant attention as a result of his injuries will be a maximum of \$32,000 instead of \$24,000 under the new legislation.

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THE DISABLED ARE CAPABLE TOO

A social worker whose primary task is finding jobs for disabled people said today there is still a general belief, particularly among employers, that disabled people are less efficient than others.

"This is a totally wrong concept because, once in a job, a person with a physical or mental disability is probably a more steady worker," said Mr. Chan Shiu-wing, Officer-in-Charge of the Social Welfare Department's Job Placement Unit.

Mr. Chan has headed the unit for the past 4½ years dealing with factory managements and other employers, placing disabled people, both men and women, in employment to give them an opportunity to earn a living on their own.

"General prejudice against the working capacity of the disabled is still the main barrier which they have to face in trying to obtain a job which would enable them to live decently in the community," he said.

He admitted that there are many jobs which the disabled cannot do but said there are also many which they can.

"More progressive employers are becoming aware of this and are willing to give them a chance to prove it, but there needs to be many more.

"Their reluctance probably stems from the general feeling towards the disabled, but I am sure, that their attitudes will change after they have given the disabled a chance to show what they can do," Mr. Chan said.

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It is not realised, he pointed out, that the disabled, whether they are mentally or physically handicapped, are like that through no fault of their own.

"They are members of our society and are entitled to equal chances like anyone else."

Mr. Chan said specialisation in production processes offer many simple repetitive jobs which able-bodied workers find boring and meaningless, but which the handicapped, with proper vocational training, could do.

The Social Welfare Department, he said, has two centres where disabled people receive vocational training before they are found work so they are put into jobs with some basic training.

"What they need is patience, understanding and the chance to prove themselves."

"For example," Mr. Chan added, "during the past few years the Job Placement Unit has placed some mentally-retarded persons in a variety of jobs such as machine sewers in a factory making bedsheets and pillows, some in a garment factory as packers and others in a paper products factory as casual workers."

Last month his unit also secured employment for another 23 disabled people comprising a cured T.B. patient, five ex-mental patients, five deaf people and 12 cripples. They were found jobs as clerks, machine sewers, apprentices, type-setters, assemblers, packers, and one as a lift-operator in a hotel.

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TEXTILES ADVISORY BOARD

New Membership Announced

The Governor has appointed 17 residents to the Textiles Advisory Board for the period between April 1, 1974 and March 31, 1975.

They are Mr. David Jordan, Director of Commerce & Industry (Chairman ex-officio), the Hon. George Ronald Ross, Mr. Francis Yuan-hao Tien, Mr. Lam Kun-shing, Mr. Bryan Irlam Barlow, Mr. Chow Chung-kai, Mr. Wong Toong-yuen, Mr. Chan Sui-kau, Miss Lydia Dunn, Mr. Philip Lai, Mr. Lee Yiu-wah, Mr. Frank Huipo Lin, Mr. Shen Hsi-jui, Mr. Jack Chi-chien Tang, Mr. William Tsu-liang Yao, Mr. Ronald Chao and Mr. Stephen Cheong.

The terms of reference of the Board are to advise the Director of Commerce and Industry on any matter, other than labour matters, which affects the textile and garment industries.

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NEW POSTAL GUIDE

A new edition of the Post Office Guide, giving up-to-date postal information, will be on sale at all post offices from Monday (April 1).

The new guide contains information about post office services, postage rates and the conditions of acceptance for all categories of mail.

It would be of particular interest to firms and other organisations who make frequent use of post office services, a Post Office spokesman said.

For an additional fee of \$2, he said, subscribers will be sent regular amendment lists and an application form for this purpose is enclosed with the new guide, the price of which will remain unchanged at \$8.50.

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STATUE SQUARE PLB STAND RELOCATED

The mini-bus stand in Des Voeux Road Central next to Statue Square is being removed on Sunday (March 31) to an enlarged stand on the west side of Connaught Centre, near Blake Pier.

A spokesman for the Transport Department said today that the government has extended the new stand to accommodate a total of 60 mini-buses which is adequate to meet the numbers now using the Statue Square stand.

"This will provide a convenient picking up and setting down point for commuters as it is close to the ferries, which carry vast numbers of people daily, and the covered footbridge which crosses Connaught Road Central," he added.

To provide easier access to the enlarged terminus, the northern extension to Pedder Street and the un-named road fronting the stand will be re-routed for two-way traffic.

At the same time, improvements will be made in Stanley Street by prohibiting the loading and unloading of goods vehicles during peak hours - 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. to reduce any congestion now experienced in this street.

An extra minibus stand will shortly be set up in Wellington Street to give additional setting down and picking up facilities in the area.

Commenting on the relocation of the Statue Square stand, the spokesman said that it was part of the final phase of the Central District Traffic Arrangements which have been gradually introduced since the end of last year.

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The scheme, which has involved the private motorist, goods vehicles as well as mini-buses, is a bold move to improve the traffic flow in the heavily congested Central District - and it has proved successful.

There has been a noticeable easing in the flow of traffic particularly in Queen's Road Central, Des Voeux Road Central, Connaught Road Central and Ice House Street.

"Apart from improving traffic conditions, the area near Statue Square will be required for mass transit works early next year," the spokesman added.

He said that the mini-bus operators have known about the removal of the stand for almost a year. Only last month they were informed that its closure was imminent.

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Note to Editors: Copies of a sketch map illustrating the change are boxed for collection.

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SPARE THE DEAF A THOUGHT, - SAYS MISS ANNIE CHAN

The Assistant Director of Social Welfare, Miss Annie Chan Suet-man, today called for greater public understanding of the deaf and their problems.

She said few people realise what deaf people are up against and therefore pay very little attention to them.

Miss Chan was speaking at the meeting of the Hong Kong Society for the Deaf on social work services being provided for deaf people.

Deafness, she noted, could be congenital, the result of illness or loss of hearing as one grows old.

"But being deaf does not necessarily mean a person is dumb because with effort and training a deaf person can also learn to speak." They need special education, medical services and employment opportunities, she pointed out.

For its part, the Social Welfare Department has been providing services for the deaf for the past 16 years.

The department now has six clubs for deaf people situated in various parts of Hong Kong and these provide educational, recreational and handicraft training. Vocational training courses are also run at its two rehabilitation centres in Aberdeen and Kwun Tong. Besides these services, she said, the department also subsidises the purchase of hearing aids for deaf people.

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But the Social Welfare Department is not alone in this field and others like the Education and Medical Departments and voluntary welfare organisations are also running a variety of services for the deaf in Hong Kong.

Miss Chan said much has already been done but there was still room for development, for example, in such areas as lip-reading and sign-language. She also hoped more activities would be organised for deaf people.

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Note to Editors: Copies of Miss Chan's speech, in Chinese only, are distributed in the press boxes.

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CONSUMER ADVISORY SERVICE

Daily Guide To Wholesale Market Prices And Supplies

The following prices were realised today (Thursday) at sales under the Rice Control Scheme and at the Vegetable Marketing Organisation Wholesale Market and the Fish Marketing Organisation Wholesale Market at Cheung Sha Wan, Kowloon:

Supplies and Wholesale Prices of Rice

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Availability of Supply</u>	<u>Wholesale Price (\$/catty)</u>
<u>China Rice</u>		<u>Average</u>
See Mew -- old crop	Good	-
See Mew -- new crop		2.00
S.C.Jion -- new crop	Good	1.94
Po Ngai	-	-
Chu Cho	-	-
<u>Thai Rice</u>		
100% Whole	-	-
10-15% Broken	-	-
A1 Super Extra	Good	1.67
A1 Super	Good	1.52
Whole Glutinous	Good	2.00
<u>U.S. Rice</u>	Good	1.82
<u>Australian Rice</u>	-	-
<u>Pakistan Rice</u>	-	-
<u>Taiwan Rice</u>	-	-

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Supplies and Wholesale Prices of Marine Fish

<u>Species</u>	<u>Availability of Supply</u>	<u>Wholesale Price (\$/catty)</u>		
		<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Average</u>
Golden Thread	Good	3.3	2.5	2.8
Big-Eyes	Good	2.7	0.8	1.8
Squid	Limited	5.0	2.0	4.5
Hair-Tails	Good	2.0	1.3	1.8
Lizard Fishes	Normal	3.5	1.3	2.7
Croakers	Normal	2.0	1.2	1.5
Conger-Pike-Eels	Good	2.7	1.8	2.4
Melon Coat	Scarce	2.3	1.0	1.5
Breams	Limited	6.0	3.2	4.0
Yellow Belly	Good	1.8	0.7	1.5
Mackerels	Normal	4.5	3.0	4.5
Red Goat Fish	Good	1.2	0.6	0.8
Fork-Tail	Normal	1.4	1.0	1.2
Horse-Head	Good	4.8	3.2	4.0
Melon Seed	Scarce	2.8	2.0	2.4
Pomfrets	Scarce	11.0	8.5	9.0
Groupas	Normal	7.2	5.5	6.5
Yellow Croaker	Scarce	6.5	6.0	6.2

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Supplies and Wholesale Prices of

Locally Produced Vegetables

<u>Type</u>	<u>Availability of Supply</u>	<u>Wholesale Price (\$/catty)</u>		
		<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Average</u>
Flowering cabbage	Normal	1.40	0.60	1.00
White cabbage	Normal	0.80	0.35	0.60
Chinese Lettuce	Normal	0.80	0.30	0.50
Chinese Kale	Normal	1.20	0.50	0.80
Spring onion	Good	0.80	0.20	0.50
Spinach	Limited	1.50	0.70	1.20
Water cress	Normal	1.00	0.20	0.70
Leaf mustard cabbage	Normal	0.80	0.20	0.50
Tomato	Limited	1.60	0.80	1.20
Chinese spinach	Scarce	2.00	1.20	1.50

Supplies and Wholesale Prices of Pork (Live weight)

	<u>Availability of Supply</u>	<u>Wholesale Price</u>
		<u>(\$/ picul)</u>
		(Average)
Pork	Good	300