



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Friday, August 3, 1973

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TRIAL TUNNELS FOR MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY

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Work on the excavation of four trial tunnels for the mass transit railway has reached the stage where the sinking of shafts can now begin.

A spokesman for Charles Haswell and Partners, the engineering consultants for these tunnels, said today that the specialised equipment needed for horizontal boring was now being shipped from Britain.

The trial tunnels are being sunk to identify and solve the technical problems which will arise in the course of construction of the mass transit railway. They will also help train Hong Kong construction workers in soft ground tunnelling techniques.

The spokesman said: "We started taking over and clearing the sites in early June. We have now reached the stage where shaft sinking can begin in earnest."

"We are already in a position to install and operate the equipment once it arrives in Hong Kong."

The four tunnel sites are: an area of the former naval dockyard off Harcourt Road, known as the Admiralty site; an area to the south of Salisbury Road, the Tsim Sha Tsui site; an open area opposite Lok Fu housing estate in Kowloon City, the Lok Fu site; and the Lai Chi Kok site which is off Castle Peak Road.

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Note to Editors: The Public Works Department has arranged for a tour of inspection of two of the sites -- Admiralty and Tsim Sha Tsui -- to take place on the morning of Thursday, August 9. You are invited to nominate a reporter and/or photographer to participate. Representatives should be at G.I.S. 16 mm theatre, 5th floor, Beaconsfield House at 9 a.m. for an initial talk by Mr. Brian Honan of the consultants. This will be followed by a tour of the two sites and then return to GIS for a question-and-answer session. The list for nominations will close at midday on Tuesday, August 7. Nominations should be given to the duty officer, press room, GIS.

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DEFICIT OF \$15 MILLION IN GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTS

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A deficit of \$15 million has been recorded in the Hong Kong Government accounts for April -- the first month of the new financial year.

This compares with a surplus of \$12 million in April 1972.

Total revenue for the month was \$294 million -- an increase of \$33 million over the previous April. Expenditure amounted to \$309 million which was an increase of \$60 million over the same month last year.

A government spokesman said today that the expenditure included the payment of some \$46 million to the Urban Council which was the yield from the Urban Council Rate for April 1973.

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NO LEGALISED OFF-COURSE BETTING FOR COMING RACING SEASON

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A government spokesman said today there was no prospect of legalised off-course betting being implemented in Hong Kong in time for the coming racing season in October.

Commenting on newspaper reports, he said: "It is not envisaged that legalised off-course betting will begin before the 1974-75 racing season, which opens in October next year."

The spokesman added that the Royal Hongkong Jockey Club was being extremely helpful and co-operative on every aspect of the deliberations on off-course betting by the working party.

"The question of extending an off-course betting scheme to cover dog racing in Macau is being considered, but a decision has yet to be reached on this aspect," he said.

It is likely that any system of off-course betting would be under Jockey Club management."

The spokesman recalled that the working party was appointed to examine specific aspects of a report submitted to the Executive Council in April this year, reviewing the present government policy on gambling generally, with particular reference to problems related to illegal gambling.

When completed, the working party's report would be submitted to the Executive Council for consideration, and any legislative action would have to be put to the Legislative Council. Since the latter would not be reconvened until October there was no prospect of any imminent change in the law.

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RECLAMATION FOR SHA TIN NEW TOWN

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More than 40 acres of land at Sha Tin will be reclaimed to provide more space for development of the new town.

The area to be formed is located north of the existing reclamation.

There will be space for a public housing estate, a temporary sewage treatment works, and other community uses.

To accommodate households affected by clearance for the development of the town, a further two acres of land will also be formed at Tung Lo Wan.

About 1.5 million cubic yards of earth will be required for the overall project and this will be obtained from a borrow area near the Sha Tin portal of the Lion Rock Tunnel.

To avoid traffic congestion, construction vehicles using public roads will be restricted at weekends.

The site formation, including ancillary drainage work, is expected to take 24 months to complete.

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STAMP BILL BECOMES LAW

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The Stamp (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 1973 has become law after its final passage through the Legislative Council on Wednesday.

A notice published in today's Government Gazette said the amending ordinance will come into operation on a day to be appointed by the Governor.

The main object of the bill is to make statutory provision for relief from stamp duty on contract notes in respect of purchases and sales of shares by a broker on his own account when he is performing a jobbing function.

During the second reading of the bill, the Senior Unofficial Member, Mr. P.C. Woo said the Unofficial Members felt that it would be premature to grant the concession in respect of a type of business which is not yet provided for or identified by legislation: the business of jobbers and jobbing should first of all be fully legislated for and controlled by the Securities legislation and then stamp duty concessions granted by making regulations under the Stamp Ordinance.

Mr. Woo also voiced disagreement to the proposal by the Financial Secretary when moving the second reading that, apart from odd lots, the proposed relief should be confined to transactions involving overseas clients.

"That," he said, "seems to me to be wrong in principle as transactions involving local clients should similarly acquire the benefit of the concession."

However, he said he would not wish to go so far as to suggest that these provisions be removed from the ordinance since the exemption could not become effective until regulations were made.

/Mr. Woo added .....

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Mr. Woo added that if the government would give an assurance that such regulations would not be made under the Stamp Ordinance until after the Securities Bill had itself become law and had come into operation, the Unofficial Members would have no objection to the bill.

In reply, the Financial Secretary, Mr. Philip Haddon-Cave, explained that (as he told the council when moving the second reading of the bill), the reason why the government's immediate proposal was that relief from stamp duty should be confined to transactions involving either overseas clients or odd lots, was that these were the only areas to which the extension of relief was practical and desirable at the present time.

Any further extensions of relief would depend on the initiative of the stock exchanges.

The Financial Secretary also said that he proposed to include provisions in the Securities Bill to allow the type of dealer that might be classified as a jobber, and the manner of his transactions, to be determined by way of regulation.

In conclusion Mr. Haddon-Cave said: "But as Honourable Members feel that, were I to seek Regulations for relief in the limited areas of jobbing concerned with odd lots and overseas transactions before the passing of the Securities Bill I would be putting the cart before the horse, I am willing to give the assurance my Honourable Friend, Mr. P.C. Woo requires."

This means that, although enabling legislation has been passed, no further steps will be taken to grant stamp duty relief for jobbing transactions until after the Securities Bill has become law and has come into operation.

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INLAND REVENUE OFFICE FOR TSUEN WAN

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A sub-office of the Inland Revenue Department is to be opened in Tsuen Wan on Tuesday (August 7).

It will provide a revenue collecting point for the taxpayers in the New Territories, particularly those in the Tsuen Wan area.

All taxes assessed under the Inland Revenue Ordinance, including Salaries Tax, Profits Tax and Hotel Accommodation Tax will be collected at the new sub-office. However, Property Tax will be excluded.

It will also serve as a Business Registration and Stamp Sub-office, but the Tsuen Wan District Office will continue to undertake the stamping of documents relating to land and buildings which require to be registered with the Land Registry.

The sub-office, in the On Yue Building, Tsuen Wan Market Street, will be opened to the public from 8.45 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and from 1.30 p.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays to Fridays; and 8.45 a.m. to 12 noon on Saturdays.

The telephone number for general enquiries is 12-426956.

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PUBLIC LIGHT BUS RESTRICTION

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Restrictions on the operation of public light buses in a section of Mong Kok will come into force on Tuesday (August 7).

From 10 a.m. on that day, public light buses will not be permitted to pick up or set down passengers in the section of Bute Street between Nathan Road and Portland Street from 7 a.m. to midnight daily.

These arrangements are intended to reduce obstruction to through traffic at the junction of Nathan Road with Bute Street.

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GOVERNOR AND LADY MACLEHOSE GOING ON LEAVE

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Note to Editors: The Governor, Sir Murray MacLehose, and Lady MacLehose will leave Hong Kong by air tomorrow for a holiday in the U.K.

They will be returning to Hong Kong in mid September.

During the absence of Sir Murray, the Colonial Secretary, Sir Hugh Norman-Walker, will be acting Governor, Mr. Denys Roberts will act as Colonial Secretary.

Sir Murray will not be holding a press conference at the airport. Photographers who wish to take pictures of the departure of the Governor are requested to assemble at the airport press room not later than 9.30 a.m. tomorrow (Saturday).

Sir Murray and Lady MacLehose will leave by BA 931, E.T.D. 10 a.m.

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DANGEROUS BUILDINGS

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The Building Authority today declared 14 and 15 Tseng Lan Shue on Clearwater Bay Road to be in a dangerous condition. Two other buildings, 16A and 16, in the same village are liable to become dangerous.

The Principal Government Building Surveyor said that these two storey pre-war buildings were inspected subsequent to a report of a collapse.

It was found that the party wall between 14 and 15, which was constructed of mud and straw blocks, had collapsed together with the roofs of both buildings causing damage to the adjoining party walls.

Numbers 16A and 16 are similarly constructed and are liable to become dangerous during or after the demolition of the adjoining buildings.

Notices of intention to apply for closure orders in Kowloon District Court at 9.30 a.m. on August 24 were posted today.

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Release Time: 7.00 p.m.