



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Monday, November 6, 1972

ACTION TO REMOVE ILLEGAL TANNERIES

Thirty small illegal tanneries operating in the Sheung Shui area of the New Territories are to be cleared as from November 28.

The land for these and other tanneries in the area was re-entered by the Crown on January 26 this year for failure to clear the illegal tanneries from their land and to revert it to its permitted agricultural user.

A Government spokesman said today that the owners had been given repeated notice about the action to be taken to clear the tanneries, but these 30 had failed to make any concrete plans for removal.

In their petition, which has been rejected by the Governor in Council, the 30 owners had asked for land to be made available cheaply in Kwai Chung or at Tai San Wai in the Yuen Long District and for time to construct new factories there.

The spokesman said these owners had been given the opportunity of buying sites in the Offensive Trades Area in Kwai Chung, but failed to take up the offer.

He said the request for the relocation of their factories at Tai San Wai was not acceptable as the establishment of tanneries there would involve the discharge of effluents and other wastes into a natural watercourse.

The spokesman pointed out that the operators had been given the option of accepting flatted factory accommodation in Yuen Long together with domestic accommodation for their families at either Yuen Long, Tuen Mun or Kwai Chung.

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The Labour Department has also been prepared to assist tannery workers in finding alternative means of employment on the closure of the tanneries, but so far none of them have taken advantage of the offer.

The spokesman said that 21 other tannery operators who have formed themselves into three consortiums and have bought sites in Kwai Chung, will be allowed to continue operating at their present locations until their new factories are ready.

However, they will be subject to four conditions which are designed, as far as is practicable, to minimise the problems of pollution.

The conditions are:

- (a) all waste matter and refuse must be stored in proper containers to prevent the emission of noxious or injurious effluents pending disposal;
- (b) the occupier must satisfy the Director of Urban Services in regard to how and where all solid trade wastes are disposed;
- (c) any part of the premises fronting a stream or water-course must be set back from it by at least 15 feet; and
- (d) the entire premises must be satisfactorily fenced in.

The tanneries to be moved to Kwai Chung will be required to adhere to a strict time-table for the planning and construction of the new factories and the demolition of the existing tanneries.

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The Government will ensure that in the event that any tannery operator does not conform to this time-table, the tannery will be cleared from Sheung Shui.

The spokesman said that land for the new factories in Kwai Chung will become available from April or May next year and it is estimated that the factories will take two years to complete.

The Governor in Council has decided that where landowners took positive steps to evict tanneries by court action or where the tannery operators themselves took steps to buy land in the Offensive Trades Area in Kwai Chung, the agricultural land at Sheung Shui will be returned to the original owners subject to the payment to the Government of the cost of clearing the tanneries.

Clearance costs would not, however, be necessary in the case of the tanneries voluntarily cleared by November 28. In the remaining cases the land will not be returned to its previous owners.

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SOILS ENGINEERING MUST BE CONSIDERED BY LAND DEVELOPERS

The Director of Public Works, Mr. J.J. Robson, said today it was evident that, in the light of the June landslides, soils engineers must play a far greater part in the formation of building sites on hillslopes than in the past.

He said there is obviously a "pressing need" to apply the latest techniques and knowledge of soils engineering to the situation in Hong Kong and to seek a code of practice that will give effective results.

Mr. Robson was speaking at the opening ceremony of the 3rd South-East Asian Conference on Soils Engineering at the City Hall.

He praised the efforts of the organisers and told the delegates that "it is essential that your knowledge is made freely available to all civil engineers, since the pressures of today place increasingly difficult tasks on the shoulders of the average engineer and now require of him the solution of problems that were previously only tackled by specialists."

The general quality of these problems, he said, have not changed so very much with the passage of time, though they have gained daily in sophistication.

Referring to Hong Kong, Mr. Robson said: "Our problem is made acute by our very high growth rate and the lack of suitable building land."

This situation necessitates the quick construction of high-rise buildings utilising every inch of space, he added.

/"Unless we pause

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"Unless we pause at this stage, and introduce sensible legislation based on the best information that soil engineering affords us, hazardous situations will continue to arise, to the detriment of the community," he warned.

He continued: "But I would much rather see law enforcement taking a secondary place to education, and I believe that there is a real need to encourage developers to understand the fact that the use of qualified civil engineers, experienced in soil engineering will contribute greatly to the solution of their problems."

Mr. Robson considered that this contribution would not only decrease day-to-day hazards, but also show a real saving in the costs of many buildings.

He said his department is now giving active attention to this problem and a special unit of suitably qualified engineers has been set up to check development proposals.

Their job is to verify that these proposals will not endanger the lives of workmen engaged in site formation, nor the stability of the surrounding areas, he said.

In some cases, he added, developers are now required to present very comprehensive investigations and supporting calculations to prove beyond reasonable doubt that they have based their proposals on valid engineering assumptions.

Mr. Robson stressed that "this unit is not restricting its investigations to individual developments alone, since the combined effect of several high-rise buildings as a group exert an altogether different condition on a hillside."

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He said the effectiveness of such a unit and the measure of cooperation they obtain from developers, clearly depends largely on their ability to skilfully decide when a problem exists and how far the investigations should be taken.

"Too conservative an approach will not only increase development costs unnecessarily, but also undesirably slow down progress."

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QUARANTINE RESTRICTIONS LIFTED

The Port Health Authority announced today that quarantine restrictions have been lifted against arrivals from Dacca, excluding the airport.

The restrictions had been imposed because of an outbreak of cholera.

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RESEARCH HELPS HONG KONG CHINESE NEWSPAPERS

The Information Secretary, Mr. J. Cater today (Monday) complimented the Chinese Language Press Institute for its achievements in research work.

These will enable the Hong Kong Chinese newspapers to more effectively help the Government in the important task of "communicating with the people of Hong Kong."

He said he was particularly impressed by the research on the most frequently used Chinese characters and on the mechanical transmission of Chinese news items.

Mr. Cater was speaking at the Fifth Annual Meeting and Assembly of the Institute.

These studies will help the Chinese newspapers as well as the Government to pass "accurate information speedily to the public", he said.

Mr. Cater said that tenders have already been called for the supply and maintenance of transmitting and receiving machines for a facsimile network to be operated by the Government Information Services and it was hoped everything would be ready by the end of next March.

With the launching of the new service "we are confident that we will have more up-to-the-minute news to meet the deadlines of the morning, noon and afternoon Chinese newspapers and, thereby, contribute to the improved running of your newspapers," he added.

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NEW ROAD IN AIRPORT

A new road will be built to provide access to areas being reclaimed for the future expansion of Hong Kong Airport.

To be named Eastern Road, the project comprises the construction of 2,100 feet of two-lane roadway alongside the eastern airport boundary together with a security fence and a new sliding palisade gate across an aircraft taxiway.

On completion, the road will serve as an alternative access route for construction traffic which will then be able to avoid increasingly congested areas within the airport.

It will also serve eventually as a permanent service road linking the passenger terminal and apron services areas with the future air cargo complex.

Work on the project is expected to commence next January and will take about six months to complete.

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BETTER MOORING FACILITIES IN YAU MA TEI TYPHOON SHELTER

The Public Works Department plans to install a series of 24 dolphins in the Yau Ma Tei Typhoon Shelter to provide better mooring facilities for vessels during typhoons.

The dolphins will be built according to a special pattern to help delineate the fairways in the shelter.

Construction of the first four dolphins in the series is expected to begin next month, and will take about five months to complete.

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WATER INTERRUPTION IN MONG KOK

Water supply to a number of premises in Mong Kok, Kowloon will be turned off temporarily for five hours from 1 a.m. on Wednesday (November 8).

This is to enable the Waterworks Office to carry out a leakage test.

The area affected is bounded by Canton Road, Shan Tung Street, Nathan Road, Argyle Street and Tong Mei Road.

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EXCO MEMBERSHIP

Mr. Lee Quo-wei, an Unofficial Member of the Legislative Council, ceased to be a temporary member of the Executive Council, from November 3 on the return to Hong Kong of Mr. Szeto Wai.

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Release time: 6.30 p.m.