



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Tuesday, March 12, 1974

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Daily guide to wholesale prices and supply of basic food commodities

Release time: 7.00 p.m.

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BUDGET DEBATE

Debate on the Appropriation Bill 1974 resumes at 2.30 p.m. tomorrow when unofficial members of the Legislative Council will give their views on the financial and economic state of Hong Kong and the general principles of government policy and administration as indicated by the bill and estimates.

Seven members will speak tomorrow (Wednesday). They are: the Hon. Woo Pak-chuen, the Hon. Szeto Wai, the Hon. Wilfred Wong, the Hon. Wilson Wang, Dr. the Hon. Chung Sze-yuen, the Hon. Lee Quo-wei, and the Hon. Oswald Cheung.

Speaking on Thursday will be the Hon. Ann Tse-kai, the Hon. Mrs. Joyce Symons, the Hon. P.G. Williams, the Hon. James Wu, the Hon. Hilton Cheong-Loon, the Hon. G.M. Sayer, and the Hon. Li Fook-wo.

Both days proceedings will be broadcast live on RHK 2 (Chinese) and RHK 4 (English), and on the Chinese Service of Commercial Radio (Channel One).

The official members will reply to points raised by their unofficial colleagues on March 27.

At tomorrow's session, the Hon. Mrs. Joyce Symons will ask for a statement on the recent tragedy in Tolo Harbour due to the overloading of a boat, and what urgent action the government intends to take to prevent a recurrence.

The White Paper on the problem of dangerous drugs in Hong Kong will be tabled and the Secretary for Security will make a brief statement.

Five bills will be introduced in Council at tomorrow's sitting. These are: The Inland Revenue (Amendment) Bill, the Quarantine and Prevention of Disease (Amendment) Bill, the Employment (Amendment) Bill, the Workmen's Compensation (Amendment) Bill, and the Landlord and Tenant (Consolidation) (Amendment) Bill.

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IMPORTANCE OF CONSUMER PACKAGING STRESSED

The Director of Commerce and Industry, Mr. David Jordan, today urged Hong Kong's manufacturing industry to take advantage of opportunities to learn ways and means of upgrading its packaging standards.

"As the quality of our products continues to improve, it is important that there should be similar improvements in consumer packaging, particularly when we face, as we do, increasing competition in our export markets," he said.

Mr. Jordan was speaking at the opening of an exhibition of consumer packaging at the Ocean Terminal organised by the Hong Kong Packaging Council and the Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO).

He said it was an opportunity to study and admire what Japan had achieved as the acknowledged pacemakers in the packaging field.

The exhibits on display, he pointed out, had been selected in consultation with the Hong Kong Design Centre with an eye to the particular needs of the Hong Kong manufacturing industry.

Mr. Jordan said that good packaging was necessary "to sell what it protects and to protect what it sells."

He added: "In this age of supermarkets and self-service, packaging plays a large part in promoting and selling the product -- it's not just an irritating additional expense.

"The materials used and the markings on the package must conform to the legislation of the importing country, and this is especially true in markets such as the United States and the United Kingdom where consumer protection interests are active.

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"At the same time, the package should highlight the essential features of the product. Furthermore, its size and shape should facilitate distribution, retail storage and subsequent display, handling and checking."

Good packaging had largely taken over from the old-fashioned shop assistant at the point of sale, he said, and it was important that Hong Kong should fully realise this, as we were basically oriented to producing consumer goods for Western markets.

Mr. Jordan said that international recognition of the quality of the work being undertaken locally was accorded at the beginning of 1973 when Hong Kong became the headquarters of the World Packaging Organisation.

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Note to Editors: Copies of the full text of Mr. Jordan's address are boxed for collection.

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CDO SUB-OFFICE MOVES

The Aberdeen Sub-Office of the Western City District Office will move to new premises at 52-64 Aberdeen Main Road, ground floor, Hong Kong, this Saturday (March 16).

The telephone number for public enquiries will be changed to 5-524429.

The Aberdeen Sub-Office is now situated at 200 Aberdeen Main Road, 1st floor, Hong Kong.

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FLIGHT INFORMATION DISPLAY CENTRE

A room for a flight information display centre is to be set up at the airport terminal as part of its continual development programme.

The room, occupying some 900 square feet, will be fully air-conditioned for the delicate electronic equipment to be installed. There will also be a false floor for the complicated wiring system required for the computer to control the display system.

This computer will be connected to all public areas in the terminal where a network of large display boards with revolving flaps will give flight information up to the moment.

The system will also be linked by television monitors to airlines and other administrative offices to keep everyone informed of the latest flight movements.

Construction of the room is expected to begin in April and will take three months. The instruments will be installed at the beginning of next year and the computerised system should be operational by April next year.

Also at the airport, a temporary link will be constructed at the apron side of the terminal building.

This will facilitate the routing of passengers while Bay 5 is under construction in the next 12 months.

This work is also expected to start in April and be completed three months afterwards.

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MEASURES TO IMPROVE RICE CONTROL SCHEME DISCUSSED

Various measures to improve the operation of the rice control scheme to protect the interests of the consumer were discussed today at the first meeting of the Rice Advisory Committee set up by the Commerce and Industry Department.

The committee comprises eight members representing the import, wholesale and retail sectors of the trade and DC & I officials.

Mr. Jimmy McGregor, Deputy Director of Commerce and Industry, who is chairman of the committee, said after the meeting that a full and frank discussion had taken place on measures to eliminate speculative activity in the rice trade.

Agreement had been reached on establishing a fixed scale of maximum mark-ups to apply at the three levels of the trade in line with prevailing import costs.

At the present time, the agreed scale of mark-ups will be \$20 per picul by the importer, \$2 per picul by the wholesaler and \$40 per picul by the retailer.

The aim is to stabilise retail prices of top-grade rice at \$2.40 per catty, with lower grades correspondingly cheaper.

Written undertakings to observe a maximum scale of mark-ups will be given to the Commerce and Industry Department by members of the committee representing the importers, wholesalers and retailers.

The committee also discussed arrangements for direct sale of rice to large organisations and major retail outlets.

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It was agreed that the Commerce and Industry Department would register companies wishing to participate, and written authorisations would be issued to enable direct purchases from importers.

The minimum sale to companies employing 200 workers or more will be one ton at each transaction. For major retail outlets the minimum will be five tons.

Mr. McGregor said that Secretariat approval will be sought to extend the legal powers provided under the rice control scheme.

This would involve a change in the law to enable registration of wholesalers so that effective action could be taken to stop any malpractices in dealings between wholesalers and retailers.

In the meantime, the members of the committee have undertaken to bring to the attention of the Commerce and Industry Department any malpractices which come to their notice.

Mr. McGregor said that the committee had considered at length the internal distribution of rice supplies to ensure that adequate quantities are available in both the cheaper and more expensive grades.

The terms of reference of the committee are to advise the Director of Commerce and Industry on the administration of the rice control scheme and all aspects of the rice trade.

It is intended to appoint one or two consumer representatives to serve on the committee and consideration is now being given to choosing suitable members.

Mr. McGregor informed the committee that it was proposed, in addition, to appoint a member to represent major retail outlets.

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NEW TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS IN CENTRAL

The section of Des Voeux Road Central between Clevery Street and Morrison Street is to be temporarily re-routed one-way to cater for west-bound traffic only.

The new arrangements will come into effect from 10 a.m. on Thursday (March 14) and will continue for a period of about two months.

The measure is being taken to ease traffic congestion in the area during the renewal of the tram tracks.

Because of the re-routing, all traffic in Connaught Road Central, except trams, will be prohibited from entering Clevery Street.

Motorists will also be prohibited from making right turns from Morrison Street into Des Voeux Road Central.

Buses on routes 5, 5A, 5B, 10 and 101 will be re-routed via Man Wah Lane.

On the following day (Friday, March 15) new traffic arrangements will be introduced from 10 a.m. in the industrial area of San Po Kong to improve traffic flow.

A clearway system will be imposed along the entire lengths of Tai Yau Street and Tseuk Luk Street and on King Fuk Street between Sam Chuk Street and King Tai Street.

All motor vehicles will be prohibited from stopping in these streets during the clearway hours of 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily.

In conjunction with the clearway system, the existing metered parking spaces in Sheung Hei Street, Sam Chuk Street, Pat Tat Street and Tsat Po Street will be re-designated for the use of goods vehicles only.

Traffic signs will be erected in the various locations to guide motorists.

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DEATH SENTENCE COMMUTED

The Governor, after taking into consideration the advice of the Executive Council, has decided that the death sentence passed on Chan Hon-tong on February 26 last year should be commuted to life imprisonment.

Chan was found guilty of the murder of Wong Yuk-lin.

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CONSUMER ADVISORY SERVICE

Daily Guide To Wholesale Market Prices And Supplies

The following prices were realised today (Tuesday) 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 | - | - |
| See Mew -- new crop | - | - |
| S.C.Jion - new crop | Good | 1.94 |
| Po Hgai | - | - |
| Chu Cho | - | - |
| <u>Thai Rice</u> | | |
| 100% Whole | - | - |
| 10-15% Brokens | Good | 1.89 |
| A1 Super Extra | - | - |
| A1 Super | Good | 1.52 |
| Whole Glutinous | - | - |
| <u>U.S. Rice</u> | Good | 1.82 |
| <u>Australian Rice</u> | Good | 1.8 |
| <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 | 4.2 | 2.8 | 3.8 |
| Big-Eyes | Good | 2.7 | 0.8 | 1.8 |
| Squid | Limited | 6.0 | 3.0 | 4.5 |
| Hair-Tails | Good | 2.7 | 1.2 | 2.0 |
| Lizard Fishes | Normal | 2.6 | 1.1 | 2.0 |
| Croakers | Normal | 2.4 | 1.2 | 1.7 |
| Conger-Pike-Eels | Normal | 3.0 | 2.0 | 2.7 |
| Melon Coat | Limited | 2.0 | 1.0 | 1.6 |
| Breams | Limited | 5.5 | 3.8 | 5.0 |
| Yellow Belly | Good | 1.6 | 0.8 | 1.2 |
| Mackerels | Good | 4.0 | 3.0 | 3.5 |
| Red Goat Fish | Normal | 1.2 | 0.6 | 0.9 |
| Fork-Tail | Normal | 1.4 | 0.9 | 1.2 |
| Horse-Head | Normal | 6.0 | 3.3 | 5.0 |
| Melon Seed | Limited | 2.8 | 1.8 | 2.4 |
| Pomfrets | Limited | 8.5 | 8.0 | 8.2 |
| Garoupas | Normal | 6.5 | 5.5 | 6.0 |
| Yellow Croaker | Good | 5.7 | 4.2 | 5.0 |

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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 | Limited | 1.6 | 0.8 | 1.2 |
| White cabbage | Normal | 0.8 | 0.3 | 0.5 |
| Chinese Lettuce | Normal | 0.8 | 0.3 | 0.5 |
| Chinese Kale | Limited | 1.0 | 0.4 | 0.7 |
| Spring onion | Good | 0.6 | 0.2 | 0.4 |
| Spinach | Limited | 1.2 | 0.3 | 0.8 |
| Water cross | Good | 0.8 | 0.2 | 0.5 |
| Leaf mustard cabbage | Limited | 0.7 | 0.2 | 0.5 |
| Tomato | Limited | 1.6 | 0.5 | 1.0 |

Supplies and Wholesale Prices of Pork (Live weight)

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