



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Wednesday, January 9, 1974

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Daily guide to wholesale prices and supply of basic food commodities

Release time: 8.45 p.m.

Issued by Government Information Services, Beaconsfield House, Hong Kong. Tel: 5-233191

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TELEPHONE CHARGES RAISED

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The Legislative Council today approved an application by the Hong Kong Telephone Company to raise its telephone charges with effect from January 15.

The revision is the first in about 10 years. The charges for a business line are increased from \$350 to \$410 per annum, and those for a residential line from \$235 to \$280 per annum.

For a private wire, the charges will go up from \$200 to \$300 per annum for a cable pair not exceeding one mile in distance, and from \$10 to \$15 per annum for each additional 220 yards.

In explaining the increases, the Financial Secretary, the Hon. C.P. Haddon-Cave said they were necessary to provide the company with an adequate return on its capital and thus enable it to raise funds in the capital market to provide for the required expansion in the telephone system.

The installation of new telephone lines had grown at a rapid rate in recent years, and this had required substantial increases in capital investment by the company in recent years, from an average of \$79 million each year between 1965 and 1967 to an average of \$164 million each year between 1970 and 1972.

To continue to meet expenditure of this magnitude, the company was obliged to raise funds in the capital market.

With the approved increases, Mr. Haddon-Cave anticipated that the return to the company on average capital employed would not exceed 11 per cent after tax in any year - that is below the permitted annual 12-per-cent maximum return.

He further pointed out that these increases had been accepted by the government on the advice of the Advisory Committee on Telephone Services.

/In tendering .....

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In tendering its advice, the Committee made it clear that it intended to pursue with the telephone company the steps that could be taken to enable even more funds to be generated internally for increased capital expenditure in order to reduce the waiting list for telephones which presently stood at about 31,000.

"The committee is also looking into the company's maintenance programme which has tended to be inadequate at times as the cacophony of noise interference sometimes heard in the middle of telephone conversations bears out.

"The government has taken note of this intention and has decided to review the position when the Advisory Committee's report on its discussion with the Telephone Company is available," he said.

Dr. the Hon. S.Y. Chung also spoke in support of the motion. He noted that with the increased rental charges the company should be able to do very much in its expansion programme.

"As the company is operating under a franchise of monopoly, the government has a responsibility to ensure that the Hong Kong community has efficient and adequate telephone services.

"I therefore urge that the government should exert greater pressures on the company with particular respect to the adequacy of its overall development programme in meeting the increasing needs of Hong Kong people whether they are residing in urban, sub-urban or rural areas," he said.

Dr. Chung said that due to "depreciation of money and appreciation of telephone value" the company should be permitted to raise the rental charges so as to maintain a reasonable annual return of around 10 to 11 percent on average capital employed.

However, he felt that improvements should be made by the company in respect of supply and demand of telephones, and the services it provided in the New Territories and outlying islands where telephone communication was badly needed.

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SECURITIES BILL WINS RESERVED SUPPORT

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Unofficial Members of the Legislative Council spoke out in support of the Securities Bill today but made it clear that a number of amendments were necessary before it could be passed into law.

While they did not accept parts of the bill in its present form, the general feeling was that with suitable amendments the draft legislation would be an invaluable boon to orderly market trading and for the protection of investors as well as strengthening Hong Kong's position as a financial centre.

Some 230 amendments to the bill have been suggested, about half of which are acceptable to the government.

Speaking on behalf of his colleagues, the Senior Unofficial Member, the Hon. P.C. Woo, said that the unofficial members did accept the need for legislation along the general lines of the bill.

Such legislation, he added, was "entirely necessary to ensure adequate control of stock exchange transactions, to avoid malpractices and to put the whole business of transactions in securities on a thoroughly sound framework."

But although it was important to get the legislation on the statute book, "it is equally important to allow adequate time to ensure that the amendments are practicable and workable by those concerned."

Referring to the setting up of a compensation fund as provided in the present bill, Mr. Woo said the amended proposal was that the cash fund should be \$25 million with a further \$25 million in bank guarantees.

/"Although this .....

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"Although this sum still exceeds the amount which the stock exchanges said they were prepared to subscribe, a fund of this size is, in the view of the unofficial members, necessary to demonstrate internationally that Hong Kong has provided a realistic safeguard against the possibility of default by dealers," he said.

Welcoming the additional protection provided to investors, the Hon. Wilson Wang expressed the hope that legislation covering mutual funds would be passed in due course.

By providing protection to innocent investors, the bill would make Hong Kong exchanges safe institutions and, in the long run, strengthen the financial structure of Hong Kong, he added.

Had it been introduced one year earlier when laissez faire really prevailed "the debacle of the Hong Kong stock market in 1973 which cost the majority of investors, salaries and wage earners alike, two-thirds of their fortunes and savings, would have been averted," he said.

Another speaker, the Hon. G.M. Sayer noted that the old laissez faire methods of marketing securities were no longer suitable and needed to be brought up to date to cope with the different circumstances prevailing today.

"The bill provides one aspect of what is needed and the stock exchanges can help by encouraging their members to become technically competent in selling their services and handling the needs of their constituents," he said. "There is no place for amateurs anymore."

It was also important, he stressed, that the operations of the stock exchanges should be the responsibility of the members themselves. "Free enterprise should be seen to work, but also be seen to be accompanied by self-discipline."

In his opinion, the bill provided safeguards without imposing unreasonable restrictions.

The Hon. Hilton Cheong-Leen suggested that after the bill was passed, a simpler, non-legal version should be compiled in both English and Chinese so that stockbrokers and investors alike could be made aware of their rights and obligations.

/In reply .....

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In reply, the Financial Secretary, the Hon. C.P. Haddon-Cave, said he was grateful for the warm support the Unofficials had afforded the bill and, in particular, for the very thorough and conscientious study undertaken by the Ad Hoc group of Unofficial Members.

The group had studied in detail the representations of the four stock exchanges submitted direct to them and which contained most of the recommended amendments directly affecting the stock exchanges.

The Financial Secretary shared Mr. Woo's concern that adequate time be afforded for a thorough examination of the proposed amendments.

In fact, he said a list of the proposed amendments to be moved on January 30 at the Committee Stage had already been made available to members of the Council so they could have adequate time to study them.

He also assured Mr. Woo that the clause relating to insider trading would not be brought into operation without the council having an opportunity to debate it. He added that there would be no procedural difficulty in arranging this.

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GREATER PROTECTION FOR DEPOSITORS

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New legislation specifying the minimum size of deposits which finance companies can accept from the general public is expected to be introduced soon, the Financial Secretary, the Hon. C.P. Haddon-Cave, disclosed today.

Replying to a question from the Hon. G.M. Sayer, the Financial Secretary said that while he was not dissatisfied with the operating standards of reputable companies accepting deposits in Hong Kong, he recognised that there was a possibility of less reputable companies operating to lower standards thus providing some risk for depositors.

However, under the proposed new bill the deposit-taking activities of finance companies would be confined to a fairly restricted clientele by specifying a minimum figure below which only licensed banks will be permitted to accept deposits, he said.

In answer to another question, Mr. Haddon-Cave said he remained convinced that licensed banks had the means at their command to compete on equal terms with the finance companies.

"It is true that licensed banks have to meet capital and liquidity provisions set by the Banking Ordinance and to this extent they may feel that they are unfairly restricted.

"But the facts do not match this feeling. Banking licences continue to be much sought after and there are many concerns, both overseas and local, which have expressed a wish for a banking licence," he said.

Only a few finance companies had established local business, he noted, and the majority did not compete directly with the local banks because their business was directed to the supply of credit for current liabilities and capital projects elsewhere in the Far East.

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PROMPT PAYMENT FOR URGENT NEEDY CASES

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Public assistance payments in urgent cases are usually made on the day of application, or at the latest within 48 hours, the Secretary for Social Welfare, the Hon. F.K. Li, said today.

About 100 such payments are made every week.

In the majority of cases, however, where no immediate serious hardship was likely to arise, applications were dealt with in the normal turn, he told the Legislative Council.

The processing procedure, he explained, consisted of a home visit to check facts about the applicant and to ascertain the circumstances of the case, calculation of the amount of allowance, and authorisation and issue of a cash order book.

"The natural desire for prompt payment must not be allowed to override the need to exercise proper control over public funds which includes ensuring that applicants receive their proper entitlement."

The enquiry stage normally took up to two weeks, although this could vary depending on the complexity of the case and whether there was difficulty in locating the applicant, Mr. Li said. About 700 applications were under enquiry at any given time.

Calculation and issue of a cash order book normally took a week to complete, he went on, and about 2,000 cases were awaiting payment at the moment.

/For those .....

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For those applying for Infirmity and Disability Allowances, Mr. Li said, an additional medical assessment was required for those whose medical history was unknown to the Medical and Health Department.

A medical examination could normally be arranged within two to four weeks for a physically disabled patient, he said. However some difficulty was experienced with mental patients due to a shortage of psychiatric doctors and the failure of the patients to keep appointments. A total of 45,000 applications for Infirmity and Disability Allowances have been received since the scheme started in April last year.

The final stage of authorisation and payment at present takes about one month, Mr. Li said. "However, with the steady reduction of the back-log of work being handled by the Social Welfare Department, this can soon be expected to come down to a normal period of about one week."

Existing staff were working substantial amounts of overtime, and staff were diverted from other duties to help clear application back-log, he said.

"Procedures for processing applications are kept under constant review but they will be examined with particular care in connection with long-term staff proposals.

"Every effort is being made and will continue to be made to reduce and finally eliminate any back-log of work," he emphasised.

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HEADWAY BEING MADE ON SEPARATE HONG KONG SHIPPING REGISTER

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Considerable progress has been made in clarifying difficulties which would be involved in the establishment of a separate Hong Kong Shipping Register and in defining the attitudes of the British and Hong Kong governments to the issues involved, the Financial Secretary, the Hon. C.P. Haddon-Cave, told council today.

"These relate essentially to the employment of certain non-British qualified officers and the acceptability of certain types of safety equipment of non-British manufacturers on Hong Kong-owned ships," he said.

Close liaison was also being maintained with the Hong Kong Shipowners' Association and the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce.

The report was now being awaited of the British team which recently conducted an in-depth study of the local shipping industry.

Mr. Haddon-Cave envisaged that after the report had been received and studied, further discussions would be necessary with the Department of Trade and Industry in order to reach an agreed view on the conditions for the establishment of a separate shipping register.

This view, he said, would have to strike a balance between the U.K. government's desire not to permit any lowering of essential standards of ships flying the Red Ensign, and the Hong Kong shipowners' insistence that the associated conditions should be such that the viability of their operations would not be jeopardised in any way.

/In reply .....

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In reply to a supplementary question from the Hon. P.C. Woo, the Financial Secretary said the government was aware of the comments made in the recent debate in the House of Commons on the Merchant Shipping Bill.

"Some of the comments made were inaccurate and others offensive and are to be deplored," Mr. Haddon-Cave said. "And I can categorically deny the charge that the Hong Kong government is seeking to establish a Hong Kong Register with standards which are lower than those applicable to British registered ships."

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PRINCESS MARGARET HOSPITAL TO OPEN IN EARLY 1975

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The general wing of the new Princess Margaret Hospital in Lai Chi Kok will open in the early part of 1975.

Dr. the Hon. G.H. Choa, Director of Medical and Health Services, said this today in the Legislative Council in reply to a question by the Hon. Wilfred Wong.

The Director told the Council that work on this portion of the whole hospital complex was progressing satisfactorily, and he anticipated that it would be handed over to his department by the Public Works Department during June this year.

He explained that the complex consisted of the general wing, the combined staff quarters, and the psychiatric wing.

The last was in Category A of the public works programme, with the completion date presently expected in 1977. The combined staff quarters were under construction, with completion expected in November this year.

Dr. Choa did not expect that the general wing could be opened until one month after the handing over of the combined staff quarters.

Intake of patients after that date was planned to be phased over a period of three months, ending with the opening of the casualty section.

/By that .....

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By that date, all supporting and clinical sections would be operational, and specialised units of clinical sections would be added progressively as the necessary staff became available.

In a reference to the major approach road to the hospital, Dr. Choa felt that since the new Lai Chi Kok Hospital Interchange roadworks were not expected to be completed until February 1975, this could affect the access of ambulances and other transport to the hospital, and consequently the intake of patients.

The South Kwai Chung Polyclinic Stage II, which would be the specialist clinic for the Princess Margaret Hospital, was presently out to tender, and its completion date was not expected until the middle of 1975.

But Dr. Choa assured members that it was proposed to run a temporary specialist clinic in consulting rooms situated in the present Stage I South Kwai Chung Clinic.

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EXCO TO CONSIDER TAXI FARES SHORTLY

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The question of integrating taxi operations on both sides of the harbour will be put to the Executive Council shortly together with proposals regarding Kowloon taxi fares, the Secretary for the Environment, the Hon. J.J. Robson, said today.

Replying to questions by the Hon. P.C. Woo and the Hon. Dr. S.Y. Chung, Mr. Robson said the advice of the Transport Advisory Committee had already been received on both matters.

The two issues had been under active consideration for some time, he said, and if the Executive Council approved the proposals regarding the Kowloon taxi fares, they could be implemented with little delay.

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SYSTEM FOR COMPILING TRADE STATISTICS EXPLAINED

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Statistics of Hong Kong's trade published in respect of any particular month do not relate to all shipments actually made during that month, nor only to shipments made during that month, the Director of Commerce and Industry, the Hon. David Jordan, told the Legislative Council today.

"The reason for this is that full details about all shipments do not come to hand in time," he said, "and if we waited until all the information was available there would be an unacceptable delay in publication of any figures at all."

Mr. Jordan, who was replying to a question from the Hon. Dr. S.Y. Chung, said that, generally speaking, provisional trade figures for a given month are published four weeks after the end of that month.

They are based on trade declarations covering shipments made in that month and lodged by the 10th of the succeeding month, and on declarations covering trade in previous months and lodged between that day and the 11th day of the preceding month.

"On average, this system results in published figures for a given month covering about 70 per cent of shipments actually made during that month, but of course the 30 per cent not recorded then is made up for by declarations relating to trade in previous months," said Mr. Jordan.

"The Census and Statistics Department's experience has shown that the offsets cancel each other out to a high degree."

/Mr. Jordan .....

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Mr. Jordan said that there was usually a six months' lapse before final figures could be obtained, and the latest month for which they were available was July, 1973.

These showed that the difference between published trade figures for that month and the final figures was only about one and a half per cent.

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TRANSPORT GREEN PAPER TO GO TO EXCO SHORTLY

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The draft Green Paper on transport will be published for public comment as soon as Executive Council approval has been obtained.

Speaking in the Legislative Council today, the Secretary for the Environment, the Hon. J.J. Robson, explained that the Green Paper was discussed only yesterday (Tuesday) by the Transport Advisory Committee and their views were now awaited.

"As most of the material in the Green Paper is based on matters previously discussed and agreed by members of the TAC, I am hopeful that they were able to agree the basic principles involved," he said.

"The next step," he added, "will be to amend the draft as necessary and then put it to Executive Council for approval to publish."

Mr. Robson was replying to a question by the Hon. James Wu who wanted to know whether the government would fix deadline dates for the publication and adoption of the Green Paper.

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SECOND CHANCE FOR YOUNG DRUG OFFENDERS

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Offenders sentenced to treatment in a drug addiction treatment centre will have no conviction recorded against them unless this is ordered by the court.

This is one of the main changes proposed in the Drug Addiction Treatment (Amendment) Bill 1974 which aims at introducing a number of procedural improvements.

In moving the second reading of the Bill in the Legislative Council today, the Secretary for Security, the Hon. G.P. Lloyd, explained that treatment was medical rather than cure. "Rehabilitation is more likely to succeed if offenders, particularly young and first offenders, can return to normal life with clean sheets."

The bill also enables the Commissioner of Prisons to recall to a centre for further treatment a person who fails to comply with a supervision order, thus dispensing with the present need for an additional appearance before a magistrate.

Under the present ordinance, a detention order lapses and treatment or supervision ceases on a sentence of imprisonment for however short a period.

Mr. Lloyd said this was unsatisfactory, and the bill would provide that a detention, or supervision or recall order would lapse only upon a prison term of more than two years or upon the making of a new detention order.

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If the imprisonment was for less than two years, he said, the original order would merely be suspended during it.

The bill also provides that inmates who are considered to be a bad influence may be transferred to a prison by order of the Governor without the court appearance now necessary.

Finally, it enables the transfer of a prisoner who is a drug addict from a prison to a treatment centre during the last 18 months of his sentence, also by order of the Governor.

Mr. Lloyd explained that this provision was designed to cover cases in which both the individual's and the public interest would be best served by a period of suitable treatment immediately before release.

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/18 .....

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STRICTER DISCIPLINE NEEDED IN TRAINING CENTRES

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Tougher measures are necessary in training centres to deal effectively with young and less responsive offenders, the Secretary for Security, the Hon. G.P. Lloyd, told the Legislative Council today.

"Experience has shown that in these centres there is now a need for a sharper regime with stricter discipline. This should be most effective for an increasing number of the younger and less amenable offenders there," he said when moving the second reading of the Training Centres (Amendment) Bill 1974.

The bill aims to clarify and strengthen existing legislation governing training centres.

It makes clear that courts should not remand unsuitable persons for detention in training centres, and reduces from nine to six months the minimum period of detention so that those who respond to short, sharp treatment need not be detained longer than necessary.

In the case of a detainee who is at large, the bill provides for a declaration to be made declaring that detainee "incorrigible." The balance of his sentence may then be commuted to imprisonment. This already applies to detainees actually in training centres.

The bill also reduces the period of supervision following a detainee's release, from four to three years from the date of sentence. This is to remove an existing anomaly whereby a detainee released early, because of good response to training, is supervised for a longer period than one who did not respond.

/Under the .....

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Under the bill, failure to observe the requirements of supervisory notices will be punishable by a fine of \$5,000 and 12 months' in prison.

Provision is also made to cover cases in which a new sentence is imposed on a person detained in a training centre. If the new sentence is another detention sentence or one for more than two years, then the original sentence (or supervision notice or recall order) will cease to have effect.

If the new sentence is for a shorter period of imprisonment, then the original one (or supervision notice or recall order) will merely be suspended during the period of imprisonment.

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#### NEW APPEALS TRIBUNAL MAY BE SET UP

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Active consideration is being given to setting up an Administrative Appeals Tribunal so as to improve arrangements for dealing with statutory appeals.

This was disclosed today by the Attorney General, the Hon. J.W.D. Hobley, in answer to a question raised in the Legislative Council by the Hon. O.V. Cheung.

At present, statutory appeals can only be made by way of petition.

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PROPOSED RESITING OF RAF MESS

\*\*\*\*\*

Proposals are in hand to rebuild the RAF officers' mess within the boundaries of Kai Tak so as to release the land it now occupies on the opposite side of Kwun Tong Road, the Colonial Secretary, the Hon. D.T.E. Roberts, said today.

He was speaking in the Legislative Council in reply to a question from the Hon. Hilton Cheong-Leen who asked whether the government could negotiate for the return of the land occupied by the RAF adjacent to Kai Tak airport in Ngau Chi Wan for public development.

The Colonial Secretary said it was not practical for the RAF to move from its present location, but the Force had given every assistance in making boundary adjustments to promote the widening of Kwun Tong Road and to help in the construction of the underground railway.

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MORE WOMEN PCs ON TRAFFIC DUTY

\*\*\*\*\*

The number of women police officers on traffic control is to be increased from 70 to 280 within two years, the Secretary for Security, the Hon. G.P. Lloyd, said today.

It was also intended, he added, to recruit more women for a range of other work, although new posts in the Force could be filled by either men or women. The planned increase is from about 700 to 1,200.

Mr. Lloyd noted that the recent improvement in police rank and file pay had encouraged many young women to apply to join, and nearly 250 have been initially accepted during the latest recruitment campaign.

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BETTER TV COVERAGE OF LEGCO PROCEEDINGS

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The Colonial Secretary, the Hon. D.T.E. Roberts, said today that investigations will be made as to the possibility to improve arrangements for televising Legislative Council proceedings.

It was not satisfactory, he said, that only the backs of certain speakers were revealed to television audiences, and the Director of Public Works would assess whether improvements at a reasonable cost could be made.

He noted, however, that better television coverage presented problems since it could only be achieved by the location of remote control cameras at different places in the Legislative Council chamber. It would also be necessary to extend the control booths along the north wall to house the necessary additional controls, probably at the expense of the public seating area.

Mr. Roberts was replying to a question raised by the Hon. P.C. Woo who also asked about the possible extension of the chamber so as to increase seating accommodation both for council members and members of the public.

The Colonial Secretary said this would involve substantial alterations which would be very costly. It would also mean that the chamber would have to be closed for several months.

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CO-OP HOUSING RULES EXPLAINED

\*\*\*\*\*

The Colonial Secretary, the Hon. D.T.E. Roberts, told the Legislative Council today that the by-laws which govern Government Servants' Co-operative Building Societies flats have ensured that such flats are well occupied at all times.

In reply to a question from Mr. Lee Fook-wo, he said that if a member of such a society is required to occupy a departmental quarter, or is transferred to another part of Hong Kong where he would be unable to make use of his flat, he may with the consent of the Committee of the Society under-lease his flat to another civil servant for one year.

"A member may also, with the prior written approval of the Committee, leave his flat in the care of a 'caretaker' for a period not exceeding six months," he added.

In either case, the Governor's permission was required if the periods exceeded the stipulated length of time.

Mr. Roberts explained that a 'caretaker' is not permitted to make any payment to the member for his occupation of the flat and need not necessarily be a government servant.

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WORKING PARTY TO CONSIDER ACCOMMODATION FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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A Working Party has been appointed by the Governor, on the recommendation of the University and Polytechnic Grants Committee, to consider whether additional accommodation should be provided from public funds for students of the two universities.

The Working Party will be chaired by The Hon. Oswald Cheung, a local member of the UPGC.

The government recently released funds through the UPGC enabling the Chinese University of Hong Kong to erect Romney huts providing temporary hostel space for about 400 students.

The Working Party will now examine the further student accommodation needs, both residential and non-residential, of both the Chinese University and the University of Hong Kong.

A government spokesman said today that the accommodation problem was causing concern to the government, the university authorities and to student bodies alike.

"The problem of hostel accommodation is a difficult one for Hong Kong students, many of whom live in crowded home conditions not conducive to study," he said.

"Students not accommodated by the universities may have to travel considerable distances each day.

"At the Chinese University, the problem has naturally been aggravated by the fact that, for the first time since the establishment of the university 10 years ago, the three constituent colleges are all together at Sha Tin."

/The terms ....

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The terms of reference for the Working Party are: To recommend whether further residential or non-residential accommodation for students should be provided at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the University of Hong Kong, during the next 10 years and, if so, the extent to which public funds should be made available for these purposes.

The Working Party is asked to take into account the following factors:

- \* the amount of public transport serving, and that which could be arranged to serve, the universities;
- \* the availability of existing and further accommodation outside, but within reasonable distance of, the universities;
- \* the minimum standards for residential accommodation for students.

In addition to the Hon. Oswald Cheung, the other members of the Working Party are The Hon. Sir Kenneth Ping-fan Fung, Professor D.M.E. Evans, Mr. Cheng Tung Choy, Mr. S.E. Alleyne and Mr. Yeung Kai Yin.

The spokesman said that, in complying with the terms of reference, it was necessary for the Working Party to collect data on transport and accommodation from the appropriate government departments.

The views of the universities and students will be considered in its deliberations and members of the public are welcome to submit suggestions to the Secretary of the Working Party, U.P.G.C. Secretariat, Chiu Lung Building, 2nd floor, 15-25 Chiu Lung Street, Hong Kong.

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/25 .....

AIM OF NEW TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS IN CENTRAL CLARIFIED

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The Commissioner for Transport, Mr. Brian Wilson, today made it clear that the new Central District traffic arrangements, which were introduced last weekend, were not part of a campaign to phase out Public Light Buses.

He said they were implemented simply to move the minibuses to the outskirts of the heavily congested Central area in an effort to improve traffic flow. The arrangements not only affect minibuses, but also goods vehicles and even the private motorist.

Although there has only been two clear days' operation to test the new arrangements, the indications are that they are working satisfactorily. Mr. Wilson added that they were not something new as similar restrictions had been brought in during the past few years and no doubt further ones will be introduced as the need arises.

Referring to the strike by minibus drivers, the Commissioner said that the action was totally unnecessary and could only have a more harmful effect on themselves. Apart from slightly longer delays, the China Motor Bus Company and the Hongkong Tramways were able to cope with the increased load.

Figures supplied to the Transport Department today by the companies indicate that C.M.B. on Tuesday carried an additional 188,000 passengers, the trams an extra 90,000 and the Kowloon Motor Bus Company 15,000 extra people on its cross-harbour service. At the same time, the Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company introduced two new ferry services along the north shore line to help ease the situation, and these are expected to continue operating after the strike is over.

However, Mr. Wilson reiterated that the mini-bus did have a role to play in the overall public transport field, particularly along feeder routes and to areas which could not be served by larger buses.

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CONSUMER ADVISORY SERVICE

Daily Guide To Wholesale Market Prices And Supplies

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The following prices were realised today (Wednesday) 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<br/>of Supply</u> | <u>Wholesale Price<br/>(\$/catty)</u> |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <u>China Rice</u>      |                                   | <u>Average</u>                        |
| See Mew - old crop     | Good                              | 1.72                                  |
| - new crop             |                                   |                                       |
| S.C.Jien - old crop    | Good                              | -                                     |
| Po Ngai                | Good                              | 1.42                                  |
| Chu Cho                | Good                              | -                                     |
| <u>Thai Rice</u>       |                                   |                                       |
| 100% Whole             | Good                              | 1.52                                  |
| 10-15% Broken          | Good                              | -                                     |
| A1 Super Extra         | Good                              | 1.45                                  |
| A1 Super               | Good                              | 1.37                                  |
| Whole Glutinous        | Good                              | 1.52                                  |
| <u>U.S. Rice</u>       | Good                              | 1.62                                  |
| <u>Australian Rice</u> | Good                              | -                                     |
| <u>Pakistan Rice</u>   | Good                              | -                                     |
| <u>Taiwan Rice</u>     | Good                              | 1.42                                  |

/Supplies and \*\*\*\*\*

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Supplies and Wholesale Prices of Marine Fish

| <u>Species</u>   | <u>Availability<br/>of Supply</u> | <u>Wholesale Price<br/>(\$/catty)</u> |            |                |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------|----------------|
|                  |                                   | <u>High</u>                           | <u>Low</u> | <u>Average</u> |
| Golden Thread    | Normal                            | 4.5                                   | 3.0        | 4.0            |
| Big-Eyes         | Good                              | 2.5                                   | 0.8        | 1.8            |
| Squid            | Normal                            | 6.7                                   | 3.0        | 5.0            |
| Hair-Tails       | Good                              | 1.8                                   | 1.0        | 1.5            |
| Lizard Fishes    | Normal                            | 2.8                                   | 1.0        | 2.0            |
| Croakers         | Normal                            | 2.2                                   | 0.5        | 1.5            |
| Conger-Pike-Eels | Good                              | 2.8                                   | 2.3        | 2.5            |
| Melon Coat       | Limited                           | 2.6                                   | 2.0        | 2.4            |
| Breams           | Normal                            | 4.6                                   | 3.2        | 4.0            |
| Yellow Belly     | Good                              | 1.4                                   | 0.8        | 1.2            |
| Mackerels        | Normal                            | 3.5                                   | 3.0        | 3.3            |
| Red Goat Fish    | Good                              | 3.2                                   | 0.7        | 2.0            |
| Fork-Tail        | Normal                            | 1.5                                   | 1.0        | 1.3            |
| Horse-Head       | Normal                            | 4.8                                   | 3.0        | 4.0            |
| Melon Seed       | Normal                            | 3.3                                   | 1.4        | 2.8            |
| Pomfrets         | Limited                           | 8.5                                   | 8.0        | 8.2            |
| Groupers         | Normal                            | 7.5                                   | 5.5        | 6.5            |
| Yellow Croaker   | -                                 | -                                     | -          | -              |

*Supplies and .....*

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Supplies and Wholesale Prices of Selected Locally Produced Vegetables

| Type                 | High | Low | Availability of Supply | Wholesale Price (\$/catty) |     |         |
|----------------------|------|-----|------------------------|----------------------------|-----|---------|
|                      |      |     |                        | High                       | Low | Average |
| Flowering cabbage    | 2.5  | 0.8 | Limited                | 2.4                        | 0.8 | 1.6     |
| White cabbage        | 1.5  | 0.4 | Limited                | 1.2                        | 0.4 | 0.8     |
| Chinese lettuce      | 1.5  | 0.2 | Normal                 | 1.0                        | 0.2 | 0.6     |
| Chinese Kale         | 1.5  | 0.3 | Good                   | 1.0                        | 0.3 | 0.6     |
| Spring onion         | 1.8  | 0.7 | Normal                 | 1.8                        | 0.7 | 1.4     |
| Spinach              | 1.8  | 0.6 | Normal                 | 1.8                        | 0.6 | 1.4     |
| Water cross          | 1.5  | 0.4 | Normal                 | 1.5                        | 0.4 | 1.0     |
| Leaf mustard cabbage | 1.0  | 0.5 | Scarce                 | 1.0                        | 0.5 | 0.6     |
| Potato               | 1.8  | 1.0 | Limited                | 1.8                        | 1.0 | 1.4     |

Supplies and Wholesale Prices of Pork (Live weight)

| Type | High | Low | Availability of Supply | Wholesale Price (\$/picul) |     |         |
|------|------|-----|------------------------|----------------------------|-----|---------|
|      |      |     |                        | High                       | Low | Average |
| Pork | 2.8  | 2.8 | Good                   | 2.8                        | 2.8 | 2.8     |

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Supplies and Wholesale Prices of Selected Locally Produced Vegetables