



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Friday, February 8, 1974

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Daily guide to wholesale prices and supply of basic food commodities

Release time: 7.45 p.m.

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WATER SERVICE PROCEDURES TO BE STREAMLINED

A new Waterworks Bill, which was published in today's gazette, should lead to improved water service procedures from which both the public and the Waterworks Office will benefit.

The bill will eliminate certain anomalies which have arisen under the existing legislation. As one example, it provides that the registered consumer, who is responsible for the payment of water charges, must either live on the premises in question or own them or manage them.

This provision should help to combat the problem of the absentee consumer who fails either to pay a bill or to see that it is passed on to the appropriate occupant of the premises.

A spokesman for the Waterworks Office pointed out today that the existing ordinance has been in existence since 1938 and has not been revised since then with the exception of very minor amendments. Changes have become necessary in order to bring the legislation up-to-date and to meet present-day circumstances.

While much of the essence of the old ordinance has been retained, it has been re-written as part of the updating process by expanding certain sections and making provision for new requirements.

Among the most important of the new provisions is, firstly, the introduction of a new category of person known as the agent who is required to be responsible for the custody of the communal water services.

In many multi-storey buildings there are plumbing services which are used in common by more than one consumer because there is no individual direct connection from the Waterworks main to the premises.

/Under the

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Under the old ordinance, no one could legally be held responsible for the custody and maintenance of this communal service, but this will now be rectified by the appointment of an agent who will be the person responsible for any charges arising in connection with the maintenance of the common parts of the plumbing service.

He will also be required to inhabit or own the premises or be responsible for managing all or part of them.

It should be a straight-forward matter to apply this requirement to new buildings. But it is expected that the verification of agents to be approved for existing buildings may take some time.

Secondly, there is the provision whereby the consumer must either live on the premises or own them or be responsible for managing them.

Under the existing ordinance, anyone who ceased to occupy, own or manage premises could remain a consumer and this has led to difficulties in collecting bills for water consumed, because the consumers could no longer be traced.

The liability of the consumer or agent will continue until he is either replaced by another consumer or agent or his undertaking is cancelled by the Water Authority, even though he may cease to occupy or to be responsible for the premises.

Thirdly, there is a provision about the mapping of gathering grounds which modifies similar provisions in the old ordinance, so that there will be no limitation on the Crown's right to dispose of mapped land.

/However, lessees

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However, lessees of land falling within a gathering ground may be required to carry out certain drainage or other works so as to protect the water supply from pollution or damage where the lease conditions do not make the lessee subject to such requirements.

The cost of such works will be borne by the government, and a further provision allows for the payment of compensation to lessees who suffer damage or loss as a result of drainage or other works they must carry out in gathering grounds to meet the Water Authority's requirements.

Maps of the gathering grounds will be deposited in the appropriate Land Office and notices that they have been deposited will be published in the Government Gazette. Before the Water Authority maps new gathering grounds or extends existing ones, he will be required to consider preserving the traditional rights of persons to take water for agricultural and domestic purposes from the grounds.

Fourthly, under the old ordinance it was an offence for any work on a plumbing service supplied from a government main to be undertaken without the approval of the Water Authority.

This is no longer the case and minor alterations or repairs may be carried out, provided the materials conform to the requirements of the ordinance. Licensed plumbers will be advised of the type of work which may be so undertaken.

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PROVISIONAL M.T.R. AUTHORITY TO BE SET UP

Published in the government gazette today is a bill providing for the establishment of a Mass Transit Railway Provisional Authority.

The Authority will be set up as an interim measure to continue the work of the Mass Transit Steering Group, pending the creation later this year of a statutory corporation to bring the railway into operation.

The Chairman of the Provisional Authority will be the Financial Secretary, and the membership will be the same as for the Steering Group.

A government spokesman explained today that the Provisional Authority was a necessary step because it could exercise certain executive powers not vested in the constitution of the Steering Group.

For instance, the Steering Group had no legal capacity to employ staff and there was no other suitable agency of the government available for this purpose.

The responsibilities of the Provisional Authority would cover not only appointment of staff, but also arrangements for the supply of services and equipment.

"Although negotiation of the contract for the construction and equipment of the first four stages of the Mass Transit Railway will be the responsibility of the Provisional Authority, it is not proposed that the Authority will enter into a contractual relationship with the selected contractor. This will be a matter initially for the government and eventually for the corporation," the spokesman added.

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HEAVY ROUND OF TRADE NEGOTIATIONS FOR HONG KONG

The Deputy Director of Commerce and Industry (Commercial Relations), Mr. Bill Dorward, today expressed the hope that negotiations under the new set of rules to cover trade in cotton, wool and manmade fibres would lead to a happier situation for the Hong Kong textile industry.

They were generally more favourable from Hong Kong's point of view than those which existed previously, he said.

Mr. Dorward, who was addressing the Rotary Club of Kowloon North, said that the year ahead contains a heavier negotiating schedule than any we have ever known.

It would start next month when an American delegation arrived to renegotiate the Hong Kong/U.S. textiles agreement.

In addition, Hong Kong would be involved in a whole series of negotiations, mainly overseas, with Canada, Austria, Sweden, Norway, possibly Greece, and definitely the European Economic Community.

"This last one promises to be one of the biggest ever, now that the EEC contains nine member states, including Britain," said Mr. Dorward.

As well as textile negotiations, the schedule included international meetings of real significance to Hong Kong, mainly to be held in Geneva.

"These will be concerned with fundamental rules of world trade, and I doubt if there is anywhere in the world where these are more important than right here," he added.

/Mr. Dorward

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Mr. Dorward said that the basic set of rules which have provided Hong Kong with its main protection against unfair and unreasonable treatment are in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

"I don't think I can stress too strongly how important the protection of the GATT has been for Hong Kong," he said.

"If the situation in the 1950s and 1960s had been similar to what it was back in the 1930s when there was no GATT, then I seriously doubt if Hong Kong's success in international trade would have been nearly as great.

"Many of our industries would have found themselves faced with barriers of one kind or another in important markets as soon as they have begun to penetrate those markets."

Mr. Dorward said that, in negotiating trade agreements, Hong Kong -- being a free port -- really had no concessions to give in the normal sense because it does not restrict imports to protect local industry nor does it have a custom tariff.

It was also well known here and abroad that except under the most extreme provocation, Hong Kong would not move away from its free port policy to retaliate.

"I think that the secret of our modest success is that we do our homework very thoroughly and, when we make a deal, we live up to it. As a result Hong Kong has, I believe, a reputation in international trade policy circles for knowing its business and acting with integrity. And believe me that reputation is worth money in the bank."

/Mr. Dorward said

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Mr. Dorward said the community in general was in debt to the members of the Textiles Advisory Board, whose members must rank among the finest public servants, paid or unpaid, in Hong Kong.

"They give freely of their time and advice and often leave their own business interests at short notice to travel across the world with one of our delegations so that, as a negotiation proceeds, we officials can break off and consult our advisers at short notice," he said.

On occasions, he added, the entire board, about 14-strong, has gone off to Washington or London to be available for immediate consultation during major negotiations.

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Note to Editors: Copies of the full text of Mr. Dorward's speech in English are boxed for collection.

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TEACHER EDUCATION ADVISER ON SIX-WEEK VISIT

A British teacher education adviser, Mr. Charles Stephen Griffiths arrived in Hong Kong last night on a six-week visit at the invitation of the Education Department.

Mr. Griffiths, 49, who is the Deputy Principal of the Sidney Webb College in London - a college of education specifically for mature students - will advise the department on the professional training of teachers.

He will have talks with senior officials of the department, including the principals of the three colleges of education.

Arrangements have been made for him to visit primary and secondary schools, the colleges of education, the Morrison Hill Technical Institute and the two universities.

Mr. Griffiths will also review existing plans for the expansion of facilities for the education of teachers, a spokesman for the Education Department said today.

"We believe Mr. Griffiths' advice will help us to plan the future development of teacher education in Hong Kong," the spokesman said.

He pointed out that the Sidney Webb College, which is maintained by the Inner London Education Authority, is a constituent college of the University of London Institute of Education.

On successful completion of their course, students of the College whose ages range from 24 to 50 receive the Certificate in Education of the University of London. It is also possible for them to sit for a Bachelor's Degree in Education if they fulfil the necessary conditions.

/Mr. Griffiths

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Mr. Griffiths was himself a mature student having worked in a variety of occupations before becoming an educationalist.

He joined the Sidney Webb College 12 years ago and has served on the Academic Board of the University of London Institute of Education and he has been chairman of some of its committees.

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DEVOTED SERVICE RECOGNISED

Mr. Kwong Sam-poey, a retired Mechanical Inspector of the Public Works Department, has been awarded the Imperial Service Medal for devoted service.

The award has been approved by Her Majesty the Queen.

Mr. Kwong was in the public service for about 25 years before retiring in December last year.

He joined the government before World War II and was appointed a temporary foreman in the Electric and Mechanical Office in July 1946, working his way up to Mechanical Inspector II.

During the latter part of his service, Mr. Kwong devoted his time to the re-organisation of the Caroline Hill Workshop, earning the respect of his colleagues through his ability and integrity.

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COMPANY FINED FOR STORING DANGEROUS GOODS WITHOUT LICENCE

A Kowloon company, which "jumped the gun" by storing dangerous goods before receiving a licence from the Fire Services Department, was fined \$1,500 by Mr. F.W. Blackwell at Tsuen Wan Magistracy today.

The case arose out of an operation on January 15 by officers of the Fire Prevention Bureau against kerosene hoarders. The company, Hoong Wah Hong and Company Limited, of 322, Sai Yeung Choi Street, pleaded guilty.

Mr. P.R. Millest, prosecuting, told the Court that the company had applied for a dangerous goods licence from the Fire Services Department, but had started to store the goods before it was issued.

"They jumped the gun," said Mr. Millest. He added the Fire Services Department were satisfied that the requirements for storing dangerous goods were being complied with.

Mr. George Willis, representing the defedants, said the offence was "merely technical" in that there was no danger because the storage tanks were of the approved type and the storage area was in an isolated spot away from residential habitation.

"The Fire Services Department will be inspecting the premises soon and I very much doubt that the required licence will be refused," he said.

Imposing the fine, Mr. Blackwell said: "This type of jumping the gun is not to be encouraged."

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BOGUS' LABOUR OFFICER JAILED

A man who impersonated a Labour Department officer in an attempt to trick a factory owner into giving him \$800 was today sentenced to nine months' imprisonment.

The man, Wan Chuen-man, 25, painting worker of Room 1308 at the Tsz Wan Shan Housing Estate, appeared before Mr. T.J. Ryan in San Po Kong Magistracy.

The court was told that Wan telephoned the personnel manager of an electronics factory in To Kwa Wan on December 28, claiming to be an officer of the Labour Department. He asked for \$800 for an advertisement in a publication he said was called the Annual Labour Department Staff Welfare Report.

The personnel manager was suspicious and contacted the Labour Department, who immediately informed the police.

When Wan kept an appointment at the factory to collect the money, he was arrested.

Mr. Ryan sentenced Wan to six months' imprisonment for impersonating a public officer, and nine months for obtaining property by deception, the sentences to be served concurrently.

The Commissioner of Labour, Mr. Ian Price, today praised the factory management for its quick action. "All too often in these cases, factory managements either pay up and complain when it is too late, or, even worse, pay up and say nothing," he said.

/"We regularly

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"We regularly warn factory owners against con-men like these. Every factory owner should be aware that no publication of the Labour Department carries any form of advertisement whatsoever, and no officer of my department is authorised to collect any money in this way.

"Anyone who is approached for money by any person claiming to be an officer of the Labour Department, should immediately contact the Labour Department or the Police.

"My department is at the moment preparing handbills warning factory owners about these cases and telling them what steps to take if they have the slightest suspicion. These handbills will be sent out soon," Mr. Price said.

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DAY OF FUN FOR POSTMEN'S FAMILIES

The Post Office Recreation Club will be playing host to some 1,000 children of post office staff at its annual children's party this Sunday (February 10).

The event will take place at the club's grounds in Caroline Hill Road and will last from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Apart from amusement stalls, donkey rides and games, there will be stage shows by artistes from Radio Hong Kong, RTV and TVB, as well as music performances by the Band of the Royal Hong Kong Regiment, and a road safety demonstration by the Royal Hong Kong Police.

There will also be a lucky draw and prizes will be presented by Mrs. M. Addi, wife of the Postmaster General.

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Note to Editors: Reporters and photographers will be welcomed.

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FUN FAIR FOR 6,000 CHILDREN

One of the biggest Fun Fairs ever to be held for children in Hong Kong this year will take place at the Social Welfare Department's Community Centre in Wong Tai Sin on Sunday (February 10) when some 6,000 children in the district will have a day of fun and games.

This function, to celebrate the Lunar New Year, is an annual affair that has been held since 1963. This year it is organized by the community centre and 20 children and youth welfare agencies and schools in Wong Tai Sin District.

Altogether there will be 16 stalls at which the children will be able to try their luck and skills in a variety of games. Other entertainment will include judo demonstrations, a lion dance, a Chinese classical dance and harmonica and folk music.

The fair will begin at 10 a.m. with the judging of booths to be followed by the opening ceremony which will be officiated by Mrs. Ko Shiu-wah, Chairman of the Children and Youth Division of the Hong Kong Council of Social Service.

Mrs. Henrietta Chen, Warden of the Community Centre and Chairman of the Fun Fair Organizing Committee, said the money raised on this occasion will be incorporated into the welfare fund of the Wong Tai Sin District Federation of the Welfare Services of the Aged.

The Fun Fair will be held in three sessions each with 100 volunteers manning the stalls and scouts and members of the St. John's Ambulance Brigade to look after the children and provide any first-aid service that may be required.

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Note to Editors: You are welcome to cover this Fun Fair on Sunday (February 10) at the Wong Tai Sin Community Centre at, 104 Ching Tak Street, Wong Tai Sin, Kowloon. It will begin at 10 a.m. and last until 6 p.m.

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HONG KONG DAY SPECTACULAR IN LONDON DRAWS BIG CROWD

The Arts Theatre in London's Great Newport Street near China Town was packed on Wednesday night when the Chinese community staged a "Hong Kong Day" spectacular -- one of the highlights of events during the London Tourist Board's month-long "London Entertains" promotions.

The spectators were treated to a two-hour entertainment programme of films and variety shows which included a lion dance, Chinese folk dances and a display of "Kung Fu".

Two lion dance experts who had been flown from Hong Kong to lead the lion procession during the Chinese New Year celebrations again displayed their skill while Chinese students from the London University performed a variety of Chinese folk dances.

Two films about Hong Kong -- "Magic Stone" and "Hong Kong Symphony" -- were shown to the delight of the 350 spectators.

"Hong Kong Day" was a joint effort of the Chinese community, the Hong Kong Tourist Association and the Hong Kong Government Office in London.

The Hong Kong Commissioner, Mr. S.T. Kidd, and the European representative of the HKTA, Mr. Donald Jones, attended the function to give their personal supports.

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CONSUMER ADVISORY SERVICE

Daily Guide To Wholesale Market Prices And Supplies

The following prices were realised today (Friday) 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 Now -- old crop	Good	-
-- new crop		1.84
S.C.Jion -- old crop	Good	-
Po Hgai	Good	-
Chu Cho	Good	-
<u>Thai Rice</u>		
100% Whole	Good	-
10-15% Broken	Good	-
A1 Super Extra	Good	1.52
A1 Super	Good	1.42
Whole Glutinous	Good	-
<u>U.S. Rice</u>	Good	1.74
<u>Australian Rice</u>	Good	-
<u>Pakistan Rice</u>	Good	-
<u>Taiwan Rice</u>	Good	-

/Supplies and

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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	5.2	3.5	4.2
Big-Eyes	Good	2.4	0.7	1.5
Squid	Normal	6.3	3.2	4.5
Hair-Tails	Normal	2.0	1.0	1.6
Lizard Fishes	Normal	2.5	1.0	1.6
Croakers	Good	2.4	0.9	1.5
Conger-Pike-Eels	Normal	3.7	2.7	3.0
Melon Coat	Normal	2.3	1.7	2.0
Breams	Normal	5.5	4.0	5.2
Yellow Belly	Good	1.5	0.8	1.3
Mackerels	Normal	6.5	3.0	4.5
Red Goat Fish	Good	1.95	0.6	1.6
Fork-Tail	Good	1.7	0.9	1.2
Horse-Head	Normal	5.8	3.5	5.0
Melon Seed	Normal	3.8	2.0	3.0
Pomfrets	Scarce	12.0	10.5	11.0
Garoupas	Normal	7.0	5.8	6.5
Yellow Croaker	-	-	-	-

/Supplies and

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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	2.20	1.00	1.60
White cabbage	Limited	1.00	0.40	0.70
Chinese Lettuce	Limited	1.00	0.40	0.70
Chinese Kale	Limited	1.60	0.60	1.20
Spring onion	Normal	0.80	0.30	0.60
Spinach	Normal	1.20	0.40	0.80
Water cross	Normal	1.20	0.40	0.80
Leaf mustard cabbage	Scarce	0.60	0.20	0.40
Tomato	Limited	1.80	0.50	1.40

Supplies and Wholesale Prices of Pork (Live weight)

	<u>Availability of Supply</u>	<u>Wholesale Price</u>
		<u>(\$/ picul)</u>
		(Average)
Pork	Normal	¥290