



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Wednesday, January 30, 1974

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Daily guide to wholesale prices and supply of basic food  
commodities

Release time: 9.00 p.m.

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NEW COUNCIL TO BE SET UP TO ADVISE ON WAYS TO FIGHT GRAFT

Public Widely Represented On New Committees

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The Independent Commission Against Corruption will be assisted in its work by a number of new advisory bodies on which members of the public will be represented.

This was disclosed today by the Colonial Secretary, the Hon. Denys Roberts, when moving the second reading of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Bill in the Legislative Council.

Among the new committees will be an Advisory Council on Corruption. Its task will be to advise the Commissioner Against Corruption on such matters as he may refer to it, and to make recommendations generally about dealing with corruption in Hong Kong.

It will also advise the Commissioner on the engagement of staff and their terms of reference.

The other committees to be set up are:

- \* A new Target Committee with roughly the same terms of reference as the present one which assists the Police Anti-Corruption Office in deciding priorities to be given to investigations. It will probably be under the chairmanship of the Commissioner with a representative of the Attorney General and two or three unofficial members appointed by the Governor.
- \* A Corruption Prevention Committee which will advise on the work of the Commission's Corruption Prevention Department and
- \* A Citizens Advisory Committee on Community Relations which will be broadly representative of the community and will advise on the work of the Community Relations Department.

/"This participation .....

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"This participation will, I hope, remind us all that the eradication of corruption cannot be left entirely to the Commission, but demands widespread and vigorous public support," the Colonial Secretary said.

Mr. Roberts was optimistic that the new Commission would make a real impact on the social problem of corruption, "but we must not demand the impossible of it," he said.

"To clean the stable is the work of years, and we cannot expect results to be swift or dramatic."

He paid tribute to the devoted efforts of many police officers in combating corruption in the past and emphasised that the new Commission should not obscure the fact that the situation could have been much worse had it not been for the skill, hard work and integrity of the police.

Outlining the organisation of the new Commission Mr. Roberts said it was organised into three complementary departments -- Prevention and Administration, Community Relations, and Operations -- because efforts should "not only be directed at the detection and punishment of offenders but also at the social causes and administrative sources of corruption."

He expected the Commission to start operating at about the middle of next month, and both the Prevention and Administration and the Community Relations Departments would be fully operational by August.

The Independent Commission Against Corruption Bill gives the new Independent Commission the necessary powers to start operating.

It sets out the duties of the Commissioner, which are far more than a mere responsibility to investigate complaints of corruption.

/He will .....

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He will examine the practices and procedures of department and public bodies to make corruption more difficult; advise anyone, whether inside or outside the government, on the best ways of eliminating corruption; advise heads of government departments and public bodies of changes in practices and procedure; as well as educate the public and enlist its support.

While he is expected to concentrate his work initially on government departments, it will also be part of his duty to examine undesirable practices in public bodies and private businesses, "which, we should not forget, are also said to suffer from corruption to a disturbing degree," Mr. Roberts said.

Other provisions of the bill empower officers of the Commission to arrest and detain up to 48 hours persons reasonably suspected of committing corruption offences.

As to officers of the Commission themselves, the Commissioner will be able to terminate the services of an officer immediately without giving any reason if there is any suspicion of his loyalty or integrity, or doubt as to his energy and efficiency in work.

However if an officer is seconded to the Commission from the government service, he will be reverted to the government until he is dealt with by the usual disciplinary rules which apply to public officers.

In moving the second reading of the Prevention of Bribery (Amendment) Bill, the Colonial Secretary explained that it aimed at giving effect to recommendations made by Sir Alastair Blair-Kerr in his second report for changes in the law relating to corruption.

In addition, it aimed at transferring the investigatory powers conferred by the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance to the Commissioner or investigating officers of the Independent Commission Against Corruption as appropriate.

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FIXED PENALTIES FOR CERTAIN TRAFFIC OFFENCES

25 Per Cent Saving In Police Time

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The Attorney-General, Mr. John Hobley, said today that the new legislation to streamline traffic offence procedures and make Hong Kong's roads safer would result in a 25 per cent saving in police time as well as save the time of the courts.

Last year, he said, almost half a million police man-hours were taken up in implementing the existing procedures.

"The problem could be solved quite substantially if drivers and vehicle owners showed more consideration and honoured the responsibilities which go with the right to drive and the ownership of a vehicle," he added.

Mr. Hobley was speaking in the Legislative Council when he moved the second reading of the Fixed Penalty (Criminal Proceedings) Bill 1974.

He said the government considered that some change in the existing procedures was essential for two main reasons. The first was that the resources of the Police Force might be used to the best advantage from the point of view of the public, and the second was that the new legislation would ensure that offences against traffic laws could be brought home to offenders swiftly and effectively.

Mr. Hobley said that the Bill had two main points.

He emphasised that Part Two of the Bill, which seeks to introduce a fixed penalty system for a wide range of traffic offences, was concerned entirely with the enforcement procedures. It did not create any new traffic offences and, therefore, did not affect the substantive law.

/Mr. Hobely .....

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Mr. Hobley also pointed out that the evidence required to support a demand for payment of the fixed penalty would obviously not be any less than that required at present because non-payment would be followed by a normal criminal prosecution.

Another point he emphasised was that a person who had been given the opportunity to pay the fixed penalty might decline to do so and contest the charge in the ordinary way.

However, the Attorney-General said that the new system, whilst enabling drivers or owners to be given an opportunity to discharge their liability by payment of a fixed penalty, did not affect the right of the Crown to institute normal criminal proceedings where that was considered appropriate.

Normal criminal proceedings would also be instituted if a person who had been given the opportunity to pay the fixed penalty did not do so, he said.

In such a case, he added, the Bill provided that the Court might order a convicted person to pay costs up to \$500.

Mr. Hobley said Part Three of the Bill concerned the additional deterrent.

The essence of the proposal, he said, was that the persistent offender against traffic laws should lose his right to drive for a specified period.

The period of disqualification will be six months on the first occasion when a driver builds up 15 "demerit" points within a three-year period and 12 months on any subsequent such occasion.

/The Attorney-General .....

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The Attorney-General also moved the second reading of the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill 1974.

The main object of this Bill is to require drivers to have their driving licences with them when they are driving.

Mr. Hobley told the Legislative Council that the proposed requirement was not by any means unique and it was already a legal requirement in a number of countries.

He said it would help the Police Force considerably in the enforcement of the road traffic laws and would, in particular, contribute to the effective operation of the proposed fixed penalty scheme by ensuring that there was a ready means of identifying drivers.

Mr. Hobley said that a new form of driving licence, similar to an identity card, was about to be introduced.

In the light of this, he added, the proposed requirement that driving licences should be carried was thought to be reasonable.

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OFFICIAL STATUS FOR ENGLISH AND CHINESE

Language No Longer A Pretext For Difficulty In Communication

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The Secretary for Home Affairs, the Hon. Denis Bray, today described the Official Languages Bill which gives equal official status to both English and Chinese as "a meaningful statement of purpose."

It demonstrates the government's earnest intention that language itself be no longer used as a pretext for any difficulty of communication between government and the people, he said.

Moving the second reading of the bill, Mr. Bray, pointed out that it was offered to the people of Hong Kong as an act of good faith. "As such, some may regard it as unnecessary. Those who trust us do not need it."

He explained that caution in implementing the recommendation of the Chinese Language Committee to make Chinese official was not due to unwillingness to acknowledge or adopt the free use of either English or Chinese in official dealings.

"We thought that the government should not commit itself to amending the law so as to make Chinese an official language, until an adequate supply of trained interpreters and translators was, or would shortly be, available."

He noted that the total establishment of interpreter/translators by last December was 281, or nearly double the number in July 1971 when the final report of the Chinese Language Committee was published.

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Of the total, 14 posts were at a rank higher than that attainable in 1971, two posts at Chief Interpreter/Translator level were filled recently by distinguished scholars, and in addition to a Chief Interpreter in simultaneous interpretation, the government has the services of two full-time simultaneous interpreters and five part-time simultaneous interpreters.

"Because of this rapid progress, the government believes that the time has come formally to declare Chinese and English as official languages," he said.

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MORE STAFF FOR B.O.O.

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Staff resources are always made available to the Buildings Ordinance Office when it has to deal with unauthorised alterations to buildings which would cause a risk to life, the acting Director of Public Works, the Hon. William Bell, told the Legislative Council today.

He was replying to the Hon. Szeto Wai who had asked when administrative, legal and technical staff would be available to the B.O.O. to enable it to make a start on the control of the more serious unauthorised alterations to buildings.

Mr. Bell said the necessary staff should become available progressively within two years.

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#### STREET PATROLS SCHEME WILL BE STUDIED

Next Phase In Fight Violent Crime Campaign Starts This Summer

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The government will consider proposals for the introduction of district security groups to patrol the areas where they live as part of further measures in the continuing fight against crime.

The scheme was put forward today during the adjournment debate in the Legislative Council by the Hon. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN who suggested that it could be tried out in one or two designated areas to gauge its effectiveness.

"The results might well be worth the effort in the strengthening of the forces of law and order, not to mention the shouldering of a greater measure of co-responsibility and a deeper involvement by the people in improving and making safer the environment in which they and their families live," he said.

He envisaged that the district or area security groups would operate near their homes and membership would be voluntary but based on careful selection. Members would have to undergo some basic training and would go on duty in uniform, equipped with a whistle, torchlight and baton.

As he saw it, members of the security groups would be paid an allowance from the government and would be accompanied on patrol by regular or auxiliary constables who would be armed. Security group members would have no powers of arrest except in certain circumstances.

While commending the government's efforts to make Hong Kong an even safer and more secure place, he felt that more could be done.

/Replying to .....

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Replying to Mr. Cheong-Leen's proposals, the Secretary for Home Affairs, the Hon. Denis Bray, said there was merit in them and they would be considered together with any other proposals to help reduce crime.

Mr. Bray pointed out, however, that something close to Mr. Cheong-Leen's proposed scheme was already being carried out, although on a small scale.

"Many Mutual Aid Committees already employ watchmen in their buildings. The police have launched a training programme for the watchmen, who are already playing a significant part in the prevention of crime," he noted.

And for street patrols, he added, we rely on the regular police and some 7,000 Auxiliaries.

Mr. Bray agreed that street patrols must be trained, uniformed, paid, armed and have powers of arrest but he noted that those young men who wanted to take part in this type of patrol joined the Auxiliary Police.

"I must say I find it difficult if many would want to join patrols which were second-class Auxiliaries," said Mr. Bray, pointing to the fact that they would invariably be less trained, less well turned out, less well paid, less armed and less powerful in law.

"If this was the only comparison between the proposed patrols and the Auxiliaries, the patrols would come off second best."

Mr. Bray assumed that the chief merit of Mr. Cheong-Leen's proposal might be the "local connection," and arising from this he wondered whether better use could be made of the Auxiliaries in the areas they live. He felt that this would be worthwhile and the idea would be studied with the proposed street patrols by the Fight Violent Crime Committee.

Mr. Bray also announced that a further phase of the Fight Violent Crime Campaign would be introduced this summer.

/"The fight .....

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"The fight is not over," he stressed. "There is still far too much robbery, too much mugging by gangs and too much criminal violence for a healthy society."

Suggestions would be welcome, he said, and could be made to the Commissioner of Police or the Secretary for Home Affairs either by letter or telephone and to City District Officers or Divisional Superintendents.

The Fight Violent Crime Campaign, he went on, had demonstrated how wide public response could be and how swift the police could react to cries of help and calls on 999.

"Public involvement not only in the Area Committees but also through over 1,000 Mutual Aid Committees was unprecedented.

"It is this public concern that will in the end be the most effective weapon against violent crime," Mr. Bray said.

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COMMITTEES BEING REVIEWED

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The government is reviewing the functions and terms of reference of both the Land Development Planning Committee and the Industrial Sites Co-ordination Committee.

This was disclosed today by the Secretary for the Environment, the Hon. James Robson, in reply to a question from the Hon. Woo Pak-chuen who wanted to know whether the government would appoint non-official members to the two committees.

Mr. Robson said the suggestion would be carefully looked into, but it seemed unlikely at this stage that the terms of reference of the committees would be such that unofficial representation would be appropriate.

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## SALES OF LAND FOR SPECIAL INDUSTRIES

### Basic Principles Of Government Policy Outlined

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The Secretary for the Environment, Mr. James Robson, said that the government is prepared to consider restrictive user sales of land for special industries when an application is made for suitable land.

However, he pointed out that the industrial processes to be used must be:

- \* first, new to Hong Kong and represent a technological upgrading to a significant degree of an existing industrial process;
- \* second, at a higher level of technology and provide employment opportunities at a general higher level of skill than currently obtains in Hong Kong industry;
- \* third, land-intensive and cannot be carried out in ordinary multi-storey industrial buildings.

Mr. Robson was outlining the basic principles of the policy now being applied for restrictive user sales of land for special industries in reply to a question by Dr. the Hon. S.Y. Chung in the Legislative Council today.

He said that the basic method of sale to be adopted for this land was normal tender procedure on a suitably defined restrictive user basis.

"Recently, however, the Executive Council has agreed to sales by private treaty where the engineering studies necessary to submit a reasoned tender, or the difficulty of specifying what controls are needed to safeguard against pollution, would probably have resulted in there being no sale if tenders had been called for the sites applied for," Mr. Robson said.

In such cases, he added, the premium charged was the full market value of the land restricted to low buildings.

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NEW SAFETY RULES FOR OPERATION OF LIFTING APPLIANCES

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The Legislative Council today approved a new set of regulations to ensure the safe operation of lifting appliances and lifting gear in industrial undertakings.

The regulations - the Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Lifting Appliances and Lifting Gear) Regulations 1974 - were made by the Commissioner of Labour on November 30, 1973 and will come into force on November 1, 1974. They cover the loading, unloading or handling of goods or cargo at any dock, quay, wharf or warehouse.

The Secretary for Social Services, the Hon. Li Fook-kow, said construction work was specifically excluded from the application of the regulations because it was already covered by the more stringent Construction Sites (Safety) Regulations.

In moving the new legislation, Mr. Li told council that Hong Kong's industry was relying more and more on mechanical aids for lifting and lowering materials, machinery and goods. However, this development had in the past caused an increasing number of accidents to persons operating lifting appliances as well as to others working in the vicinity. In 1973 such accidents killed 10 workmen and injured 155, compared to two dead and 72 injured in 1972.

/To safeguard .....

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To safeguard workers' safety, the regulations required lifting appliances and lifting gear to be of sound construction and to be tested and examined by competent examiners before first being taken into use, and then to be re-examined periodically thereafter. Mr. Li said such appliances and gear must not be used for loads greater than their maximum safe working loads, which must be legibly marked on them.

In addition, lifting appliances must be fitted with efficient brakes to prevent suspended loads from falling.

"The regulations will come into effect in nine months' time to allow time for management to make the necessary preparations," Mr. Li said.

The regulations also stipulate special safety precautions appropriate to the use of many different types of equipment. Any person who contravenes the regulations shall be liable on conviction to fines ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000.

"The penalty clauses apply to owners of industrial undertakings and competent examiners in breach of their responsibilities, as well as to workers who wilfully and without reasonable cause endanger themselves or others," Mr. Li said.

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RETURN OF ARMY LAND

Negotiations In Advanced Stage

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Negotiations are well advanced for the release of some 56 acres of land presently occupied by the British Forces at Sham Shui Po, Chatham Road and Argyle Street, the Secretary for Security, the Hon. Peter Lloyd, announced today.

"Approximately 60,000 square feet of land at Victoria Barracks was transferred by the military authorities recently, and a further 130 acres at Lei Yu Mun suitable for use as a public park will be released as soon as necessary fencing has been completed," he told the Legislative Council.

Mr. Lloyd was replying to a question by the Hon. Roger Lobo who wanted to know whether any decision had been reached on the release of urban army camp areas for other use.

The Secretary for Security explained that the policy agreed between the government and the British Forces was that property which they no longer needed in urban areas would be released.

However, usually alternative accommodation had first to be provided elsewhere, he added.

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REGULATIONS ON CRECHES AND NURSERIES BEING CONSIDERED

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New legislation relating to creches and nurseries will soon be introduced into the Legislative Council, the Secretary for Social Services, the Hon. Li Fook-kow, said today.

In reply to a question from the Hon. Mrs. Joyce Symons, he said drafts of the Child Care Centres Bill and regulations were being considered by the departments concerned, and he anticipated that the bill would be placed before the council during its current session.

The Hong Kong Council of Social Service and the Social Welfare Advisory Committee would also be consulted before hand.

In answer to another question from Mrs. Symons, Mr. Li said it was not intended to issue a report on investigations into the operations of the nursery where an outbreak of measles occurred recently.

"The nursery in question closed of its own accord on the day after the cases of measles came to light," he said.

"The operator has now been located and has been charged in the courts with two counts of cruelty to children under section 27(1) of the Offences Against the Person Ordinance."

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RESEARCH INTO ACUPUNCTURE

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The Director of Medical and Health Services, Dr. the Hon. Gerald Choa, said today he would be communicating with the heads of clinical units in government hospitals to find out if they were conducting research on acupuncture.

He was replying in the Legislative Council to the Hon. Hilton Cheong-Leen who had asked, since acupuncture had been practised in Hong Kong for some time, what kind of, and how much, research had been or would be carried out by the government on that subject.

Dr. Choa said: "I am afraid I cannot answer this question now because I did not have sufficient time to communicate with all heads of the clinical units in government hospitals.

"As soon as information regarding what research, if any, they are carrying out, or will be carrying out, on acupuncture is available, I shall give the honourable member a written reply."

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ROLE OF QUALIFIED PHARMACIST

Dr. Choa Explains Conditions Laid Down By Pharmacy And Poisons Board

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The Director of Medical and Health Services, Dr. the Hon. Gerald Choa, told the Legislative Council today it was not possible for the government to ensure that there were enough pharmacies in each district of Hong Kong "because this is in the sector of private enterprise."

He was replying to a question by the Hon. Wilfred Wong who had asked if the government would make sure that there were enough chemist shops with qualified pharmacists operating in each district of Hong Kong to meet the needs of each district for prescriptions for medicine.

Dr. Choa explained that one of the conditions laid down by the Pharmacy and Poisons Board was that listed sellers of Part II poisons were required to have their premises "at least 100 yards away from the shops of authorised sellers, who may sell Part I poisons as well."

In that context, the role of a qualified pharmacist was to dispense Part I poisons as well as antibiotics on a retail basis.

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INSPECTION OF PRIVATELY-RUN X-RAY ESTABLISHMENTS

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Anyone in possession of x-ray apparatus must apply for a licence from the Radiation Board, and this is not granted without an inspection of the equipment and premises by the Senior Physicist of the Medical and Health Department and his staff.

In addition, such an inspection includes ensuring that proper and adequate supervision is available on the premises during the hours the apparatus is in use.

The Director of Medical and Health Services, Dr. the Hon. Gerald Choa, gave the Hon. Wilfred Wong these assurances today in the Legislative Council when Mr. Wong rose to ask whether the government would make a survey of privately-run x-ray establishments to ensure that their equipment was properly supervised and maintained.

Dr. Choa said that of 533 annual licences issued so far, the majority were for operating the equipment, but some were for storage, repair, and sales.

Further inspections were made from time to time, but staff and facilities did not permit regular, comprehensive oversight of every establishment in Hong Kong.

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WRITTEN TESTS FOR TAXI DRIVERS SPEEDED UP

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Processing of written tests for taxis and public cars have been stepped up this year to a maximum of 300 each day, with a waiting time of three weeks.

The Secretary for the Environment, the Hon. James Robson, told Legislative Council today that there were 12,180 candidates on the waiting list for the test at the end of 1973.

However, special arrangements have been made for drivers of Kowloon Motor Bus and China Motor Bus so that they can take their road tests immediately without delay, he added.

He was replying to a question from the Hon. James Wu as to the number of outstanding cases for driving tests for each category of road vehicles and the waiting time involved.

In regard to the written test for driving licences for private cars or motor-cycles, Mr. Robson said there were 55,260 candidates - 12,600 on Hong Kong Island and 42,660 in Kowloon - and waiting time varied from seven months to one year.

For their road tests, candidates have to wait from three to eight months. At the end of last year, there was a total of over 49,000 candidates waiting to take the test for either private cars or motor-cycles.

There was a total of 10,200 candidates waiting to take the road test for light buses - 1,890 on Hong Kong Island and 8,310 in Kowloon. Waiting times were 20 months and 43 months respectively.

For the road test for goods vehicles weighing two tons and above, there were 1,060 candidates on Hong Kong Island (waiting time eleven months) and 6,870 in Kowloon (waiting time 34 months).

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HOUSING SURVEY IN APRIL

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The Research and Statistics Section of the Housing Department will start surveys on public and private housing conditions this April in co-operation with the Census and Statistics Department.

"This Section started work last August, to supplement the very useful work being done by the Social and Housing Section of the Census and Statistics Department in assembling data on public and private housing," the Secretary for Housing, the Hon. Ian Lightbody, told council in answer to a question from the Hon. Hilton Cheong-Leen.

"The initial effort will concentrate on basic information needed to up-date the 10-Year Public Housing target," said Mr. Lightbody. It will at the same time gauge the tenants' opinions on the various aspects of estate life and estate amenities.

The Research and Statistics Section has been in close touch with the Chinese University, post-secondary colleges and a prominent welfare organisation.

It has also brought about exchange of housing data and co-operation in social surveys carried out by these institutions, Mr. Lightbody said.

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#### NEW WHOLESALE MARKET FOR IMPORTED VEGETABLES

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A new wholesale market in Kowloon for the handling of imported vegetables will commence operation on Friday (February 1).

The newly constructed market is located at Hing Wah Street, Cheung Sha Wan. It will be managed by the Agriculture and Fisheries Department.

It is anticipated that daily some 400 to 500 metric tons of vegetables - representing about half of the total imports - will pass through the new market.

This will reduce the distribution costs of imported vegetables for consumption in Kowloon and the New Territories, a spokesman for the department said. It will also relieve the present congestion at the Kennedy Town Wholesale Market on Hong Kong Island where, up until now, all imported vegetables have been received.

An area of 120,000 square feet has been used to provide all the necessary basic marketing facilities. These include waterfrontage for the berthing of vessels and the unloading of vegetables, parking space for inward and outward delivery lorries, trading space for primary and secondary wholesalers, offices for the importers, temporary storage, and a spacious canteen for the convenience of all market users.

Ample access way has been left for the movement of produce by means of mechanical platform trucks.

This market for the sale of imported vegetables is of a temporary nature -- pending the completion of a permanent wholesale market complex on a proposed reclamation nearby.

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It is intended that the future market complex should provide for centralised wholesale facilities for dealing with imported vegetables, fruit, poultry, fresh-water fish, crustacea and flowers, the spokesman said.

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#### LAWS ON PYRAMID SELLING BEING CONSIDERED

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The government recognises the dangers which pyramid or multi-level selling schemes can present and is considering introducing legislation in this respect, the Attorney General, the Hon. John Hobley, said today.

Replying to a question by the Hon. Peter Williams, the Attorney General revealed that a bill was circulated at the beginning of this month for the consideration of the government departments concerned.

He emphasised, however, that the bill "represents initial thinking only because there are two distinct ways in which the matter can be tackled."

One, he explained, was to regulate the operation of pyramid schemes, as had been done in the United Kingdom by the Fair Trading Act, and the other was to prohibit them altogether.

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AMENDMENTS TO SECURITIES BILL OUTLINED

No Change In Basic Principles

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The Financial Secretary, the Hon. Philip Haddon-Cave, today outlined a series of proposed amendments to the Securities Bill during the committee stage of the proceedings.

The amendments related to Parts I to VII of the bill and were concerned almost entirely with clarification and application. None involved a retreat from the basic principles of the bill.

No vote was taken on any of the proposed amendments, and the Financial Secretary said he would deal with the proposed amendments to the remaining parts of the bill before the council's next meeting.

Commenting on the proposed amendments to Parts I to VII, Mr. Haddon-Cave said they were the result of lengthy meetings between the Commissioner for Securities and principal interested parties, including ad hoc groups of Unofficial Members of the Legislative Council.

"Every one of the large number of comments and suggestions which had been received was carefully considered and discussed," he said, but he was fully conscious that the Securities Bill could not be definitive as it dealt with an industry which was constantly evolving.

He envisaged that more problems would arise in drawing up and implementing the rules and regulations before the various sections of the bill could be brought into operation, "but all these difficulties can be overcome if those concerned with the securities industry will accept the bill in a spirit of co-operation and with the determination to make it work."

/After some .....

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After some initial uneasiness, there was now a wide measure of support within the industry, he said, although some opposition still lingered in one or two limited quarters despite the great effort which has been made to meet all reasonable objections.

The Financial Secretary was certain, however, that those concerned would eventually take a broader and longer view.

Any legislation, he pointed out, inevitably caused some inconvenience to some of the parties concerned.

"But we must bear in mind that the main purpose of this bill is to give better protection to the large body of investors, and we have to weigh the benefit to these against the inconvenience to a much smaller number of people, particularly as much of this inconvenience will be of a temporary nature."

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/26 .....

DIFFERENCE OF AIR MAIL RATES

Between Hong Kong And United States

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The Financial Secretary, the Hon. Philip Haddon-Cave, said today that different postage rates between one country and another was the result of different charges made by airlines for carrying mail.

He was replying to a question by Dr. the Hon. Sze-yuen Chung who asked why it cost HK\$2 to send an airmail letter to the United States while the rate in the reverse direction was only US\$0.21 (HK\$1.05).

Mr. Haddon-Cave said: "It is common to find dissimilar postage rates between one country and another, depending on the direction in which the mail was travelling."

Indeed, he said, a number of examples could be quoted of countries to which the air mail rates from Hong Kong were substantially cheaper than were rates in the reverse direction.

He said: "The major reason for these discrepancies is the different charges made by airlines for carrying mail."

Many countries, Mr. Haddon-Cave added, had their own national airlines and it was not unusual for these airlines to carry mail originating in their own countries at very much cheaper rates than they charged to carry other countries' mail, and in some cases at lower rates than those charged by airlines of other countries.

"This is the case with the United States' airlines, which are paid by the U.S. Post Office only a fraction of the charge which they make to the Hong Kong Post Office for carrying mail from Hong Kong to the United States." he said.

/He pointed .....

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He pointed out, however, that the public in Hong Kong had the option of using the aerogramme service to the United States at a cost of HK\$0.50. This was cheaper than US\$0.15 (or Hong Kong 75 cents) charged by the United States in the reverse direction.

The Financial Secretary said: "It is worth noting that, notwithstanding the considerable cost advantage enjoyed by the United States Post Office in the carriage of its air mail, it operates overall at a considerable financial loss.

"On the other hand, the Hong Kong Post Office covers its costs."

Mr. Haddon-Cave felt sure that Honourable Members would not wish to add the Post Office to the many other burdens to be borne by the general taxpayer.

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BILLS PASSED

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Five bills passed their third and final readings in the Legislative Council today.

They were: the District Court (Amendment) Bill, the Magistrates (Amendment) Bill, the Training Centres (Amendment) Bill, the Drug Addiction Treatment Centres (Amendment) Bill, and the Temporary Restriction of Building Development (Pok Fu Lam and Mid-Levels) (Amendment) Bill.

Seven other bills were read for the first time. These were the Independent Commission Against Corruption Bill, the Prevention of Bribery (Amendment) Bill, the Hong Kong Export Credit Insurance Corporation (Amendment) Bill, the Fixed Penalty (Criminal Proceedings) Bill, the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill, the Official Languages Bill, and the Prisons (Amendment) Bill.

Reports tabled at the meeting included the annual report by the Director of Civil Aviation for the year 1972/73 and the Director of Audit's Report and Certificate on the Hong Kong government's accounts for the year ended March 31, 1973.

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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 of Supply</u>	<u>Wholesale Price (\$/catty)</u>
		<u>Average</u>
<u>China Rice</u>		
See Mow -- old crop	Good	1.84
-- new crop		
S.C.Jion -- old crop	Good	1.74
Po Ngai	Good	1.47
Chu Cho	Good	1.37
<u>Thai Rice</u>		
100% Whole	Good	1.74
10-15% Broken	Good	-
A1 Super Extra	Good	1.52
A1 Super	Good	1.42
Whole Glutinous	Good	1.82
<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	Limited	5.3	3.5	4.0
Big-Eyes	Limited	3.0	0.8	2.0
Squid	Limited	6.0	2.5	4.5
Hair-Tails	Normal	2.5	0.8	1.7
Lizard Fishes	Limited	2.9	1.0	1.8
Croakers	Normal	2.5	0.75	1.6
Conger-Pike-Eels	Good	3.2	2.6	3.0
Melon Coat	Good	2.0	1.3	1.7
Breams	Limited	5.0	4.0	4.6
Yellow Belly	Limited	2.5	0.9	1.6
Mackerels	Good	4.8	3.0	3.8
Red Goat Fish	Normal	1.5	0.8	1.0
Fork-Tail	Normal	1.4	0.9	1.3
Horse-Head	Limited	6.5	3.8	5.0
Melon Seed	Limited	3.2	1.6	2.2
Pomfrets	Scarce	10.5	9.0	10.0
Garoupas	Scarce	9.0	7.0	8.0
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	Good	0.8	0.2	0.6
White cabbage	Good	0.3	0.1	0.2
Chinese Lettuce	Good	0.4	0.1	0.3
Chinese Kale	Good	0.6	0.1	0.4
Spring onion	Good	1.0	0.2	0.6
Spinach	Good	0.5	0.1	0.3
Water cross	Good	0.8	0.2	0.5
Leaf mustard cabbage	Scarce	0.5	0.2	0.3
Tomato	Normal	1.0	0.3	0.7

Supplies and Wholesale Prices of Pork (Live weight)

	<u>Availability of Supply</u>	<u>Wholesale Price (\$/ picul)</u>
		(Average)
Pork	Normal	285

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