



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Thursday, October 19, 1972

COMPREHENSIVE WHITE PAPER ON SOCIAL WELFARE

The Government will bear the major portion of an estimated \$725 million total expenditure on vastly-expanded social welfare during the remainder of the 1970s if all the proposals in the white paper on social policy, tabled in the Legislative Council yesterday, are finally implemented.

The Governor, Sir Murray MacLehose, in a reference to the white paper in his review of Hong Kong affairs, said it was a draft only because not all of its proposals had yet been accepted, and he invited public comments before final decisions were taken.

The comprehensive nature of the proposals put forward make the white paper -- and a five-year plan of implementation which is still to be published -- the most important step forward in social welfare in the history of Hong Kong.

The two documents are the joint work of the Social Welfare Department, the Hong Kong Council of Social Service, and voluntary agencies, and represent the conclusions of all concerned -- a significant partnership because only in this way is the real, and continuous, improvement in the quality of life of the people of Hong Kong possible.

/The proposals

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The proposals cover a balanced social security system, community development with emphasis on youth and the family, facilities for the disabled, aid to the elderly, rehabilitation of young offenders and probationers, and effective supporting services in training, planning, research and evaluation.

On social security, the white paper recommends emergency relief to victims of disasters, a means-tested public assistance scheme to guarantee an acceptable level of income to those in the community who have the least money, and in particular, an outright regular monthly payment -- that is, without a means test -- to assist the "most vulnerable groups" in the community.

With regard to the latter, the white paper proposes that the first groups to be helped without a means test should be the severely disabled and those over 75 years of age. Then, if the scheme is successful, it should be extended to other groups, such as widowed mothers with young children and the chronically sick.

On community development, the white paper wants facilities extended so that they become available to the population as a whole.

To this end it recommends a comprehensive network of community and social centres, and estate welfare buildings and community halls in all areas in the Colony.

It proposes the appointment of community and youth officers to coordinate community services in each of the 15 urban and rural districts, with community workers employed by voluntary agencies operating at the street, or block, level.

/Above all,

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Above all, the white paper recommends the doubling of children's and youth centres now in existence, and the extent of their programmes and activities.

The immediate objective is to have one children's and one youth centre for every 50,000 of the population. The longer-term aim is to have such centres for every 20,000 of the population.

On family welfare, the white paper seeks to improve the quality and scope of current activities so that assistance is readily available to any family in need of help. In particular, the proposals recommend control and improvement in the standards of care in children's day care centres through legislation, inspection, advice, assistance and training.

Of the disabled, the white paper urges that every handicapped person be given assistance in pre-vocational training, or vocational training, or sheltered work, so that he, or she, has the opportunity to achieve and maintain a position of social and economic independence in the community.

The white paper recommends that the elderly be encouraged, by special services, to remain independent as long as possible. For those who need particular care, it proposes residences, where necessary, and services in the home, for example, help to keep the home clean, where practicable.

On probation and correctional services, the white paper recommends facilities that will enable the young offender to rehabilitate himself within the community.

Such a programme will need supporting services in the fields of training, planning, research and evaluation. The white paper accordingly recommends measures that will enable the objectives to be achieved as fully as possible.

/In particular,

In particular, it recommends the setting up of an institute for social work training below the university level.

If approved, the total capital cost of the proposals in the five-year period between 1973-78 would be approximately \$50 million. The major proportion of this expenditure would fall on the Government. The recurrent cost to the Government would rise from about \$122 million a year in 1973 to \$155 million in 1978. The total expenditure over the five years would be about \$725 million.

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NEW RURAL CLINIC AND MATERNITY HOME FOR SHA TAU KOK

A new standard rural clinic and maternity home is to be built at Shek Chung Au, in Sha Tau Kok, New Territories.

It is to replace the existing clinic within the closed area of Sha Tau Kok which is operating from rented premises and does not have maternity facilities.

The new clinic is to be located on a site opposite the existing Sha Tau Kok Police Station. It will rise to two storeys and will provide an out-patient clinic on the ground floor including a dispensary.

On the second floor, there will be a maternity ward with seven beds and a delivery room. There will also be quarters for a midwife, a nurse and minor staff.

Construction is expected to start in December this year and the work will be completed in ten months.

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LABOUR ADVISORY BOARD ELECTION

The Labour Department is to hold an election to choose two candidates for nomination as workers' representatives to be appointed by the Governor as members of the Labour Advisory Board for next year.

The election, to be held by secret ballot, will take place in the Industrial Safety Training Centre of the Labour Department's Kowloon Regional Office on the third floor of the Canton Road Government Offices at 10 a.m. on Saturday.

All registered workers' trade unions are invited to take part in the election.

The Secretary of the Board, Mrs. Soo Mok Sau-ha, said: "Any registered workers' trade union wishing to vote may send a representative to attend the election."

The representative must be in possession of a letter of authorisation from the Executive Committee of his union and should also carry a copy of a circular letter of October 10, 1972 from the Labour Department on the subject.

Mrs. Soo said that 14 candidates have been nominated to stand for election and a list of these candidates has been sent to all workers' trade unions for information.

The Labour Advisory Board is composed of four employers' representatives and four workers' representatives with the Commissioner of Labour as chairman.

Two of the workers' representatives are elected by registered trade unions and two are selected for appointment by the Governor.

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TRAFFIC RE-ROUTING AT TWO SECTIONS OF ROADS IN KOWLOON

New traffic arrangements will be introduced at two sections of roads in Kowloon from 10 a.m. on Saturday (October 21) to improve the traffic flow.

The section of Wing Lung Street between Shun Ning Road and Po On Road in Shamshuipo is to be re-routed one-way towards Po On Road.

The section of Dundas Street between Canton Road and Shanghai Street will be re-routed one-way eastbound.

Appropriate traffic signs will be erected to guide motorists.

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COMMEMORATIVE POSTAGE STAMP ON SALE TOMORROW

Members of the public are reminded today that the new \$1 postage stamp to commemorate the opening of the cross harbour tunnel will be on sale tomorrow (Friday) at all post offices.

Chairman of the Cross Harbour Tunnel Company Ltd., Mr. J.L. Marden, will purchase the first stamp at the General Post Office, Pedder Street, at 8 a.m. tomorrow.

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Note to Editors: You are welcome to have the event covered.

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SAU MAU PING WELFARE BUILDING TO CELEBRATE THIRD ANNIVERSARY

A series of festivities to mark the third anniversary of the Sau Mau Ping (Central) Estate Welfare Building will be held in its premises tomorrow.

Apart from its celebrative role, the function is designed to publicise the services rendered by the seven member agencies of the Welfare Building so that the local residents can make maximum use of the services available.

The programmes will comprise an opening speech by the Rev. Anderson of the Ping Ngon Youth and Service Centre. After that, seven resident representatives of each agency will officiate at the ceremony.

Highlight of the evening will be an open-air fun fair at the building's car park and a film show on family planning, public health and cartoon in the hall.

More than 1,000 local residents are expected to share the fun at the free occasion.

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Note to Editors: You are welcome to have the ceremony covered. It will start at 8 p.m. tomorrow evening.

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FIRST GROUP UNDER REHOUSING SCHEME BEING INTERVIEWED

The first group of tenants involved in the Shek Kip Mei Rehousing Scheme is expected to move into their new homes in Pak Tin Estate on November 1, this year.

Officers of the Housing Authority today (Thursday) began their first interviews with individual applicants at the Pak Tin Estate Office.

These families will be offered tenancy at the Estate next Tuesday if they are found to be meeting the requirements of the Housing Authority.

The Housing Manager of Pak Tin Estate, Mr. Fung Tung, said that the idea of an interview was to find out the applicants' family circumstances and their individual needs to ascertain their suitability for tenancy.

"It has been planned for my staff to conduct some 80 interviews daily," he said.

"Taking interviews this way with the 1,800 families involved in the present phase of the Shek Kip Mei Rehousing Scheme can be completed in about one month and the last family can move into the estate before the end of the year."

One of the first householders interviewed this morning was Mrs. Lau Wing Fat of Block 26 of Shek Kip Mei Resettlement Estate.

Mrs. Lau, mother of six sons and one daughter, said she was glad that she could now move into a larger and better flat.

"Although the rent for Pak Tin is higher, it is considered reasonable and within our means as six of my children are working," Mrs. Lau said.

/Mrs. Lau's

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Mrs. Lau's sons and daughter are working in garment factories. Mrs. Lau has applied for a flat for four people and another for five.

She said she had applied for a low-cost housing flat two years ago but was not successful.

"I am glad that I can now get one so near to my present living place," Mrs. Lau said.

The Shek Kip Mei Relhousing Operation Office has received a total of 1,720 applications for flats at Pak Tin since the rehousing scheme was put into full swing one week ago.

The number represents just over 90% of the total number of application forms the Resettlement Department has sent out to tenants involved in the scheme.

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OBLIGATIONS AND ENTITLEMENTS OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN RECENT INCIDENT

The Labour Department today drew the attention of employers, injured workers and dependents of victims involved in the recent gas explosion incident in Causeway Bay area to their respective obligations and entitlements under the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance.

A department spokesman said officers of the department's Workmen's Compensation Unit were helping dependants of the deceased fireman and salesgirl and those injured in the accident to obtain workmen's compensation.

He stressed that all non-manual workers earning \$1,500 or less a month and all manual workers irrespective of their earnings are entitled to compensation under the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance if they suffered injury by accident arising out of and in the course of employment.

He added that the employers concerned should notify the department on prescribed forms of any injury to their workers within seven days after the accident and that they should make periodical payments to the injured workers on their normal pay-days during the period of temporary incapacity.

He pointed out that employers, injured workmen and dependants of victims can obtain further information about their respective obligations and entitlements under the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance from the following offices of the Workmen's Compensation Unit of the Labour Department:-

- * New Rodney Building, Ground floor, Queensway, Hong Kong.
(H-249081 ext. 97)
- * Canton Road Government Offices, 5th floor, Canton Road,
Kowloon. (K-669014) (K-688856) (K-688626).

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CLOSURE ORDERS ON TWO CONDUIT ROAD BUILDINGS TO BE RAISED

The Building Authority announced today that the closure orders on Nos. 53 & 55 Conduit Road were to be raised tomorrow (Friday).

In a statement issued this afternoon, the Principal Government Building Surveyor said he was now satisfied that these two buildings, which were closed mainly as a precautionary measure following the landslide in the Po Shan/Conduit Road area in June, were no longer threatened and therefore notices of the expiry of the order were posted on the premises today.

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Release time: 7.00 p.m.