



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Tuesday, April 10, 1973

CONTENTS

	<u>Page No.</u>
Inauguration of the reconstituted Urban Council by the Governor	1
The Board of Education is to discuss the proposals of the Joint Secretariat of Thirteen Educational Bodies	4
The land sale programme for the next six months has been announced	10
No reprieve for man convicted for murder	12
Measures are being taken to prevent the importation of smallpox into Hong Kong	13
A second manpower survey of the building and civil engineering industry is to be held later this month	15
Tunnelling tests for the Mass Transit Railway system are to start in May	17
Officers of the Immigration Department will stage a passing-out parade this Friday	18
New traffic arrangements are to be introduced in Kowloon Tong ..	18

Tuesday, April 10, 1973

- 1 -

GOVERNOR INAUGURATES NEW URBAN COUNCIL

Describes Council's Work As Vital

The reconstituted Urban Council has a vital role to play in the Government's overall plan to improve the quality of life of the people of Hong Kong.

This was the message given by the Governor, Sir Murray MacLehose, at the inauguration of the new Urban Council this (Tuesday) afternoon.

"The work of this Council, and the particular field it covers," Sir Murray said, "has always struck me as of crucial importance."

He said he was amazed by people who deprecated the Council's role or claimed that it had no importance or effect on the daily lives of the community.

"On the contrary, much of what it handles is what matters most to many people for much of the time."

The Governor cited hygienic food and restaurants, clean streets, parks and playgrounds as some examples of the important responsibilities of the Council.

He fully agreed with the Council that playgrounds were of immense social importance and that there were too few of them, and described the swimming complexes managed by the Urban Council as being "amongst the finest civic amenities in the world."

The Governor noted that the Council's list of appointed activities was now much longer and he believed that the new arrangements for the Council would give it new financial and administrative freedom.

/He said:

Tuesday, April 10, 1973

- 2 -

He said: "I like the verve and vitality of the Council and its members, and I am sure you are now going to make things hum in your sector."

Turning to the administration, the Governor revealed that plans were already in hand or being prepared for social advances on a broad front.

These included:

- * Education, particularly the provision of universal secondary education and the overhaul of the examination system which this will permit, and a considerable expansion of technical education.
- * A vastly expanded housing programme based on a new concept and directed by a new unified authority with a single Government department working to it.
- * A phased expansion of the social services so as to progressively provide a system of social security underpinned by a specially trained cadre of professional social workers.

In addition, the reconstituted Medical Development Advisory Board would report by the end of July on plans for further development in the next 10 years, including the enormous programme necessary to provide facilities for the new towns and New Territories and to consolidate and improve what has already been achieved in the urban areas.

Once these plans mature, and if they were accompanied by decisive advances within responsibilities of the Urban Council, the Governor said, "we should find ourselves on the edge of really significant new developments."

/Broadly

Tuesday, April 10, 1973

- 3 -

Broadly speaking, he added, Hong Kong would then have the assurance that, provided its prosperity lasted, some of the existing major defects would be eliminated within a measurable time.

It would also mean that "a term has been put to the makeshift conditions forced upon Hong Kong by the influx of population in the Fifties and early Sixties."

The Governor said there were of course many other problems to be tackled, including crime and corruption, narcotics, traffic and off-street parking, the need for proper markets for hawkers and the need to coordinate the solution of these interconnected problems.

"Above all," Sir Murray said, "there is a need to maintain the expansion of the prosperity of this city on which all else depends."

The Governor concluded by assuring the Council of his interest and support, and said he was sure that if all parts of government worked together "Hong Kong can achieve the better life we all want, and achieve it within a decade."

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Note to Editors: Copies of the full text of the Governor's speech are distributed separately in the G.I.S. Press boxes this evening.

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/4

Tuesday, April 10, 1973

4

BOARD OF EDUCATION TO DISCUSS JOINT
SECRETARIAT PROPOSALS

Commenting further on the statement issued by the Joint Secretariat of Thirteen Educational Bodies on Saturday, a Government spokesman said today:

Education is one of the Government's top priorities. This was made very clear by the Governor in his speech at the opening session of the Legislative Council last October.

His Excellency said that the Government planned "free primary education for all, followed by secondary education for all to the age of 14; the latter to include an expanded pre-vocational or technical stream."

"At that point", he added, "there will be on the one hand greatly expanded facilities for further secondary education leading to the Certificate of Education; on the other, young people will be able to choose between going into industry, or acquiring a qualification in a technical institute."

In his budget speech in March, the Financial Secretary emphasised this priority by saying that "expenditure on education does and will continue increasingly to dominate expenditure", pointing out that it now absorbed 19 per cent of total expenditure compared with 14 per cent ten years ago.

The Joint Secretariat's concern with these issues has much in common with that of the Government, and the recommendations which appear in their statement warrant serious consideration.

/These

Tuesday, April 10, 1973

- 5 -

These recommendations cover the expansion of secondary education, the abolition of bi-sessionalism in primary schools, the position of teachers in private schools and the ratio of teachers to classes.

The general objectives behind these proposals are in line with the Government's policy on education.

The reconstituted Board of Education, appointed in January of this year, is charged with advising the Governor on all educational matters. In particular, it has been given the task of taking a new look at the educational and examination system that will be appropriate to the conditions of expanded secondary education envisaged by the Government. It will also advise on the speed with which this can be implemented.

The Board has publicly asked for comments and suggestions from all interested parties to help them in their deliberations.

The Chairman of the new Board, Mr. P.C. Woo, said tonight that suggestions from the Joint Secretariat had already been noted by the Board and would be carefully considered.

"We would be happy to consider further representations from the Joint Secretariat and to discuss the present proposals with them if necessary", Mr. Woo added.

The Board's report will be submitted by August of this year and will then be published as a "Green Paper" for public discussion and comment.

/The Board

Tuesday, April 10, 1973

- 6 -

The Board will be advising on the best way of achieving, within the shortest time practicable, the objectives of providing three years of secondary education for all in the 12-14 year age group, and of doubling places for the full five-year course.

In making their recommendations the Board will obviously be concerned both with quality and quantity and will have to take into account the availability of staff and buildings amongst other factors.

On the question of the Secondary Schools Entrance Examination, nobody likes a system whereby the whole of a child's secondary education is determined by his performance in one afternoon.

As more secondary school places become available the secondary schools entrance examination will be made easier and will become less critical.

The Board of Education will be advising on the examinations system in general, and in particular will advise on the system of allocation to be adopted once there is a secondary school place available for every child.

Obviously there will need to be a system of placing children in the type of secondary school most suited to their talents.

We shall wish to achieve this as quickly as possible, but we cannot put a date to it until the Board has examined all the implications.

Educationally, whole-day sessions are clearly more desirable than the bi-sessional system now practised in primary schools.

We shall change over to whole-day sessions in government primary schools as circumstances permit.

/A start

Tuesday, April 10, 1973

- 7 -

A start has already been made in one government primary school which has been converted to whole-day sessions to allow pupils more time for extra-curricular activities.

This scheme is to be extended in September of this year, when seven more primary schools will also operate whole-day sessions.

The Board of Education has also been asked to advise on the degree of bi-sessionalism it considers appropriate in the short and long term in secondary schools.

The Government shares the concern of the Joint Secretariat for the position of teachers in private schools.

Much has been done for teachers in private non-profit making secondary schools. These teachers already benefit from schemes which provide assistance from public funds to help pay their salaries, and these allowances have recently been increased to bring the salary scales of these teachers into line with the recently improved salary scales in government and aided sectors. Details will be announced shortly.

Furthermore these schools also benefit from a classroom allowance which helps meet their recurrent expenditure. This allowance has been doubled within the last month.

Private profit making schools, however, are free to distribute their profits as they like. It is therefore difficult to work out a scheme to provide financial assistance for teachers in these schools, since it is not the Government's policy to subsidise private profit making ventures with taxpayers' money.

/The Government

Tuesday, April 10, 1973

- 8 -

The Government however is seeking to improve the treatment of teachers in these schools by giving guidance to the proprietors in making appointments and setting out conditions of service.

The position of teachers in private schools is another aspect of education the Board of Education will consider.

There is already a problem in providing sufficient teachers to meet the increased demands of education in the 70's. To staff the expansion approved up to 1976, the output of the three existing Colleges of Education will be increased by 2,000 by 1976. Thereafter the construction of a fourth college or other means would be necessary to meet the increased expansion envisaged by the Governor in his speech.

The present estimates are based on a ratio of 11 teachers to 10 classes in primary schools, 13 teachers to 10 classes in form 1 to form 5, and two teachers for every class in form 6.

On educational grounds, it is accepted that it would be desirable to increase the ratio of teachers, but the implications of such a change would need to be carefully examined.

As an example, in the aided primary sector alone, a change from a ratio of 1.1 to 1.3 would mean recruitment and training of an additional 2,468 teachers.

However the expansion of facilities for the training of teachers is high on the list of topics for consideration by the Board of Education, which will no doubt be making recommendations on this issue.

/The points

Tuesday, April 10, 1973

- 9 -

The points raised by the Joint Secretariat have extensive implications. It is not possible to analyse them in detail at this stage, but they will be considered further by the Board of Education.

As the Chairman of the Board has already stated, the Board will be pleased to consider these present proposals and any others the Joint Secretariat might have on this vital issue.

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/10

Tuesday, April 10, 1973

- 10 -

LAND SALE PROGRAMME FOR APRIL-SEPTEMBER

Upset Prices To Be Announced At Start Of Auction

Twenty-two lots of Crown land with a total area of nearly 260,000 square feet will be put up for sale by auction during the next six months.

This was announced today by the Director of Lands and Survey in his Land Sales Forecast for the six-month period ending September 30.

Of the 22 lots, five are for industrial use, nine for non-industrial purposes and eight are for residential development.

In addition, more than fifty sites of various sizes and uses are included in a separate Sales Forecast for land within the New Territories.

These will also be sold by public auction during the same six-month period.

The Director also announced that in future, the Particulars of Sale for most lots would not state an "Upset Price" - previously the sum at which bidding commenced.

It had been apparent for some while that the advance publication of "Upset Prices" had caused inconvenience at auctions and had proved misleading to the public, he said.

Sale Conditions had to be printed and made available to intending purchasers some five weeks before the auction, and if Upset Prices were to be included, they in turn had to be determined some two months in advance of sale.

/This meant

Tuesday, April 10, 1973

- 11 -

This meant that on a fast moving market the Upset Price was already out of date and had little significance by the time of the auction.

"Recent experience", he added, "has shown that intervening sales of other similar lots often prove Upset Prices determined in advance to be totally unrealistic by date of sale, but when Upset Prices have been published, they cannot be changed and considerable time is wasted for all present at the auction by bidding having to commence at an inappropriate figure."

"In future, therefore, immediately prior to the commencement of each sale, the auctioneer will announce the figure that would be acceptable to him as an opening bid."

Current Values

The Director said this figure would take into account current values and the need to leave room for movement in the bidding. As it would not have to be determined a long time in advance, the assessment would be able to have regard to the most recent similar sales.

"This will save time for all concerned and also avoid the misconceptions that arise as a result of lots selling at prices far in excess of published but unrealistic Upset Prices," he explained.

Particulars of the Land Sale Forecasts together with plans showing the location of the lots in the Urban Areas to be offered for sale may be inspected at the Crown Lands & Survey Office, Murray Building, Garden Road, Hong Kong and in the Kowloon Branch Office, 10th floor, Kowloon Government Offices, Nathan Road.

/Particulars

Tuesday, April 10, 1973

- 12 -

Particulars and plans may also be inspected at the Public Enquiry Bureau, Central Government Offices, West Wing, Ground floor, Ice House Street; all the City District Offices, in the office of the District Commissioner, New Territories, North Kowloon Magistracy, Tai Po Road and in the Commerce and Industry Department, Fire Brigade Building, 46 Connaught Road Central, Hong Kong.

Copies of the forecast may be obtained free of charge by calling at any of the above offices or by written request to the Crown Lands & Survey Offices.

The sale dates for each lot will be notified in the Government Gazette and advertised in English and Chinese newspapers in the usual way.

At the time of advertising, detailed Conditions of Sale and sale plans will be available to the public and these may be obtained at the Crown Lands & Survey Office listed above or at the Public Enquiry Bureau, Central Government Offices, West Wing, Ground floor, Ice House Street.

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REPRIEVE NOT GRANTED

His Excellency the Governor, after taking into account the advice of the Executive Council, has decided not to grant a reprieve in the case of Tsoi Kwok-cheong, who was found guilty on November 2, 1972 of the murder of Ng Sung-por.

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/13

Tuesday, April 10, 1973

- 13 -

PREVENTION OF IMPORTATION OF SMALLPOX

Surveillance Of Arrivals Without Certificates From Today

People arriving in Hong Kong without a valid smallpox certificate are being put under medical surveillance.

This means that after being vaccinated at Kai Tak Airport, or their ship, they are required to report to a health officer every day for 14 days, or until they leave, if they are not staying for two weeks.

"This measure is intended to prevent the importation of smallpox into Hong Kong at a time when the disease is causing concern in many parts of the world," said Dr. G.H. Choa, Director of Medical and Health Services.

He recalled that Hong Kong has not had a case of smallpox since June, 1952 - it was imported - and "we intend to maintain this record by every means open to us."

As a further protective measure, the department has sought the aid of the Board of Airline Representatives, the Hong Kong Hotels' Association, and the Hong Kong Association of Travel Agents to impress upon their travellers, air crews, and staff the need for vaccination against the disease at this time.

The Hong Kong Tourist Association is advising Association members to this effect, as well as informing Association offices abroad by telegram and telex.

The Association circular says: "Travellers arriving at Kai Tak Airport from non-infected areas who are not in possession of a valid smallpox vaccination certificate will be vaccinated on arrival. Any passenger who refuses to be vaccinated may be denied permission to land in Hong Kong."

/These

Tuesday, April 10, 1973

- 14 -

These measures are also being adopted for persons arriving by sea.

Dr. Choa said a valid certificate against smallpox had always been a requirement for travellers arriving in Hong Kong, but in March, for example, 467 passengers had disembarked without such a certificate.

They were vaccinated at Kai Tak, or their ship, and allowed entry into Hong Kong, but the immunity so provided was not guaranteed since it took two weeks, in some cases, for the vaccination to be effective.

"The surveillance will help us to make certain that nothing goes wrong," Dr. Choa explained.

A third measure in the current effort to safeguard Hong Kong against smallpox will take effect from Tuesday, April 16, when passengers arriving without valid certificates will also be required to deposit a bond of up to \$400 with the Port Health authorities, in addition to being placed under surveillance.

"The bond is intended to see that the passengers concerned co-operate fully with the authorities during the period of their medical surveillance," Dr. Choa said.

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/15

Tuesday, April 10, 1973

- 15 -

SECOND MANPOWER SURVEY

Of Building And Civil Engineering Industry

A major survey of Hong Kong's building and civil engineering industries will be carried out between April 24 and 26.

It will cover some 1,400 construction sites and 600 contracting firms in the three-day period.

The survey - the second of its kind - will be conducted by the Building Trades Industrial Committee of the Industrial Training Advisory Committee, with the assistance of the Labour Department and the Public Works Department.

Questionnaire forms and explanatory letters in both English and Chinese were sent today to construction sites and contracting firms.

About 200 students from the Hong Kong Polytechnic and the Morrison Hill Technical Institute will assist in the survey by visiting sites and firms to help employers complete the questionnaire.

The Secretary of the Committee, Mr. Au-Yeung Man-tak, said that in the first manpower survey, made in August 1968, almost all construction sites and contracting firms approached had co-operated fully.

"I am confident that this month's survey will meet with equal success," he said.

The information obtained in 1968 was compiled and analysed by the Committee and the findings and recommendations were subsequently published. Many of the recommendations made to both the industries and Government have now been implemented.

/Mr. Au-Yeung

Tuesday, April 10, 1973

- 16 -

Mr. Au-Yeung said: "The first survey showed that a total of 28,446 workers were employed on a total of 464 construction sites.

"In March 1973, however, the number of construction sites - both Government and private - recorded by the Public Works Department had increased to 1,380.

"In view of the substantial increase in the number of sites - and inevitably in the number of workers employed - the committee has decided to conduct a second survey to obtain up-to-date information on new manpower and training requirements in this field."

The information which employers will be asked to supply will include:

- * the number of workers at present employed;
- * the number of workers at present under training; and
- * the number of existing vacancies.

Mr. Au-Yeung stressed that the information collected would be handled in strict confidence and would only be published in the form of statistical summaries, without reference to individual sites or contracting firms.

He urged employers to co-operate by providing accurate answers to the questionnaire forms. Any queries about the questionnaire should be directed to the Industrial Training Unit of the Labour Department by ringing 5-282523 Ext. 85 and 88 during office hours.

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/17

Tuesday, April 10, 1973

- 17 -

TUNNELLING TESTS FOR MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY

Work on four test tunnels for the Mass Transit Railway system is scheduled to start in May of this year.

Before the construction of the railway itself begins, trial tunnels are to be excavated at four separate locations to obtain information concerning the practical difficulties of tunnelling in Hong Kong.

The trial tunnelling works will be carried out at four sites -- in the area of the former Naval Dockyard between Harcourt Road and Queensway on the Island; to the south of Salisbury Road, opposite the Peninsula Hotel in Tsimshatsui; beside Wang Tau Hom East Road, in the open area opposite Lok Fu Resettlement Estate; and beside the Castle Peak Road in Lai Chi Kok.

All the four sites involved are on Crown land.

The Government Mass Transit Engineer, Mr. S.A. Barden, said today that exact information on ground conditions is required to provide the essential data for the design of the permanent tunnels and the best methods of constructing them.

The tunnels forming part of the Mass Transit Railway would have to be bored through soils varying from solid rock to soft clay.

"We may encounter special problems at these four sites and our intention is to find out as much as we can about them and use this information in the design of the system and its construction", he said.

The work at these sites will involve no disruption of traffic. Pavements for pedestrians will be available during the work and every effort will be made to keep the noise level at all sites to the minimum.

The work is expected to continue until the end of the year.

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/18

Tuesday, April 10, 1973

- 18 -

PASSING-OUT PARADE OF IMMIGRATION OFFICERS

Nineteen Assistant Immigration Officers, including five women, will take part in a passing-out parade to be held on Friday (April 13) at the Royal Hong Kong Regiment Parade Ground in Happy Valley.

The Honourable Sir Douglas Clague will inspect the parade and present awards to the top recruits.

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Note to Editors: You are invited to send a reporter and/or photographer to cover the parade which will take place at 9.30 a.m.

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TRAFFIC RE-ROUTING

The section of Dorset Crescent in Kowloon Tong fronting houses Nos. 6, 8 and 10 will be re-routed one-way for north-west bound traffic with effect from 10 a.m. on Thursday (April 12).

A spokesman for the Transport Department said that the re-routing was to improve local traffic circulation.

Appropriate traffic signs will be set up to guide motorists.

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Release time: 8.30 p.m.



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

SUPPLEMENT

Tuesday, April 10, 1973

INAUGURATION OF NEW URBAN COUNCIL BY H.E. THE GOVERNOR

The following is the full text of the speech given by H.E. the Governor, Sir Murray MacLehose, at the inauguration of the reconstituted Urban Council today (Tuesday).

"I am most grateful for this invitation to meet you. This enables me to salute the new-style Urban Council. Its inauguration is an important and happy event, and I do wish you all success in your work.

"The work of this Council, and the particular field it covers has always struck me as of crucial importance. I am amazed by people who deprecate the Council's role, or say that it has no importance or effect on the daily lives of the population.

"On the contrary, much of what it handles is what matters most to many people for much of the time. Hygienic food and restaurants - its importance is self-evident. Clean streets and a clean environment and a clean appearance to the city - consider what the recent campaign has done for so many people; consider too the effect on them if the new-found cleanliness were dissipated.

"Parks to relax in - in most cities these are mere pleasure grounds, but in densely populated Hong Kong they are an absolute necessity. They are also intensely difficult to build, and I will watch with great interest how you solve the problem of how to construct parks and gardens that can be used by the numbers that wish to and yet stay inviting, green and unsoiled.

/"Playgrounds -

Tuesday, April 10, 1973

- 2 -

"Playgrounds - obviously they give pleasure, but I entirely agree with you that they are of immense social importance and that there are far too few of them. In a mini-blitz during and subsequent to the "Keep Hong Kong Clean" campaign about 45 new sites for recreation areas have been formed or found, and 32 additional provisional sites have been located.

"The beach facilities and guards that you manage are vital services, and the swimming complexes must be amongst the finest civic amenities in the world.

"Then there is the whole field of civic entertainment. In recent years and months in both the Hong Kong Festivals and the Festival of the Arts, peoples' hunger for cultural enjoyment has been amply proved, and I hope that the Council will continue to expand the imaginative services which it already provides and provides for all tastes.

New Momentum

"The list of your appointed activities is of course much longer, but the point I want to make is that in some cities these sorts of services and amenities can be taken as a matter of course, but for Hong Kong real excellence in these fields could go so far to mitigate the hardships of a densely packed population, just as failure could make them unendurable.

"I believe that the new arrangements for the Council will give it new financial and administrative freedom. With the sheets eased the ship should gather way. If this is how you feel I think it comes at the right time.

"As you know, the Government is committed to social advance on a broad front. The will and the means are there. The sectors covered so far are: education, particularly provision of universal secondary education and the overhaul of the examination system which this will permit, and the considerable expansion of technical education. /"Secondly,

Tuesday, April 10, 1973

- 3 -

"Secondly, housing: a vastly expanded programme based on a new concept and directed by a new unified authority with a single Government department working to it.

"Thirdly, the phased expansion of the social services so as progressively to provide a system of social security, underpinned by a specially trained cadre of professional social workers.

"Fourthly, the reconstituted Medical Development Advisory Board will report by the end of July on plans for further development in the next 10 years, including the enormous programme necessary to provide facilities for the new towns and New Territories and to consolidate and improve what has already been achieved in the urban areas.

Problems

"There are of course many other problems to be tackled. There are crime and corruption to be mastered; there is the problem of narcotics, the most intractable and baffling problem of all. There is the problem of our traffic and our motor cars, the need for off-street parking, the need (within the Council's own responsibilities) for proper markets for people who are now called hawkers, and the need to co-ordinate the solution of these interconnected problems.

"Above all there is the need to maintain the expansion of the prosperity of this city on which all else depends.

"Our plans for advance in the major fields I mention are already laid or in preparation. If this effort is accompanied by decisive advances in the field within the responsibilities of the Urban Council, and I know how determined you are to achieve this, I think that once our plans mature, and inexorably this will take time, we should find ourselves on the edge of really significant new developments.

/Broadly

Tuesday, April 10, 1973

- 4 -

"Broadly speaking, our city will then have the assurance that provided our prosperity lasts some of the major defects in the life of Hong Kong as we know it will be eliminated within a measurable time, and that a term has been put to the makeshift conditions forced upon Hong Kong by the influx of population in the '50s and early '60s.

"May I say how grateful I am for the advice which some of you have been kind enough to give me, and how much I admire the Council's devotion to our community. I like the verve and vitality of the Council and its members, and I am sure you are now going to make things hum in your sector. I am sure too that if all parts of our government work together Hong Kong can achieve the better life we all want, and achieve it within the decade.

"I assure you of my interest and support, and I am sure that in wishing you all success I am speaking for the entire community you serve."

It is with this thought that I have much pleasure in handing you, Mr. Chairman, the gavel presented to you for use in this Council by the Amateur Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong.

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