



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Sunday, February 10, 1974

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Release time: 2.30 p.m.

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ESTIMATED \$8,500 MILLION TO BE SPENT ON NEW TOWNS

Plans Envisage Polytechnics, Clinics, Schools, Pools, Cultural Centres

Planning of the new towns in Sha Tin, Tuen Mun and Tsuen Wan has taken on a new concept to keep the towns in line with existing development in the respective districts and to bring community facilities up-to-date with the ones provided in urban areas.

"The basic idea is to build up the new towns as balanced, self-contained entities, which are at the same time related to the overall development of the whole of Hong Kong," a government spokesman explained.

The total cost of the development of the three new towns is estimated at \$8,500 million. Of this, \$3,070 million has been allocated to Sha Tin. Tsuen Wan, although covering a larger area to be developed, is getting a smaller amount of \$2,700 million due to the fact that considerable development has already been completed in the area.

One new feature in the planning is the inclusion of technical institute and teacher training facilities.

Each of the three new towns has plans for a polytechnic, and two technical institutes. One technical institute is expected to come into operation in Kwai Chung in 1975, in keeping with the government's target of having five such institutes in commission by 1976/77.

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Public facilities to be provided in the new towns range from abattoirs to swimming complexes, and it is intended that development of such facilities should be reasonably well advanced before full occupation so as to attract more people to move in.

For recreation, the maximum amount of open spaces has been planned, and there are long term plans for the construction of cultural centres.

Primary and secondary schools, ambulance depots, fire stations, polyclinics, police stations, office buildings and car parks have all been planned.

Site investigation is also being carried out in Tsuen Wan for a vehicle crusher and vehicle testing station.

Reclamation is to be carried out in Tuen Mun to provide a site for a wholesale fish market.

The target population for the new towns are as follows:

	<u>1973/74</u>	<u>1978/79</u>	<u>1982/83</u>
Sha Tin	25,000	236,000	461,000
Tuen Mun	37,500	149,000	464,000
Tsuen Wan	398,000	721,000	836,000

In order to achieve a reasonably broad-based community, private residential areas will be provided in addition to public housing.

With the geographic location of the new towns, especially in Sha Tin, there is a great danger of their becoming dormitory towns of the urban area where people have to commute between their places of work and their homes, the spokesman noted.

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To prevent this development, industrial sites are provided in the neighbourhood of the housing estates so that job opportunities will be available right at the door-steps of the new town residents.

However, with the shifting of industries and population into the new towns, new and up-to-date necessary transport and communications systems will have to be provided to cope with the higher traffic density.

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NO REFUNDS OF RATES ON VACANT PREMISES

The Commissioner of Rating and Valuation, Mr. Raymond Fry, today reminded ratepayers that no refunds of rates are payable on vacant domestic premises.

This regulation came into force on January 1 this year. Previously ratepayers could obtain a refund of half the rates paid when their premises became vacant.

Mr. Fry said the new regulation applies to any premises designed wholly or primarily for domestic purposes. It also applies to any premises which, immediately prior to becoming vacant, were used for domestic purposes.

However, owners of vacant non-domestic premises such as shops, offices, factories etc. can claim a refund of half of the rates paid, provided proper notice has been given to the Commissioner of Rating and Valuation.

An explanatory leaflet entitled "Refunds" is available free of charge at the offices of the Rating and Valuation Department, at public enquiry counters and Tenancy Inquiry Bureaux and at District Offices in the New Territories.

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SETTLE YOUR TAX BILL BY POST: PUBLIC URGED

Members of the public were today urged to pay their taxes by crossed cheques and mail them to the Inland Revenue Department.

A spokesman for the department pointed out that the collection offices were usually very busy at this time of the year when most people had to pay their salaries and profits tax.

Queues in these offices have been needlessly long in recent days, the spokesman said, because so many of the people who pay by cheque have chosen to do so in person or by messenger, and to wait for a receipt.

The waiting time for everyone would be greatly reduced if those paying by crossed cheque would send them by post, he said.

However, taxpayers who must have their cheques delivered by hand can make use of another service. For their convenience as well as for others, they can leave the payment documents at the counter in a sealed envelope addressed to the Collector. A receipt will be given through the post.

"Nothing is gained by waiting for a receipt for a payment by cheque, provided always that it is crossed," the spokesman said.

The Inland Revenue Department's collection offices are in the Club Lusitano Building in Ice House Street and at the old Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank Building in Nathan Road.

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