



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Wednesday, November 22, 1972

METHADONE MAINTENANCE PILOT SCHEME TO BEGIN

A three-year methadone maintenance pilot scheme sponsored by the Hong Kong Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society will begin soon.

The aim is to discover with what success methadone maintenance can achieve withdrawal from heroin and to determine whether its application is useful in the rehabilitation of drug addicts in Hong Kong.

The scheme will be run in consultation with a supervisory committee appointed by the Action Committee Against Narcotics. It is headed by Dr. P.H. Teng, Professor of Preventive and Social Medicine at the University of Hong Kong, and consists of representatives of professional associations and government departments.

The programme will treat 100 volunteer male addicts, aged between 25 and 50, using different doses of methadone. Cases will be hospitalised for two weeks initially to allow detoxification from heroin and induction to methadone.

After this they will attend daily at an out-patient centre where they will take their methadone under supervision. No methadone will be dispensed for home use.

/Former prisoners,

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Former prisoners, especially those living in the vicinity of the Tung Tau area where the scheme's out-patient centre will be located, who wish to be considered for admission should apply to the Society's intake office at Tung Tau Resettlement Estate, Block 9, Ground Floor, Kowloon.

During the course of the programme and at the end of three years, the data collected will be analysed. A final assessment will be made and published.

Methadone (sometimes called Physeptone) has been used in Hong Kong for some years as a heroin substitute, but has not been used in any long term maintenance treatment programme.

A spokesman for the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society said today the methadone maintenance treatment has been used overseas, especially in the United States, with considerable success in helping to bring about social rehabilitation for heroin addicts. "The object of this clinical trial is to assess its applicability to Hong Kong."

The ultimate objective of methadone maintenance, as with other programmes, he said, is to help addicts to regain their self-respect and confidence so that they will become responsible citizens freed from the bondage of destructive heroin abuse.

A larger programme, run by the Medical and Health Department and involving a total of 550 patients over a period of three years, is expected to begin early next month.

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MORE FIRE STATIONS PLANNED

About 20 sites have been selected for new fire stations and ambulance depots in various parts of Hong Kong under a 10-year development programme drawn up by the Fire Services Department.

The programme is aimed at strengthening the cover provided by the department.

The plan to build these new stations was prepared after taking into consideration the future development of Hong Kong and its implications in respect of the Fire Services Department.

The aim is to reduce to a minimum, the time between the receipt of a call for help and the time a fire appliance or an ambulance arrives at the scene of the fire or accident.

A spokesman for the Fire Services said today the expansion will help in no small way to reduce the loss of life and property.

The largest project envisaged is the construction of the Hong Kong Command Headquarters, Principal Fire Station and Fire Prevention Bureau Headquarters in about four years' time.

Two new fire stations were completed earlier this year in Waterloo Road and Cheung Sha Wan. This brings to 34 the total number of stations in all parts of Hong Kong.

An additional three are now well under construction -- in Kwai Chung, Fanling and Yau Tong. They are expected to be completed shortly and in operation before the Chinese New Year.

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A number of other new stations are planned for Wong Tai Sin, Shek Kip Mei and Kowloon Bay in Kowloon; Quarry Bay, Kotewall Road, Chung Hom Kok, Causeway Bay and the Peak on Hong Kong Island; and Castle Peak, Sha Tin and Sai Kung in the New Territories.

In addition, consideration is also being given to the construction of new ambulance depots in Yuen Long, Quarry Bay, Mount Davis and Kwai Chung.

At present, there are seven such depots throughout Hong Kong and sites have been earmarked for another five. The last one was recently completed in Waterloo Road and replaces the old Mongkok Depot.

The equipment in use by the Fire Services is among the most up to date in the world. It has 11 turntable ladders, 96 pumps of all types, two hydraulic platforms (snorkels), three foam tenders, two breathing apparatus tenders, 28 pump and rescue escapes and some 60 ambulances plus 10 temporary vehicles. Further new ambulances will be arriving shortly.

In addition, there are six fireboats. The largest of these is the "Alexander Grantham," which is capable of delivering water at the rate of 10,000 gallons a minute and can also make foam.

These boats are invaluable not only in fires which break out on ships in the harbour but also operating as base booster pumps to supplement water supplies at fires within reach of the shore line.

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EXPANSION OF REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR DISABLED

The Social Welfare Department's rehabilitation section, formerly part of the Family Services Division, has been reorganised into a separate division under its own Senior Principal Social Welfare Officer.

This reconstitution and elevation of the section recognises that rehabilitation services for all categories of the disabled will continue to expand.

In the words of the draft white paper on social welfare development in the 1970's, "there will be a major push to develop more facilities for the disabled" with "the greatest growth in services for the mentally retarded."

The white paper says: "For the disabled in general, training centres, vocational training, sheltered workshops and hostel facilities will double in number during the five-year plan.

"The aim will be to establish comprehensive services to meet the known needs of the disabled in the fields of training, employment and housing. So far as possible, these services will help them to reach maximum self fulfilment and to be integrated fully into the community. The community in turn must respond by assisting the disabled, for example, in employing them."

The head of the new division is Mr. T.P. Khoo, formerly Senior Principal Social Welfare Officer in charge of the Family Services Division.

He says: "The change reflects the welcome emphasis being placed by the Government on the status of the disabled in relation to the able-bodied in the community.

/"After all,

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"After all, the humanity of a society is measured by the treatment it accords to its less fortunate members."

The Social Welfare Department's first rehabilitation centre was opened in 1964 in Aberdeen and a year later was catering for 300 disabled.

By 1972, facilities provided both by the Government and the voluntary agencies for the disabled totalled more than 1,100 places.

Vocational and pre-vocational training for the disabled has become much more sophisticated since 1965 in order to keep pace with trends in industry.

Only a few months ago, the Liaison and Placement Unit celebrated its 1,000th successful placement of a trainee in "open" employment, and on an average, about 25 trainees a month are assisted into jobs.

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GOVERNMENT PAVILION NEARS COMPLETION

Work is expected to begin in the next few days on putting the finishing touches to the Government's pavilion at this year's Chinese Manufacturers' Association Exhibition.

The circular shaped building, which covers an area of almost 9,000 square feet, is being built at a cost of \$280,000.

The theme this year will be "the next 10 years" and it will feature photographs, models, sculptures and graphics illustrating the Government's major plans in housing, education and social welfare during the decade.

The building has been designed with a walk-around area where the three-dimensional displays are mounted. In the centre will be a permanent cinema showing films of general interest about Hong Kong.

As part of the display, the Education Department has organised an art competition for primary school children aged between 9 and 12. They have been asked to give their impression of what Hong Kong will look like 10 years from now.

Hundreds of entries have been received and these have been reduced to a "long list" of 200. The final selection will be made next week and these will be exhibited in a special section of the pavilion.

The pavilion will be manned at all times by government officers who will be available to answer questions about the exhibition.

It is estimated that more than one million people will pass through the government pavilion this year.

/The C.M.A. Exhibition

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The C.M.A. Exhibition will be held on the Wan Chai Reclamation and will be officially opened by the Governor, Sir Murray MacLehose, on December 7.

Note to Editors: Photographs of a model of the pavilion are distributed separately in the GIS press boxes this evening.

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SCHOOLS GARDEN COMPETITION

Note to Editors: The final judging of the Schools Garden Competition, held in support of the forthcoming Agricultural Show, will take place at the R.T.C.A.A. (San Hui) and Tuen Mun Primary School (Tuen Mun) on November 23-25.

You are invited to cover the final judging on Friday (November 24).

Press transport (Agriculture and Fisheries Department mini bus AM2101) will leave the Kowloon Sub-pool, behind the Tsim Sha Tsui Post Office, at 8.50 a.m. sharp.

Details of the Schools Garden Competition are contained in a press release which is distributed separately in the G.I.S. press boxes this evening.

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ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS FOR SHAM SHUI PO YOUTH CENTRE

Hundreds of members of the Social Welfare Department's Sham Shui Po Youth Centre will celebrate its eighth anniversary on Friday (November 24).

The centre was set up by the department's Group and Community Work Division in 1964 to provide constructive and creative opportunities for young people in the area. It has a membership of more than 800.

There are opportunities for the pursuit of interests such as tailoring, Chinese painting, singing, folk dancing, judo, and a variety of sports. Emphasis is placed on the development of the personality through group experience.

The centre encourages community services by young volunteers, and acts as a focal point for district youngsters. Here, they make friendships, and learn how to use their leisure constructively.

It also looks after the interests and needs of young factory workers, and a number of weekend camps in the New Territories were organised for their benefit during the year.

A number of events has been planned in conjunction with the anniversary celebrations, including a judo competition.

The finale of the competition, and presentation of prizes, will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Friday (November 24) in the Maple Street Playground, adjacent to the centre.

The inauguration ceremony of the 1973 Centre Members' Council, comprising leaders from youth groups in the centre, will also take place during the evening. The council provides an opportunity for youth members to develop leadership.

/Officiating

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Officiating will be Mr. Wong Shiu-cheuk, Chairman of the Sham Shui Po Kaifong Welfare Association; Mr. C.W.B. Oxley, City District Officer, Sham Shui Po; Mr. K.H. Lomas, Divisional Superintendent of Police, Sham Shui Po; Mr. Law Chi-kin, Senior Principal Social Welfare Officer, and Mr. Kwok Ka-chi, Principal Social Welfare Officer.

Lion and folk dances will follow the speeches and distribution of prizes.

Note to Editors: You are invited to attend the anniversary celebrations at the Maple Street Playground on Friday, November 24 at 7:30 p.m.

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WATER INTERRUPTION IN WONG TAI SIN

Water supply to a number of premises in Wong Tai Sin, Kowloon, will be interrupted for five hours from 1 a.m. to 6 a.m. on Friday (November 24).

The temporary stoppage is to enable the Waterworks Office to carry out a leakage test.

The area affected is bounded by Junction Road, Wang Tau Hom East Road, Fu Mou Street, Heng Lam Street and Lok Fu Resettlement Estate.

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Release Time: 7.00 p.m.