



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Wednesday, February 7, 1973

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OVER 70 PER CENT OF LABOUR DISPUTES SOLVED

Record Amount Paid Out To Workers Last Year

The Labour Relations Service of the Labour Department dealt with 4,524 labour problems in 1972 and helped solve 3,275 or 72.4 per cent of them.

The remainder were referred to the courts and the Legal Aid Department.

The five branch offices of the Labour Relations Service handled some 19,040 inquiries and consultations about personnel management and labour laws. Advice given by the Service prevented many disputes from arising or deteriorating.

Mr. Tsui Tim-fook, Senior Labour Officer in charge of the Labour Relations Division, said that a record \$7,924,990 was paid out by managements to 11,876 employees in disputes settled with the help of the department. This averaged \$667 per employee.

"This amount is a combination of money due to workers under the law and ex-gratia payments," he said.

"Yet it does not take into account the large sums of long service benefits received by workers of two large shipyards in November following the settlement by the parties themselves of their differences over the question of the merger of yard operations," he added.

The Labour Relations Service itself functions as an independent and neutral party to help employers and employees resolve their differences.

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"But," Mr. Tsui continued, "Where a breach of a provision of the Employment Ordinance is discovered by an officer of the Service concerning payment of wages and other sums due under a contract of employment, he warns the offending party and seeks an early remedy in the interests of the aggrieved party.

"At the same time, the officer advises the aggrieved party on what legal steps it may take in default of a settlement."

During the year, an employer in the woollen knitting industry was prosecuted by the Labour Department under the Employment Ordinance for continuing the contracts of employment of his workers without believing on reasonable grounds that he would be able to pay all wages earned by the workers.

Prosecuted

The directors of a limited liability restaurant in liquidation were prosecuted under the same ordinance for failure to pay wages due to employees within the statutory limit of seven days.

In both cases a further ground for prosecution was that the employer had contravened the provisions of the ordinance wilfully and without reasonable excuse.

Mr. Tsui advised employers that in the interests of harmonious labour relations, they should familiarise themselves with the Employment Ordinance. In particular, they should familiarise themselves with those provisions concerning payment of wages because under present living conditions workers cannot afford to have payment of wages delayed.

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It is equally important for workers to be conversant with not only their rights but also their obligations under the Employment Ordinance.

Employees and employers are welcome to make enquiries at any of the five branch offices of the Labour Relations Service or to obtain a copy of the concise or comprehensive guide to the ordinance.

"Where wages are owing to an employee, the earlier he seeks advice from the Service, the greater are the chances of recovery," Mr. Tsui emphasised.

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COLLECTION CENTRE FOR WATER CHARGES

The Tai Po District Office will set up a temporary collection centre at the Sha Tin Rural Committee office on Monday (February 12) for the collection of water charges for the third period of 1972 (August to December).

The hours of business will be from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Residents of the Sha Tin District are invited to use the facilities.

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S.H.A. DEALT WITH ONE MILLION ENQUIRIES LAST YEAR

Nearly 1.4 million enquiries and cases were handled by the Secretariat for Home Affairs in 1972.

This shows an increase of 15.5 per cent over the 1971 figure.

The enquiries were dealt with by the 19 Public Enquiry Centres, and the two Tenancy Inquiry Bureaux.

The subjects most frequently touched on were problems related to housing, rent control and tenancy. Most of the enquiries concerned the Rating and Valuation (99,391), the Urban Services (79,785), the Education (79,009) and the Immigration (56,664) Departments, and the Judiciary (78,793).

The number of miscellaneous Government application forms distributed through the Public Enquiry Centres totalled 556,797.

Most of these forms were applications for entry to the two technical institutes and for Government posts and Government housing estates.

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ANTI-POLIOMYELITIS CAMPAIGN 1973

Figures For Fourth Week Released

During the week ending on January 27, 1973, a total of 4,997 doses of the anti-poliomyelitis vaccine was administered, according to figures released by the Medical and Health Department today.

Of these, 1,126 doses were administered on the Island, 2,908 in Kowloon, and 963 in the New Territories.

Since the latest anti-poliomyelitis campaign began on December 28 last year, the total number of doses administered amounted to 25,155. The first phase of the 1973 campaign has now ended. The second phase begins in March.

But the vaccine remains available free at all government general clinics and maternal and child health centres.

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STREETS TO BE REOPENED

Three streets in Mong Kok will be re-opened to vehicular traffic from 10 a.m. on February 9 (Friday).

They are Fife Street (between Reclamation Street and Shanghai Street), Nelson Street (between Reclamation Street and Shanghai Street) and Shantung Street (between Portland Street and Shanghai Street).

A spokesman for the Transport Department said that the streets had been closed to facilitate road works.

Appropriate signs will be posted to guide motorists.

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LABOUR PARTY DELEGATION DUE

A three-man Labour Party delegation will arrive from London tomorrow for a three-day visit to Hong Kong. The party is at the beginning of a three-week fact-finding tour of some South-east Asian countries.

The delegation is led by the Rt. Hon. James Callaghan, MP, a former Chancellor of the Exchequer. The other two are Mr. Ian Mikardo, MP, and Mr. Tom McNally.

They will meet the Governor, Sir Murray MacLehose, senior government officials and community leaders.

During their stay, they will also visit the Resettlement Department and will have talks with officials of the Trade Development Council.

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Note to Editors: The delegation will arrive by BA 926 at 1.10 p.m. on Thursday, February 8, there will be no press conference on their arrival. But facilities will be provided for press photographer who should assemble at the airport V.I.P. room at 12.50 p.m. Officers from the G.I.S. will be present to give assistance.

The party will leave by CI 817 for Saigon on Saturday, February 10. A press conference will be held at the airport V.I.P. room at 9.30 a.m. before their departure.

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EXPORT OF TEXTILES TO NORWAY

The Director of Commerce and Industry today announced details of licensing arrangements for restrained textiles to Norway for the period ending February 28, when the current textiles agreement between Hong Kong and Norway expires.

The Director also announced details of the operation of the year-end special shipment scheme.

Trade associations and companies in the Commerce and Industry Department's mailing list will receive copies of a notice on this.

Copies can also be obtained from the receptionist counter on the ground floor of the Fire Brigade Building.

Further enquiries can be directed to Mr. C.L. Li, Industry Assistant, at Tel. No. 5-247315.

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CALL TO INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES

To Stand For Urbco Election

The Returning Officer of the Urban Council Election, Mr. Donald Tsang, today urged independent candidates to come forward and stand for the election next month.

Mr. Tsang made the appeal when he announced details of the nomination procedures.

He said seven vacancies will occur on April 1. If more than seven valid nominations were received, an election will be held on March 7.

"So far", he said, "there are sufficient indications that there will be a contested election."

The Reform Club, Mr. Tsang said, is understood to have put up seven candidates and the Civic Association five candidates.

However, he added that no independent candidate has yet applied for the nomination papers.

Nominations for the seven seats can be submitted to Room 624, Colonial Secretariat, Central Government Offices (East Wing) during office hours. The closing date is Thursday, February 15.

The basic qualifications for a candidate are a good knowledge of English, and he or she must be registered as an elector.

Mr. Tsang pointed out that the English-speaking requirement is necessary at present because the Government does not have the staff for simultaneous interpretations at meetings of the Urban Council select committees.

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There are also not enough translators to translate the council papers for members who do not read English.

However, it is hoped that the Government will soon be able to introduce an amendment to the law to provide for Council members who speak only Cantonese.

The Returning Officer also reminded those taking part in the election in any capacity to acquaint themselves with the Corrupt and Illegal Practices Ordinance.

He drew special attention to the provisions relating to the publication and the distribution of election material and the use of transportation for the free conveyance of electors.

For further enquiries, Mr. Tsang can be contacted at 5-95544.

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Release Time: 6.30 p.m.