



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Friday, July 20, 1973

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COST OF LIVING RISES IN JUNE

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The General Consumer Price Index at the end of June stood at 164 points -- a rise of seven points over the previous month.

The rise was due mainly to an increase of 12 points in the index for foodstuffs. The index for durable goods rose by five points.

Increases of three points each were also recorded in the indexes for miscellaneous goods and services, while the index for fuel and light and the index for clothing and footwear increased by one point each.

Movements in the indexes for other sections of commodity were insignificant.

Compared with the previous month there were increases in the average retail prices of rice, salt and fresh water fish, other fish, pork, poultry, fresh vegetables and fresh fruit.

A spokesman for the Census and Statistics Department said that the rather rapid increase in the retail price of rice in the early part of June was caused by consumers stocking up, although there was in fact no shortage.

The retail prices of vegetables and fish also increased sharply at the same time, mainly as a result of adverse weather conditions and the effects of the Dragon Boat Festival.

The increase in the index for durable goods was generally brought about by higher prices for glassware, crockery and earthenware. Household goods also rose and this resulted in an increase in the index for miscellaneous goods. The index for services went up because of higher charges for domestic service.

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GREEN PAPER ON TRANSPORT PUBLISHED SOON

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The people of Hong Kong will soon be given an opportunity to advise on proposals to tackle the worsening traffic problem when the government's Green Paper on overall transport policy is published, probably within the next few weeks.

Disclosing this today, the Commissioner for Transport, Mr. B.D. Wilson, said it was wiser to let the general public, particularly those directly connected with transport and the motor trade, have their say, rather than for the government to go ahead with plans that left no room for adjustment.

Addressing a luncheon meeting of the Rotary Club Kowloon North, Mr. Wilson explained it was not always easy to get things going as quickly as possible as planning involved various departments. "Inevitably, there are differences of opinion and some unfortunate delays."

The Commissioner for Transport, he stressed, could rarely act on his own. "In most cases, he must consult and convince colleagues in other departments."

One field where it was "all plans and no progress" was mechanical inspection of vehicles, he said.

With its limited resources, the Transport Department at present was only able to inspect less than 10 per cent of the total number of vehicles each year.

/The ultimate .....

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The ultimate object, he said, must be to inspect all vehicles to make sure they are roadworthy, "but we cannot do more until we get a proper large inspection centre, with all the necessary equipment and staff."

He added: "After one year of persistent endeavour, an item for a new inspection centre has not even got into the Public Works Programme and I despair of getting anywhere on this."

The Commissioner emphasised that, coupled with adequate vehicle inspection facilities, must be legal powers -- presently lacking -- for suspending the licence of a vehicle found unroadworthy.

"You would hardly believe it but there are no powers to stop a vehicle from driving away if it is found with no brakes, broken suspension, bald tyres and no lights," he told the Rotarians.

Turning to pollution caused by cars, Mr. Wilson said measures were still being worked out whereby new petrol-driven vehicles would have to conform to a manufacturing standard designed to prevent the emission of excessive exhaust fumes.

As for the existing 200,000 vehicles in Hong Kong, there was a proposal for making it an offence for a vehicle to produce exhaust fumes beyond the legal limit on smoke measuring equipment.

There was also a forward programme for the progressive installation of parking meters in places where on-road parking was acceptable and demand exceeded supply.

"The aim is to ration these parking places fairly by means of a meter fee that ensures a turnover of short term parkers and avoids frustrated motorists circling round when they just want to stop for a short while," he said.

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Another forward programme concerned the provision of more off-road multi-storey car parks and their careful siting so that motorists would not be attracted into congested areas.

"Firm control of parking and its pricing has been shown in a number of countries to be a most effective way of regulating the number of vehicles entering congested areas," he noted.

Referring to driving tests, the Commissioner said this had been a "sore topic," but his department flatly refused to give priority except to doctors and the consular corps.

"If we started picking and choosing here, we would find it impossible to assess relative degrees of priority and it might open the door to irregularity," he added.

Some progress had been made, he went on, with a scheme for indoor simulator equipment to give driving instruction for private cars from scratch up to the intermediate level.

A trial would be conducted as soon as the equipment was received to determine its usefulness. However, the scheme would not replace actual driving experience between the intermediate and final stages, and the final test would still be conducted on the road.

Mr. Wilson made it clear that he would continue to stand firm by his action last month freezing the number of vehicles on Lantau Island, despite the reaction against the move.

"To my mind, no matter what the excuse, it is criminal folly to allow more vehicles on to roads which by common consent are highly dangerous," he said.

/In summing .....

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In summing up, Mr. Wilson said traffic congestion could be avoided if the right buttons were pushed and if it was recognised that human beings must put themselves in firm control of motor vehicles, not the other way around.

"Life will be insupportable," he stressed, "if we allow vehicles to dictate how we are to live."

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Note to Editors:

Copies of full text are boxed

today.

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GOVERNMENT REPLIES TO MIDWIVES PETITION

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The midwives last night were sent the government's reply to their recent petition on the pay dispute.

The Director of Medical and Health Services, Dr. G.H. Choa, said today that the reply had restated the government's view that the new pay scale approved for the midwives was, on all the evidence available to the government, a very fair one.

This scale, he said, represented an average increase of 30 per cent, approximately double the average increase paid to the public service as a whole after the 1971 Salaries Commission, and had been further increased by 3 per cent from April 1, 1972.

The new scale was produced after thorough investigation by the Senior Civil Service Council of the duties and responsibilities of midwives and it had been exhaustively discussed in the council.

Dr. Choa went on to say that the government now had no fresh proposals to make. But he repeated what he had said on a number of occasions, namely, that if the midwives wished to produce new evidence, including evidence of pay in the private sector, they could always do so through their representatives on the Staff Side of the Senior Civil Service Council.

Commenting on the decision reported to have been taken by government midwives, health auxiliaries and inoculators to perform minimal duties for 48 hours beginning next Monday, Dr. Choa said: "I would deplore any action arising from this decision which might have an adverse effect upon the health and welfare of the public.

/"I would .....

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"I would hope that responsible officers in all three grades will bear in mind their responsibilities as public servants to the public whom they serve.

"I would also remind them that the government itself does not accept that a trade dispute is a reasonable excuse for failure by officers to perform their duties."

Dr. Choa concluded by repeating that the government's new pay scales were, in his view, very fair ones.

He emphasised that if the midwives and other officers concerned did not wish to accept the new scales, and had no further constructive new evidence to put forward, then it was entirely up to them to decide whether or not to resign from the public service and seek better paid employment elsewhere.

They could not, however, hope by means of industrial action to force the government to give them more pay than could be properly justified to the taxpayer.

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### LABOUR RELATIONS SERVICE HELPS SETTLE 851 DISPUTES

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The Labour Relations Service of the Labour Department helped settle 851 disputes during the second quarter of this year - a success rate of 73.2 per cent.

During the three-month period, a total of 1,162 disputes were placed before the service, ranging from minor individual grievances to disputes involving large groups of workers.

"The success rate is high, considering that all cases brought to the service are accepted irrespective of the claims involved and the rights and wrongs of the parties," the head of the Labour Relations Service, Mr. T.F. Tsui, said today.

Mr. Tsui said that as a result of settlements reached, \$1,473,737 were paid to 3,150 workers as arrears of wages, payment in lieu of notice under the Employment Ordinance, or as ex-gratia severance payments.

As usual, he said, most labour problems arose out of disagreements over wage rates, changes in conditions of employment, dismissal, prolonged lay off, redundancy, insolvency of the employer, or simply mutual misunderstanding.

"In settling 26 of the 35 major labour disputes which began during the quarter, officers of the Labour Relations Service conducted a total of 72 joint meetings lasting an average of nearly three hours each, and made 27 visits to the sites of the disputes," Mr. Tsui said.

During this quarter - the first full quarter of operation of the Labour Tribunal - the service referred 221 cases involving 536 workers to the Tribunal.

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A large number of minor grievances were allowed to drop by the complainants after the initial complaint, and a number of cases which began late in the quarter were carried over into July before settlement.

During the quarter the service responded to 4,448 consultations and enquiries initiated by workers and employers.

Mr. Tsui said: "As part of our continuing effort to improve relationships between management and workers, officers of the Labour Relations Service visited 49 industrial and commercial establishments during the quarter to encourage management to introduce joint consultative arrangements, to prepare written contracts of employment, and to work out grievance procedures in order to preserve industrial harmony.

"We feel that such consultative machinery is vital to good management-employee relations, and is the best possible way of preventing disputes - which mean loss of wages to workers and loss of profits to management."

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CHINESE CALLIGRAPHY EXHIBITION

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An educational exhibition on the history of Chinese calligraphy is now on display in the City Hall.

It depicts the development and changes of calligraphy in the past 35 centuries from the Shang dynasty to the Ch'ing dynasty.

Organised by the Urban Council, the one-week exhibition is held daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. until next Wednesday (July 25) in the Exhibition Hall of the City Hall Low Block.

The great masterpieces and the mainstreams of Chinese calligraphy are shown in a pictorial account supported by short clear commentaries.

The various styles and calligraphic forms are also shown in chronological order, including the oracle bone script, the bronze inscription, the seal script, the clerical script, the draft script, the formal script and the cursive script.

The different surfaces and objects on which these scripts were applied are also illustrated.

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LADY MACLEHOSE TO SEE WORK OF "LITTLE PAINTERS"

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The works of some 500 young painters will be the subject of a visit by Lady MacLehose to Kowloon Park tomorrow (Saturday) morning.

The artists, between the ages of eight and 14, will show off their skill by capturing in paint the scenery in different parts of the park during the "Little Painters' Competition".

The contest marks the beginning of the summer youth programme jointly organised by the Yau Ma Tei/Tsim Sha Tsui District Youth Recreation Co-ordinating Committee and the Yau Ma Tei City District Office.

The competition aims at promoting artistic talent and fostering individual interest in painting.

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

Lady MacLehose will arrive at Kowloon Park at 10.30 a.m. and leave at 11.15 a.m. Press representatives are requested to enter the park at the Haiphong Road entrance, where Girl Guides will be on hand to show them the competition site.

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RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR CORRECTIONAL AND WELFARE INSTITUTIONS

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A basketball competition for boys in correctional and welfare institutions has been arranged during weekends from now until the middle of August.

Teams from the Hong Kong Juvenile Care Centre, the Society of Boys' Centres, the Begonia Road Boys' Home, Castle Peak Boys' Home, O Pui Shan Boys' Home and the Kwun Tong Hostel will be playing against each other.

The matches will be played at the Ma Tau Wei Girls' Home at 464, Ma Tau Wei Road in Kowloon every Sunday morning.

On the afternoon of the last day, August 12, there will also be exhibition matches between girls of the Hong Kong Juvenile Care Centre and the Ma Tau Wei Girls' Home as well as staff of institutions with teams participating in the competition.

Any social worker or youth worker who is interested in watching the matches is welcomed to attend.

The competition is one of an annual series of activities sponsored by the Inter-Institution Activities Executive Committee, said Mr. Leung Kai-wah, the Executive Secretary.

Mr. Leung said the committee is responsible for organising various indoor and outdoor competitions and sporting events each year for the boys and girls under the care of the various correctional and welfare institutions.

"The aim is to bring them together to help develop their mental and physical state while at the same time promoting mutual understanding and co-operation between the various institutions," he said.

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FIGHT VIOLENT CRIME "JUST BEGINNING"

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The Governor, Sir Murray MacLehose, today stressed that the fight violent crime campaign had just begun and would not end until its aims were achieved.

Sir Murray was addressing members of the various area committees and mutual aid committees when he spent the afternoon seeing for himself the operation of the committees in the Kwun Tong district in support of the campaign.

He urged the public to help themselves by helping the police.

The Governor also encouraged residents in each building in Hong Kong to form their own mutual aid committees as well as area committees.

He asked members of the committees to encourage youths of good character to join the police force to fill about 1,800 vacancies. At the same time, the government was also making every effort to recruit more regular policemen.

Sir Murray said that during the past few months the strength of the auxiliary police had doubled as a result of an intensive recruiting drive.

Commenting on reports that the campaign had already come to an end, Sir Murray said: "This is absolute nonsense. The campaign has just started and still has a thousand miles to go. Only the technique of the police in fighting crime changes."

He said we could not expect to see the results of the campaign in just one month's time, but we should reap the benefits within a year's time.

/Prevention, .....

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Prevention, he emphasised, is the best way to fight crime.

During his visit the Governor was accompanied by Mr. J.M. Rowlands, the Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr. Peter Ng, City District Commissioner, Kowloon, Mr. Jack C.K. So, City District Officer, Kwun Tong, and Mr. I.P. Hyde, District Superintendent, Kwun Tong Police Station.

The party first went to the office of the Kwun Tong Town Centre Area Committee at Yuet Wah Mansion, Yuet Wah Street, where committee members were attending a meeting in connection with the fight crime campaign.

The Governor was welcomed by the Chairman, Mr. Cheng Yuen, and other committee members, Mr. Fung Sun-ngor and the Rev. Baldwin Lau.

While he was taken on a short tour of Yuet Wah Mansion, Sir Murray was briefed on the overall measures which are being taken by the residents to fight crime.

The party then called at Kiu Cheong Mansion at Hong Ning Road where the Governor was met by the Chairman of the Mutual Aid Committee, Mr. Lam Hang-fai, before he inspected the building to see the security measures that have been taken by the residents.

From there, Sir Murray drove to the Garden Estate, one of the low cost housing schemes managed by the Hong Kong Housing Society.

On arrival at the Methodist Centre in the Estate, the Governor was greeted by the Chairman of the Garden Estate Area Committee, Mr. Woo Koon-lam, Committee Member and Manager of the Estate, Mrs. Ho Lo Pui-ching, and other committee members.

The Governor toured one of the estate buildings and paid a goodwill visit on Mr. and Mrs. C.K. Lam and their family in Pak Ling Lau whose two sons were once victims of robbers.

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Release Time: 8.00 p.m.