



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Thursday, November 29, 1973

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CONSUMER ADVISORY SERVICE ESTABLISHED

The Financial Secretary, the Hon. C.P. Haddon-Cave, announced today the setting up of a Consumer Advisory Service to give an authoritative guide to wholesale prices and supplies of certain basic commodities.

This daily service will come into immediate effect and the first details of prices and supplies will be issued to the press this afternoon by Government Information Services.

The commodities covered will be rice, marine fish, vegetables and pork.

Mr. Haddon-Cave told the Legislative Council that with experience in interpreting changes in this information, the housewife would be able to see clearly for herself whether retail margins were reasonable.

But if she felt that the prices were not reasonable she should make her views known in no uncertain terms; "the economic power of the housewife can be quite ^{and waste} devastating," he stressed.

The guide will be compiled from information supplied by the Agriculture and Fisheries Department and the Commerce and Industry Department.

In announcing the Consumer Advisory Service, the Financial Secretary said he was not convinced that profiteering was taking place on anything like the scale that has been implied. But he was prepared to accept that there was potential scope for profiteering in certain circumstances, "such as when panic buying ensues on the basis of some rumour to the effect that a commodity is in short supply."

He felt that it could be of assistance to consumers to have some authoritative guide as to the availability of certain foodstuffs and their price ranges.

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Note to Editors: The first guide to wholesale market prices and supplies of four basic food items -- rice, marine fish, vegetables and pork -- **is** issued in today's Daily Information Bulletin. A daily guide will be issued in the D.I.B. everyday.

It is hoped that you will publish the list daily as a guide to housewives as to the availability of certain foodstuffs and their price ranges.

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CONSUMER ADVISORY SERVICE

Daily Guide To Wholesale Market Prices And Supplies

The following prices were realised today (Thursday) at sales under the Rice Control Scheme and at the Vegetable Marketing Organisation Wholesale Market and the Fish Marketing Organisation Wholesale Market at Cheung Sha Wan, Kowloon:

Supplies And Wholesale Prices of Rice

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Availability of Supply</u>	<u>Wholesale Price (\$/catty)</u>
<u>China Rice</u>		<u>Average</u>
See Mew - old crop	Good	1.64
- new crop		1.72
S.C.Jien old crop	Good	1.58
Chu Cho	Good	1.22
10-15% Broken	Good	1.50
A1 Super Extra	Good	1.45
A1 Super	Good	1.22
Whole Glutinous	Scarce	1.52
<u>U.S. Rice</u>	Good	1.62

Supplies And Wholesale Prices of Marine Fish

<u>Species</u>	<u>Availability of Supply</u>	<u>Wholesale Price (\$/catty)</u>		
		<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Average</u>
Golden Thread	Limited	5.0	3.8	4.0
Big-Eyes	Limited	2.8	1.7	2.1
Squid	Limited	5.5	3.0	4.5
Hair-Tails	Good	3.0	2.0	2.4

/Lizard Fishes

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<u>Species</u>	<u>Availability of Supply</u>	<u>Wholesale Price (\$/catty)</u>		
		<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Average</u>
Lizard Fishes	Good	3.2	1.8	2.5
Croakers	Good	2.4	1.2	1.6
Conger-Pike-Eels	Limited	2.9	2.5	2.7
Melon Coat	Good	2.5	1.7	2.0
Breams	Limited	5.5	4.2	4.5
Yellow Belly	Limited	1.8	0.8	1.3
Mackerels	Limited	5.0	3.0	4.0
Red Goat Fish	Good	1.9	1.0	1.5
Fork-Tail	Good	2.2	1.2	1.6
Horse-Head	Scarce	6.0	4.5	5.0
Melon Seed	Limited	3.0	2.0	2.7
Pomfrets	Scarce	8.0	5.8	7.0
Garoupas	Scarce	7.5	6.0	7.2
Yellow Croaker	Limited	6.5	2.6	4.4

Supplies And Wholesale Prices of
Locally Produced Vegetables

<u>Type</u>	<u>Availability of Supply</u>	<u>Wholesale Price (\$/catty)</u>		
		<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Average</u>
Flowering cabbage	Limited	1.60	0.70	1.00
White cabbage	Good	0.30	0.15	0.25
Chinese Lettuce	Good	0.50	0.20	0.30
Chinese Kale	Limited	0.80	0.40	0.55
Spring onion	Limited	1.20	0.50	0.70

/Spinach

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<u>Type</u>	<u>Availability of Supply</u>	<u>Wholesale Price (\$/catty)</u>		
		<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Average</u>
Spinach	Limited	1.20	0.50	0.70
Water cress	Good	1.10	0.40	0.60
Leaf mustard cabbage	Scarce	0.60	0.20	0.40
Tomato	Scarce	2.40	1.60	2.00

Supplies And Wholesale Prices of Pork (Live weight)

	<u>Availability of Supply</u>	<u>Wholesale Price</u>
		<u>(per picul)</u> (Average)
Pork	Good	285

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ANTI-CORRUPTION LEGISLATION BEING STRENGTHENED

Tough new penalties will shortly be introduced against corruption to give stronger legal backing to the government's all-out drive to eradicate graft.

The new measures are being incorporated in draft legislation now being prepared which will implement most of the recommendations in Sir Alastair Blair-Kerr's Second Report.

They will include, among others:

- * A maximum penalty of seven years' imprisonment for an offence under Section 10 of the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance, as against the present maximum of three years.
- * Provision to enable a court to make a forfeiture award in favour of the Crown against a person convicted under Section 10, in relation to those monetary resources or property of which the accused failed to explain his possession satisfactorily to the court.
- * New machinery to prevent banks and other institutions from dealing with the assets of a person under investigation, and
- * Inspection and investigation of any bank account operated by a government servant.

In outlining the proposed new measures, the Colonial Secretary, the Hon. D.T.E. Roberts, told the Legislative Council that careful thought

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was also being given to the recommendation to make it an offence to fail to comply with a notice issued under Section 14 requiring a suspect to submit information to the Anti-Corruption Commission headed by Mr. Jack Cater.

"I believe that these amendments will make the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance a more effective instrument in dealing with corruption than it is at present," Mr. Roberts said.

The new Commission, he added, had a formidable task. "It must not lack the proper legal support." The Bill will be introduced in the Legislative Council early next year.

Useful Talks

Mr. Roberts told Council that useful talks had taken place between the Secretary for the Civil Service and the three Staff Associations concerning Sir Alastair's proposals to change the Colonial Regulations so as to make it easier to remove government servants against whom no conviction for corruption could be obtained because of insufficient evidence.

While the associations were concerned that honest officers should be protected against possible victimisation or injustice, they had taken "a most reasonable and responsible attitude towards the proposals which have been put to them."

The Colonial Secretary hoped that a formula could be reached which would be acceptable to everyone concerned.

On the Anti-Corruption Commission, Mr. Roberts said it was too early to say precisely what form it would take, but generally it was proposed that it should comprise three main divisions:

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- * An Operations Division, responsible for the investigation and prosecution of offences.
- * A Preventive and Administrative Division to deal with the prevention of corruption, principally by advice or the adoption of procedures which are likely to reduce the opportunities for corruption; and
- * A Community Relations Division to involve the public in the fight against corruption through education, publicity and by influencing public opinion.

The Ordinance under which the Commission will be formally constituted, he went on, will place the Commission directly under the control and direction of the Governor.

"These measures should make it clear that the Commissioner and his staff are intended to be free from the departmental and inter-departmental pressures to which members of the public service may be liable and are in fact independent of the government, though subject to the control of the Governor.

"In this way we wish to demonstrate yet again, that the government means to tackle corruption relentlessly."

Mr. Roberts said the term of service of the Commission's officers would also be subject to the Governor's approval, and it was intended that these terms should be kept roughly in line with those of the public service.

In order to preserve the rights to pensions and gratuities of those public servants serving with the Commission, steps would have to be taken to ensure that their career prospects did not suffer, he said.

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Turning to the Labour Tribunal, the Colonial Secretary announced that the Legislative Council would be asked in due course to approve its establishment as a permanent part of the judicial structure.

The tribunal, which was initially set up until the end of 1975, has proved very popular during the six months it has been in operation dealing with 563 cases -- far more than originally estimated and about twice the rate at which wage cases were dealt with by the District Court in recent years.

"It is therefore apparent, from the figures alone, that the tribunal has succeeded in obtaining the confidence of the public and that those with claims within its jurisdiction are very willing to resort to it," Mr. Roberts said.

Presiding Officer

It was likely, he added, that the increasing work load of the tribunal would necessitate the appointment of an additional presiding officer in the near future as well as additional premises.

Referring to criticism that the government was out of touch with public opinion, the Colonial Secretary said such criticism did not take proper account of the comprehensive network of over 100 advisory bodies on which civil servants and members of the public sat together to formulate advice on most matters of major importance.

These committees, he said, served as a useful bridge between the government and the people but he conceded that too many of them had common memberships. He felt that the field from which advice and assistance was

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sought should be widened and made more representative. In this regard the desirability of enlisting some of the younger members of the community would particularly be borne in mind.

The Colonial Secretary spoke at some length on the public service and its re-organisation and noted that the changes introduced on the advice of the McKinsey team of consultants would help improve the overall efficiency of the government.

There were yet weaknesses to be overcome and these were being tackled, he said, but there was equally much to be said for the strength and enterprise of the civil service and the police force, both of which compare very favourably with others elsewhere.

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NEW MEASURES TO IMPROVE PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Restraints Likely On Private Cars And PLBs

A number of measures aimed at expanding the public transport services in Hong Kong were put forward today by the Secretary for the Environment, the Hon. J.J. Robson.

He told the Legislative Council that this expansion would almost certainly have to be associated with restraints on the growth of private transport; the phasing out of public light buses as a substitute for double-decker buses and allocating to them their more proper role of providing feeder services to the main routes; the proper use of taxis; and the "suppression of pak pais".

Mr. Robson said traffic and transport probably created the greatest problems of modern living.

"The effect of motor vehicles on both urban and rural life, and the facilities which have to be provided to meet their insatiable demands, is almost overwhelming.

"This situation must be brought under control."

He said it was not intended to prescribe routes and fares for each of the public light bus routes, but instead, Hong Kong would be divided into a number of zones with a standard fare for each. "The time and circumstances under which higher fares may be charged will also be laid down and enforced by the police."

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However, Mr. Robson said if experience indicated that prosecution was no real deterrent to overcharging by public light bus and taxi drivers, "it will be necessary to consider more drastic measures such as administrative powers to suspend the vehicle licence after a conviction for overcharging."

The Secretary for the Environment reiterated that a green paper on transport was being prepared which would outline the government's thinking on the overall transport policy for Hong Kong.

He pointed out that although the construction of the underground railway was the "greatest single project which will transform our transport patterns" it must be remembered that, on present indications, even when it is built there will be a need for far more surface transport than exist now.

Fixed Penalties

"A very close watch will have to be kept on its planning and control to ensure that good progress is not achieved at the expense of widespread traffic congestion or disruption of utility companies' services - most of which run under our roads."

Mr. Robson hoped that the recently formed Road Safety Council would have an impact on the behaviour of both pedestrians and motorists, but their efforts would need to be backed by tougher legislation. This should provide fixed penalties for moving traffic offences such as jumping the lights, and failing to give way at a pedestrian crossing.

Coupled with this scheme should be a driver demerit system which could lead to a motorist having his licence suspended.

"These various methods," he said, "should be very effective in making motorists more law-abiding and the road safer for all."

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Turning to the subject of pollution, Mr. Robson said that the demand for land for special industries, including applications for petroleum refinery and petrochemical projects, had highlighted the need for a comprehensive system for the control of pollution arising from industry.

He added that the two environmental feasibility studies of specific proposals for petroleum-~~cum~~-chemical industries have emphasised that these industries are generally acceptable in Hong Kong at the sites proposed, "but only provided that there is full control at the design stage of their plants and that there is comprehensive legislation and an effective authority to control the environmental standards set."

Mr. Robson's wide-ranging speech touched on a number of other important issues. Among the main points were:

- * a revision of the Colony outline Plan to incorporate not only the land use standards used in the preparation of the present plan but also to match it with a time scale and to relate land use both to the development of other resources and to economic feasibility;
- * expanding the very limited planning controls contained in the Town Planning Ordinance. As the law now stands, there is no statutory planning control over any part of Hong Kong not covered by the statutory outline zoning plans, while the restrictions created by the zoning plans within the planned areas may be too inflexible;
- * an interim report dealing with the feasibility and economic sense of a bridge to Lantau Island is now being considered by the Director of Public Works; and
- * more staff becoming available to push ahead with the programme for the recreational development of the countryside.

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TOWARDS A MORE OPEN GOVERNMENT

The Secretary for Home Affairs, the Hon. D.C. Bray, today outlined three main initiatives for establishing a "more open government" to keep pace with a community which is developing a new sense of purpose.

Speaking in the Legislative Council, he said the three initiatives required the government to "let the people know what we are thinking; to make it easier for people to formulate and present their views; and to make sure that these expressions of opinion are taken into account."

These were necessary in response to social change in Hong Kong which seemed to be emerging as "one of the most dramatic developments of the early seventies".

"Our older society, prized loose from its stable clan structure, was made up of individuals more concerned with material well-being than social awareness," he said.

It had only recently become clear that the most important change in society was not its increasing wealth, nor its increasing expectations of government performance, but "its new sense of purpose".

"The new society no longer expects everything to be done for it by a paternalistic government. It is a society on the move, prepared to act on social issues with the same vigour that the old refugee society displayed in the pursuit of private prosperity."

Turning to the first initiative, Mr. Bray said that green papers, reports of advisory bodies and findings of consultants were frequently

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published before decisions were taken. But "more informal methods of airing ideas and proposals could be developed and I should like to give further thought to this".

Obviously there were limitations, such as the budget, but he said he would like to think that the government could air more proposals involving a choice of courses open to it so that there was an opportunity to shape policy more closely to public aspirations.

Mr. Bray said that on the second point there was already a basic structure which enabled people to formulate and present their views, including a broad range of advisory bodies which were capable of further sophistication.

Grass Roots

However, he said he was more concerned with the far wider network of committees that had been reinforced during the clean Hong Kong and fight crime campaigns. These are the City District Committees, the Area Committees and the "grass roots organisations of over 1,000 Mutual Aid Committees."

In the New Territories there are the Rural Committees and the village organisations.

Many of the town organisations were quite new, "but I certainly hope they will provide the means whereby people can put forward their views on anything they like."

As well, proposals to strengthen the government's opinion gathering methods were now being drawn up.

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On the third initiative, the Secretary for Home Affairs said the responsibility for taking public opinion into account "rests with all officials and unofficials concerned with policy decisions. In addition, a special responsibility rests on the holder of my post to ensure that public opinion is presented and considered at all levels."

Mr. Bray emphasised: "The new society is anxious to deal with social problems itself. We shall respond by involving the community more in decisions affecting its everyday life."

Dealing with the crime problem, he said the government should be encouraged by greater public confidence. Last winter people were beginning to stay off the streets at night, to keep their children at home, and walk in fear of attack.

"This is not the case today. Reports from City District Offices, opinion surveys, and police contacts all reflect a strengthening of public confidence in law and order.

"However," he added, "we still have far too many robberies and other violent crimes; and the police must be given the men to deal with them."

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MORE LAND TO BE MADE AVAILABLE TO PRIVATE DEVELOPERS

The Director of Public Works, the Hon. A.S. Robertson, today forecast that about 11 acres of land in the Kowloon foothills will be set aside for private development and should be on the market by the middle of next year.

He told the Legislative Council that consultants were now investigating the possibilities of development of land in this area and in the Sai Kung Peninsula and on Lantau.

Although none of these investigations had been completed, Mr. Robertson predicted that a bridge to Lantau would prove to be feasible.

He said that it would permit consideration to be given to development of parts of north east Lantau for industrial and residential purposes, without being incompatible with the use of the south and west of the Island for recreational development. "It remains to be seen whether north east Lantau should be developed in this way."

He added: "The overall plan for recreational development of Lantau and the Sai Kung Peninsula will reveal specific opportunities for the government to enlist the aid of the private sector to take part in this development, under conditions attractive to both parties.

"If the Lyemun bridge is feasible, and the investigations we are undertaking will answer that question by early next year, it will remain to be seen how and when a bridge would fit into the traffic needs of Kowloon and Hong Kong; and our Comprehensive Transport Study will answer that question."

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Mr. Robertson then went on to describe some of the major activities of his department.

On water, he said: "The long-term plans for augmenting our water resources have borne fruit in another -- the sixth successive -- year of continuous supply. In the past six years we have distributed more water than in the previous 18 years.

"This year saw the completion of the works to increase the capacity of Plover Cove reservoir to 50,000 million gallons which is by itself three times the total storage capacity of all of our reservoirs 10 years ago."

Desalter

In the meantime work was continuing apace on the Lok On Pai desalter -- still the largest in the world -- and a valuable source of 40 million gallons per day which will gradually come on stream in 1975. This will be followed closely by the High Island Reservoir Scheme which will add another 70 million gallons per day during the period 1976-78.

Mr. Robertson said while he was happy that his department was on top of the problem of providing water resources, he was less happy about its ability to provide the standard of service which the 600,000 paying customers of the Waterworks Office should have.

"This is, in part, due to an inadequate accounting and billing system which creaks and groans while barely achieving its accounting task, but fails completely to yield information essential to deal with customer queries and complaints," he said.

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The Public Works Department, as a whole, he went on, was the subject of a special study on the uses which it should be making of computers.

He was sure that an important outcome of this study would be the computerisation of the Waterworks accounts, and this would be a great relief to the Waterworks Office and its customers.

On problems facing the Buildings Ordinance Office, Mr. Robertson said it was apparent that no ordinary measures could reduce the backlog of work that had built up following last year's catastrophic rainstorms, or even keep pace with the inflow of new work.

Allegations

This was particularly so since the heavy rainstorms had shown that the Buildings Ordinance Office must scrutinize more closely all plans for development in hilly areas and scrutinize also the actual activities on the ground, he said.

Mr. Robertson also referred to allegations of P.W.D. failing to take action against illegal building modifications.

In reply, he said: "The intensive programme of action this year against the owners of one group of new buildings on King's Road has shown clearly that it is completely impractical to extend such action generally because of the enormous staff effort involved to achieve even a temporary improvement.

/"Some additional

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"Some additional posts have been approved recently for the Buildings Ordinance Office and we will do what we can with these, but I hope that we will also be provided with adequate legal and administrative means of tackling this problem."

Mr. Robertson gave an assurance that once the office was given this, its staff would get down to the problem "with a will."

Referring to the New Territories Development Department, which was formed as a result of the Government's new, accelerated 10-year housing programme, he said he was happy to say that "the impact of this new organisation has already been felt."

Land

"In Sha Tin, already there are about 80 acres of formed land and within the period 1975 to 1978 there will be another 640 acres. Much of this land will clearly be required for public housing, but there should also be 150 acres for private housing.

"Of more immediate interest, however, will be a plan to allow private developers to participate in the formation of land in the Sha Tin area."

The New Territories Development, Mr. Robertson said, had identified an opportunity to invite private developers to excavate hillside and reclaim a large area of seabed on the southeast side of Sha Tin.

"The developer will retain about 48 acres of the land so formed which he may develop for private residential purposes; the remainder of the land will be returned to the government to be used to promote the speedier development of Sha Tin Town. These areas are additional to the 640 acres I have mentioned before," he said.

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Mr. Robertson then listed some of the successes in the transport battle. He said the extension to Kai Tak Runway would be completed early next year and the new railways terminus at Hung Hom in mid-1975.

In addition, double-tracking and station improvements between Kowloon and Tai Po are being planned to come into effect when required by the traffic demands of Sha Tin New Town and beyond.

The Port Works Office continues to provide facilities to improve inter-urban and inter-island travel.

Turning to the work of the Highways Office, he said: "Last year 36 major highway schemes were completed and there are at present 35 more in the course of construction. The forecast expenditure on highways in the next five years is \$2,700 million, compared with \$350 million in the past five years."

Delays

Mr. Robertson also briefly described the work of the Office of Director of Mass Transit Studies.

"If all goes according to plan, work will begin next year on a number of sites between Kowloon Bay and Shek Kip Mei and will spread progressively down Nathan Road," he added.

Referring to alleged delays of some items of Public Works, Mr. Robertson said: "Delays apparently do occur; they occur before a project begins because it may not be so evident to all, that the project is necessary or desirable; they may appear to occur during the construction stages of a project because the project is immensely more complicated than is apparent to the superficial observer; they may actually occur because all the staff of the Public Works Department, its consultants and contractors are human.

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"But these same people will be 'getting with it' to the tune of \$1,000 million -- which is the estimated cost of the Public Works Non-Recurrent Programme this year. And, given just a little encouragement I am sure that they will rise to the increasing demands that the community will have to place on them in the future."

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COUNCIL FOR RECREATION AND SPORT ESTABLISHED

The government today took a major step in the development of facilities to meet the leisure time needs of young people with the setting up of a Council for Recreation and Sport.

The Governor, Sir Murray MacLehose, today approved the appointment of the council under the chairmanship of the Secretary for Home Affairs.

The official members will be the Secretary for Social Services, the Secretary for the Environment, the Director of Urban Services and the Deputy Financial Secretary. The unofficial members are Mr. A. de O. Sales, Mr. K.C. Thornton, Mr. H.C. Ma, Mr. F.K. Hu and Mr. Wong Chung-cheun.

The unofficial members have been chosen for their wide experience in sport and physical recreation and in dealing with the needs of young people.

The terms of reference of the Council are to ensure that facilities for recreation and sport in both the urban and rural areas are expanded, consistent with resources available, that their use is maximised and that facilities and services are provided appropriate to meet the leisure-time needs of young people. To do this, the council will:

- * advise on how facilities for both recreation and sport may be expanded and to make recommendations on government expenditure on such facilities;
- * advise on how the use of such facilities may be maximised;

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- * advise on how the supervision of recreation and sport by voluntary and government agencies can be improved and expanded;
- * be the channel for advice to government on financial assistance to amateur sport;
- * make recommendations to government on any special services and facilities required to meet the leisure-time needs of young people;
- * keep under review needs in these fields and progress made in meeting them and to issue an annual report; and
- * establish a special secretariat under the supervision of the Secretary for Home Affairs.

In his address at the opening of the new session of the Legislative Council on October 17, the Governor said that the council would bring together a high-level group of people with the special experience of the public and private organisations controlling the main recreational facilities and services in existence.

The Council will also include within its purview the five-year programme of recreational development and nature conservation which was announced last year. The programme is now passing from the planning stage to actual construction.

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AGREEMENT ON PERMANENT LAND TRIBUNAL

Broad agreement has been reached with several government departments on the form of a proposed permanent Land Tribunal, the New Territories District Commissioner, the Hon. D. Akers-Jones, said today.

Making his debut as District Commissioner at the Legislative Council, he said such a Tribunal would avoid the need to convene separate Compensation Boards for each resumption of land.

It would also be able to deal with compensation claims arising from the alteration of streets and foreshore reclamation.

"From an organisational standpoint it has many advantages and when properly established, it would deal with claims much more expeditiously than at present. I hope this improved system will meet general commendation and support," Mr. Akers-Jones said.

He pointed out that the Governor, in his speech to the Council on October 17, had agreed that the rates of compensation offered in cases of resumption would be adjusted to reflect the market value in the areas concerned.

This change, he said, would remove a long standing grievance.

Mr. Akers-Jones described as "extremely valuable" the regular meetings which he and his staff had with the Heung Yee Kuk, Rural Committees, Village Representatives and local organisations.

"However, these contacts need extending and, in addition to the traditional links, I will be examining ways and means of involving the citizens of the new towns more closely in the management of their own affairs and environment."

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On slum clearance in rural areas, he proposed, in addition to examining what could be done about clearing up some of the mess, to examine the present policies to see whether they were realistic for the vast areas of land in private ownership outside planned areas of government development.

Referring to a suggestion from the Hon. Li Fook-wo to turn Hei Ling Chau into a recreational area, he said the decision to resite the explosives depot on the island was taken after a careful examination of the amount of land which would be sterilised by the depot, the competing use for land at various locations and the physical requirements for siting a depot.

However, Mr. Akers-Jones said he had asked the departments concerned to consider once again if it was essential to make use of the island for this purpose and, if no alternative site could be found, to ensure that everything was done to minimise the effect on the rest of the island.

He pointed out that any undue delay in moving the depot from Green Island was unacceptable because of public safety, and also because additional explosives storage was urgently required for public works and the underground railway.

Mr. Akers-Jones went on to say that the increasing tempo of change and development would give rise to many more difficult decisions and matters of judgement involving the New Territories.

"This will mean sacrifice, some places of beauty will disappear, others will be brought for the first time within easy reach of the people.

"It is a process in which the great issues affecting the happiness and well-being of the people of Hong Kong as a whole must not be lost to sight and be obscured by sectional interests; we must keep our eyes on the main objectives," he added.

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FINANCIAL SECRETARY SPEAKS ON FUTURE TRENDS

The Financial Secretary, the Hon. C.P. Haddon-Cave, said that the world-wide increases in fuel prices should not result in any "erosion of our external competitiveness".

Speaking in the Legislative Council this afternoon, he said Hong Kong had a very strong currency which "puts us in a very favourable position by comparison with other countries when it comes to meeting pressures towards higher import costs -- whether fuel or anything else."

He said the exchange rate of the Hong Kong dollar had appreciated by three-and-one-third per cent so far this year in "terms of a trade-weighted average of major currencies".

"A strong currency also works to our advantage in the export field; and if this leads to increased money incomes, it is easier for us to meet such increases in consumer prices as do occur."

Mr. Haddon-Cave went on: "All things considered, then, I am very hopeful not only that the rate of increase of consumer prices will be slower next year, but also that the rate of growth of our real incomes will be higher."

As regards the effect of higher prices for diesel oil on the cost of public transport, the Financial Secretary said he did not consider that increased fuel costs would require any fare increases for some time to come.

Although oil costs represented about 12 per cent of total operating costs in the case of buses, the companies were at present in a strong financial position.

/Mr. Haddon-Cave

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Mr. Haddon-Cave said it was very difficult to speak "with any great certainty about the future course of fuel prices." However, household expenditure on kerosene and liquefied petroleum gas currently accounted for only about one-and-a-half per cent of total household expenditure.

Even if total expenditure on electricity was included, instead of simply its fuel oil cost component, the figure would rise to only three per cent.

On future supplies of rice, Mr. Haddon-Cave said the view is widely held that world wide rice yields in 1974 will be an all-time record.

"The increase in the price of rice alone this year, on a seasonally adjusted basis, accounted for something like a quarter of the overall increase in the General Consumer Price Index," he added.

The fact that rice was likely to be more plentiful in the near future was, in itself, likely to have a "profoundly stabilising effect on the rate at which consumer prices increase."

On the question of fish supplies, the Financial Secretary said that to restrict exports of fish, at this time, would have only a marginal effect on supplies, "and it could well damage the longer-term interests of the fishing industry."

"But," he added, "I can see there is a potential weakness in the Fish Marketing Ordinance in the sense that the Director of Agriculture and Fisheries has no powers to control exports."

Mr. Haddon-Cave said he intended to introduce an amendment to the ordinance "at an early date" to provide for a licensing system in case it should ever prove necessary to restrict exports.

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Dealing with the retail price rises generally, the Financial Secretary said that long before they became a matter of public concern, the Economic Branch of the Secretariat and the Consumer Price Index and Trade Research Sections of the Census and Statistics Department were monitoring the situation.

The data which has now been assembled is not only wide-ranging, but also now extends back over several years.

Mr. Haddon-Cave said: "Our aim is to ensure that we are constantly aware of what is happening in the prices field, why it is happening and what effect it is having on the community."

The Economic Branch and the Census and Statistics Department make use of a whole range of information and expert advice including the Agriculture and Fisheries Department, the Commerce and Industry Department and the Urban Services Department.

He said Legislative Council members who had suggested the establishment of an economic advisory committee or a price stabilisation board were not directly associated with this monitoring machinery.

However, he added "I think it would be very useful if they were because they could then satisfy themselves that government officers are sensitive to what is happening around them, and I think there would be merit in the appropriate UMELCO group periodically meeting them to be briefed, and we would welcome their suggestions as to useful lines of enquiry."

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SIR MURRAY TO VISIT MACAO

The Governor and Lady MacLehose will pay an informal visit to Macao next week as guests of the Governor of Macao and Madame Nobre de Carvalho.

They will travel to Macao by hydrofoil on the morning of Wednesday (December 5) and will spend the day visiting places of interest in Macao. In the evening they will attend a dinner at the Governor's residence.

On Thursday (December 6), Sir Murray and Lady MacLehose will pay a visit to Taipa and Coloane Islands before returning to Hong Kong in the early afternoon.

The Governor and Lady MacLehose will be accompanied by the Aide-de-Camp, Mr. P.A. Barkley and the Political Adviser, Mr. R.J. Stratton.

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WATER CUT

Water supply to a number of premises in Sham Shui Po will be interrupted for five hours from 1 a.m. on Saturday (December 1) to enable a test for leakage to be carried out in the area.

The area affected is bounded by Nam Cheong Street, Lai Chi Kok Road, Kweilin Street and Tung Chau Street.

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NEW SITES ALLOCATED TO KOWLOON BAY FIRE VICTIMS

More than two thirds of the Kowloon Bay fire victims eligible for re-site accommodation were today allocated sites in a newly formed Licensed Area nearby.

They are among more than 300 families who lost their homes in the squatter fire at Kowloon Bay two weeks ago.

In today's site allocation, a total of 228 families comprising 839 people were given sites. The exercise will continue tomorrow for the remaining 76 eligible families.

Those already allocated sites are allowed to put up their huts at any time they wish.

Cash grants of not less than \$1,330 for each family were distributed on Tuesday to help them rebuild and re-equip their new homes. The total pay-out from the Emergency Relief Fund amounted to nearly \$500,000.

A spokesman for the Housing Department said all the families were originally illegal squatters living in the Licensed Area.

"All those weeded out in the site identification and further processing carried out by the department were imposters, and were not genuine fire victims", he said.

Some 72 families comprising 399 people were found to be imposters. The department is still investigating the circumstances of 45 other families.

/The spokesman

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The spokesman said more than \$130,000 would have fallen into the wrong hands if these people had not been checked out.

"In addition, these people would have been given the much needed Licensed Area sites, thus depriving those who are in genuine need of them", he added.

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Note to Editors: Copies of a photograph showing the site allocation are distributed separately in the Press Boxes this evening.

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Release time: 10.30 p.m.