

**HONG KONG
GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
SERVICES****DAILY
INFORMATION
BULLETIN**

Saturday, August 5, 1972

GOVERNMENT REPLIES TO C.M.A. ON CROWN RENT POLICY

The Colonial Secretary has written to the Chinese Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong and other public organisations reiterating the Government's stand on the reassessment of rents for the renewal of Crown leases.

In December last year, the Chinese Manufacturers' Association, together with 26 other organisations, sent a joint petition to the Government calling for reconsideration of its renewal rent policy.

In the Legislative Council on May 24, 1972, the Colonial Secretary announced a number of modifications to the renewal policy which would be of benefit to the holders of renewable leases.

Replying on behalf of the Governor, the Colonial Secretary said in his letter that the various modifications to the policy proposed by the Government would cause a loss to the community from renewal rents amounting to some \$430 million during the five-year period 1973-77.

He said the lease conditions of renewable leases contained a provision, on expiry, for renewal at a re-assessed rent. "This provision states quite clearly and unequivocally that the Director of Public Works shall fix this rent fairly and impartially as the fair and reasonable rental value of the ground at the date of renewal."

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The letter stressed that the rent was the sum which a lessee might reasonably expect to pay if he were to pay monthly or annually for the right to renew the lease and use the property for a further term.

Referring to the Association's point concerning the inclusion of compound interest at five per cent in the re-assessment, the Colonial Secretary made it clear that no interest was charged on the re-assessed rent.

"The Director of Public Works, in calculating the rent for renewal, assesses the capital value of the land in question by reference to open market sales of similar land in the vicinity and then assesses the renewal rent as a percentage of this capital value.

"To determine the true annual value at Hong Kong interest rates, a return of 12 per cent would be realistic for this type of investment in land but a rate of five per cent has been used in the past; and now, as a result of the concessions recently announced by the Government, the calculation of renewal rent has been further reduced by 20 per cent, or by the equivalent of a reduction in the percentage rate from five per cent to four per cent."

In addition to the 20 per cent reduction, renewal rents will be phased in gradually. A payment of only 50 per cent will be required in 1973 rising to the full rent after five years.

Lessees have renewed on this basis in the past and numerous applications have been made for renewal in recent months in advance of the expiry of the first term of the lease. This is further evidence that lessees and their professional advisers have been, and are aware of the terms of renewal, and accept them.

Besides these concessions, the Colonial Secretary pointed out in his letter, "it should be remembered that there will be no increase in rent in respect of pre-war property unless and until it is re-developed; and also that the re-assessed rent in respect of under-developed post-war property, if the lessee so wished, will be less than for fully developed property until the property is re-developed to its full economic capacity."

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HARBOUR COLLECTION SERVICES PARTIALLY SUCCESSFUL

Three new harbour cleansing services started by the Marine Department last month are meeting with reasonable success.

Since July 19, five sampans have been working within the Yau Ma Tei and Causeway Bay typhoon shelters to provide a boat-to-boat refuse collection service for the 14,000 people living there.

A spokesman for the Pollution Control Unit said today that the service at present was not working as well as expected because the boat people were so used to dumping refuse into the harbour.

He hoped the publicity connected with the "Keep Hong Kong Clean" campaign will educate these people as to "what we are trying to do."

The sampans are now collecting about four to five tons of refuse every day. "But there is a lot more we can pick up," the spokesman added.

A scavenging service was also introduced last month for the Port of Aberdeen, where rapid developments in the past few years have resulted in an increase in refuse being dumped into the harbour.

The service is provided by one mechanised cargo boat and six sampans for more than 2,000 boats in the harbour.

Boat-to-boat collection in Aberdeen is difficult to carry out because most of the fishing vessels in the harbour are moving in and out constantly.

The third new operation introduced last month is a free ship-to-ship refuse collection service in Victoria Harbour.

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The spokesman recalled that in 1968, a similar service was introduced for a trial period of six months. At that time it was not free and ships making use of it were charged \$36 an hour.

The service was discontinued at the end of the trial period when less than five per cent of the ships made use of it.

Last year, the Marine Department conducted a feasibility study of providing a free collection service and this revealed that if the service was free, it would probably be well used.

As a result, a free service was introduced last month.

Two motor cargo boats now visit ships which have been in port for at least 48 hours to collect domestic refuse.

Ship owners and their agents can also telephone the Pollution Control Unit at H-450181, Ext. 270 requesting the service.

At present about 25 ships are visited every day but only about one third of them actually use the service.

The spokesman said that the service was not going as well as one would have hoped mainly because of the lack of co-operation from ships' officers and crew.

He said that the Marine Department had issued a notice to all shipping agents asking them to inform masters of ships of this service, and it was hoped that better co-operation would result in the future.

With the introduction of the three new services, the Marine Department's harbour cleansing fleet has been boosted to 30 vessels.

In the meantime, the spokesman said, the Department was investigating other forms of refuse collection to cope with the problem of harbour pollution, while a further expansion of the present fleet was also under consideration.

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RETIREMENT OF SENIOR SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICIAL

Mr. Chou Ting-hsun, Senior Principal Social Welfare Officer and head of the Public Assistance Division, is going on leave prior to retirement on Thursday (August 10), after serving the people of Hong Kong for more than 19 years.

To mark the occasion, the Director of Social Welfare, Mr. G.T. Rowe, will present Mr. Chou with a memento from friends and colleagues in the department on Tuesday (August 8).

Mr. Chou was first appointed in May 1953 as a Relieving Officer. He was redesignated a Social Welfare Officer Class 1 in July 1959.

He was promoted Principal Social Welfare Officer in January 1965, and became Senior Principal Social Welfare Officer in March 1970 to head the Public Assistance Division.

Throughout his career, Mr. Chou made a significant contribution to the development of social services in Hong Kong, particularly in the provision of help to those in financial need, or affected by natural disasters.

His devotion to duty and experience were particularly valuable between 1964 and 1968 when he served as Secretary of the Community Relief Trust Fund.

This was true again in 1966 and 1967 when he was a member of the Inter Departmental Working Party on Social Security. Later in 1970, he gave considerable assistance in the planning and implementation of the Public Assistance Scheme.

Mr. Chou is married with a son and a daughter. He plans a world cruise with his wife starting later this month, but will return to settle down in Hong Kong.

Note to Editors: You are invited to cover the presentation ceremony to mark Mr. Chou's retirement at 3 p.m. on Tuesday, August 8, in the Conference Room of the Social Welfare Department Headquarters in Lee Gardens.

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PUBLIC SPIRITED VILLAGER AVERTS TRAIN MISHAP

An alert and public spirited villager in Tai Po averted a serious train mishap at the risk of his own life during the rainstorm on June 17, thus saving many people on board the train from being injured or killed.

He is Mr. Lau Tim, 42, the operator of a cold drink shop near the White House in Tai Po. He is married with five children.

A landslide occurred at the 13½ railway milestone at about 5 p.m. on June 17, covering the railway track with large quantity of mud and sand. At that time, a train from Kowloon was about to pass through.

Mr. Lau, who lives near the place where the landslide took place, saw what had happened and thought of the danger it might cause to the train.

Despite the heavy rainfall and thunderstorm, Mr. Lau immediately rushed to the track, stood on it and signalled the train to stop by waving a red and white checkered table-cloth.

It was the signals that gave the driver of the train just enough time to stop the train before running into the heap of mud and sand.

There were about 1,000 passengers on board the train.

In recognition of his public spirited action, a letter of appreciation together with a token cash reward of \$500 will be presented to Mr. Lau by the acting General Manager of the Kowloon-Canton Railway, Mr. U.L. Wong.

The presentation will be made at the District Office, Tai Po, on Wednesday (August 9) afternoon.

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Note to Editors: You are invited to send a reporter and/or photographer to cover the presentation which will take place at the Tai Po District Office at 3 p.m. on Wednesday (August 9).

Transport will be provided. A 14-seater van (AM2132) will leave the Kowloon transport sub-pool behind the Tsim Sha Tsui Post Office for the Tai Po District Office at 1.50 p.m.

Copies of a photograph of Mr. Lau Tim are distributed separately in the G.I.S. Press Boxes this afternoon.

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PRESS CONFERENCE ON ANTI-MEASLES CAMPAIGN

Note to Editors: The Director of Medical and Health Services, Dr. the Hon. G.H. Choa, will be present at a press conference on Tuesday, August 8, to announce the details of this year's anti-measles campaign. The Press conference will be held at 3 p.m. in the 16 mm theatre of the Government Information Services, Beaconsfield House, 5th floor.

You are cordially invited to have the Press conference covered.

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GOVERNOR GOES ON LEAVE

The Governor, Sir Murray MacLehose, left Hong Kong by air this (Saturday) morning for five weeks leave in the United Kingdom.

He was seen off by the Colonial Secretary, Sir Hugh Norman-Walker; the Commander British Forces, Lieutenant General Sir Richard Ward; the Senior Unofficial Member of Executive Council, Sir Albert Rodrigues; the Senior Unofficial Member of Legislative Council, the Hon. P.C. Woo; and the Director of Civil Aviation, Mr. T.R. Thomson.

During Sir Murray's absence, Sir Hugh will be the Acting Governor.

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QUARANTINE RESTRICTIONS REMOVED

The Port Health Authorities announced today that the quarantine restrictions imposed against arrivals from Tjilatjap (Port), Indonesia on account of cholera have been removed.

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294,000 LOTTERY TICKETS SOLD

A total of 294,000 tickets of the 52nd Government Lottery have been sold up to 12 noon today (Saturday).

The winning numbers will be drawn at the City Hall Theatre on Saturday, August 12.

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Release time: 2.30 p.m.