



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Thursday, July 26, 1973

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GOVERNMENT ACCEPTS COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS

The Government has accepted the recommendations made by Sir Alastair Blair-Kerr in the report of the first part of his commission which is published today.

Sir Alastair's first recommendation proposes an amendment to Section 10 of the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance. This would abolish the requirement that the Attorney General must inform a suspect that a prosecution against him for an offence under this section was being considered. In addition, Sir Alastair has recommended that it should no longer be necessary for a suspect to be given the opportunity to make representations before a decision to prosecute is taken.

"It is very important," Sir Alastair states in the report, "that we should retain a provision to the effect that no prosecution be instituted without the consent of the Attorney General; but I strongly recommend that this community does not continue to tie the hands of its Attorney General, and its police force, by permitting section 10(2), in its present form, to remain on the statute book."

The Commission's second recommendation proposed that "consideration be given to the desirability of introducing legislation empowering the authorities to compel a person suspected of an offence under the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance to surrender his travel documents to the Police upon an order being made to this effect."

/A spokesman

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A spokesman said that a bill giving effect to both these recommendations would be published in the Gazette tomorrow (Friday) and all three readings taken at the Legislative Council next Wednesday.

The Commission also recommended that the Government should consider tightening security arrangements at Kai Tak. "The problem is already being examined by the Airport Security Committee," a Government spokesman said. "Some immediate measures to tighten security at the airport have already been taken and longer-term measures are being considered," he added.

Commenting on the commission's findings which suggest that more could and should have been done to minimise the risk of Godber's departure, the Commissioner of Police, Mr. Charles Sutcliffe, said, "One should not consider the reasons for the decisions taken at this time without taking into account the background to the enactment of this section of the ordinance. Section 10 was widely criticised in Hong Kong, and in Britain, for being 'an invasion of privacy' and 'an infringement of human rights'. The Attorney General, when introducing the Bill, accepted that it constituted 'some infringement of traditional liberty and privacy'."

"We, in the police force," said Mr. Sutcliffe, "have been left in no doubt, following consistent advice from our legal advisers, that the letter and indeed the spirit of these sections of the law - which protected the rights of the individual concerned - were to be scrupulously observed. We were, not unnaturally, particularly sensitive on this point, and this influenced the decisions we took on measures which might have reduced the possibility of Godber's departure," the Commissioner added.

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"The measures suggested by Sir Alastair to minimise the risk of Godber's departure were not overlooked. Each one of them was carefully considered," said the Commissioner, "and although, as Mr. Dawson said in evidence before the Commission, we wanted to arrest Godber as soon as there was evidence to justify this, we regarded this seven-day period in the Attorney General's letter as a sort of moratorium during which our hands were tied."

"Nevertheless, in the light of Sir Alastair's comments, and with the benefit of hind sight, I now accept that perhaps more might have been done to reduce the chance of Godber leaving Hong Kong," Mr. Sutcliffe concluded.

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GOVERNOR COMMENDS POLICE OFFICERS FOR BRINGING GODBER CASE TO LIGHT

The Governor, Sir Murray MacLehose, this evening commended Senior Police Officers and the Anti-Corruption Branch for their work in bringing the Godber case to light.

"It is a thousand pities that Godber got away, but I would not wish it to be forgotten that unless the Police had taken determined action to produce evidence against Godber this case would never have been uncovered," Sir Murray said.

"From the moment that the Commissioner of Police received information concerning Godber, Mr. Sutcliffe, Mr. Dawson and the Anti-Corruption Branch have pursued the case against him with vigour and expertise. I fully support Sir Alastair's view that there can be no doubt of the determination of the Police to bring this case to trial," the Governor said.

"Since Godber's departure the Police have continued their efforts; they, and the Legal Department, are doing everything they possibly can to uncover evidence which will enable us to bring Godber back to Hong Kong. I appeal to anyone with such evidence to serve the community by coming forward," the Governor concluded.

In the Commission's report Sir Alastair rules out any possibility that senior police officers connived at Godber's departure. Commenting on this allegation, which had appeared in some newspapers, and on the suggestion that Godber's disappearance from Hong Kong had been "fixed", Sir Alastair said there was not a scrap of evidence to suggest that anybody assisted Godber to leave Hong Kong by any positive act.

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"All the evidence indicates that he did not seek, nor was he given, nor did he need, any active assistance," Sir Alastair said.

He added that he was "totally unable to subscribe to the view" that Godber was assisted, in a negative way, by a planned failure of the authorities to take measures which perhaps, in retrospect, could or should have been taken.

"Never for a moment during this enquiry did I have any reason to doubt the honesty and integrity of the senior officers involved in this case," Sir Alastair said. "There is no doubt whatsoever in my mind that the intention was to arrest Godber and bring him before the court before the end of June."

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NEW ROLE FOR TUNG WAH EASTERN HOSPITAL

The Tung Wah Eastern Hospital, in So Kon Po, from today becomes a district hospital serving residents in the eastern part of Hong Kong Island.

The hospital remains under the administrative control of the board of directors of the Tung Wah group of hospitals, but will admit acute cases from the casualty section of the Tang Shiu Kin Hospital, and specialist clinics at the Violet Peel Polyclinic in Wan Chai.

In addition, it will admit acute cases from specialist clinics at the Tung Wah Eastern Hospital itself. The new arrangements provide for co-operation between the Tung Wah Eastern and the Queen Mary hospitals so that acute cases can be referred for admission from one to the other, both for the convenience of the patients, and to reduce over-crowding in either hospital.

At a ceremony this morning to mark the new role of the Tung Wah Eastern Hospital, the Director of Medical and Health Services, Dr. G.H. Choa, said its designation as a district hospital serving the eastern portion of the Island marked a further stage in plans to provide Hong Kong with more hospital beds for acute cases.

By admitting cases from the casualty section of the Tang Shiu Kin Hospital, most of whom up to now have been sent to the Queen Mary Hospital, some of the congestion at Queen Mary will be immediately relieved.

Renovations to enable the Tung Wah Eastern Hospital to assume its new role have taken one year to complete. The cost is \$750,000, met entirely by the government.

/The hospital

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The hospital now has 330 beds, two major operating theatres, one minor theatre, two air-conditioned X-ray rooms, an expanded laboratory, and an enlarged kitchen. Its range of services covers medical, surgical, obstetrical, specialist and gynaecological.

The Tung Wah group of hospitals, to which it remains attached, receives an annual government subvention. In the last financial year, this totalled \$52,255,214.

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P.M.G. TO MEET THE MEDIA

Note to Editors: Another "Meet the Media" session will be held tomorrow (Friday) at 12 noon in the G.I.S. theatre, Beaconsfield House, 5th floor.

Attending the meeting will be the Postmaster-General, Mr. M. Addi, the Controller of Posts (Systems), Mr. C.L. Owens, and the Assistant Controller of Posts, Mr. Leung Ming Fai.

You are invited to have the meeting covered. Television crews are advised to arrive early so that they will have ample time to set up their equipment.

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MURRAY ROAD MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK OPENS ON MONDAY

The new Murray Road multi-storey car park with provision for 900 parking spaces will open on Monday (July 30).

The Commissioner for Transport said today that parking facilities would be available on floors one to eight with the exception of 28 spaces on the eighth floor.

The use of the car park will be limited to private cars, goods vehicles of an unladen weight not exceeding two tons, public cars and private and public light buses.

Motorists entering or leaving the building do so by the slip road parallel to Cotton Tree Drive.

Vehicles from North Point and Wanchai can enter via Harcourt Road and the slip road under Cotton Tree Drive, while vehicles from Central District can travel via Chater Road, Murray Road and Queensway, turning left into the slip road.

Appropriate traffic signs will be erected to guide motorists.

With the opening of the multi-storey car park, the existing temporary one occupying a section of land bounded by Harcourt Road, Murray Road, Queensway and Cotton Tree Drive will be closed to all parking from midnight on Saturday (July 28).

The Commissioner pointed out that a large portion of this land had been sold for redevelopment and would be handed over to the owners on August 1.

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LADY MACLEHOSE OPENS ART EXHIBITION

The Seventh Children's Art Exhibition presented by the Urban Council in the City Museum and Art Gallery was officially opened by Lady MacLehose this evening.

The exhibition will be open to public viewing as from tomorrow until September 2 between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. daily, except on Thursday and Sunday mornings.

On display are a total of 265 pictures and three-dimensional craftworks of natural sceneries, selected from 6,500 entries submitted by children from 300 schools.

In her opening address, Lady MacLehose commended the Urban Council for organising the exhibition and said the central theme - "Discovering Nature" - was well chosen and timely when the whole world was beginning to see its various environmental problems.

"Our children here are brought up in the concrete jungle of the city among the speed and bustle of traffic, and they may gradually become insensitive to the beauty of nature," she said.

In choosing the theme, she added, the Urban Council had shown its concern with Hong Kong's environment.

In his speech, the Chairman of the Urban Council, Mr. A. de O Sales, said the exhibition had two purposes -- to emphasise the importance of art education in Hong Kong, and to attract young people to the City Hall so that they could learn to accept it as their cultural centre.

/Lady MacLehose

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Lady MacLehose presented 10 prizes to students who created the most distinguished works. Prizes were also presented to schools with the most outstanding results in the exhibition.

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Note to Editors: Copies of the full text of Lady MacLehose's speech and that of Mr. A. de O. Sales, in both English and Chinese, are boxed this evening.

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NEW PROCEDURES FOR RENEWING HAWKER LICENCES

The Urban Council has revised its procedures for renewing hawker licences.

Under the new system, fixed pitch licences, including cooked food stalls, and itinerant hawker licences are renewable two months prior to their expiry date, and up to four months after their expiry.

A spokesman for the Urban Council said today that the period of grace for four months was to cater for such eventualities as illness or absence from Hong Kong.

"However," he stressed, "anyone who trades with an expired licence is liable to prosecution."

The spokesman urged hawkers to pay particular attention to the changes and comply with the deadlines applicable to the renewal of their licences.

Licences can be renewed between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. on weekdays at the Hawker Record Offices in the Causeway Bay Magistracy; and the Urban Services Department, Sai Yee Street Depot, Kowloon.

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Note to Editors: Copies of letters to the hawkers are boxed separately.

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TECHNICAL INSTITUTE'S DAY COURSE

Fifteen full-time, one block release and 14 part-time day-release courses are being offered by the Morrison Hill Technical Institute for the 1973-74 session beginning on September 5.

New students can apply for enrolment from tomorrow (Friday).

Application forms are available from the Institute, 6 Oi Kwan Road, Wanchai.

Forms for full-time courses are also available from all City District Offices in Hong Kong and Kowloon and the Tsuen Wan District Office in the New Territories.

Completed forms should be returned to the Institute by August 18.

For block-release and part-time day-release courses, applicants should be engaged in work appropriate to the course for which they apply. They must be sponsored, and forms must be signed by their employers.

The tuition fee for full-time craft level courses and the junior clerks course is \$120 a year while the fee for full-time courses at post-secondary level is \$400 a year, payable in 10 monthly instalments.

In addition there is a welfare fee of \$15 a year and some additional expenditure on books, overalls and equipment.

The fees for part-time day-release courses are \$80 a year and \$60 for the half-year (nominal) block release course. Both rates will be subject to review.

Students are advised that applications for part-time evening courses closed on May 15.

An announcement will be made in early September for the enrolment of new students for part-time evening short courses.

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Release time: 7.30 p.m.