DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Monday, December 17, 1973

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Monday, December 17, 1973

NOVEMBER G.C.P.I. DROPS ANOTHER EIGHT POINTS

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The General Consumer Price Index for November 1973 was 169 - eight points lower than that for the previous month.

The drop was the second in two months - the first being in October when a drop of four points was recorded.

During November, the index for foodstuffs dropped by 16 points. On the other hand, the index for fuel and light went up by four points while that for durable goods advanced by three points.

Increases of two points each were recorded in the index for clothing and footwear, the index for miscellaneous goods and the index for services.

The index for alcoholic drink and tobacco also rose by one point. Movements in the indexes for other sections of community were insignificant.

When adjusted to allow for seasonal fluctuations, the General Consumer Price Index for November 1973 was 172 - five points lower than that for the previous month.

Compared with the previous month, the average retail price of fresh vegetables fell by 46 per cent as a result of a substantial increase in both local supplies and imports.

The average retail prices of marine fish, fresh water fish, poultry and fresh fruit also declined due to seasonal influences.

But the average retail prices of rice and charges for meals bought away from home increased.

As to non-food items, the increase in the index for fuel and light was attributable to the upward revision in the prices of kerosene and liquefied petroleum gas towards the end of the month.

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SAVE FUEL DRIVE IN SCHOOLS

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Hundreds of thousands of school children throughout Hong Kong are being told of ways in which they can help in the current save fuel drive by the government.

At school assemblies or during classes the pupils are being told of the need to reduce the consumption of electricity both in schools and at their homes.

This follows a circular sent to all teachers by the Director of Education in which he said he had been asked to reduce the electricity consumption within the department by some 15 per cent.

He pointed out that this figure could not be achieved without the full co-operation of all staff.

The Economic and Public Affairs Section of the Education Department has already introduced this major subject into the appropriate lessons in the secondary schools.

In this way the students become more involved and more aware of the world oil situation. This in itself emphasises the need to economise on the use of fuel.

A spokesman for the department said today that about 30 secondary schools on both sides of the harbour had organised special E.P.A. forums on "the subject of oil" and this will be expanded during the next few weeks.

To assist in the preparation of the lessons, the Section is obtaining reference material from the Director of Oil Supplies and various reports from newspapers and magazines.

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U.K. CHRISTMAS SURFACE MAIL TO HONG KONG DELAYED

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The Post Office announced today that Christmas sea mail from the United Kingdom to Hong Kong has been delayed en route and because of late arrival it will not now be possible to deliver the mail until after Christmas.

The mail is on board the container vessel Hong Kong Express which was due to arrive today (Monday). The shipping agents have informed the Post Office, however, that the vessel is not expected to reach Hong Kong until Christmas Day.

The Hong Kong Express is carrying three containers of Christmas mail for Hong Kong, consisting of 862 bags of letter mail and 366 bags of parcels.

A Post Office spokesman said that as far as Christmas sea mail to the United Kingdom was concerned, the British Post Office had confirmed that the ship carrying mail posted in Hong Kong by October 25 -- the latest date for posting Christmas sea mail to the U.K. -- had arrived in England on schedule.

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SHOP TENANT REPRESENTATIVES ACCEPT NEW DRAFT AGREEMENT

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Commenting on the reported objections from some public housing estate shop tenants to the new draft two-year tenancy agreement announced last Friday, Mr. John Walden, acting Director of Housing, said today that the terms of the agreement had been accepted by representatives of tenants and kaifongs after a series of meetings with senior staff of the Housing Department.

The objections, he said, appeared to come from a small group of shop-keepers who broke off from the talks earlier because they did not want any change whatsoever in tenancy conditions.

When long term agreements were first proposed in August, tenants raised objections which were discussed at a meeting with the Secretary for Housing, Mr. Ian Lightbody. Subsequently, the Public Housing Estates Merchant Association - which has representatives from every estate concerned - chose a small committee to represent the association's point of view to the Housing Department. Similar meetings were held with estate kaifong representatives.

"Although Friday's meeting clearly indicated that the negotiations with the association had been successfully concluded, we are not surprised at the continuing objection from the small minority," Mr. Walden said.

"The Housing Department has done everything possible to meet the points made by the tenants and the representatives at the meeting expressed their satisfaction."

/The new .....

The new agreement now meets their requirements in the following respects:

1. Security of tenure
   Tenancies will be of a fixed term of two years and will be renewed automatically at the end of each term, provided there has not been a persistent or blatant breach of the agreement. However, tenants may opt for a monthly tenancy if they wish.

2. Inheritance
   The present tenant will be allowed to transfer his right to a member of his family.

3. Change of trade
   Tenants will have the right to apply for a change of trade, provided it meets with local demand and does not adversely affect the living environment of the estate.

4. Transfer of shop tenancy
   Present tenants who held tenancies before April 1, 1973, will be allowed to assign them. In the past they could only assign to authorised tenants of an estate. Now they can assign to anyone.

A copy of the new draft agreement with a letter explaining it is going out to every shop tenant.

"We hope they will all take advantage of the considerable benefits this new agreement offers," said Mr. Walden.

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NEW RESERVOIR FOR NEW KOWLOON EAST

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A fresh water service reservoir is to be built shortly on the hillside off Anderson Road in Kowloon to cope with future water demand brought about by the development in the area.

The reservoir will have a storage capacity of two million gallons and will be situated about 2,000 feet from Clear Water Bay Road.

It is part of a scheme to extend fresh water supply to the high level areas in New Kowloon East, including Shun Lee Tsuen.

To facilitate traffic flow in the area during construction work, a section of Anderson Road from Clear Water Bay Road to the site, measuring about 1,600 feet, will be rebuilt.

Work on the reservoir project will begin in the middle of next month and will take about two years to complete.

Commenting on the project, a spokesman for the Public Works Department said that public housing planned for the area would attract an additional population of 106,000 to the area in the next few years.

In addition, private development in the area is also expected to bring in more people.

The spokesman said that a pumping station would later be built at Shun Lee Tsuen to transfer water from the existing Kwun Tong High Level Fresh Water Service Reservoir to the new service reservoir.

"This pumping station will be equipped to meet the demand anticipated over the next decade with provision for further extension," he said.

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GRANTS TO WELFARE ORGANISATIONS

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Grants totalling almost $1.5 million have been made available to 42 voluntary welfare organisations from the Sir Robert Ho Tung Charitable Fund.

The grants were recently approved by the Governor and bring the total amount allocated from the fund for this year to about $2.7 million.

In the latest allocation, the Pok Oi Hospital in Yuen Long received the biggest grant of $300,000 which will be used in a programme to improve medical facilities and staff quarters at the hospital.

Among other large grants were $158,000 for the Rennie's Mill Student Aid Project for the construction of a new dormitory at the Tung Wan School on Lantau Island; and three separate grants of $100,000 each for the Hong Kong Adventist Hospital, the Caritas medical centre in Kowloon and the Hong Kong Arts Festival Society.

The Sir Robert Ho Tung Charitable Fund was established in 1956 with a bequest of $500,000 from the late Sir Robert Ho Tung to make funds available for organisations involved in welfare, education and medical fields.

The first grants from the income of the fund were made in 1960 and since then many charities have benefited from it.

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SAFETY HINTS ON OPERATING WINCHES

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The Director of Marine, Mr. A. Fletcher has drawn the attention of shipmasters and dock workers to the dangerous practice of placing ropes on the drums of winches that are running unattended.

There should always be a second person at the winch controls whenever ropes are being worked on a warping or whipping drum, he said.

In a recent accident, a man was killed when he was caught between a rope and the revolving drum of a winch. "His life may have been saved if there had been a second man at the controls to stop the winch," the Director said.

He stressed that whenever practicable, the winch should be stopped before placing ropes on the winch drums. If it is necessary to have the winch in motion while taking ropes or wires to the warping or whipping drums, a low speed should be used.

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CHINESE CHESS TOURNAMENT

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The next events in the monthly chess tournament organised by the Princess Alexandra Community Centre of the Social Welfare Department will be held on Thursday evening (December 20).

Two chess games will be held to allow more participants. Individual or group chess players are welcome to join. Application should be made to the Group Work Unit, 2nd floor, Princess Alexandra Community Centre, Tai Ho Street, Tsuen Wan, New Territories.

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CHINESE WINTER SOLSTICE FESTIVAL

Statutory Holiday for Industrial Workers

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The Commissioner of Labour, Mr. I.R. Price, today reminded employers that Saturday, December 22 - the day of the Chinese Winter Solstice Festival - is one of the six statutory holidays to which industrial workers are entitled under the Industrial Employment (Holidays with Pay and Sickness Allowance) Ordinance.

Mr. Price said that with few exceptions, all manual workers in industrial undertakings paid on a monthly, daily, or piece-rate basis must be given a holiday on that day. Non-manual workers in industrial undertakings earning not more than $700 a month had the same right.

To qualify for holiday pay, which is in addition to the four rest days a month under the Employment Ordinance, a worker must have worked at least 180 days during a period of 12 months and at least 20 days in the 28 days preceding December 22.

"A worker who does not qualify to receive holiday pay must also be given a holiday," Mr. Price said.

"An employer may grant a holiday on another day instead of December 22, but he must do so within 60 days after that date and must post a notice of his intention at least 48 hours in advance."

The Commissioner added that the provisions of the Industrial Employment (Holidays with Pay and Sickness Allowance) Ordinance had been extended and incorporated in the Employment Ordinance. "The revised law, which will become effective on January 1, 1974, apply to all manual workers irrespective of earnings and non-manual workers earning $1,500 a month or less. The new provisions also simplifies the qualification for holiday pay," he said.

/The six .....

The six statutory holidays under the new provisions are Lunar New Year's Day; the second day of Lunar New Year; Ching Ming Festival; Tuen Ng (Dragon Boat) Festival; the day following the Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival; and the first day of January.

"An employer is therefore required to give his employees a holiday on January 1, 1974, and if such an employee has worked continuously for him for three months preceding that day, the employee is entitled to receive holiday pay," Mr. Price said.

Any worker or employer who is in doubt of his rights or obligations regarding statutory holidays should consult officers of the Women and Young Persons Unit at Tel. No. 3-667755.

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BUILDING DECLARED DANGEROUS

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The Building Authority today declared No. 7 Sai Street in Western District to be in a dangerous condition and Nos. 3 and 5 liable to become dangerous.

The Principal Government Building Surveyor said these three-storey pre-war buildings had been under observation for some time and rapid deterioration of reinforced concrete elements in No. 7 indicated that there is a risk of failure which could lead to a collapse.

The condition of Nos. 3 and 5 Sai Street is such that there is risk of failure during or after the demolition of No. 7 Sai Street.

Notices of intention to apply for Closure Orders in Victoria District Court at 9.30 a.m. on December 31 for No. 7 and at 9.30 a.m. on February 1, 1974 for Nos. 3 and 5 Sai Street were posted today.

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CONSUMER ADVISORY SERVICE

Daily Guide To Wholesale Market Prices And Supplies

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The following prices were realised today (Monday) 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

Grade	Availability of Supply	Wholesale Price ($/catty)
China Rice		Average
See Mew - old crop	Good	1.64
- new crop		1.72
S.C.Jion - old crop	Good	1.58
- new crop		1.66
Po Ngai	Good	1.42
Chu Cho	Good	1.22
Thai Rice 100% Whole	Good	1.52
10-15% Brokens	Good	1.50
A1 Super Extra	Good	1.45
A1 Super	Good	1.37
Whole Glutinous	Limited	1.55
U.S. Rice	Good	1.62
Australian Rice	Good	1.52
Pakistan Rice	Good	1.42
Taiwan Rice	-	-

/Supplies and .....

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Supplies and Wholesale Prices of Marine Fish

Species	Availability of Supply	Wholesale Price ($/catty)		
		High	Low	Average
Golden Thread	Good	3.8	2.6	3.3
Big-Eyes	Good	2.4	0.6	1.7
Squid	Limited	5.5	1.5	4.2
Hair-Tails	Normal	1.8	1.1	1.6
Lizard Fishes	Normal	2.1	0.8	1.6
Croakers	Good	1.6	0.5	1.1
Conger-Pike-Eels	Normal	2.5	1.8	2.2
Melon Coat	Normal	2.0	1.2	1.6
Breams	Limited	4.0	3.4	3.8
Yellow Belly	Good	2.0	0.6	1.2
Mackerels	Good	3.8	2.6	3.2
Red Goat Fish	Good	2.6	0.6	1.6
Fork-Tail	Normal	1.0	0.5	0.7
Horse-Head	Normal	5.0	3.0	4.2
Melon Seed	Limited	2.6	1.5	2.0
Pomfrets	Scarce	7.0	6.5	6.8
Garoupas	Normal	5.0	4.2	4.5
Yellow Croaker	-	-	-	-

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Supplies and Wholesale Prices of Locally Produced Vegetables

Type	Availability of Supply	Wholesale Price ($/catty)		
		High	Low	Average
Flowering cabbage	Limited	2.40	0.80	1.60
White cabbage	Normal	0.70	0.20	0.40
Chinese Lettuce	Normal	0.60	0.20	0.40
Chinese Kale	Normal	0.70	0.20	0.50
Spring onion	Normal	1.40	0.50	1.00
Spinach	Normal	1.40	0.60	1.00
Water cress	Normal	1.00	0.25	0.60
Leaf mustard cabbage	Scarce	0.70	0.20	0.40
Tomato	Scarce	1.60	0.80	1.40

Supplies and Wholesale Prices of Pork (Live weight)

	Availability of Supply	Wholesale Price ($/ picul)
		(Average)
Pork	Good	285

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