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DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Friday, November 24, 1972

NEW ANTI-CRIME BILL

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The first piece of proposed legislation designed to put into effect the government's plan to crack down on the increasing incidence of violent crime will be introduced into the Legislative Council on Wednesday (November 29).

The bill seeks to impose a mandatory minimum sentence of six months imprisonment or a detention order for people convicted of possessing an offensive weapon in a public place.

It also raises from two years to three years, the maximum punishment for this offence.

The Attorney General, Mr. D.T.E. Roberts, said today that the imposition of a mandatory minimum sentence was a departure from tradition. "Nevertheless, it is considered that the measure is justified, in order to deal with the growing habit of gangs of young men carrying offensive weapons in a public place and of using them for attack, or in the course of robbery."

The bill, known as the Public Order (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill, also seeks to give power to a police officer to stop and search people to ascertain whether or not they are carrying offensive weapons.

At present a police officer can do this only if he reasonably suspects that the person is carrying a weapon.

/Mr. Roberts .....

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Mr. Roberts said that the proposed new regulation would, for example, enable an area to be cordoned off and everyone in it searched for weapons.

In his speech to the Legislative Council almost two weeks ago, the Attorney General said that the proposed measures showed the part the government was taking to deal with the rising crime problem. "But we cannot do it alone -- crime cannot be kept within acceptable bounds unless every member of the community is prepared to do what he can to help."

Mr. Roberts also announced that the government was considering the re-introduction of a form of rigorous imprisonment for people convicted of violent crime and the institution of a preventive detention system to remove "habitual criminals" from society for long periods.

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ANOTHER WOMAN APPOINTED TO URBAN COUNCIL

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A well-known social worker, Mrs. Kwan Ko Siu-wah has been appointed by the Governor to serve as a member of the Urban Council.

Her appointment, with effect from next Friday (December 1) until March 31, 1976, is to fill the seat vacated by Mrs. C.J. Symons at the beginning of last month.

Mrs. Kwan is at present the General Secretary of the Young Women's Christian Association, Chairman of the Christian Council, President of the Soroptimist Club and Chairman of the Children and Youth Division of the Hong Kong Council of Social Service.

She also serves on a number of religious and welfare councils, committees and associations including the Social Welfare Planning Committee and the Social Welfare Advisory Committee.

Born in Indonesia , Mrs. Kwan received her education at the Yenching University in China where she acquired a Bachelor Degree in Social Work and Sociology.

She was awarded the M.B.E. in 1965 and became a justice of the peace in 1969.

Her main interest lies in social welfare work, especially youth welfare, women's welfare and community development.

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MORE OPEN SPACE FOR WAN CHAI

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The Town Planning Board has proposed amendments to the draft outline zoning plan for Wan Chai which was first exhibited for public inspection in February 1971.

Under the amendments, published in today's gazette, no residential development is now proposed for the Wan Chai reclamation.

One zone of about 2.3 acres between the ferry concourse and Gloucester Road, shown previously for commercial-residential development, has been rezoned for use as open space.

Two other commercial-residential zones nearby, with a total area of about 3.4 acres, have been restricted to commercial use only.

An amended note on the draft zoning plan also limits the extent to which other uses may be permitted in land zoned "Residential", which occupies about 37.5 acres in the southwest part of the area.

A government spokesman said these changes have been proposed in order to provide more open space, to maintain the present size of the population in Wan Chai, and to provide an opportunity for the development of a satellite commercial centre to ease the demand for commercial space in Central.

The plan which covers a total of some 312 acres aims at providing a statutory land use pattern and major road framework for the use and development of land in the District.

/The amendments .....

The amendments to the plan are now exhibited for public inspection during normal office hours at the Central Enquiry Sub-office, Central Government Offices, West Wing Entrance, Hong Kong; and at the Wan Chai City District Office, Tung Wah Mansion, 201 Hennessy Road, Hong Kong.

Copies of the amendments may also be purchased, at $3 per uncoloured copy, and $25 per coloured copy, from the Crown Lands and Survey Office, 19th floor, Murray Building, Garden Road, Hong Kong.

Any objections to the amendments may be made in writing to the Secretary, Town Planning Board, c/o Public Works Department, Murray Building, not later than Friday, December 15, 1972.

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Note to Editors: Copies of a sketch, in English and Chinese, showing the amendments to the zoning plan, are distributed separately in the G.I.S. Press Boxes this evening.

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DEFICIT RECORDED IN GOVT. ACCOUNTS FOR FIRST HALF OF FINANCIAL YEAR

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The Hong Kong Government accounts for the first half of this financial year show a deficit of $3.7 million.

It is the first time for three years that the accounts have not been in surplus at the end of this period.

The total revenue during the six months was $1,668 million — $329 million more than for the same period in 1971.

Expenditure amounted to $1,672 million which was $396 million above last year's six monthly figure.

For the month of September this year, the accounts showed a surplus of $14 million compared with a surplus of $13 million for the same month last year.

The total revenue for the month was $305 million -- $72 million more than in September 1971 and the total expenditure was $291 million or an increase of $71 million over the same month last year.

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OUTDATED LEGISLATION TO BE REPEALED

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Eighty-six-year-old legislation prohibiting the sale of liquor on board ships is one of two ordinances to be repealed under a bill which will be introduced into the Legislative Council shortly.

The Ships (Prohibition of Sale of Liquor) Ordinance was enacted in 1886 "to prevent the sale or conveyance of spirituous or fermented liquor on board Her Majesty's Ships, and to prohibit the hovering near or about such ships of any persons in boats for the purpose of so doing."

A government spokesman said today it was considered that because of changed circumstances, the retention of the Ordinance was no longer necessary.

The Law Revision (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 1972 seeks to repeal this ordinance and another which has become "obsolete or unnecessary", and to make consequential amendments to enactments affected by the repeals and by new legislation enacted during the year.

The other ordinance it seeks to repeal is the Bank Notes and Certificates of Indebtedness Ordinance.

The bill, published in today's gazette, amends the Cremation and Gardens of Remembrance Regulations, the Police Supervision Ordinance, and the Preventive Service Ordinance.

/The Bank .....

The Bank Notes and Certificates of Indebtedness Ordinance was passed into law in 1946 to remove doubts as to the legal status of bank notes issued during the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong and to provide for the meeting of liabilities consequent upon the status given to them.

"The ordinance has had its effect and should be repealed," the spokesman said.

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ACCOMMODATION FOR UNIFORMED STAFF OF IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT

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The uniformed staff of the Immigration Department will have new quarters on Chatham Road, Kowloon, at a site opposite the Hung Hom police station.

Due to operational reasons, it is necessary to provide quarters in the urban area to accommodate the disciplined staff of the department.

At present, only a few officers at the outlying posts of Lowu and Sheung Shui are provided with quarters.

With the completion of the new accommodation, a nucleus of uniformed staff can be called on quickly and conveniently when sudden needs arise for additional manpower.

To be built on a site of 18,500 square feet, the quarters will comprise two blocks, one 12 storeys high and the other eight storeys.

Together the two blocks will provide 40 flats, each with two or three bedrooms.

There will also be parking space for 46 cars.

Work will begin soon on the sub-structure of the buildings, including site formation, sheet piling and the construction of retaining walls.

The sub-structure is expected to be completed in June next year, when work on the superstructure will begin.

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FOOTBRIDGE PLANNED FOR TSUEN WAN

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The Public Works Department plans to build a pedestrian footbridge over Castle Peak Road at its junction with Chung On Street in Tsuen Wan to reduce the risk of traffic accidents.

A Government spokesman said today that the junction has been the scene of a large number of accidents involving pedestrians.

As the southern staircase of the proposed footbridge lies in Chung On Street, the width of a section of the street will have to be permanently reduced from 40 feet to 18 feet.

Traffic along this narrow section, which lies between Castle Peak Road and Shiu Wo Street, will have to be routed one way, south bound.

People affected have one month to lodge an objection against the proposed footbrdige or two months to make a claim for compensation.

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IMPROVED WATER SUPPLY TO TAI HANG

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Residents of the Tai Hang and Jardine's Lookout areas will soon have a much improved water supply with the laying of a new large diameter fresh water main.

The total length of mains to be laid will be about 10,000 feet, with a diameter of 15 inches. It will supply water from the Eastern Pumping Station to the service reservoirs in the area.

The project is necessary because existing mains in the area cannot cope with the rapidly increasing demand.

At the same time, an improved drainage system will be constructed in part of Tai Hang.

The work involves the construction of 300 feet of reinforced concrete stormwater box culvert in Lily Street and the laying of 290 feet of sewer in Lin Fa Kung Street West.

The extension of the sewer will form part of the system for the Lai Tak Housing Estate which is now under construction on the hillside above.

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EXPORT AUTHORISATION SCHEME FOR CERTAIN TEXTILES TO CANADA

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The Department of Commerce and Industry is to implement, from next Monday, an export authorisation scheme for the export of certain restrained textile items to Canada.

The Director, Mr. David Jordan, said today that the scheme would make available to all comers certain unallocated balances of quota for the export of restrained textiles to Canada during the current textile year.

He said that all applications must be supported by firm orders from Canadian buyers; unsubstantiated applications would be rejected.

All applications received before 5 p.m. on December 6 will be considered together and, if necessary, approved on a proportionate basis.

Applications for any balances remaining after this will be approved on a first-come-first-served basis.

Full details of the scheme have already been sent to trade associations and companies concerned, but anyone wanting advance information should contact Mr. K.C. Kwong on 5-247317 or Mr. C.K. Lai on 5-445666.

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ROOF-TOP SCHOOLS

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The operation of roof-top schools at Shek Kip Mei during the next two or three years, will not be affected by the current rehousing scheme there, a spokesman for the Resettlement Department said today.

He was commenting on a newspaper report that the livelihood of some 150 teachers would be affected early next year when the rehousing scheme enters its second phase and that some 1,500 pupils, including many overaged ones, would have no school to attend.

The spokesman said the only roof-top school which would probably have been affected some time next year suspended its operation a few months ago and the premises have already been returned to the Resettlement Department.

"We will inform the schools to be affected in due course and ample time will be given them to make the necessary arrangements before closing down. There is no need for them to worry now," the spokesman said.

The roof-top school operators had earlier sent in requests for allocation of school premises in the Pak Tin Estate, but they had already been allocated.

"These school operators have been told that if they wish to apply for estate schools in other areas they can send in applications which will be considered with others on their own merits," the spokesman added.

Any pupils wanting to transfer to other schools will be given assistance by the Education Department.

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