



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Monday, February 18, 1974

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Daily guide to wholesale prices and supply of basic food commodities

Release time: 7.00 p.m.

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NEW DEAL FOR ESTATE SHOP TENANTS

The Housing Authority has agreed to continue allowing shop operators on monthly tenancies in the 25 Group B estates to transfer their tenancies. This will apply equally to incoming tenants as well as the sitting tenants.

This decision was taken after extensive consultations between the Authority and the government.

However, to remove any possible scope for irregularities, all such transfers must be made by surrendering the tenancy to the Authority, which will then re-let the premises by inviting public tenders through advertisements. The re-letting premium will go to the outgoing tenant.

At the same time the Authority has confirmed that a simple fixed tenancy agreement, similar to the existing tenancy card, should be signed by the shop tenants. The new agreement will incorporate these arrangements, and also the previously agreed terms covering change of trade, succession and inheritance.

To allay tenants' fears about loss of security, the new agreement will not be for a fixed term as originally proposed, but on monthly terms, continuing in force indefinitely.

There will, however, be provision for rent adjustments at appropriate intervals and for termination if there are persistent and blatant breaches of the tenancy conditions.

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A Housing Department spokesman, commenting on the decision, pointed out that shop tenants had been worried that they might be evicted by the Authority at the end of a fixed term agreement, so that the Authority could then re-let their shops at a profit. The new arrangements completely remove these fears since the re-letting proceeds will go to the out-going tenant.

He further said that re-lettings carried out by the Authority would be likely to produce higher premia for the outgoing tenants as the incoming tenant would no longer have to be an estate resident, as hitherto.

It would take a little time for the new agreement to be prepared, but the department would be writing to all the affected Group B shopkeepers in the near future to explain the position.

In the meantime the revised policy would be applied with immediate effect.

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Note to Editors: Copies of the Governor's reply to the tenants' petition are boxed for your information together with copies of the letter from the Housing Department informing the tenants of the new arrangements.

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ASSURANCE TO NON-SUBVENTED VOLUNTARY AGENCIES

The Director of Social Welfare today assured effective non-subvented welfare organizations that are now providing useful welfare services in public housing estates that they need not fear about their operations in future.

Mr. Kenneth Topley gave this assurance to the Hong Kong Council of Social Service and its member agencies when he spoke at the Council's spring quarterly meeting held at Caritas House in Caine Road, Hong Kong.

The theme of the meeting was "Public Housing Rental Policy and its effects on Social Services".

Rent increases for premises occupied by these agencies have been deferred for a year by the Housing Authority to give time for the Social Welfare and other government departments to study their cases in more detail with a view to providing the money to them.

The increases for those agencies which are already subvented by the Social Welfare Department will, however, come into effect on April 1, but these will be paid in full for them by the department.

The Housing Authority decided last year that for reasons connected with financing, it was no longer acceptable that only nominal rents be paid by welfare organizations, and therefore rents would, from April 1 this year, be calculated at the rate of 50 cents per square foot.

"The Social Welfare Department noted this intention and made arrangements to include in its subvention proposals for 1974/75 adequate funds to cover these increased rents for those welfare agencies which receive subventions through the department," Mr. Topley said.

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This was intended to ensure that those agencies which were participating directly in the 5-year Plan would not be hindered in their operations.

"The finances of subvented welfare organizations are of immediate concern to the Social Welfare Department since these organizations are, by definition, providing services of clear use to the community and thus are supported by public funds," Mr. Topley pointed out.

He said their allocations will not be reduced by the provision of the rent subsidy which is an additional element extending the total subvention amount.

However, since the increases were announced it appears that there are some 87 other operations carried on in public housing estates of a welfare, religious, medical or educational nature which will also attract higher rents than before.

The organizations responsible for these operations had applied to the former authorities for accommodation in public housing estates at a nominal rent and, after enquiries to appropriate government departments, these requests were granted.

"The information available to the Social Welfare Department and, no doubt, to other relevant government departments, about these organizations and their operations is limited, particularly in respect of their current status," Mr. Topley said.

"Moreover, funds are available only in respect of welfare organizations which are at present subvented. In view of the need to assess the current status of all these organizations and their operations, the Housing Authority has agreed to waive the higher rents on these premises until April 1, 1975. It is hoped that this will provide adequate time to resolve the current situation."

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The decision to waive the rent increases for one year, he said, had been the result of discussions between the Social Welfare Department and the Housing Authority.

It will be necessary, he said, for the Social Welfare Department to make recommendations to the Social Welfare Advisory Committee (SWAC) in respect of those organizations and operations which are of a welfare nature.

"There are at present arrangements for the refund of rates to welfare organizations providing services useful to the community and it should not be insuperable to extend this arrangement to cover the refund of both rents and rates," he noted.

The question then arises of what criteria should be used for making these recommendations for refund, Mr. Topley said.

While it would not be possible to anticipate the decision of SWAC, he said, it appeared that these criteria would be important, namely, does the organization's operation in the premises provide a valuable service? Are the premises fully occupied and used? And are the services provided available to the public as a whole and not only to a membership group?

The Director said these criteria would be fair and reasonable, and would not be so stringent as those applied to organizations seeking subvention.

"It should be possible to make comprehensive recommendations to SWAC in the early summer and effective organizations providing useful services should not need to fear regarding their future operations," he said.

He pointed out that the Social Welfare Department would not be able to make recommendations regarding clinics, schools and churches for which the Medical and Health, Education and Home Affairs Departments would be the respective sponsoring authorities, but those departments would be advised of the situation so that they can make appropriate arrangements.

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RENT REVISION OF ESTATE WELFARE PREMISES EXPLAINED

The increased rent on welfare premises would barely cover servicing, management and maintenance expenses but would not result in the Housing Authority realising any profit out of these lettings.

This was stated by Mr. Frank Carroll, Deputy Director of Housing (Estate Management) this afternoon at the forum on "Public Housing Rental Policy and Its Effects on Social Services" organised by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service.

Previously, estates owned by the government - whether managed by the Authority (Government low cost housing estates) or by the Resettlement Department (resettlement estates) - were charged a purely nominal rent of \$1 per month, regardless of size. Rates were additional to the rent in all cases where assessments were raised.

Mr. Carroll said when the new Authority came into being on April 1 last year, much thought was given to whether it should subsidise welfare services in the estates which was in fact a government function.

The Authority then decided that the rents of all such premises had to be reconsidered to ensure that the true cost to government of assisting these services in the estates would not be obscured by a hidden Housing Authority subvention.

"These decisions were made in principle in July last year with the intention that the various organisations should be notified that the new rents would come into force on the termination of their existing fixed term tenancies, where these existed, or on April 1 this year, whichever was later.

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"It was thought that this would allow enough time for the individual cases to be considered by the Social Welfare Department and for the Authority to consider any special cases.

"Unfortunately, as sometimes happens, the administrative machine became clogged up with other pressing matters and the notifications to individual organisations were not issued until December, which was too late for the Social Welfare Department to be able to provide for all the appropriate lettings in 1974/75," Mr. Carroll said.

However, as a result of discussions between the Housing Department and the Social Welfare Department, the Authority has now agreed to defer the rent increases of all lettings where the SWD is unable to help immediately for a further period of one year from April 1.

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OVER 11,000 APPLY FOR RENT INCREASES

More than 11,000 applications for rent increases have been received by the Rating and Valuation Department since mid-December last year when the new Rent Control Legislation came into operation.

Commenting on this large number, a spokesman for the department said that the applications were being dealt with as quickly as possible and already some 4,500 certificates had been issued.

He said that the department was required to invite the tenant's comments on each application for an increase in rent and processing of an application proceeded only when the tenant's comments had been received or, if no comments are made, after a month has elapsed.

Processing takes about a further 21 days and is followed by the issue of a certificate of increase in rent.

The spokesman added that it was then necessary for the landlord to notify his tenant of the amount of the increase and the date from which it will be payable. This will normally be at least one month after the tenant receives the landlord's notice.

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RESULTS OF INDUSTRIAL SAFETY POSTER COMPETITION

Students from the Jockey Club Government Secondary Technical School have taken the lion's share of the honours in this year's Industrial Safety Poster Competition organised by the Industrial Safety Training Centre of the Labour Department.

They won first and second places and four special commendations in the competition for which there were more than 300 entries from students throughout Hong Kong.

First place in the competition went to Miss Ma Hak-mei, a 17-year-old Form V student. Second prize went to Miss Ching Hang-mui, a Form IV student; and the third prize to Miss Lai Pic-woon, a student in Commercial Design at the Kwun Tong Vocational Training Centre.

Miss Li Choi-wah and Messrs. Chan Ying-ming, Chan Sze-shing and Law Sai-yiu of the Jockey Club Government Secondary Technical School, and Mr. Wong Shi-liu of the Hong Kong Polytechnic were awarded consolation prizes.

The panel of judges comprised Mr. Kwok Chiu-leung, Inspector of the Art Section of the Education Department; Mr. John Hadfield, head of the Industrial Design Department of the Hong Kong Polytechnic; Mr. Joseph Law, Senior Safety Officer of Hong Kong United Dockyards Ltd., Mr. Nick Carter, Industrial Safety Training Officer and Mr. Wong Fat-kee, Factory Inspector of the Labour Department.

/Mr. Carter

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Mr. Carter said today the judges were delighted with the high standard of design shown in the entries. "It was quite difficult to decide on the winning posters because the general standard was so good," he said.

The Deputy Commissioner of Labour, Mr. Neil Henderson, will present the prizes to the winners in a ceremony at the Industrial Safety Training Centre, in the Canton Road Government Offices at 4.00 p.m. on February 28.

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APPLICATIONS INVITED FOR PLASTICS SHARE-OUT

Plastic firms were urged today to apply without delay to the Commerce and Industry Department if they wish to participate in a scheme for a share-out of two essential raw materials.

The closing date for applications to be submitted is Friday, February 22.

Circulars giving details of the scheme, together with forms on which to apply, were issued to about 2,100 firms registered with the department at the end of last week.

About five million pounds of polyethylene and polystyrene will be made available for allocation to smaller factories next month by major plastics manufacturers and importers of plastic materials.

The scheme is open to all factories registered for the production of plastic goods on or before February 13, 1974, and whose registration is still valid.

To qualify, a registered factory must have a total injection-moulding machine capacity of not more than 30 ounces, and its consumption of polyethylene and polystyrene in 1972 and 1973 must not have exceeded an average of 20,000 lbs per month in total.

Further information about the scheme can be obtained by contacting the Industrial Development Branch of the Commerce and Industry Department.

Inquiries should be referred to either Mr. T.Y. Poon, Trade Officer (Tel. 5-247316) or Miss Z.C.A. Wong, Assistant Trade Officer (Tel. 5-445884).

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PROPOSED CHANGE IN DIB FORMAT

Note to DIB Subscribers: In order to save time and paper, it is proposed to change the present format of the Daily Information Bulletin.

The intention is to re-print news items in the same form as they are sent through the teleprinter, and clip them together for distribution.

We are taking this opportunity to review our Distribution List to find out whether current subscribers wish to continue receiving their DIB copies.

Those who wish to have the new DIB sent to them are asked to fill in the form below and return it not later than February 28 to the Press Officer, News Division, Government Information Services, Beaconsfield House, 6th floor, Hong Kong.

Subscribers who have already sent in their forms need not reply again.

I wish to continue receiving copies of the D.I.B.

Name: _____

Address: _____

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CONSUMER ADVISORY SERVICE

Daily Guide To Wholesale Market Prices And Supplies

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

<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	-
-- new crop		1.84
S.C.Jion -- old crop	Good	-
Po Ngai	Good	-
Chu Cho	Good	-
<u>Thai Rice</u>		
100% Whole	Good	1.74
10-15% Broken	Good	-
A1 Super Extra	Good	1.52
A1 Super	Good	1.42
Whole Glutinous	Good	-
<u>U.S. Rice</u>	Good	1.74
<u>Australian Rice</u>	Good	1.72
<u>Pakistan Rice</u>	Good	-
<u>Taiwan Rice</u>	Good	-

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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	Good	3.8	2.3	3.0
Big-Eyes	Good	2.6	0.8	1.8
Squid	Limited	5.7	3.0	4.5
Hair-Tails	Normal	2.7	1.0	1.7
Lizard Fishes	Normal	2.8	1.1	2.0
Croakers	Normal	2.4	0.8	1.8
Conger-Pike-Eels	Good	3.0	2.2	2.8
Melon Coat	Good	2.4	1.5	2.2
Breams	Normal	4.8	3.5	4.5
Yellow Belly	Good	2.1	0.8	1.3
Mackerels	Good	4.0	3.5	3.7
Red Goat Fish	Good	2.4	0.7	1.5
Fork-Tail	Normal	1.4	1.0	1.2
Horse-Head	Normal	5.5	2.5	4.0
Melon Seed	Normal	2.6	1.6	2.0
Pomfrets	Scarce	9.0	8.0	8.5
Garoupas	Normal	6.0	5.5	5.8
Yellow Croaker	-	-	-	-

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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	Normal	1.5	0.5	1.0
White cabbage	Normal	1.0	0.3	0.7
Chinese Lettuce	Normal	0.7	0.2	0.5
Chinese Kale	Normal	1.0	0.3	0.6
Spring onion	Normal	0.8	0.3	0.6
Spinach	Good	0.7	0.15	0.45
Water cross	Normal	1.0	0.2	0.6
Leaf mustard cabbage	Limited	0.7	0.2	0.45
Tomato	Limited	1.5	0.6	1.2

Supplies and Wholesale Prices of Pork (Live weight)

	<u>Availability of Supply</u>	<u>Wholesale Price</u>
		<u>(\$/ picul)</u>
Pork	Good	(Average) 300

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