



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Thursday, February 22, 1973

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FINAL VERSION OF SOCIAL WELFARE WHITE PAPER

Consultative Process Produces Better Document

Joint consultations between the Social Welfare Department and voluntary agencies, and comments from the community at large, have led to some changes in the final versions of the white paper on social welfare in Hong Kong, and its accompanying five-year plan.

The Secretary of the Social Welfare Planning Committee, Mr. Ian Strachan, says both documents have been revised as a result of comments received, and both are expected to be sent to the Colonial Secretariat by the end of this month, for an examination of financial implications, and the Executive Council soon after.

"More than 200 comments have been received on the draft white paper, and the Committee has considered them all," Mr. Strachan explains.

"The draft was tabled at the opening session of the Legislative Council last autumn, and the Committee lost no time after that in seeking the opinions of the public to help prepare the final text."

In his view, this consultative process has produced "a better white paper," and the document in its ultimate form "can fairly be said to reflect the views of the Hong Kong community as a whole."

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In the meantime, important details of four outstanding policy issues are being resolved within the Government. They are:-

- * The Institute for Social Work Training.
- * The Severe Disability and Infirmity Allowance Scheme.
- * The Community Youth Officer Scheme.
- * Community Centres and children and youth services.

Of the four, the first two have already been approved by the Government.

While the white paper was published last October as a draft -- a new departure for a Government document in Hong Kong -- its accompanying five-year plan was, instead, circulated to the voluntary agencies on a confidential basis, since some of the policies had not, at that time, been endorsed by the Government as a whole.

But Mr. Strachan says the Social Welfare Planning Committee and the Social Welfare Advisory Committee are now putting final touches to the five-year plan "in the light of comments received from the agencies and the Hong Kong Social Workers Association."

He expects both documents to be published in their final forms early in the new financial year.

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EXPANSION OF SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT

Public Assistance Division To Be Renamed Social Security Division

The Public Assistance Division of the Social Welfare Department will be renamed the Social Security Division on March 1.

At the same time, the field units of the division will be known as social security field units. There will be 18 such field units by the end of this month.

Mr. Tsau Tsor-yan, Senior Principal Social Welfare Officer, at present head of the Public Assistance Division, will remain in charge of the expanded Social Security Division.

"The change in name," he explains, "is the result of the division's added responsibilities in view of the implementation of the severe disability and infirmity allowance scheme.

"As the same division will administer the new scheme, it is fitting that its name should be seen to accord with the expanded scope of its activities."

The 18 field units will process applications both for public assistance and the severe disability and infirmity allowance.

A widespread publicity campaign is about to be launched to inform the eligible about how to apply for the new allowances.

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SURVEY ON OPERATING COSTS AND PROFITABILITY OF TAXIS
IN HONG KONG

The Research and Development Section of the Transport Department has been conducting a survey on the profitability and operating characteristic of the taxi trade.

The survey, covering about a fifth of the 3,400 odd taxi fleet in January, aims at determining the operating costs and profitability of both Hong Kong and Kowloon taxis to see whether fares should be raised, as suggested by taxi operators, and possibly a common tariff introduced.

The first part of the survey included questionnaire interviews with taxi drivers and owners on the fixed and variable costs of taxi operation in order to assess the overall return on capital assets employed.

The difference in profit obtained by Hong Kong taxis and Kowloon taxis together with profit levels between individual owners and large taxi firms will also be established.

The second part of the survey involved an examination of taxi meters to find out the number of daily trips, passengers carried, average length of journey and dead mileage/idle time.

This enables a determination of the efficiency of present taxi operation and the degree of utilisation.

The field work, which began on January 8, has now been completed.

The results are now being analysed and interpreted, and it is hoped that the findings will be submitted to the Transport Advisory Committee.

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The Transport Department carries out many surveys on all aspects of transport including studies of the Cross Harbour and ordinary bus services, public light buses, illegal transport, utilisation of the Kowloon-Canton Railway, transport and parking facilities in housing estates and ferry services.

Besides these surveys, the department from time to time carries out investigations into special cases brought to its attention, such as on-the-spot observations on overcrowding on buses and trams, removal of obstruction on public transport routes, over charging by taxis and utilisation of on-street parking facilities,

The findings of these surveys are useful in drawing up future transport policies and deciding priorities for the efficient use of road and kerbside space.

They are also valuable in determining the level of service of public transport companies and planning future services.

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PROCEDURES FOR URBAN COUNCIL ELECTION ANNOUNCED

A staff of 360 will supervise the coming Urban Council elections on March 7, with the majority of them to be employed on vote counting, which will begin at 9 p.m. in the City Hall.

The Returning Officer, Mr. Donald Tsang, said this while announcing in tomorrow's (Friday) Gazette the particulars of polling procedure.

He said that the 10 polling stations - four on Hong Kong Island and six in Kowloon - will be open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The electors eligible to vote are those whose names appear in the Electoral Register, which came into force on January 15.

They are requested to vote at the polling station designated for them on the poll card.

They will not be allowed to vote at a polling station other than the one designated.

Electors, who may vote for seven candidates only, should identify themselves at the polling stations by producing their identity card or some other positive means of identification, such as a passport, driving licence or identity card issued by one of the Auxiliary Defence Services.

The production of a poll card, on its own, will not be accepted as sufficient evidence of identity.

Poll cards will be mailed to all registered electors before the election. These will help the polling station staff to trace the elector's name in the Register, thus speeding up the issue of ballot papers.

/Mr. Tsang

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Mr. Tsang pointed out that there are heavy penalties for impersonation at polling stations.

Electors are forbidden to talk to other voters, take photographs or display posters while in the polling station.

They are also forbidden to remove any ballot paper, marked or unmarked, from a polling station, or to deposit in the ballot box any paper other than the ballot paper provided by the poll clerk.

Members of the public will not be admitted to the vote count in the exhibition hall of the City Hall. The result will be declared as soon as counting is finished.

The polling stations on Hong Kong Island will be located at: City Hall exhibition hall; King's College, 63A Bonham Road; Hennessy Road Government Primary School, 169 Thomson Road; and North Point Government Primary School, 888 King's Road.

The polling stations in Kowloon will be located at: Kowloon Public Pier, alongside the east wing of the Star Ferry Terminal; Queen Elizabeth School, 152 Sai Yee Street; Kowloon Technical School, 332 Cheung Sha Wan Road; Perth Street Government Primary School, 6 Perth Street; San Po Kong Government Primary School, 17 Tseuk Luk Street; and Kwun Tong Government Primary School, 240 Ngau Tau Kok Road.

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LESS RESIDENTS VISITING CHINA DURING LUNAR NEW YEAR

The number of Hong Kong residents going to China during the Lunar New Year period this year dropped by about five per cent compared with last year.

A total of 138,203 local residents crossed into China by way of Lowu between January 28 and February 12, compared with 146,532 in the equivalent period in 1972.

Another 110,735 people returned from China during this period, making a total of 248,938 people travelling to and from China.

A spokesman for the Immigration Department said today that traffic over the border started to build up towards the end of January.

The highest number of passengers departing for China in any one day during this period was registered on the New Year Day (February 3) when 18,830 people were cleared by the immigration staff.

"As the holiday came to an end, travellers began to return in substantial numbers," the spokesman said.

On February 11, 18,252 people entered Hong Kong - the highest number of incoming passengers dealt with in a single day during this period.

Traffic between Hong Kong and Macao during the New Year period showed an increase of about eight per cent over last year.

Altogether, 246,575 passengers were cleared at the Macao Ferry Terminal -- 119,721 for Macao and 126,854 from Macao, compared with a total of 227,317 in 1972.

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PRE-VOCATIONAL AND SECONDARY TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Adviser From London On 3-Week Visit

The Principal of Wandsworth Technical College, Mr. K.G. Lavender, is now on a visit to pre-vocational and secondary technical schools in Hong Kong.

His visit is sponsored by the British Council at the request of the Director of Education.

Mr. Lavender will be looking at technical education as a whole, and will advise on pre-vocational and secondary technical curricula, staffing, equipment, administration and the links between secondary technical as well as pre-vocational schools with the Polytechnic and the Technical Institute.

He will make a report on the development of pre-vocational and secondary technical schools to the Director of Education.

During his three-week stay here, Mr. Lavender will also be visiting various industrial establishments.

Mr. Lavender arrived in Hong Kong on February 17, and will be returning to London on March 10.

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Note to Editors: Mr. Lavender will meet the Press on March 7 in the Conference Room of the Education Department, Lee Gardens, 3/F, at 3 p.m. You are invited to send a representative to cover the press conference.

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SEMINAR IN ENGLAND ON PROBLEMS OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

Deputy Director Of Education Taking Part In Talks

The Deputy Director of Education (Professional), Mr. N.M. Ho left Hong Kong last night for England to attend a seminar on the "Problems of Educational Planning."

The seminar, organized by the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, will be attended by a number of senior persons concerned with educational planning in other countries.

The seminar begins on February 25 and will last until March 30.

During the seminar, participants will take a fresh look at the educational world. The seminar's emphasis will be on primary and secondary education.

Topics to be discussed include the goals of the educational system, the school and the occupational structure, the school and rural development, the moulding of values, education in its social framework and planning.

In addition, participants will have an opportunity to go into greater technical depth on projection of numbers and costs, the cost-effectiveness of educational expenditure, curriculum content in primary education and educational selection and testing.

After attending the seminar, Mr. Ho will visit colleges of education, teaching centres and adult education centres within the Inner London Education Authority with which the Education Department has established a special relationship.

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FUN FAIR AND CHILDREN'S PARTY

Staff of two Government departments and their families will be enjoying themselves this Sunday (February 25) at social functions arranged by their departmental welfare associations.

The Marine Department will be holding its first fun fair at the Merchant Navy Sports Ground in Chatham Road.

The fair will start off with a lion dance and a raffle draw. Guests can then enjoy a karate demonstration, film shows and band concerts.

There will also be game stalls providing entertainment for all ages.

For staff members of the Government Supplies Department there will be an annual children's party on Sunday in the department's compound at Oil Street, North Point.

The programmes will include train and merry-go-round rides, magic shows, cartoons and band music.

About 700 children are expected to attend the party.

Note to Editors: You are cordially invited to send a reporter and/or photographer to cover the two parties. The fun fair will last from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.; and the children's party will start at 1.30 p.m.

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WATER CUT

A number of premises in Wan Chai will be without water for five hours on Saturday starting from 1 a.m.

This is to allow the Waterworks Office to carry out a leakage test.

Premises affected are within the area bounded by Queen's Road East, Lee Tung Street, the south side of Johnston Road and Anton Street.

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QUARANTINE RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED

The Port Health Authority announced today that quarantine restrictions have been imposed against arrivals from Merauke (Port), Indonesia, on account of cholera.

At the same time, quarantine restrictions imposed against arrivals from Peshawar (excluding Airport), Pakistan, on account of smallpox have been removed.

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Release Time: 7.00 p.m.