DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Friday, January 19, 1973

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Friday, January 19, 1973

BILLS PAVE WAY FOR RECONSTITUTED URBAN COUNCIL

New Functions And Financial Autonomy For New Body

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Two Bills designed to implement the proposals in the Urban Council White Paper for the reconstitution of the Council as an incorporated body with some new functions and substantial financial autonomy will soon be introduced into the Legislative Council.

The Bills, published in today's Gazette for general information, are the Urban Council Bill 1973 and the Public Health and Urban Services (Amendment) Bill 1973.

The objects of the Urban Council Bill are:-

* to provide for the repeal of the present ordinance;
* to make provision for the incorporation of the Council; and
* to define its powers and functions, membership and procedure, its accounting procedures and financial powers.

One part of the Bill provides for the incorporation and constitution of the Urban Council. The Council will be a body corporate with perpetual succession and will have the usual powers of bodies corporate to enter into contracts.

The Bill provides that the Council shall consist of 12 elected members and 12 members appointed by the Governor. The reconstituted council will not include any ex-officio members.

Another part of the Bill lays down general rules applicable to both elected and appointed members including disqualification from membership, acceptance of office and resignation. These provisions are re-enacted with only minor changes.

/The Bill .....

The Bill also governs the position of the Chairman of the Council. The standing committee of the whole Council may elect as Chairman a person who is not a member of the Council.

It stipulates that there shall be an election for Chairman and Vice-Chairman in every year in which there is an ordinary election of members.

The Bill lists functions and the range of permissible activities carried on by the Council at present and also sets out additional powers which the Council as a corporation may exercise.

Future Relationship

The future relationship between the Council, the Director of Urban Services and the Urban Services Department is also defined in the Bill.

The Director of Urban Services will no longer be a member of the reconstituted Council but he will become its chief executive officer.

The Council will discharge its functions through the U.S.D., but the department will remain a department of the Government and be under the control of the Director of Urban Services.

The Council will be required to make financial by-laws to cover certain matters which are necessary in view of the Council's financial autonomy.

The Council will also be required to prepare annual statements of revenue and expenditure and of assets and liabilities.

The Council is empowered to raise loans against its assets and revenues for the purpose of funding capital expenditures or for re-funding previous loans raised for that purpose.

It will also be able to borrow temporarily such sums of money as may be necessary to meet any obligations or to fulfil any functions imposed on it by statute and any surplus funds in such investments as may be approved by the Financial Secretary.

/The Governor, ...

The Governor, after consultation with the Council, can give general directions as to the discharge of its functions and the remedy of any failure by it to discharge any obligation or fulfil any statutory duty.

The objects of the second Bill, the Public Health and Urban Services (Amendment) Bill 1973, are twofold.

The first is to implement the proposals in the White Paper to expand certain powers and functions of the Urban Council, and the second to consolidate into the principal ordinance and to widen in scope provisions which have been contained in five separate ordinances.

The White Paper recommended that the Urban Council, as reconstituted in accordance with proposals suggested, should assume its new powers and functions from April 1, this year and this Bill so provides.

The five ordinances to be consolidated into the principal ordinance are the Hong Kong Stadium Ordinance (Cap. 270), the Library Ordinance (Cap. 145), the Museums Ordinance (Cap. 230), the City Hall Ordinance (Cap. 328) and the Cremation Ordinance (Cap. 133).

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GREATER POWER FOR COURTS TO DEAL WITH YOUNG OFFENDERS

Juvenile Courts To Be Set Up

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A bill aimed at improving the procedure of juvenile courts and offering greater protection to young offenders and expanding the court's powers of dealing with them, is to be introduced into the Legislative Council shortly.

The Juvenile Offenders (Amendment) Bill 1973 gives effect to recommendations made by a Working Party set up by the Chief Justice in 1968 to examine the existing arrangements for dealing with juvenile offenders.

If the bill is passed, juvenile courts to be presided over by magistrates appointed by the Chief Justice exclusively for that purpose will be set up.

One of the main provisions of the bill is that the minimum age of criminal responsibility will be raised from seven to 10 years.

Another provision of the bill is that a juvenile court, when determining the method of dealing with an offender, may choose to take the advice of two persons selected by it from a Juvenile Courts Advisory Panel appointed by the Chief Justice.

The members of the panel will be appointed because of their knowledge of and experience in dealing with young people.

The bill also provides, among other things, that the parent or guardian of a juvenile offender is required to attend at all stages of proceedings, unless the court orders otherwise.

The main recommendations, made by the Working Party and accepted by the Chief Justice, include the setting up of two juvenile courts -- one in Hong Kong and another in Kowloon -- and the appointment of one or, if necessary, two permanent magistrates who will deal exclusively with all juvenile cases.

URBAN RENEWAL SCHEME MOVES FORWARD

First Demolition Contract Will Be Let

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The Urban Renewal Pilot Scheme in Western District advanced a major step today with the calling of tenders for the first demolition contract for properties within the scheme area.

Official notification for tenders is published in today's Gazette with a stipulation that tenders must be submitted before noon on February 9.

The properties to be demolished are Nos. 9, 11 and 13 Sai Street and Nos. 11 and 13 Tung Street.

The sites will be mainly used in connection with the widening and reconstruction of Lower Lascar Row and for the provision of bath houses and latrines, as part of the proposed overall redevelopment of the area.

The properties were acquired partly by negotiation and partly by resumption under the Crown Lands Resumption Ordinance.

A Government spokesman said today that of the tenants and occupiers offered alternative accommodation in accordance with Government policy, 62 per cent accepted the offer.

The others made their own arrangements for alternative accommodation, he said.

He added: "Following further acquisitions, demolition of additional properties will take place this year with a view to commencing reconstruction works in connection with Lower Lascar Row towards the end of the year."

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NEW TOWN TO BE KNOWN AS TUEN MUN

Housing And Other Facilities To Be Provided There

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As part of Government's plan to provide more and better housing, with its full complement of services, industry and amenities, a new town is being developed in that part of the New Territories commonly known as "Castle Peak" in English and "Tsing Shan" in Chinese.

Both these names are of recent origin. It is not however widely known that the low lying district at the foot of the mountain is known locally as "Tuen Mun". The name "Castle Peak" and the Chinese name "Tsing Shan" are properly confined to the mountain overlooking the area.

The name "Tuen Mun" is believed by some historians to originate from early Sung times when it is thought that a garrison was stationed in the vicinity.

This garrison was needed to portect merchant sailing vessels from the pirates who were active along this coast at that time. The word "tuen" means a garrison and the word "mun" in this case means a channel, probably the one between the mainland and Lantau Island.

Having three names for one and the same place has in the past caused some confusion. On the initiative of the Tuen Mun Rural Committee it has been decided that the New Town at present known as the Castle Peak New Town will now be called Tuen Mun New Town.

It is not proposed to change the popularly known English and Chinese names of the mountain, the well known hospital or Castle Peak Town Lots .

/However, ...

However, district Government institutions and facilities such as the divisional police or fire stations now being planned will be known as Tuen Mun Police Station or Tuen Mun Fire Station.

Other local facilities will also be given traditional local names wherever possible.

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HONG KONG ATTENDS ECAFE MEETING IN BANGKOK

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Mr. P.K.C. Wong, Assistant Director of Commerce and Industry, has left for Bangkok to attend the 16th session of the ECAFE Committee on Trade to be held from January 22 to 30, 1973.

Another member of the Hong Kong delegation, Mrs. S. Yuen will leave for Bangkok on January 24.

At the meeting, the Hong Kong delegation will review Hong Kong's trade and trade policy during 1972. The agenda also includes items on export credit insurance, shipping, the ECAFE Trade Promotion Centre and other matters of regional and international trading interest.

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GOVERNMENT TO WOO HIGH-TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY

Land On Tsing Yi Offered For Automotive Industry

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The Government this weekend will launch an international advertising campaign aimed at wooing high-technology industry to Hong Kong.

The campaign will invite tenders to buy about five acres of land set aside for the establishment of a factory to produce automotive components and assemblies, including internal combustion engines.

The five-acre site, located in the south-eastern corner of Tsing Yi Island in the New Territories, is the first made available by the Government specifically for the automotive industry.

More land is expected to be sold on a restricted use basis for other high-technology industries later.

The restricted use land scheme serves four aims. It:

* Creates interest among firms that cannot utilise high-rise buildings to establish themselves in Hong Kong;
* Diversifies a consumer products-dominated economy by attracting more sophisticated and more productive industry;
* Brings higher technology and, with it, spin-offs in terms of new skills and new job opportunities for the work-force; and
* Puts Hong Kong's meagre land resources to the most productive use.

About two acres of the Tsing Yi Island site being put up for sale already have been reclaimed from the sea.

/Reclamation .....

Reclamation of the remaining three acres will be the responsibility of the successful tenderer.

A sea wall also will have to be built to the satisfaction of the Public Works Department.

Advertisements offering the sale of the site will be placed in newspapers in Common Market countries, the United States, Australia, Japan and Hongkong.

Tenders will be accepted in Hongkong between February 15 and March 15.

The successful tenderer is expected to be able to take possession of the site early in April.

Future Development

The government's decision to sell the land will pave the way for the planned future development of Tsing Yi Island.

The island, a predominantly rural area and home to about 3,500 people, has been earmarked as a future industrial centre with an ultimate population of about 80,000.

The population of the neighbouring industrial towns of Tsuen Wan and Kwai Chung is expected to increase from 325,000 people to 580,000 in the next three years.

Much of the labour force required for industries that establish themselves on Tsing Yi Island will come from Tsuen Wan and Kwai Chung.

/Spearheading .....

Spearheading the development of Tsing Yi Island is an $18 million bridge being built across the 2,000 ft. wide Rambler Channel that separates it from the mainland.

Work on the bridge, undertaken by six major companies operating on the island, is expected to be finished next December.

The bridge is not the only transportation factor that will play a significant role in the development of Tsing Yi.

The island offers easy access for shipping and is within half a mile of the new container terminal complex at Kwai Chung.

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REVISED DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR CHAI WAN

Industrial Complex To Be Created

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A revised draft outline development plan of Chai Wan has been prepared by the Town Planning Board for submission to the Governor-in-Council for approval.

The new plan, covering an area of 945 acres, aims at developing Chai Wan into a self-contained township with all the necessary residential, industrial, commercial, recreational and community facilities to serve an estimated future population of 160,000.

A total of 79.4 acres of land have been reserved for industrial purposes, with the aim of creating an industrial complex which will not only provide employment opportunities for the people living in Chai Wan, but also for the eastern part of Hong Kong Island.

With the exception of the existing industrial area at Hong Man Street and Lee Chung Street, future industrial development will be concentrated on the eastern part of the proposed reclamation.

Sites have also been reserved for a sheltered cargo handling basin, a large cargo working area, and a container freight station on the reclamation.

Altogether 95.3 acres of land have been earmarked for residential purposes in Chai Wan. This includes the existing resettlement estates and two further estates to be located on the reclamation and at the cottage estate area of Epworth Village respectively.

/Other sites .....

Other sites have also been reserved for a Housing Society estate or a project of a similar nature, and for flats for the higher income groups to cater for a variety of housing needs that are likely to be required.

Land earmarked for government, institutional and community uses totalled 99.5 acres or 18 per cent of the planning area.

A civic centre, which will include a library, exhibition and community hall, government offices and estate welfare accommodation, is proposed on the site of the existing typhoon shelter.

Hospital

Other proposed community facilities include a hospital, schools, a fire station, two markets, two bus termini, a multi-storey car park and a sewage treatment plant.

A large open space has been zoned to provide a break between the government housing estates to the southeast and the proposed commercial/residential and government, institutional and community zone to the northwest which will be accessible from all directions.

Various local open spaces have also been reserved to provide as far as possible an even distribution of such uses within the area.

A four-acre site on the south-eastern part is intended for an outdoor swimming pool complex which will serve not only Chai Wan, but also Shau Kei Wan.

Other proposals under the new draft plan include extensions to the Cape Collinson Cemetery and Crematorium (including the Columbarium) and a funeral parlour to the north of Cape Collinson Road.

As for communications, a high capacity road will connect Shau Kei Wan with Chai Wan along the northern coast-line, follows the existing alignment of Wan Tsui Road and link up with Tai Tam via a road tunnel commencing near the cemeteries.

/Two stations .....

Two stations for the proposed underground railway have also been included.

The revised plan, which is to supersede the previous plan, aims at providing a statutory land use pattern and major road framework within which the use and development of land may be legally controlled.

The implementation of the planning proposals, as far as public works are concerned, will require the voting of funds by the Legislative Council.

It will be exhibited for public inspection from today (Friday, January 19) for a period of two months at the Public Enquiry Service, Central Government Offices (West Wing), Hong Kong; the Crown Lands and Survey Office, Kowloon Government Offices, 405, Nathan Road, 10th floor; and the City District Office, Chai Wan, Hing Wah Resettlement Estate, Block 2, Chai Wan.

In a public notice, the Chairman of the Town Planning Board draws the attention of the public to Section 6 of the Town Planning Ordinance.

Persons affected by the new outline zoning plan may send to the Secretary of the Town Planning Board within two months a written statement of their objections to anything appearing on the new plan and propose amendments to remove the objections.

Copies of the draft plan and explanatory statement are also available at the Crown Lands and Survey Office, 19th floor, Murray Building Hong Kong at $3.00 each uncoloured and $25.00 each coloured.

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WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE 1973

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The Workmen's Compensation (Amendment) Ordinance 1973, which becomes effective today (January 19), will bring the percentages of loss of earning capacity for certain categories of injuries in the First Schedule of the principal Ordinance more in line with international standards.

Commenting on the amendment ordinance, Mr. David Lin, Assistant Commissioner of Labour, said: "Experience in the administration of the ordinance revealed that the First Schedule does not deal adequately with certain cases involving the loss of more than one finger.

"The amendment ensures that the aggregate percentages for the loss of individual fingers involving the index, middle, ring and little fingers will be the same as the percentage for the loss of all these four fingers at one time. This will facilitate medical assessment of injuries to fingers.

"The percentage for the loss of a toe, other than the great toe, will be raised to 2 percent if more than one toe is lost; for loss of hearing of one ear, the percentage will be raised to 20 percent and for total loss of hearing to 70 percent.

"The Accident Insurance Association of Hong Kong, which has been consulted, considers that there is no need to increase insurance premia after the increased benefits are incorporated into the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance."

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GRADE SEPARATED ACCESS TO AIRPORT MAINTENANCE AREA

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A grade separated interchange will be built shortly in Prince Edward Road adjacent to the R.A.F. quarters to provide a permanent vehicular access to the maintenance area of Hong Kong Airport.

The project consists of the building of a flyover to provide a 24-foot-wide carriageway over Prince Edward Road, a length of roadway at ground level and associated drainage works.

The flyover, about 1200 feet long, will provide a grade-separated access into and from the airport maintenance area for eastbound traffic in Prince Edward Road. The ground level roadway, about 800 feet long, will serve as an access for westbound traffic.

Work is expected to start next month.

On completion in about May, 1974, the interchange will also help ease the traffic flow in Prince Edward Road between Choi Hung Road and Clearwater Bay Road.

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HONG KONG NEEDS WELL INFORMED LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION

Pupils Urged To Repay Debt To Hong Kong

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The importance of vocal and well informed leadership in education in Hong Kong was stressed by the Deputy Director of Education (Administration), Mr. C.J.G. Lowe, this evening when he spoke at the annual prize-giving ceremony at St. Paul's Co-Educational College.

Mr. Lowe told pupils to maintain their interest in education, "join the pressure groups, take part in the world of education, keep an eye on the civil servants, influence your friends, join management committees."

Mr. Lowe reminded the boys and girls of the school that they and their school were generously subsidised by the people of Hong Kong.

"Hong Kong and the Community have done well for you. Never forget your debt to Hong Kong and to its people.

"Try to repay it and what better means than by concentrating your adult interests on the problems of education," he said.

The Deputy Director also spoke about a problem which was crucial for the future of education. The problem was how to develop from an elitist secondary system into a worthwhile mass system.

He pointed out that if more and more pupils were merely allowed to struggle up the long educational path and if the path was not changed "the cut-throat competition would become worse.

/"If we .....

"If we broaden and smooth out the path too much it will become valueless for social advancement, parents will say this is a second best and all real quality will go.

"It is a difficult problem but it is essential for school like yours to keep in touch with this major problem so that they can guide and advise. They must not turn their back and become totally divorced from this educational crisis."

Speaking about examinations, Mr. Lowe said: "One of the saddest developments affecting education is the hypnotic effect and tyranny of examinations.

Examinations

"We must force ourselves to consider examinations as the slaves of education and they should never never become the masters. They exist to measure in a very rough and ready way achievement in education. They are not education. Here they are becoming our masters. Here far too often the examination is being taught not the subject, and even worse exams and tests are becoming a teaching method.

"This is disastrous and schools must be more determined to despise examinations at any rate in Forms I - V and they must encourage pupils and parents in the same attitude. It is the mark of a confident school. This does not mean less work. Indeed more original, less exam oriented answers should get better results."

/Paying .....

Paying tribute to teachers, the Deputy Director said that Hong Kong was indeed extremely lucky to have so many well educated, dedicated, hard-working teachers temperamentally suited for teaching.

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Note to Editors: Copies of the full text of Mr. Lowe's speech are distributed separately in the Press Boxes, Government Information Services, this evening.

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Release time: 7.30 p.m.