



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Thursday, January 8, 1976

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P.W.D. TAKES PART IN METRICATION EXHIBITION

Visitors to Hong Kong's first metrication exhibition which opens at the Hong Kong Polytechnic tomorrow (Friday) will be given a deeper insight into the metrication system and the application of metric units in every day use.

The Public Works Department, which has been in the forefront of the gradual changeover to the metric system in Hong Kong, is taking part in the exhibition and will demonstrate the metrication progress in the various areas of P.W.D. activities.

The four-day exhibition, jointly organised by the Hong Kong Polytechnic and the Federation of Hong Kong Industries, will be held at the Keswick Hall of the Polytechnic, Hung Hom, and will be open daily to the public between 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. from January 9 to 11.

The P.W.D. stand will feature a range of graphic material, including "think metric" posters, photographs of P.W.D. projects, building plans and maps designed and planned -- and in some cases already completed -- in metric units.

Also on display will be a variety of metric measuring equipment and tools such as metric conversion slides, levelling staffs, survey tapes, scale rules, rods, tide gauges, stream gauges and micrometers.

A feature of the display will be electromagnetic measuring equipment which is being used by the department's Crown Lands and Survey Office in measuring metric distances.

Copies of metric publications produced by P.W.D. will also be available for sale at the stand.

Mr. Jim McGuinniety, P.W.D. Metrication Officer, noted today that since 1971 the Public Works Department had been actively engaged in planning and implementing the changeover to the metric system for all disciplines within P.W.D.

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"The changeover has now almost effectively been completed," he said.

"A finalisation programme graph indicating the progress of P.W.D. in the metric changeover will also be on display," he added. "It will indicate in graphic form the extent of the completeness of the changeover."

Mr. McGuinniety pointed out that from June 1974, all new design projects in the architectural and engineering disciplines had been produced in metric terms, and the calling of tenders had progressively moved in favour of metric contracts rather than imperial contracts.

Metric scales had also been adopted in the preparation of maps, he said, and maps in metric scales and contours were now available. Samples of metric scale maps would be displayed at the exhibition.

He also noted that from June this year, the sale of Crown Land would be exclusively conducted in metric terms.

Last December, he continued, the Buildings Ordinance Office issued Practice Notes and a Schedule of Metric Equivalents which would enable Authorised Persons to seek approval of plans and documents prepared on the prescribed metric system.

"The optional submission of documents in metric form became effective on January 1 this year and authorised persons now have the option of making submissions for approval in either imperial or metric terms," he said.

"Further P.W.D. programme regarding the private sector anticipated the compulsory submission of documents solely in metric terms and is intended to become effective as from January 1, 1977."

Mr. McGuinniety praised the Hong Kong Polytechnic and Hong Kong Federation of Industries in staging the exhibition and said that it would help industry to realise the extent to which metrication had already taken place in Hong Kong.

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"It will also convey to the public at large the inevitability; universality and simplicity of the system and help allay fears due to lack of understanding.

"Once one had had a practical encounter with metrication," he added, "the apparent difficulties disappear and the inadequacy of the imperial system becomes evident."

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NEW TERRITORIES ATHLETIC MEET

Note to Editors:

The first New Territories athletic meet, jointly organised by the Heung Yee Kuk, the Recreation and Sport Service of the Education Department and the New Territories Schools Sports Association, will be held at Mongkok Stadium, Boundary Street, Kowloon, beginning at 9 a.m. on Sunday (January 11).

The prize-giving, at which the Secretary for the New Territories, Mr. David Akers-Jones, will make a short speech, will take place at 4 p.m.

Prizes will be presented by Mr. Cheung Yan-lung and Mr. Lam Shu-chun, Vice-chairmen of the Heung Yee Kuk, and Mr. Deacon Chiu, President of the New Territories General Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Michael Caswell, Principal Education Officer of the Education Department, will present attendance certificates to trainees of the district atheletic coaching courses.

You are cordially invited to send members of your staff to cover both the atheletic meet and the prize-giving ceremony.

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MINOR AMENDMENTS MADE TO EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S
CODE OF PRACTICE

Minor amendments to the Code of Practice issued exactly a year ago by the Director of Education, Mr. Kenneth Topley, come into force today.

The amendments are of terminology in a few paragraphs dealing with general principles, textbooks, exercise books and other items. These amendments have been made to ensure that the Code is effective and not misinterpreted or misunderstood. The Code, which aims at eradicating malpractices, lays down procedures for the sale of such items, including school uniforms and other school accessories.

In a circular to the heads of all schools, Mr. Topley said: "It has been gratifying that school authorities have acted so responsibly in following the Code during the first year of its existence.

"However, my Action Committee on School Textbooks and Supplies has monitored throughout 1975 the working of the Code in order to assess its effectiveness and to consider any need for its amendment."

Following consultations with 12 major school councils and associations it was decided to make the minor amendments.

Mr. Topley again asked the heads of schools to ensure that the provisions of the Code were implemented.

He stressed that in all matters concerning the sale of textbooks, exercise books, equipment, uniform and school accessories, the procedures laid down by the Code must be observed in full to avoid any cause of complaint.

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The Chairman of the Education Department's Action Committee on School Textbooks and Supplies, Mr. Colvyn Haye, wrote to the school councils and associations to thank them for their views and their cooperation.

Mr. Haye said that the Department, through its Action Committee, would continue to oversee the operation of the Code.

He added: "I shall be happy to receive from your Council/Association throughout 1976 any suggestions for the Code's even more effective working".

Since the Action Committee was set up in December 1974, it has received 308 complaints against 222 schools. Of these, 148 were substantiated and resolved; in 139 cases the allegations were unsubstantiated and in 21 cases investigations were continuing.

None of the complaints involved any Government Schools. Forty-seven of the complaints were made against aided primary schools, ten against aided secondaries, 88 against vocational schools.

During the last seven months, 102 complaints were received compared with 206 in the first five months. The actual number of schools involved dropped to 62 from 160 while the number of substantiated cases fell to 47 from 101 and the number of unsubstantiated cases also decreased to 63 from 76.

"These figures indicated that the Code has been successful and is working for most schools, parents and pupils.

"In every case investigated and found to have substance, immediate action was taken to eradicate the irregularities and schools have been most anxious to comply," Mr. Haye said.

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He said that the complaints against 222 schools in the past year should be seen in relation to more than 2,600 schools in operation.

The Action Committee works in close liaison with the Consumer Council. Members of the public who have any complaints on textbooks or school supplies are once again advised to lodge them with the Action Committee (Tel. 5-778311 Ext. 254) or write to the Chairman, Action Committee, Education Department, Lee Gardens, 3rd floor, Hysan Avenue, Causeway Bay, Hong Kong with full details.

Note to Editors: Copies of the School Circular together with the revised Code of Practice are distributed separately in the G.I.S. press boxes this evening.

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N.T.LAND AUCTIONS NET \$32M LAST YEAR

The Government last year netted \$32,130,000 from land auctions in the New Territories.

A New Territories Administration spokesman said the plots, 15 in all, ranged in area from 8,700 to 200,300 square feet.

Prices paid per square foot varied from \$399 for a 16,920 sq. ft. site in Kwai Chung Road to \$12.28 for a 75,700 sq. ft. site at Silverstrand, Clearwater Bay. The average price per square foot was \$58.53.

Only one lot had to be withdrawn from auction because of lack of bidders - a 21,530 sq. ft. site at the 17 milestone, Castle Peak Road.

The total area of land auctioned in the New Territories during 1975 was 548,920 sq. ft.

The largest amount of money - \$6.750,000 - was realised from auctioning the Kwai Chung Road site in August.

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BEWARE OF BOGUS LABOUR DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS

The Labour Department today warned factory proprietors to be on guard against bogus Labour Department officials.

Mrs. SOO MOK Sau-ha, Assistant Commissioner for Labour, said complaints were often received from proprietors who had been approached by people claiming to be Labour Department officers for money for advertisements in purported departmental publications.

She stressed that no publication of the department carried advertisements.

"All services provided by the Labour Department are free, and from time to time, the department published pamphlets on labour legislation, in English and Chinese, which are also available free to the public."

She reminded factory proprietors that all Labour Department officers carried with them government identity cards and warrants which showed the photograph and name of the holders.

Members of the factory and labour inspectorates are under instruction to identify themselves by producing their warrants when visiting factories," she added.

Mrs. Soo advised proprietors that they should ascertain the identity of the visiting officer, and if in doubt, should immediately report to the Police.

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QUICKER ACTION NOW LIKELY ON OVERDUE TAXES

The Inland Revenue Department today (Thursday) advised people to pay their taxes on time because followup action on overdue tax was likely to take place far sooner now than in the past.

A spokesman for the department said this was the result of the partial computerisation of the department's Collection Section.

"Taxpayers who do not pay their tax on or before the due date should expect the imposition of a surcharge for late payment almost immediately afterwards with recovery action taking place shortly after that," he said.

The **spokesman** also stressed that deferment of payment of tax would only be considered in the most exceptional cases of hardship so that requests for deferment would invariably be rejected.

He pointed out that the two instalment system of payment introduced this year for the first time represented, in itself, a substantial concession compared with previous years.

Also, in order to avoid the inconvenience of queuing up at collection offices, he advised people to pay their tax by post addressed to the Commissioner of Inland Revenue, Central Mail Office, Club Lusitane Building, ground floor, Hong Kong.

He said there would be no surcharge if the payments were received late so long as the envelope was postmarked not later than the date on which the tax was due as shown in the demand note.

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SEMINAR ON EVALUATION OF WELFARE SERVICES

About 150 directors or executive secretaries of voluntary welfare agencies and officers of the Social Welfare Department will attend a half-day seminar on Saturday (January 10) on evaluation of welfare services.

The seminar arranged by the Social Welfare Advisory Committee, is to review the effectiveness of the initial evaluation exercise which was carried out last year covering five voluntary welfare agencies and one Social Welfare Department institution. Proposals for the conduct of future evaluation studies will be formulated.

The pilot evaluation exercise, which concentrated largely on management, organisation, staffing, salaries and the quality of services provided, was aimed at establishing clearcut guidelines in general welfare undertakings.

It was jointly undertaken by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service and the Social Welfare Department, under the auspices of the Social Welfare Advisory Committee Sub-Committee on Evaluation, of which Miss K. Siu-wah is the Chairman.

Mr. Thomas Lee, Director of Social Welfare and Chairman of the Social Welfare Advisory Committee, will chair the seminar. In his opening address, Mr. Lee will speak on the possible roles of evaluation.

The seminar will be divided into nine discussion groups, six to be conducted in Cantonese and three in English. All participants will have an opportunity to express their views on evaluation.

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The group leaders will later make a report to the Chairman, who will then prepare an overall report on the seminar for issue to all participants.

Attending the seminar will be representatives of the 83 voluntary welfare agencies that receive Government subvention; lecturers from the Social Work Department of the two Universities; representatives of the Hong Kong Council of Social Service and the Social Welfare Department; members of the Evaluation Sub-Committee; and a number of people receiving welfare services.

Note to Editors:

You are cordially invited to cover the seminar to be held on Saturday (January 10) at 9.30 a.m. at the Lady Trench Training Centre, 44 Oi Kwan Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong.

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PUBLIC URGED TO HEED FIRE PRECAUTION WARNINGS

The Fire Services Department today urged members of the public to be more careful with fires; especially in the countryside.

A spokesman for the department said that because of the prolonged spell of very dry weather, the average daily number of fires for the first seven days of this month totalled 44, compared with 21 for the same period last month.

"During this period," he added, "there were 306 fires of which 183 were hill fires. It is most disappointing to see that such a large percentage of fires occurred in the countryside in spite of repeated warnings to the public to be careful."

The spokesman attributed the increase largely to carelessness and failure to take precautions in view of the fire danger brought about by the present dry spell. Burning of weeds or other waste materials by villagers on open ground was another main cause of hill fires.

"If all available firemen and engines are deployed to fight hill fires which normally take hours to put out, there might not be enough people to call on should fires occur at the same time in multi-storey buildings," he said.

He urged smokers to be particularly careful when discarding cigarette ends and matches and appealed to visitors to the rural areas this weekend to do all they could to prevent causing fires.

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The spokesman also pointed out that it was an offence to light or use a fire in or near a forest, plantation, prohibited area, or open countryside.

"Fire prevention in the countryside is the same as anywhere else," he added, "all it requires is a little care and thought."

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TRAFFIC RE-ROUTING IN KOWLOON

Traffic in Sai Yeung Choi Street between Prince Edward Road and Nullah Road will be reversed from one-way northbound to one-way southbound as from 10 a.m. on Saturday (January 10).

This is in connection with the elevated road project linking Prince Edward Road and Lai Chi Kok Road.

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PWD SPORTS DAY

Public Works Department staff will put aside their slide rules and set squares this Sunday (January 11) and converge on the South China Athletic Association Stadium to test their skills in 27 track and field events.

The occasion will be the **Eighth P.W.D. Sports Day**, the highlight in the department's sporting calendar.

This year a record number of 388 entries, including 62 from female staff, have been received for the various events and the meeting promises to be the best and most exciting ever.

The events include a variety of races, hurdles, high jump, long jump, shot put, javelin, relays, tug-of-war, cricket ball throw, and a walk race.

Special events are also scheduled for veterans over 40 and 50 years old, as well as for children aged between six and eleven.

Apart from individual honours in the various events, competitors will be vying for the all round Best Athlete title in the men's and ladies' sections.

Trophies and prizes will be presented to the winners by Mrs. McDonald, wife of the Director of Public Works. Mr. David McDonald will marshall the finals of the men's 1,500 metre sprint and will later address the competitors and guests.

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The Sports Day, which aims at promoting sportsmanship and physical recreation among P.W.D. staff, will start at 8.25 a.m. and last until noon.

During breaks, guests will be entertained by the Pipes and Drums of the Royal Hong Kong Police Force.

Note to Editors: Your representatives are cordially invited to cover the occasion between 8.25 a.m. and 12 noon on Sunday (Jan. 11) at the South China Athletic Association Stadium, Caroline Hill Road.

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