

H.K. Standard

21 April 1985

# 'Another push' for ERP next month

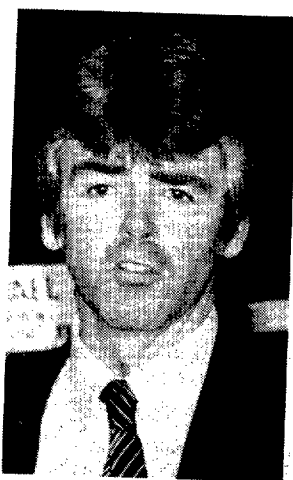
THE Transport Branch will be making another push for the electronic road pricing system next month, in the final round of public consultations through the district boards.

Principal Assistant for Transport, Mr Michael Clancy, said the public consultation through the district boards would begin as soon as the summary of the report on the \$36.5 million pilot scheme was available, expected before the end of May.

Speaking at a Queensway Jaycees forum on the ERP system at the Mariners' Club yesterday, Clancy said the full report of the pilot test on the feasibility and reliability of the equipment would also be available upon request.

The six-month pilot test, compiled by an independent consultancy firm, had already reached its final drafting stage and the full report would be completed by the end of June, Clancy said.

Besides a summary of the report, he said, the district



MR Clancy ... a demonstration

boards will also be furnished with a comparative study on the cost and effectiveness of other forms of traffic controls versus the ERP scheme.

"The area licensing method used in Singapore, which was often mentioned in the past few months as an alternative to the ERP, will also be included," he said. Opinions as to whether taxis should be included in the

scheme, will also be solicited.

He indicated that the first of the ERP was to cut down the number of cars by 10 per cent.

Taxis will unlikely be charged in the first year of implementation of the ERP scheme but taxi drivers will be requested to install electronic numbering plates on their vehicles.

Clancy said the full report on the technical operation and public opinion regarding the ERP scheme, will be forward to the Executive Council for final approval.

If the go-ahead is given, the full ERP scheme, which will cost taxpayers about \$400 million a year, will come into operation by late 1987.

If the public reaction is found to be negative for full adoption of the scheme, he said, it would not cost the government more even if the scheme was to be postponed for a year.

Introduced in May 1983, the concept of the ERP as a solution to relieve traffic congestion has been under strong attack from academics and motorists.

Beginning last December, a second round of public consultations was conducted through the 18 district boards which only succeeded in convincing two boards in the New Territories — Island and Northern.

A territory-wide publicity campaign was launched in January, highlighted by a film on the government's rationale for the ERP scheme.

It was shown on television and at district board meetings to canvass public support.

Meanwhile, a total of 2,600 vehicles, government and private, have been fitted with electronic number plates and "toll stations" fitted with electronic loops set up at 18 locations.

Clancy reiterated that the pilot scheme was practically a demonstration of the technology involved in the actual implementation of the scheme and would be vital to the future transport policy of Hongkong.