

Hong Kong Standard

5 November 1976

ACTION OVER HAWKER SITE ALLOCATION

MARSHA Prysuska's column in your issue of October 27, 1976 complained about Government's wheels grinding slowly. The burden of the complaint was that in 10 months nothing had been done to allocate sites to a number of hawkers whose circumstances made it appear desirable to assist them on compassionate grounds.

Miss Prysuska is right in saying that there has been a delay in these cases, although it was not as long as she has been led to believe. In fact, whilst Mr Saunders mentioned such cases to me earlier this year, in the course of general discussions of hawker problems in Tsunwan, he did not give the Urban Services Department and myself any names until late

June, when we arranged two meetings with six of the eight hawkers (two did not respond to our written invitations to attend).

Some time later (October 12, 1976), Mr Saunders came to discuss other matters, in the course of which he complained that no decision had yet been reached in these cases.

I have consulted the Urban Services Department, and it has been agreed that I should write this reply. The Department's Tsunwan Office is under its approved strength, and this led directly to the delays which have occurred in processing these hawker cases. Action is in hand to strengthen the office. Fixed pitch licences are now no longer offered to compassionate cases as it is more appropriate to render help

through the Public Assistance Scheme. The Social Welfare Department is now assessing their eligibility for public assistance as a matter of urgency.

Incidentally, no person went "missing" as a result of the inter-departmental correspondence referred to in Miss Prysuska's further notice of this subject in her column of November 2 1976. Mr Saunders provided eight names to the Urban Services Department and all have been referred to the Social Welfare Department.

Finally, I am most grateful for Miss Prysuska's interest and hope that the machinery for dealing with such cases will not clog up again.

J.W. HAYES
TOWN MANAGER and
DISTRICT OFFICER,
Tsunwan.