



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

THURSDAY, MARCH 25, 1976

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INDUSTRIAL TRAINING AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION ADVOCATED

THE HON. ALEX S.C. WU TODAY STRONGLY URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO PAY MORE ATTENTION TO SHORTAGE OF SKILLED MANPOWER, FOR +THE PLAIN FACT IS THAT WITHOUT INDUSTRIAL TRAINING AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION WE SHALL NEVER HAVE ADQUATE RESOURCES TO MEET THE CONTINUING CHALLENGE WE SHALL HAVE TO FACE.+

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DURING THE BUDGET DEBATE, MR. WU SAID THE 1.74 MILLION WORKING POPULATION ESTIMATED BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY COMPRISED ALMOST ENTIRELY OF PEOPLE WHO HAD NOTHING BUT A PRIMARY EDUCATION AND HONG KONG'S PAST SUCCESSES HAD BEEN DUE TO THEIR ABILITY TO LEARN ON THE JOB.

+BUT THE DEMANDS OF THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE CALL FOR A FAR MORE CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH,+ HE SAID.

QUOTING THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, HE POINTED OUT THAT ONLY 2,500 CRAFT APPRENTICES AND 500 TECHNICIAN APPRENTICES WERE UNDERGOING +ADEQUATE TRAINING+ COMPARED WITH 15,000 APPRENTICES OR TRAINEES AT CRAFT LEVEL AND 2,000 AT TECHNICIAN LEVEL WHO WERE NOT. THE COMMISSIONER HAD ALSO SAID: +THERE IS STILL A LONG WAY TO GO TO MEET INDUSTRY'S NEEDS FOR ADEQUATELY AND PROPERLY TRAINED APPRENTICES.+

TO MEET THE NEEDS, THE TRAINING COUNCIL WAS ASKED TO RECOMMEND SPECIFIC TRADES TO BE DESIGNATED. AS A RESULT, THE TRAINING BOARDS NOMINATED NO LESS THAN 36.

MR. WU SAID, HOWEVER, THE TRAINING COUNCIL WAS INFORMED BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR THAT THE DECISION ON THE TRADES TO BE DESIGNATED COULD NOT BE TAKEN UNTIL HE KNEW WHAT STAFF HE WOULD GET UNDER THE ESTIMATES FOR 1976-77.

HE DOUBTED IF THE GOVERNMENT WAS SERIOUS ABOUT ADMINISTERING THE APPRENTICESHIP ORDINANCE SINCE THE COMMISSIONER HAD ONLY ASKED FOR A SMALL VOTE OF \$251,000.

AS A FURTHER STEP, HE BELIEVED THAT THE TRAINING COUNCIL SHOULD BE GIVEN STATUTORY POWERS TO ENSURE AN ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF TRAINED INDUSTRIAL MANPOWER.

TURNING TO THE RESOURCES TO MAINTAIN HONG KONG'S ECONOMIC POSITION, MR. WU SAID: +THIS IS AN AREA WHERE WE HAVE BEEN COMPLACENT FOR FAR TOO LONG.+

HE POINTED OUT THAT +ON COUNTLESS OCCASIONS OVER MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS WE HAVE CONGRATULATED OURSELVES ON A DILIGENT, ADAPTABLE AND DEXTROUS WORK FORCE, ALLIED TO A POLICY OF FREE ENTERPRISE AND INITIATIVE.+

THIS CONSTANT REFERENCE TO THE NATURAL DILIGENCE OF THE WORK FORCE, HE SAID, WAS BECOMING A DANGEROUS PLATITUDE.

+WE MUST BE CAREFUL THAT WE ARE NOT MESMERISED BY OUR OWN RHETORIC OR BY PRIDE IN AN ECONOMIC ACHIEVEMENT BASED UPON ONLY ONE NATURAL RESOURCE: PEOPLE,+ HE SAID.

ON TECHNICAL EDUCATION, MR. WU SAID +DOUBT HAS NOW BEEN CAST UPON THE ROLE OF THE PREVOCATIONAL SCHOOLS+, POINTING OUT THAT THE 1974 WHITE PAPER ON SECONDARY EDUCATION HAD SAID THE PREVOCATIONAL CONCEPT WAS NOT NECESSARILY THE MOST APPROPRIATE ANSWER TO THE NEEDS OF HONG KONG.

HE SAID HOWEVER THAT THE ENORMOUS DEMAND FOR PLACES IN SUCH SCHOOLS COULD NOT BE DENIED.

+UNTIL IT IS CLEAR BEYOND ANY DOUBT THAT WE HAVE, IN BEING, A BETTER ALTERNATIVE WHICH IS DOING THE JOB BETTER, WE SHOULD ENCOURAGE THOSE PREVOCATION SCHOOLS WHICH ARE WORKING,+ HE SAID.

+IF EVENTUALLY THEY ARE REPLACED BY SOMETHING DEMONSTRABLY BETTER IT WILL BE A NATURAL AND ACCEPTABLE PROCESS.+

HE SUGGESTED THAT THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S MEASURES TO MAKE THE FULL USE OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS -- FLOTATION AND THE EXTENDED DAY -- BE APPLIED TO PREVOCATIONAL SCHOOLS, THUS INCREASING THE NUMBER OF PLACES BY 20 PER CENT.

MR. WU EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WOULD NOT ONLY ENCOURAGE SUCH INITIATIVE AND SEE THAT +THE PREVOCATIONAL SCHOOLS GET THE HELP THEY NEED, BUT THAT MORE WILL BE BUILT.+

REFERRING TO EDUCATION IN GENERAL, HE WELCOMED THE \$1,376 MILLION BUDGET ALLOCATION BUT HOPED THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION WOULD EXPLAIN HOW TO STAFF +THIS MASSIVE PROGRAMME OF EXPANSION IN SECONDARY EDUCATION+ AND GIVE HIS OBSERVATIONS ON THE QUALITY OF TEACHERS WHO WERE TO TAKE UP THEIR NEW RESPONSIBILITIES.

MR. WU URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO GIVE MORE ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE PROMOTION OF CULTURE IN HONG KONG, WITH +OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL, IRRESPECTIVE OF THE LEVEL OF THEIR FORMAL EDUCATION.+

HE SAID THAT AT PRESENT THERE WERE ONLY +A HANDFUL OF PROJECTS+, OTHER THAN THOSE OF THE URBAN COUNCIL, BY WHICH GOVERNMENT'S INVOLVEMENT COULD BE MEASURED.

MR. WU POINTED OUT THAT THE COUNCIL FOR RECREATION AND SPORT, WHICH TOOK A LONG TIME TO SET UP, WAS NOW PERFORMING A VALUABLE FUNCTION.

HE DID NOT THINK IT UNREASONABLE, THEREFORE, TO SUGGEST THAT THE +CO-ORDINATION AND DEPLOYMENT OF OUR RESOURCES FOR THE ENCOURAGEMENT AND PROMOTION OF CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IS IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO BE MADE THE DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY OF A BRANCH OF THE GOVERNMENT.+

MR. WU WAS PLEASED TO SEE FROM THE ESTIMATES THAT +WE ARE REALLY GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW TERRITORIES.+

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+IT IS A CONCRETE SIGN OF OUR OWN CONFIDENCE THAT NEXT YEAR MORE THAN 26 PER CENT OF PUBLIC WORKS EXPENDITURE WILL BE ON PROJECTS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

+WHAT IS EQUALLY IMPORTANT IS THAT OVER \$500 MILLION OF THAT EXPENDITURE IS TO BE DEVOTED TO WORKS IN CONNECTION WITH THE THREE NEW TOWNS, AND THIS FIGURE EXCLUDES ANY EXPENDITURE BY THE HOUSING AUTHORITY. FOR HONG KONG THIS IS A TREMENDOUS OPPORTUNITY,+ HE SAID.

MR. WU CONCLUDED HIS SPEECH BY SAYING THAT IT WAS NOT NECESSARILY THE BEST POLICY FOR HONG KONG NOT TO BORROW WHEN IT WAS IN ITS INTERESTS TO DO SO.

IN FACT, HE SAID, HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE HONG KONG MAKING MORE USE OF ITS CREDIT-WORTHINESS IN WORLD MARKETS.

+IN THIS WAY, GOVERNMENT COULD PROVIDE GUARANTEES IN ORDER TO ACCELERATE THE COMPLETION OF PROJECTS THAT ARE WAITING TO BE UPGRADED BECAUSE OF LACK OF READY CASH,+ HE SAID.

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HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME WELCOMED

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DR. THE HON. HARRY FANG TODAY WELCOMED THE PROPOSALS OUTLINED IN THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S BUDGET SPEECH FOR THE PROMOTION OF HOME OWNERSHIP, STRESSING THAT +THE SCHEME HAS FAR REACHING SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND MUST BE IMPLEMENTED WITHOUT DELAY.+

HE BELIEVED THAT THE SCHEME, IF LAUNCHED ON A SUFFICIENTLY LARGE SCALE AND WITH THE ACTIVE SUPPORT OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISE, WOULD PROVIDE THE SOLUTION TO HONG KONG'S HOUSING PROBLEM.

SPEAKING IN THE RESUMED BUDGET DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, DR. FANG WAS DOUBTFUL THAT MUCH MORE THAN 40 PER CENT OF THE POPULATION, OR 1.8 MILLION PEOPLE, WERE REALLY IN NEED OF PUBLIC HOUSING AT SUBSIDIZED RENTALS.

+MANY WHO ARE PRESENTLY OCCUPYING PUBLIC HOUSING MUST HAVE PROSPERED OVER THE YEARS TO SUCH AN EXTENT THAT THEY WOULD NO LONGER QUALIFY FOR SUBSIDIZED HOUSING IF ASSESSED ON CURRENT INCOME LIMITS,+ HE SAID.

+THE GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITY THEREFORE LIES IN ENSURING THAT SUFFICIENT QUANTITIES OF LOW AND MEDIUM PRICED FLATS ARE AVAILABLE ON THE MARKET AND THAT LOAN FINANCING IS PROVIDED WITHIN THE REACH OF BLUE AND WHITE COLLAR WORKERS.

+THUS ALL THOSE WISH TO PURCHASE THEIR FLATS CAN BE GIVEN THE MEANS TO DO SO, INCLUDING THOSE WHO ARE ALREADY ACCOMMODATED IN PUBLIC HOUSING, THOSE WHO ARE STILL ON THE WAITING LIST, AND THOSE CIVIL/SERVANTS WHOSE INCOME RENDERS THEM NEITHER ELIGIBLE FOR PUBLIC HOUSING NOR FOR A HOUSING ALLOWANCE.+

DR. FANG POINTED OUT THAT THE SUCCESS OF THE HOME-OWNERSHIP SCHEME DEPENDED TO A VERY LARGE EXTENT ON ACTIVE PARTICIPATION BY PRIVATE ENTERPRISE.

THEREFORE, HE ADDED, THE GOVERNMENT MUST BE PREPARED TO MAKE LAND AVAILABLE AT CONCESSIONARY PRICES WITH BUILDING RESTRICTIONS AND TO AGREE TO GUARANTEE LOAN FINANCING FOR PROSPECTIVE HOME-MAKERS OVER A PERIOD OF 15 TO 20 YEARS.

ANOTHER ALTERNATIVE WAS THAT THE GOVERNMENT COULD TAKE OUT AN OPTION TO DISPOSE OF A NUMBER OF UNITS IN APPROVED PRIVATE HOUSING SCHEMES.

IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, HE SAID, PRIVATE DEVELOPERS MIGHT WELL CONSIDER OFFERING THE GOVERNMENT A VOLUME DISCOUNT WHICH WOULD DIRECTLY BENEFIT BUYERS.

TURNING TO THE STAFF PROBLEMS IN KWONG WAH HOSPITAL AND THE RECENT RESIGNATION OF A NUMBER OF SENIOR MEDICAL STAFF AT QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL, DR. FANG SAID, +THE SITUATION IS GRAVE AND CALLS FOR CONCERTED GOVERNMENT ACTION.+

/+IF THIS

+IF THIS PARTICULAR NETTLE IS NOT GRASPED NOW, THE GOVERNMENT MEDICAL SERVICE WILL BE REDUCED TO WELL BELOW PAR WITH THE STAFF OVERWORKED, DISGRUNTLED, AND DISILLUSIONED,+ HE WARNED.

AS THE MONETARY REWARD OF PRIVATE PRACTICE NORMALLY COULD NOT BE MATCHED IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE, HE SAID, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD OFFER OTHER ATTRACTIONS — THE OPPORTUNITY FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH IN INDIVIDUAL SPECIALITIES AND THE FREEDOM AND OPPORTUNITY TO PURSUE ONE'S OWN ACADEMIC PREFERENCE.

SINCE MANY OF THE IMPROVEMENTS COULD NOT BE IMPLEMENTED BECAUSE OF A LIMITED BUDGET, DR. FANG SUGGESTED AS A SOLUTION THAT PRIVATE PRACTITIONERS BE EMPLOYED ON AN +ASSIGNMENT BASIS+.

THE GOVERNMENT COULD MAKE USE OF THEIR EXPERTISE AND EFFICIENCY BY ASSIGNING THEM SPECIFIC DUTIES IN GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS OR CLINICS IN RETURN FOR A FEE, BUT WITHOUT FRINGE BENEFITS SUCH AS QUARTERS, STUDY LEAVE, PENSION ETC,+ HE PROPOSED.

HE BELIEVED THAT SUCH A SCHEME WOULD ENABLE THE PRIVATE PRACTITIONERS TO KEEP ABREAST OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THEIR OWN FIELD, GIVING THEM CONSIDERABLE JOB SATISFACTION AS WELL AS MORE OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY.

+THE ACCURED SAVINGS COULD THEN BE USED TO IMPROVE THE CONDITIONS OF SERVICE OF FULL-TIME STAFF AS WELL AS TO PROVIDE BETTER FACILITIES FOR RESEARCH AND OVERSEAS TRAINING,+ DR. FANG POINTED OUT.

ON DENTAL CARE, DR. FANG CRITICISED THE GOVERNMENT FOR LACK OF ACTION.

DESCRIBING DENTAL CARE FOR THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG AS A SERIOUS AND SEVERELY IGNORED PROBLEM FOR DECADES, HE STRESSED THAT THE PROVISION OF A DENTAL SCHOOL SHOULD HAVE PRIORITY OVER THE SECOND MEDICAL SCHOOL.

REFERRING TO COMMUNITY NURSING SERVICE, HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN URGED FOR YEARS TO CONSIDER THE INTRODUCTION OF A COMMUNITY NURSING SCHEME TO COMPLEMENT HOSPITAL CARE. HOWEVER, SO FAR THIS SCHEME HAD NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED WITHIN GOVERNMENT SERVICE.

DR. FANG POINTED OUT THAT THE SCHEME HAD PROVED TO BE MORE THAN WORTHWHILE AS EVIDENCED BY THE FACT THAT FIVE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES WERE ALREADY ENGAGED IN THIS FIELD.

SUCH SERVICE, HE SAID, NOT ONLY WOULD RELIEVE THE STRAIN ON HOSPITAL FACILITIES BUT ALSO EXTEND NURSING CARE TO THE HOME.

HE SUGGESTED THAT FUNDS BE ALLOCATED TO VOLUNTARY AGENCIES WHICH PROVIDE THE MUCH NEEDED COMMUNITY NURSING SERVICE.

ON THE QUESTIONS OF SUBVENTIONS IN GENERAL, DR. FANG POINTED OUT THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO RETAIN AN INCENTIVE FOR VOLUNTARY AGENCIES TO MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE THEIR EXISTING SERVICES AND TO EXPLORE NEW NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE.

+THE AMOUNT OF \$52 MILLION IN TOTAL FOR SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES IN THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR CANNOT BE SAID TO BE EXTRAVAGANT WHEN ONE CONSIDERS THAT THE GOVERNMENT SPENT NO LESS THAN \$22 MILLION ALONE LAST YEAR IN SUBSIDIZING STUDENT BUS FARES,+ HE SAID.

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WARNING AGAINST IMPORTING COMPLICATED
TAXATION SYSTEM

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THE HON. JOHN BREMRIDGE, WHILE WELCOMING THE INLAND REVENUE REVIEW COMMITTEE, TODAY GAVE A WARNING AGAINST IMPORTING +THE WHOLE BAG OF COMPLICATED TAXATION MEASURES WHICH PLAGUE OTHER COUNTRIES+.

HE SAID HONG KONG'S PRESENT TAX SYSTEM +AT LEAST WORKS AND IS EASILY COMPREHENSIBLE.+

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED BUDGET DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, HE SAID +WE SHOULD NOT THROW OUT THE BABY WITH THE BATH WATER. THE RICH CAN ALWAYS PAY FOR TECHNICAL ADVICE AND LEGAL DEFENCE. THE POOR CANNOT.+

MR. BREMRIDGE AGREED THAT SOME INDIVIDUALS, INTERESTS, AND COMPANIES RESIDENT IN HONG KONG CONTRIBUTED NOTHING TO THE COMMUNITY IN THE FORM OF TAXATION.

IF TAXES COULD BE LEVIED ON THEM, THEN TO THAT EXTENT THE BURDEN OF TAXATION ON THE REST OF US COULD BE REDUCED AND EQUITY WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE SERVED.

ON THE OTHER HAND, MR. BREMRIDGE SAID, IT WAS GENERALLY AND WISELY ACCEPTED THAT HONG KONG MUST REMAIN A LOW-TAX AREA- THAT TAXATION MUST BE SIMPLE AND CHEAP TO COLLECT- THAT ECONOMIC GROWTH MUST NOT BE IMPEDED- AND THAT USEFUL OVERSEAS INVESTMENT MUST NOT BE DISCOURAGED.

REFERRING TO THE PROPOSED DIVIDEND WITHHOLDING TAX, MR. BREMRIDGE SAID ITS IMPLEMENTATION SEEMED CERTAIN TO INVOLVE THE INTRODUCTION OF AN UNDISTRIBUTED PROFITS TAX, RESTRICTIONS ON DIRECTORS' FEES, NEW RULES ON COMPANIES' RESIDENCE, APPRECIABLE DISINCENTIVES TO OVERSEAS INVESTMENT AND MUCH MORE.

+IT THEREFORE APPEARS THAT ACCOMPANYING LEGISLATION WOULD BE BOTH CONTENTIOUS AND COMPLICATED,+ HE SAID. +NOR WILL THE LEGAL POSITION NECESSARILY BE KNOWN UNTIL PRECEDENTS HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED IN THE COURTS.+

HE SAID IT WAS RIGHT TO BE CAUTIOUS IN VIEW OF +WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN OTHER LESS FORTUNATE PLACES WHERE PROGRESSIVE REFORM HAS LED TO FEARFUL AND TOTALLY UNEXPECTED PROBLEMS.+

HE ADDED : +TAXATION'S PURPOSE IN HONG KONG IS TO RAISE REVENUE SIMPLY AND CHEAPLY. NOTHING ELSE.+

REFERRING TO THE WORK OF THE SECURITIES COMMISSION, MR. BREMRIDGE SUGGESTED THAT SOME ACCOUNTANTS' FACILE REPORTS ACCOMPANYING NEW ISSUES +SHOULD BE EYED VERY MUCH MORE COLDLY THAT THEY WERE IN THE LAST STOCK EXCHANGE BOOM.+

/+THE LINE

+THE LINE BETWEEN FACT AND FICTION WAS FREQUENTLY CROSSED, AND THIS SHOULD NOT HAPPEN AGAIN,+ HE SAID.

ON THE CIVIL SERVICE, MR. BREMRIDGE SAID THE TIME HAD NOW COME FOR A GENERAL, BUT CERTAINLY NOT RETROACTIVE, PAY INCREASE FOR THOSE CIVIL SERVICE GRADES WHO DID NOT GET AUTOMATIC COST-OF-LIVING INCREASES, PROVIDED IT COULD BE SHOWN THAT COMPARABLE GOOD EMPLOYERS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR HAD ACTED SIMILARLY.

REFERRING TO THE PRINCIPLE OF COMPARABILITY, HE SAID +IT IS VERY DIFFICULT INDEED TO SET LIKE AGAINST LIKE IN SUCH COMPLICATED AFFAIRS.+

HE SAID THAT REAL SACRIFICES HAD RECENTLY MADE IN THE COMMUNITY INTEREST BY CIVIL SERVANTS AND THAT AT THE HIGHER LEVELS THERE WAS LITTLE IF ANY COMPARABILITY.

IT WAS NOW TIME +TO ENSURE THAT THESE MEN AND WOMEN WHO WORK FOR US ARE TREATED AT LEAST FAIRLY IF NOT GENEROUSLY.+

MR. BREMRIDGE SAID THAT NOW THAT HONG KONG WAS OVER THE HUMP FINANCIALLY, THE AIM MUST BE TO +PRODUCE QUICKLY A FAIR SETTLEMENT ACCEPTABLE TO ALL.+

ON THE MCKINSEY RECOMMENDATIONS, MR. BREMRIDGE SAID HIS PARTICULAR CONCERN WAS WITH THE INTRODUCTION TO THE GOVERNMENT OF MODERN BUDGETARY SYSTEMS OF FINANCIAL CONTROL, AND OF MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES.

HE SAID IN ALL GOVERNMENT, ONLY QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL HAD AN EFFECTIVE FULL-SCALE ANNUAL OPERATING PLAN.

+CAN WE HOPE FOR FURTHER MOVEMENT IN THIS IMPORTANT FIELD?+ HE ASKED.

MR. BREMRIDGE REFERRED TO +THE SHORTAGE OF QUALIFIED ACCOUNTANTS IN THE CIVIL SERVICE, AND THE CONSEQUENT DIFFICULTY OF DISCERNING TRUE COSTS.+

HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THERE WERE REAL PROBLEMS TO BE FACED AND THAT NO QUICK OUTCOME WAS LIKELY- +BUT PROGRESS SEEMS DESPERATELY SLOW.+

ON RECREATION, MR. BREMRIDGE CALLED FOR A +FRESH LOOK+ AT HIS SUGGESTION OF MAKING AVAILABLE SOME OF OUR RESERVOIRS FOR RECREATIONAL USE.

HE NOTED THAT MANY RESERVOIRS IN THE U.K. WERE OPEN TO BOATING. IN SINGAPORE, WHEN SELETAR RESERVOIR WAS OPENED IT WAS THOUGHT APPROPRIATE TO STAGE A WATER CARNIVAL.

+THE SAME SENSIBLE OUTLOOK (WHICH IS DENIED TO US) PREVAILS IN MANY OTHER COUNTRIES,+ HE SAID.

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QUOTAS RESULT IN HIGHER PRICES
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THE HON. FRANCIS TIEN SAID TODAY THAT IF OVERSEAS IMPORTERS WANTED THE PRICES OF QUOTA-CONTROLLED HONG KONG PRODUCTS TO BE REDUCED, THEY SHOULD URGE THEIR OWN GOVERNMENTS TO INCREASE OR TO REMOVE THE QUOTAS.

ADDRESSING THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN THE ANNUAL BUDGET DEBATE, HE POINTED OUT THAT THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE OF THE TEXTILE QUOTA CONTROL SYSTEM WHICH HAD ALWAYS BEEN FOLLOWED WAS TO MAKE THE MAXIMUM USE OF EXPORT OPPORTUNITIES, BY SELLING AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE TO THE FULL RESTRAINT LIMITS IMPOSED ON HONG KONG.

THE SYTEM FOR TRANSFERRING QUOTAS FROM ONE COMPANY TO ANOTHER WAS DESIGNED TO MAKE THIS EASIER TO ACHIEVE, HE SAID.

MR. TIEN THOUGHT IT WAS WRONG TO TALK IN TERMS OF THE PRICE OF QUOTAS, OR 'QUOTA PREMIUM' AS IT WAS MORE COMMONLY KNOWN.

HE EXPLAINED THAT ANYTHING WHICH WAS SCARCE IN RELATION TO DEMAND WOULD NATURALLY PUSH ITS PRICE HIGHER.

+IF IMPORTING COUNTRIES CHOOSE TO LIMIT SUPPLY TO A LEVEL LOWER THAN THAT OF DEMAND, THEY MUST EXPECT TO PAY MORE,+ MR. TIEN SAID. + THIS INCREASE IN PRICE IS CAUSED BY THE SCARCITY OF THE GOODS IN QUESTION, BY THE RESTRAINT LIMITS THEMSELVES, NOT BY THE QUOTA SYSTEM, WHICH IS MERELY A METHOD OF DISTRIBUTION BUT CANNOT INCREASE THE QUANTITY AVAILABLE. THE ONLY REMEDY IS TO INCREASE THE SUPPLY.+

HE STRESSED : +IF THE IMPORTERS WISH TO SEE PRICES REDUCED, THE BEST WAY THEY CAN DO THIS IS TO PERSUADE THEIR OWN GOVERNMENTS TO INCREASE THE SIZE OF THE QUOTAS HONG KONG IS PERMITTED TO EXPORT, OR EVEN BETTER TO REMOVE THEM ALTOGETHER,+

HE ADDED THAT THE TEXTILE ADVISORY BOARD, OF WHICH HE WAS A MEMBER, WOULD SOON BE LOOKING INTO THE WHOLE TEXTILE QUOTA SYSTEM WHERE HE WAS SURE IMPROVEMENTS COULD BE MADE, BUT ANY CHANGES WOULD NEED TO FOLLOW THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE HE MENTIONED.

MR. TIEN SOUNDED A WARNING ON POSSIBLE OVERLOADING OF THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY.

HE SAID HONG KONG WAS BEGINNING TO PASS OUT OF THE PERIOD IN WHICH PLENTY OF CAPACITY WAS AVAILABLE IN THE BUILDING INDUSTRY, INTO A STAGE WHEN A STEEP INCREASE IN THE DEMAND MADE ON IT, INCLUDING THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY, WAS LIKELY TO COINCIDE WITH A REVIVAL OF PRIVATE INVESTMENT.

/+THE LAST

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+THE LAST THING WE WANT IS TO GO BACK TO A SITUATION OF SPIRALLING COSTS, PRICES AND WAGES IN THE BUILDING SECTOR,+ HE SAID.

HE URGED THAT THE SITUATION BE MONITORED REGULARLY SO AS TO AVOID GETTING INTO AN OVER-HEATED CONDITION.

MR. TIEN ALSO MENTIONED ANOTHER AREA WHERE THE SITUATION HAD TO BE WATCHED — THE ACUTE SHORTAGE OF LABOUR IN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES, PARTICULARLY IN THE GARMENT SECTOR.

HE SUGGESTED THAT THE INCENTIVES TO HAWKING PREVIOUSLY ADOPTED TO EASE UNEMPLOYMENT SHOULD BEFORE LONG BE REMOVED SO THAT ESSENTIAL MANPOWER COULD BE DIVERTED BACK TO THE MORE PRODUCTIVE SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY.

MR. TIEN FULLY SUPPORTED THE MEASURES ANNOUNCED TO EXPAND SECONDARY EDUCATION, ESPECIALLY TECHNICAL EDUCATION, INCLUDING THE POLYTECHNIC.

AT THE SAME TIME, HE URGED THAT THE CLOTHING AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRIES TRAINING SCHEMES BE EXPANDED TO OTHER INDUSTRIES.

HE WELCOMED THE EMPHASIS PUT ON ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROJECTS.

+THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BASIC INFRA-STRUCTURE, SUCH AS ROADS, WATER SUPPLIES, AIRPORT FACILITIES AND PORT WORKS AND SO ON IS VITAL TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR WHOLE ECONOMY,+ MR. TIEN SAID.

HE THOUGHT THE NINE PER CENT GDP GROWTH IN REAL TERMS FORECAST BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY FOR 1976 WAS SOMEWHAT CONSERVATIVE.

+BUT I AGREE THAT AS REVENUE FORECAST IS BASED ON THE FORECAST OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ECONOMY, IT IS BETTER TO BE PRUDENT IN FORECASTING THE GROWTH OF THE GDP,+ HE SAID.

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CENTRALISED SUBSIDY ENTITLEMENT REGISTRATION SYSTEM PROPOSED
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A SINGLE CENTRALISED SYSTEM OF MEANS TESTS FOR PERSONS RECEIVING GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES WAS ADVOCATED BY THE HON. T.S. LO IN HIS SPEECH BEFORE THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT COULD NET ABOUT \$85 MILLION BY PERMITTING HIRE CARS TO OBTAIN TAXI LICENCES AT A COST OF \$66,000 EACH.

SPEAKING ABOUT SUBSIDY ENTITLEMENT, MR. LO SAID THAT THERE WERE NO LESS THAN FIVE DIFFERENT FORMULAS FOR MEANS TESTS NOW BEING USED BY VARIOUS GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, AND THIS WAS +SOCIALLY UNJUST AND POLITICALLY UNWISE.+

HE ASKED IF IT WERE SOCIAL JUSTICES FOR THE RICH TO PAY THE SAME AS THE POOR FOR, SAY, UNIVERSITY EDUCATION. HE ALSO SAID IT WAS POLITICALLY UNWISE FOR HOUSING PROGRAMMES TO BE DELAYED BY RENTS NOT COVERING COSTS AND BEING TOO HIGH FOR THE POOR AND TOO LOW FOR THE BETTER OFF.

HE URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO DO A FEASIBILITY STUDY ON A CENTRALISED AND GRADED SUBSIDY ENTITLEMENT REGISTRATION SYSTEM. THE INITIAL COST OF SUCH A SYSTEM MIGHT BE +QUITE HIGH+, BUT THE ANNUAL RUNNING COST WOULD BE +COMPARATIVELY LOW.+

TURNING TO HIRE CARS, MR. LO SAID THEY LOOK LIKE TAXIS, HAVE METERS LIKE TAXIS, PICK CUSTOMERS OFF THE STREETS LIKE TAXIS AND +FOR ALL PRACTICAL INTENTS AND PURPOSES, THEY ARE TAXIS+. +THE ONLY DIFFERENCE,+ HE WENT ON, +IS THAT WHAT THEY ARE DOING IS ILLEGAL.+

HE SUGGESTED THAT THEY BE GIVEN A CHANCE TO TURN LEGAL BY BEING OFFERED TAXI LICENCES AT A COST OF, SAY, \$66,000 EACH. AS TAXI LICENCES WERE NOW CHANGING HANDS UNOFFICIALLY AT \$158,000, HIRE CAR OWNERS +WOULD NOT OBJECT UNDULY TO THE CONVERSION FEE+, AND THE GOVERNMENT WOULD GAIN \$85 MILLION +WITHOUT ANYONE SHEDDING ANY TEARS AT ALL.+

MR. LO BEGAN HIS ADDRESS BY SAYING THAT ALL THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY HAD SAID, IF ONE STRIPPED HIS SPEECH OF ITS METHODOLOGY, WAS THAT +WHILST THE GOVERNMENT IS MINDFUL OF ITS DUTY TO FORGE AHEAD WITH ITS STATED SOCIAL PROGRAMMES, IT CANNOT EXCEED THE NATURAL LIMITS OF HONG KONG'S FISCAL POTENTIAL IT CANNOT GO OUTSIDE OUR NATURAL EQUATION.+ THIS WAS +OBVIOUSLY RIGHT+ AND IT WAS THEREFORE +CLEARLY VITAL+ TO ENSURE THAT OUR RESOURCES WERE PUT TO BEST USE.

/REFERRING

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REFERRING TO HIS BUDGET ADDRESS LAST YEAR, IN WHICH HE HAD URGED THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO TAKE +A TOTAL VIEW IN FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT+ AND SET UP A +HIGH-POWERED AND FULL TIME CENTRAL BODY+ TO MEASURE RELATIVE PRIORITIES, MR. LO SAID HE WAS ENCOURAGED BY THE FACT THAT THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY NOW CONSIDERS THAT SUBVENTED ORGANISATIONS SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO THE SAME DEGREE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY AS GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

HE NOTED WITH REGRET, HOWEVER, THAT THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY HAD NOT YET CONSIDERED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FULL-TIME COMMITTEE TO EXAMINE PRIORITIES PROPERLY, AND THAT THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT HAD NOT YET COMMITTED HIMSELF TO EXAMINING THE ACCOUNTS OF GOVERNMENT-OWNED STATUTORY BODIES.

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64 MILL
HARD-SIZE

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GOV'T URGED TO SPEND MORE ON PREVENTIVE SOCIAL SERVICES
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THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONSIDER SPENDING MORE ON PREVENTIVE AND GENERAL DEVELOPMENTAL SOCIAL SERVICES IF THE ECONOMIC SITUATION DURING THE COMING YEAR SHOULD IMPROVE, THE HON. MISS KO SIU-WAH SAID TODAY.

SPEAKING IN THE ANNUAL BUDGET DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MISS KO SAID THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE SCHEME AND THE DISABILITY AND INFIRMITY ALLOWANCES ALONE WERE +NOT ENOUGH TO MEET THE RAPIDLY CHANGING HUMAN NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS OF THE PEOPLE IN OUR INCREASINGLY SOPHISTICATED COMMUNITY.+

WHILE THEY SHOULD REMAIN AS FUNDAMENTAL SERVICES, SHE SAID, +OTHER SERVICES NEED TO BE DEVELOPED TO ENABLE THE PEOPLE TO COPE WITH PERSONAL AND FAMILY DIFFICULTIES.+

THESE INCLUDED SERVICES FOR PROBLEM CHILDREN AND YOUTH, SCHOOL DROP-OUTS, WORKING MOTHERS, BROKEN FAMILIES, HOMELESS OLD PEOPLE AND THE DISABLED, SHE SAID.

THERE WAS ALSO A GREAT NEED FOR OTHER PREVENTIVE AND CURATIVE SERVICES, MISS KO ADDED, +TO HELP BUILD A STABLE AND HAPPY COMMUNITY, WHICH IS ONE OF THE IMPORTANT FACTORS IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.+

THESE SERVICES, MAINLY PREVENTIVE, INCLUDED FAMILY SERVICE, COMMUNITY AND YOUTH SERVICE, REHABILITATION SERVICE AND PROBATION AND CORRECTIVE SERVICE.

+ALL THESE ARE SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES OTHER THAN CASH PAYMENTS,+ SHE SAID.

SHE POINTED OUT THAT EVEN WHEN THE SUBVENTION VOTE OF \$52 MILLION FOR SOCIAL WELFARE WAS ADDED, THE TOTAL FOR ALL WELFARE SERVICES APART FROM THE SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES WAS ONLY \$56.5 MILLION, OR ABOUT 13.8 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL BUDGET FOR SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES COMPARED WITH THE 73 PER CENT SHARE OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND DISABILITY AND INFIRMITY ALLOWANCES.

ON THE SUBJECT OF SUBVENTION FOR WELFARE AGENCIES, MISS KO ASKED TO BE ASSURED THAT ALLOCATION OF FUNDS WOULD BE CAREFULLY AND FAVOURABLY CONSIDERED BY THE GOVERNMENT, AS LONG AS THERE WAS A REAL NEED FOR THE SERVICE AND THE AGENCY ENDEAVOURED TO PLAY ITS PART EFFECTIVELY IN THE PROVISION OF SUCH A SERVICE.

+IN THE HISTORY OF SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES IN HONG KONG, THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES HAVE BEEN AND ARE STILL PLAYING A VERY IMPORTANT ROLE INCLUDING THE PIONEERING OF NEW SERVICES AS WELL AS CO-OPERATING CLOSELY WITH GOVERNMENT IN THEIR ENDEAVOURS.

/+VOLUNTARY

+VOLUNTARY SOCIAL WELFARE AGENCIES HAVE STRONG INCENTIVES TO PLAY THEIR PART AND ARE EAGER TO EXPERIMENT WITH INNOVATIVE APPROACHES AND METHODS IN THEIR WORK.

+IT IS ALSO TRUE THAT THEY ARE MORE FLEXIBLE AND ARE BETTER ABLE TO TEST PILOT PROGRAMMES PLANNED AND DESIGNED TO MEET CHANGING NEEDS,+ SHE SAID.

SHE ADDED THAT MOST OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES OTHER THAN CASH IN KIND WERE PROVIDED BY VOLUNTARY AGENCIES, AND SOME ESSENTIAL SERVICES WERE PROVIDED SOLELY BY THEM.

+HOWEVER, QUITE A LARGE PART OF THE SUBVENTION ALLOCATION IS USED TO MEET RENTS AND RATES, OFTEN PAYABLE TO GOVERNMENT ITSELF FOR PREMISES IN ITS PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES.+

SHE FORECAST THAT OVERSEAS CONTRIBUTIONS PREVIOUSLY A MAJOR SOURCE OF INCOME FOR MANY OF THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES, WERE EXPECTED TO DROP FROM \$1.1 MILLION THIS FINANCIAL YEAR TO BELOW \$1 MILLION IN THE COMING YEAR, AND WOULD COMPLETELY DRY UP TWO YEARS FROM NOW.

+I HOPE GOVERNMENT WILL REVIEW THE SITUATION OF THE SUBVENTED AGENCIES DURING THE YEAR, AND IF NECESSARY CONSIDER SUPPLEMENTARY SUBVENTION ESPECIALLY FOR THOSE AGENCIES IN DIFFICULTIES,+ SHE SAID.

MISS KO WAS PLEASED THAT AT A SEMINAR RECENTLY SPONSORED BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE THE DISCUSSION GROUPS CONSIDERED EVALUATION TO BE NECESSARY TO ENSURE BOTH VALUE FOR MONEY AND THAT AGENCY SERVICES SHOULD DEVELOP IN RESPONSE TO CHANGING COMMUNITY NEEDS.

+I THINK WE SHOULD ENSURE HOWEVER THAT MONEY IS NOT THE MAIN CRITERION FOR EVALUATING SERVICES, BUT THE REAL NEEDS OF THE HONG KONG COMMUNITY SHOULD BE IDENTIFIED AND EMPHASISED IN THE EVALUATION PROGRAMMES. PRIORITIES WOULD ALSO BE SET THROUGH EVALUATION EXERCISES.+

EVALUATION SHOULD BE INTEGRATED WITH THE REVIEWING PROCESS, INCLUDING THE REVIEW OF THE FIVE-YEAR PLAN, SHE CONTINUED.

+EVALUATION SHOULD ALSO LOOK AT EACH PARTICULAR AREA OF SERVICE AS A WHOLE AND AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO EACH AREA OF SERVICE IS DESIRABLE TO AVOID UNHEALTHY COMPETITION.

+THE INDIVIDUAL WELFARE AGENCIES SHOULD CONDUCT SELF-STUDY CONTINUOUSLY THUS HELPING THE OVERALL EVALUATION PROGRAMME.

+WITH THE EVALUATION PROGRAMMES, IT IS ALSO HOPED THAT A BROAD RANGE OF ACCEPTABLE AND REALISTIC STANDARDS WILL BE ESTABLISHED, AND THESE WILL THEMSELVES FACILITATE MORE OBJECTIVE EVALUATION.+

SHE ADDED THAT AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT, GUIDELINES OR MINIMUM STANDARDS SHOULD BE SET TO RAISE THE QUALITY OF THAT SERVICE.

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+QUANTITY IS IMPORTANT WHEN THE NEED FOR SERVICE IS VERY GREAT, BUT QUALITY SHOULD BE IMPROVED GRADUALLY TO MAKE THE SERVICE MORE EFFECTIVE,+ SHE SAID.

WITH EFFECTIVE EVALUATION AND PLANNING PROGRAMMES, SHE ADDED, THE SERVICES CONSIDERED AND PROVED OUT-DATED OR UNDESIRABLE SHOULD BE ABOLISHED.

EQUALLY +IT IS IMPORTANT TO PLAN AND TEST NEW APPROACHES TO MEET THE IDENTIFIED NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY MORE EFFICIENTLY.+

AS AN EXAMPLE OF HOW THE DIRECTION AND EMPHASIS OF THE SERVICES MAY CHANGE, SHE SAID: +INCREASING ATTENTION IS NOW BEING GIVEN TO THOSE WHO NEED YOUTH SERVICES BUT DO NOT BENEFIT FROM THOSE ALREADY OFFERED. INCREASING EMPHASIS IS BEING PUT ON THE EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS THAT PLAGUE SO MANY YOUNG PEOPLE. NOW EMPHASIS IS BEGINNING TO BE PLACED ON THE PREVENTIVE AND DEVELOPMENTAL CONCEPT OF YOUTH SERVICE.+

SHE STRESSED THAT WITH PROPER REVIEWS AND JOINT PLANNING, +WE CAN ENSURE THAT WE GET OUR PRIORITIES RIGHT AND OBTAIN AN EFFICIENT END-RESULT.+

+IT IS WASTEFUL TO ALLOW INDIVIDUAL SERVICES TO JUST 'GROW LIKE TOPSY' AND AN OVERALL PICTURE MUST BE OBTAINED,+ SHE SAID.

MISS KO WELCOMED THE INCREASED PROVISION FOR EDUCATION FOR THE COMING YEAR.

THIS WOULD ENABLE THE AIM OF THE WHITE PAPER TO EXPAND THE NUMBER OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES TO ALLOW ALL CHILDREN TO ATTEND FORM I (AND SUBSEQUENTLY FORMS II AND III) TO BE ACHIEVED BY 1978 — ONE YEAR AHEAD OF THE ORIGINAL TARGET DATE.

MISS KO ALSO WELCOMED THE ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY THAT THE CHILD CARE CENTRES ORDINANCE WOULD COME INTO OPERATION ON JUNE 1 THIS YEAR.

SHE WAS CONFIDENT THAT, WITH ADEQUATE PROVISION FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION, THE STANDARDS IN CHILD CARE CENTRE AND NURSERIES WOULD IMPROVE WITHIN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

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POLICE ACHIEVEMENTS GIVE GENERAL PUBLIC SATISFACTION
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THE HON. OSWALD CHEUNG TODAY PRAISED THE POLICE FOR THEIR SUCCESS IN BREAKING UP DRUG SYNDICATES AND LEVELLING OFF THE INCIDENCE OF REPORTED VIOLENT CRIME.

WINDING UP THE BUDGET DEBATE FOR UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, HE SAID THESE TWO ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE POLICE FORCE HAD GIVEN GENERAL PUBLIC SATISFACTION.

MR. CHEUNG SAID ALTHOUGH HE HAD TWICE BEEN ASSURED IN THE FINANCE COMMITTEE THAT ENOUGH PROVISION HAD BEEN MADE IN THE BUDGET FOR REWARD MONEY TO INFORMERS ON DRUG TRAFFICKING, HE BELIEVED THAT MORE MONEY WOULD ATTRACT MORE INFORMATION.

HE WELCOMED THE INTRODUCTION OF PERSONAL RADIO FOR POLICE ON BEAT PORTROL IN THE COMING YEARS.

MR. CHEUNG SUPPORTED THE VIEWS OF HIS UNOFFICIAL COLLEAGUES, THE HON. LOBO AND THE HON. WILLIAMS, ON THE MENACING BEHAVIOUR OF MOTOR CYCLISTS.

HE SAID NOW THAT THE POLICE STRENGTH WOULD COME UP TO ESTABLISHMENT, A LONG AND HARD LOOK SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THEM TO STRICTER ENFORCEMENT OF THE LAWS, TOWARDS NOT ONLY MOTOR CYCLISTS, BUT OTHER CLASSES OF VIOLATORS AGAINST THE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS.

MR. CHEUNG STRONGLY URGED THAT PROPOSALS BY THE HON. T.S. LO THAT PUBLIC VEHICLES BE CONVERTED INTO TAXIS BE SYMPATHETICALLY CONSIDERED.

+ I KNOW THERE IS A NEED AND A PLACE FOR HIRE CARS WITH PUBLIC VEHICLE LICENCE PLATES: HOTELS, TOUR OPERATORS AND AT LEAST ONE LARGE AND WELL KNOWN COMPANY KEEP TO THE RULES OF THE GAME, BUT TOO MANY LICENCES HAVE GOT INTO THE HANDS OF THE WRONG PEOPLE, + HE SAID.

STILL ON THE SUBJECT OF LAW AND ORDER, MR. CHEUNG SUPPORTED PROPOSALS BY THE HON. WILLIAMS TO PUT TO USEFUL AND PROFITABLE LABOUR THE LARGE AND GROWING PRISON POPULATION AND TO PROVIDE BUSINESS EXPERTISE TO FURTHER SUCH A SCHEME.

ON MEDICAL SERVICES, MR. CHEUNG THOUGHT THAT THE NEW DENTAL SCHOOL SHOULD BE GIVEN A HIGHER PRIORITY, + SO THAT AT AN EARLY DATE ITS DESIGN AND CONTRACT DRAWINGS MAY BE FINALISED.+

HE WAS GLAD TO SEE THE FORMATION THIS YEAR OF A STEERING GROUP FOR THE KOWLOON CANTON RAILWAY.

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WHILE THERE MAY BE EARLY DAYS, HE SAID, HE HOPED TO HEAR FROM THE GOVERNMENT ABOUT SOME OF THE IDEAS THAT HAD BEEN ENGENDERED FOR THE RAILWAY.

REFERRING TO HOME OWNERSHIP, HE SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO MAKE TWO OBSERVATIONS: (A) THAT HE WAS GRATIFIED THAT A CONCEPT ADVOCATED BY UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS FOR SOME TIME HAD FOUND ACCEPTANCE IN PRINCIPLE BY THE GOVERNMENT, AND (B) THAT FROM WHAT HE HAD HEARD IN THE PAST TWO DAYS, IT APPEARED THERE WERE MORE WAYS THAN ONE OF SKINNING THE CAT.

HE SUGGESTED THAT THE MATTER SHOULD BE DEALT WITH CAUTION.

TURNING TO THE QUESTION OF A SALARY REVISION FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, HE SAID IT WOULD APPEAR THAT A GOOD CASE COULD BE MADE OUT FOR IT, AND THAT THERE MIGHT WELL BE THE MONEY TO MEET IT.

HOWEVER, HE AGREED WITH HIS UNOFFICIAL COLLEAGUE, THE HON. LI FOOK-WO, THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO WASTE AND HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY.

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LAW ON THERAPEUTIC TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY MADE PERMANENT
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THE GOVERNMENT, IN SEEKING TO MAKE THE LAW ON THERAPEUTIC TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY PERMANENT, BELIEVES IT IS DOING WHAT IS NECESSARY AT THE PRESENT TIME AND ALSO IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WISHES OF THE MAJORITY OF THE COMMUNITY.

THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON. GARTH THORNTON, STRESSED THIS TODAY IN THE RESUMED DEBATE OF THE OFFENCES AGAINST THE PERSON (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976.

HE ASSURED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THAT ALL REPRESENTATIONS WHICH MIGHT BE MADE CONCERNING THIS +DEEPLY FELT AND IMPORTANT ISSUE+ WOULD BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED.

HE DISAGREED WITH DR. THE HON. HARRY FANG'S ARGUMENT THAT SECTION 47A OF THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE +LEGALISES ABORTION GENERALLY+. +IT IS A LONG STEP FROM THE PRESENT PROVISIONS OF OUR LAW TO THAT POSITION,+ HE ADDED.

EARLIER, THE HON. ROGER LOBO WHO WAS OPPOSED TO THE MOTION SAID HE, LIKE DR. FANG, WOULD ASK THE COUNCIL TO SERIOUSLY RECONSIDER THE INTENTION OF MAKING THIS SECTION A PERMANENT FEATURE OF THE HONG KONG LAW.

HE SAID DR. FANG HAD DRAWN ATTENTION TO CERTAIN LOOPHOLES IN SECTION 47A WHICH +I FEEL OUGHT TO BE PLUGGED BEFORE WE OPT FOR PERMANENCY.+

HE URGED THE COUNCIL TO PROCEED WITH CAUTION AND EXTEND THE TRIAL PERIOD OF THE LEGISLATION FOR A FURTHER TWO YEARS TO ALLOW MORE TIME FOR A THOROUGH EXAMINATION OF THE WHOLE QUESTION OF ABORTION IN THE CONTEXT OF HONG KONG.

+IN THE COURSE OF THIS EXAMINATION WE COULD AND, INDEED, SHOULD TAKE A VERY CLOSE LOOK AT THE EXTENT TO WHICH SOCIAL PROBLEMS HAVE GIVEN RISE TO THE CALL FOR LEGAL ABORTION, WITH A VIEW TO SEEKING MORE EFFECTIVE WAYS TO SOLVE THESE PROBLEMS,+ HE ADDED.

THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN SPOKE IN SUPPORT OF THE BILL. HE REFERRED TO A STATEMENT BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL IN THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING THAT THE GOVERNMENT INTENDED TO REVIEW LATER ON THE PROVISIONS IN THE BILL, AND WOULD BE PREPARED TO CAREFULLY CONSIDER FURTHER REPRESENTATIONS ADVOCATING MODIFICATIONS TO THE BILL.

+I EXPECT THAT SUCH REPRESENTATIONS WILL COVER A WIDE SPECTRUM OF PUBLIC OPINION, RANGING FROM A DEMAND FOR MORE LIBERALISATION TO MORE RIGID CONTROL OF THE ABORTION PROVISIONS,+ MR. CHEONG-LEEN SAID.

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IN THE LIGHT OF REPRESENTATIONS ALREADY PUT FORWARD, HE ANTICIPATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD REVIEW THE BILL TO ENSURE THAT THE PROVISIONS WOULD NOT BE ABUSED OR MISUSED, OR MISINTERPRETED- BUT WOULD IN ACTUAL PRACTICE BE REASONABLE AND HUMANE, AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE NEEDS AND MORES OF AN ENLIGHTENED, CIVILISED AND SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE COMMUNITY OF HONG KONG CITIZENS.

AT THE COMMITTEE STAGE, DR. FANG SAID SECTION 47A SHOULD NOT BE A PART OF THE OFFENCES AGAINST THE PERSON ORDINANCE SINCE IT AFFORDED LITTLE OR NO PROTECTION TO THE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR AND NO PROTECTION WHATSOEVER TO THE UNBORN CHILD.

+IF, THEREFORE, IT HAS TO BECOME A PERMANENT PART OF THE LAW, SHOULD THIS COUNCIL NOT CALL A SPADE A SPADE AND INCORPORATE ITS PROVISIONS IN A COMPLETELY SEPARATE ABORTION BILL?+ HE ASKED.

IN REPLY, MR. THORNTON SAID HE COULD NOT ACCEPT DR. FANG'S ARGUMENT THAT THIS SECTION WAS MISPLACED IN THE ORDINANCE.

+SECTIONS 46 AND 47 OF THAT ORDINANCE ARE CONCERNED WITH UNLAWFUL ABORTION AND THESE ARE SURELY PROPERLY CLASSIFIED AS OFFENCES AGAINST THE PERSON. SECTION 47A IS ESSENTIALLY A STATEMENT OF WHAT DOES NOT FALL WITHIN THESE SECTIONS.+

HE REITERATED THAT THIS PARTICULAR SECTION WAS SUBJECT TO FURTHER REVIEW, AND SHOULD THIS REVIEW RESULT IN LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS, THEN WHAT DR. FANG HAD SAID WOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.

THE BILL WAS PASSED.

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WATER INTERRUPTION

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WATER SUPPLY TO A NUMBER OF PREMISES IN WESTERN WILL BE TURNED OFF FOR FIVE HOURS STARTING FROM 1 A.M. ON SATURDAY (MARCH 27) TO ALLOW THE WATERWORKS OFFICE TO CARRY OUT LEAKAGE TESTS.

THE AREA AFFECTED IS BOUNDED BY WING WO STREET TO MORRISON STREET AND BONHAM STRAND TO THE SEAFRONT.

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SENIOR STRUCTURAL ENGINEER RETIRES
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MR. HO PENG, SENIOR STRUCTURAL ENGINEER OF THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE, IS RETIRING SHORTLY AFTER 21 YEARS IN THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

MR. HO FIRST JOINED THE P.W.D. IN APRIL 1955 AS AN ASSISTANT ENGINEER IN THE PORT WORKS DIVISION OF THE CIVIL ENGINEERING OFFICE. IN MAY 1961 HE WAS TRANSFERRED TO THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE AS AN ASSISTANT STRUCTURAL ENGINEER. HE WAS PROMOTED TO STRUCTURAL ENGINEER IN AUGUST 1962 AND TO HIS PRESENT POST OF SENIOR STRUCTURAL ENGINEER IN APRIL 1972. HE ALSO ACTED AS CHIEF STRUCTURAL ENGINEER ON TWO OCCASIONS IN 1974 AND 1975.

DURING HIS 15 YEARS WITH THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE, MR. HO WAS PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH THE CHECKING OF STRUCTURAL PLANS SUBMITTED BY PRIVATE DEVELOPERS UNDER THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF BUILDINGS. WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY, HE WAS ONE OF THE FOUNDER STAFF OF THE MASS TRANSIT UNIT ESTABLISHED IN THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE TO ENSURE THE STRUCTURAL STABILITY OF PRIVATE BUILDINGS ALONG THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY ROUTE.

TO MARK HIS RETIREMENT, THE PRINCIPAL GOVERNMENT BUILDING SURVEYOR, MR. EDWARD KENNARD WILL TOMORROW (FRIDAY) PRESENT HIM WITH A RETIREMENT GIFT ON BEHALF OF HIS COLLEAGUES.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO COVER THE PRESENTATION. IT WILL BE HELD AT 3.30 P.M. TOMORROW (FRIDAY) IN THE B.O.O. OFFICES, 8TH FLOOR, MURRAY BUILDING, GARDEN ROAD, HONG KONG.

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