



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1974

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DAILY GUIDE TO WHOLESALE PRICES AND SUPPLIES OF BASIC FOOD COMMODITIES

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HONG KONG TO CONSULT BRITAIN ON PROPOSED
LEGCO EXPANSION

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THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT IS TO CONSULT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT ON THE QUESTION OF EXPANDING THE UNOFFICIAL MEMBERSHIP OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AS PROPOSED BY DR. THE HON. CHUNG SZE-YUEN A FORTNIGHT AGO.

WINDING UP THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DEBATE, THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. DENYS ROBERTS, SAID IT WAS DESIRABLE TO REFLECT FROM TIME TO TIME ON WHETHER THE CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS WHICH HAD SERVED HONG KONG SO WELL IN THE PAST SHOULD BE ADAPTED SO AS TO EQUIP US TO DEAL MORE EFFECTIVELY WITH CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE.

BUT HE NOTED THAT BEFORE SUCH CHANGES COULD BE MADE THE ROYAL INSTRUCTIONS WOULD HAVE TO BE AMENDED AND SUCH AN AMENDMENT INVOLVED CONSULTATION WITH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT.

IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, HE COULD NOT COMMENT FURTHER ON DR. CHUNG'S SUGGESTIONS +UNTIL WE HAVE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO CARRY OUT THE CONSULTATION.+

DR. CHUNG'S PROPOSALS ENVISAGED AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF UNOFFICIAL SEATS FROM 15 TO ABOUT 20 WITH THE NEW MEMBERS SELECTED FROM THOSE WORKING AMONG THE LOWER STRATA OF THE ORGANISATION IN FACTORIES AND SHOPS.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY PRAISED THE UNOFFICIALS FOR THE WILLINGNESS WITH WHICH THEY ACCEPTED THE INCREASING VOLUME OF COUNCIL WORK, SAYING +THE COMMUNITY IS INDEED FORTUNATE TO FIND SO MANY MEN AND WOMEN WHO ARE PREPARED TO DEVOTE A HIGH PROPORTION OF THEIR TIME TO PUBLIC AFFAIRS, OFTEN AT CONSIDERABLE PERSONAL INCONVENIENCE AND FINANCIAL LOSS.+

TURNING TO THE PROCESS OF DECISION-MAKING, MR. ROBERTS NOTED THAT ANY GOVERNMENT SENSITIVE TO SOCIAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC OPINION HAD A NARROW AND DANGEROUS PATH TO TREAD BETWEEN RIGIDITY AND FLEXIBILITY.

GENERALLY, HE AGREED WITH THE HON. LO TAK-SHING THAT A GOVERNMENT SHOULD CHANGE ITS POLICY BECAUSE IT WAS RIGHT TO ALTER IT, NOT MERELY BECAUSE OF THE NOISY OPPOSITION OF A SECTION OF THE COMMUNITY WHICH MAY BE URGING A LIMITED INTEREST NOT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE.

+NEVERTHELESS, THERE ARE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH THE VERY VOLUME OF CRITICISM AND THE DEGREE OF DISCONTENT GENERATED BY IT, BECOME SUCH POWERFUL FACTORS OF THEMSELVES THAT THEY MUST INFLUENCE THE COURSE OF ACTION OF THE SENSITIVE ADMINISTRATION, WHATEVER THE MERITS OF THE POLICY AGAINST WHICH THE OPPOSITION HAS BEEN DIRECTED,+ HE ADDED.

/HONG KONG,

HONG KONG, HE WENT ON, HAD A LONG TRADITION OF REASONABLE GOVERNMENT MAINTAINED LARGELY BECAUSE OF A REASONABLE POPULATION. +IF THIS DESIRABLE RELATIONSHIP IS TO MAINTAINED -- AND IT IS ESSENTIAL FOR OUR HAPPINESS AND PROSPERITY THAT IT SHOULD BE -- THE GOVERNMENT MUST BE PREPARED TO LISTEN, AND SOMETIMES MODIFY, ITS POLICIES TO ACCORD WITH POPULAR DEMAND.+

WHILE THIS MIGHT BE INTERPRETED AS A SIGN OF WEAKNESS, SUCH PRESSURES WERE INEVITABLE BECAUSE HONG KONG WAS A FREE SOCIETY IN WHICH OPINIONS MAY BE OPENLY EXPRESSED, AND THIS WAS TO BE ENCOURAGED HE SAID.

HE STRESSED, HOWEVER, THAT IF THIS KIND OF LIBERAL SOCIETY WAS TO CONTINUE, THERE MUST BE A LIMIT BEYOND WHICH A CITIZEN MUST NOT SEEK OR BE PERMITTED TO GO. WHILE HE WAS FREE TO HOLD PUBLIC MEETINGS UNDER PROPERLY CONTROLLED CONDITIONS AND MAKE USE OF THE MEDIA TO DISSEMINATE HIS VIEWS, HE MUST NEVER GO BEYOND PEACEFUL MEANS AND PERSUASIVE PROCESSES OR INCONVENIENCE THE COMMUNITY.

+NOR MUST HE BE ALLOWED TO THINK THAT HE CAN CHANGE GOVERNMENT POLICY BY THREATS, ILLEGALITY OR VIOLENCE,+ MR. ROBERTS SAID, STRESSING THAT +THIS GOVERNMENT WILL NOT TOLERATE CONDUCT WHICH ENDANGERS THE STABILITY OF OUR SOCIETY.+

ON THE CIVIL SERVICE, THE COLONIAL SECRETARY SAID IT WAS REALISED THAT THE SERVICE COULD BE IMPROVED AND +WE ARE NOT IGNORANT OF THE PROBLEMS WHICH OUR FAILURE TO DECIDE THINGS QUICKLY IMPOSES ON MEMBERS OF THE TRADING AND BUSINESS COMMUNITY.+

HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS, HE SAID, WILL COME UNDER INCREASING PRESSURE TO LOOK AT THEIR ACTIVITIES FROM A PRODUCTIVITY POINT OF VIEW IN FUTURE AND CONSIDERATION WAS BEING GIVEN TO WHAT FORM OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT ORGANISATION SHOULD BE DEVELOPED TO MONITOR THE WORK OF DEPARTMENTS TO MAKE SURE THEY ARE GIVING VALUE FOR MONEY.

THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOW STARTING TO PREPARE A FEW ANNUAL OPERATING PLANS WHICH AIM TO IMPOSE COST EFFECTIVENESS BY RELATING EXPENDITURE TO RESULTS. AS ENVISAGED IN THE MCKINSEY REPORT, THE PLANS ARE DESIGNED TO ENSURE THAT COST EFFECTIVENESS METHODS ARE APPLIED TO THE ACTIVITIES OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS IN ROUGHLY THE SAME WAY AS IT IS APPLIED IN COMMERCIAL LIFE.

MR. ROBERTS WAS DOUBTFUL THAT REALLY SIGNIFICANT RESULTS COULD BE ACHIEVED IN ANOTHER YEAR OR TWO, +BUT WE SHALL PUSH AHEAD WITH THE PREPARATION OF THESE PLANS AS BEST WE CAN.+

ON POPULATION CONTROL, THE COLONIAL SECRETARY SAID ENCOURAGEMENT OF FAMILY PLANNING WAS NOT ENOUGH BY ITSELF AND FURTHER MEASURES MUST BE TAKEN TO DISCOURAGE THE GROWTH OF POPULATION.

A WORKING PARTY HAD BEEN SET UP, HE SAID, AND ITS REPORT WAS EXPECTED TO BE PRESENTED TO THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL IN THE FAIRLY NEAR FUTURE, OUTLINING THE APPROACH TO BE TAKEN IN FORMULATING A POPULATION POLICY.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY NOTED THE CONCERN OVER THE INCREASE IN CRIME AND SAID THAT WHILE THERE WERE NO QUICK OR EASY SOLUTIONS +THE GOVERNMENT REGARDS IT WITH THE UTMOST SERIOUSNESS AND WILL CONTINUE TO USE EVERY REASONABLE DEVICE AT ITS DISPOSAL UNTIL IT IS BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL.+

PROGRESS MIGHT BE SLOW, HE ADDED, BUT IN THE LONG RUN +THE COMBINATION OF AN OUTRAGED COMMUNITY AND AN AUGMENTED AND EFFECTIVE POLICE FORCE, MUST AND WILL REDUCE CRIME ONCE MORE TO AN ACCEPTABLE LEVEL.+

COMMENTING ON THE EDUCATION WHITE PAPER, MR. ROBERTS NOTED THAT MUCH OF THE CRITICISM HAD CENTRED ROUND THE JUNIOR CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION BUT HE CAUTIONED AGAINST ALLOWING THIS ISSUE TO DIVERT US FROM THE PRINCIPAL TASK OF PROVIDING THREE YEARS' SECONDARY EDUCATION FOR ALL.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE EXAMINATION WOULD NOT BE TAKEN BY ANYONE FOR SEVERAL YEARS AND DURING THIS INTERVAL THERE WOULD BE TIME FOR FURTHER CONSULTATION AND REFLECTION ON IT.

MR. ROBERTS SAID HONG KONG WAS GOING THROUGH A PERIOD OF TRANSITION AND CHANGES WERE TAKING PLACE ON A SCALE WHICH WOULD DWARF OUR PRESENT DIFFICULTIES ONCE THE IMMEDIATE IMPACT OF THE PRESENT RECESSION HAD PASSED.

HONG KONG, HE NOTED, HAD BEEN THE SUBJECT OF MUCH OVERSEAS CRITICISM -- SOME OF IT MALICIOUS AND MUCH OF IT UNINFORMED, BUT TO A LARGE EXTENT IT WAS BASED ON ENVY OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS.

WHILE THERE WERE STILL DEFICIENCIES TO BE OVERCOME, HE WAS SURE THAT OUR OBJECTIVES WERE RIGHT.

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MR. HOBLEY ADMITTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN SLOW IN LOOKING TO SEE WHETHER THE LAW SHOULD BE CHANGED SO AS TO IMPOSE MORE STRICT RULES, PARTICULARLY IN THE CASE OF PUBLICATIONS AIMED AT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.

GREATER STRINGENCY MIGHT NOT BE UNDESIRABLY ACCEPTABLE IN RELATION TO PORNOGRAPHIC LITERATURE AND AT OTHER PEOPLE BUT I HAVE NO DOUBT FROM THIS REPORT AND PUBLIC REACTION TO IT THAT THERE WILL BE GENERAL SUPPORT FOR FIRMER LAWS IN RELATION TO MATERIAL AIMED AT CHILDREN.

THE NEXT MOVE CLEARLY LIES WITH THE LEGISLATURE AND MR. KO HAS SUGGESTED ONE AREA FOR LEGISLATIVE ACTION.

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STIFFER PENALTIES FOR SEX CRIMINALS

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TOUGHER MEASURES TO DEAL WITH SEXUAL AND RELATED CRIMES ARE TO BE INTRODUCED SHORTLY, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON. JOHN HOBLEY, ANNOUNCED TODAY.

HE SAID WORK ON A NEW BILL WAS IN A FAIRLY ADVANCED STAGE AND WOULD SOON BE INTRODUCED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

+WE SHAL BE PROPOSING MARKEDLY INCREASED PENALTIES, BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, WE HAVE IN MIND CHANGES IN THE SUBSTANTIVE LAW WHICH WILL, I HOPE, ENABLE THE POLICE TO TACKLE THIS PROBLEM WITH INCREASED EFFECTIVENESS,+ HE SAID.

MR. HOBLEY ALSO INDICATED THAT OTHER LEGISLATIVE ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN TO DEAL WITH THE CONTROVERSIAL PROBLEM OF VIOLENCE AND SEX IN CHILDREN'S MAGAZINES.

THE REPORT ON THIS PROBLEM PREPARED BY THE ROTARY JOINT INTERACT COUNCIL AND THE HONG KONG SOCIAL WORKERS' ASSOCIATION, HE SAID WAS +A MOST USEFUL ONE, WHICH HAS BROUGHT HOME SHARPLY THE EXTENT OF A PROBLEM WHICH HAS NOT BEEN APPRECIATED AS FULLY AS IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN.+

THE PARTICULAR EXAMPLES CONTAINED IN THE REPORT, HE ADDED, ARE SHOCKING, BUT ONE REASON WHY ACTION HAD NOT BEEN MORE EFFECTIVE IS THAT OPINION AS TO WHETHER ANY PARTICULAR PUBLICATION OF THIS KIND IS LEGALLY OBJECTIONALBE AS THE LAW STANDS IS NO MORE CERTAIN THAN IT IS IN THE CASE OF PORNOGRAPHIC LITERATURE AIMED AT A DIFFERENT AGE GROUP.

+THIS HAS MEANT THAT ACTION HAS NOT BEEN TAKEN IN THE CASE OF QUITE A NUMBER OF MAGAZINES WHICH HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED TO MY OFFICE BY THE POLICE WITH A VIEW TO PROSECUTION.+

MR. HOBLEY ADMITTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN SLOW IN LOOKING TO SEE WHETHER TTHE LAW SHOULD BE CHANGED SO AS TO IMPOSE MORE STRINGENT RULES, PARTICULARLY IN THE CASE OF PUBLICATIONS AIMED AT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.

+GREATER STRINGENCY MIGHT NOT BE UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTABLE IN RELATION TO PORNOGRAPHIC LITERATURE AIMED AT OLDER PEOPLE BUT I HAVE NO DOUBT FROM THIS REPORT AND PUBLIC REACTION TO IT THAT THERE WILL BE GENERAL SUPPORT FOR FIRMER LAWS IN RELATION TO MATERIAL AIMED AT CHILDREN.

+THE NEXT MOVE CLEARLY LIES WITH THE LEGISLATURE AND MISS KO HAS SUGGESTED ONE AREA FOR LEGISLATIVE ACTION.

/MR. HOBLEY

MR. HOBLEY SAID THAT MAIN SUGGESTION WILL BE THE INTRODUCTION OF A PRESUMPTION THAT A PUBLICATION DEPICTING THE COMMISSION OF CRIME OR ACTS OF VIOLENCE OR CRUELTY IS PRIMA FACIE OBJECTIONABLE IF IT IS AIMED AT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE. ANOTHER PROPOSAL WILL EXTEND THE RANGE OF OFFENCES BY PROHIBITING THE POSSESSION FOR THE PURPOSES OF TRADE OR BUSINESS OF SUCH PUBLICATIONS.

REFERRING TO MISS KO'S CALL FOR MORE RESOURCES TO BE DEVOTED TO THE PROSECUTION OF OFFENDERS IN THIS FIELD, MR. HOBLEY SAID THAT IF THE PRESENT DEFICIENCIES IN THE LAW COULD BE CURED TO SOME EXTENT, IN THE FACE OF THE LEVEL OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY NOW PREVAILING HERE THE POLICE FORCE WOULD HAVE A PRIORITIES PROBLEM.

+IT CANNOT DEVOTE MUCH TIME TO THE SUPPRESSION OF UNDESIRABLE LITERATURE WITHOUT WITHHOLDING RESOURCES WHICH ARE COMMITTED TO DEAL WITH OTHER KINDS OF CRIME. THE IMPROVED CONTROLS WHICH WE SHALL PROPOSE WILL STILL NOT BE SIMPLE AND ENFORCEMENT OF THE LAW RELATING TO UNDESIRABLE PUBLICATIONS CANNOT BE LEFT TO BE HANDLED BY INEXPERIENCED OFFICERS. IT CANNOT BE LEFT TO ANY CONSTABLE TO SWEEP UP PUBLICATIONS FROM STALLS AND OTHER PREMISES ASHE PASSES BY.+

HE WENT ON TO SOUND A NOTE OF CAUTION TO THOSE WHO MIGHT BE DISPOSED TO FOLLOW THE SUGGESTION IN THE REPORT THAT, FAILING ACTION BY THE GOVERNMENT, MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY SHOULD BRING PRIVATE PROSECUTIONS.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE WAS WELL AWARE OF THE MEASURE OF PUBLIC CONCERN AND IT WAS HOPED THAT FACILITATION OF POLICE ACTION BY CHANGES IN THE LAW WOULD MAKE IT QUITE UNNECESSARY FOR ANYONE TO CONTEMPLATE PRIVATE PROSECUTIONS.

MEANWHILE, MR. HOBLEY EMPHASISED, POLICE ACTION AGAINST OTHER PORNOGRAPHIC LITERATURE WAS CONTINUOUS THOUGH THE RESOURCES WHICH CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE WERE LIMITED. +IT OFTEN PASSES UNNOTICED HOWEVER AND THERE IS UNDOUBTEDLY A GREAT DEAL OF DUBIOUS MATERIAL IN CIRCULATION.+

TOUCHING ON THE SUBJECT OF COMMUNITY SERVICE ORDERS AS A PUNISHMENT FOR CRIME, HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD SOUGHT ADVICE AS TO THE SUCCESS OF SUCH A SCHEME IN ENGLAND.

PRELIMINARY ADVICE RECEIVED SO FAR, HE SAID, HAD NOT ENABLED THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE A FIRM DECISION ONE WAY OR THE OTHER AND A REPORT ON THE ENGLISH SCHEME WAS BEING AWAITED.

+A MAJOR DIFFICULTY, WHICH COULD PROVE INSURMOUNTABLE FOR THE TIME BEING, IS THAT SUCH A SCHEME IS VIABLE ONLY IF COMPREHENSIVE SUPERVISORY SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE.

+AT PRESENT, THAT SEEMS UNLIKELY AND I CAN ONLY BE SOMEWHAT PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE LIKELIHOOD OF SUCH A SCHEME BEING INTRODUCED IN THE NEAR FUTURE, ASSUMING THAT IT IS OTHERWISE FEASIBLE TO DO SO IN HONG KONG'S CIRCUMSTANCES,+ HE ADDED.

SHA ADVOCATES GRADUAL ELIMINATION OF WORST ABUSES IN
GAMBLING
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THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON. DENIS BRAY, SAID TODAY THE BEST POLICY ON GAMBLING SEEMS TO BE ONE OF +GRADUALISM+.

HE TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THAT THE GOVERNMENT FELT IT WISE TO MOVE +CAUTIOUSLY BY THE ELIMINATION OF THE WORST ABUSES NOW FOUND IN THIS FIELD.+

+A PERIODIC CONSIDERATION OF THE PROBLEM WITH CAREFULLY CONSIDERED CHANGES, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT CHANGES IN PUBLIC OPINION ARE A BETTER WAY OF PROCEEDING THAN THE APPOINTMENT OF A WORKING PARTY,+ HE ADDED.

A WORKING PARTY MAY ONLY BE APPROPRIATE IF IT SEEMED NECESSARY TO TAKE SOME DRASTIC STEPS SUCH AS DEVISING TOUGH NEW LAWS OR ABANDONING ALL CONTROL.

MR. BRAY ADMITTED THAT THE PRESENT POSITION WAS FAR FROM SATISFACTORY, BUT SAID A START AT REFORM HAS BEEN MADE IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS AND +I BELIEVE THE RIGHT WAY TO PROCEED NOW IS TO CONTINUE THIS PROCESS STEADILY AND PURPOSEFULLY IN A WAY THAT WILL FIND ACCEPTANCE IN THE COMMUNITY.+

NOT ALL FORMS OF UNLAWFUL GAMBLING ARE WIDESPREAD, AND IT IS THOSE WHICH ARE PERVASIVE THAT CONCERN US.

HE ADDED THAT LEGALISATION OF ALL GAMBLING WOULD NOT BE GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE NOW. +BUT CHANGES IN LICENSING AND CONTROL METHODS FROM TIME TO TIME ARE ACCEPTABLE.+

TURNING TO THE QUESTION OF CHILDREN AGED 12 AND 13 WHO ARE NOT AT SCHOOL, MR. BRAY SAID THAT THE +PROBLEM IN ITS TRADITIONAL FORM IS SOLVED BY THE EDUCATION WHITE PAPER.+

+IN ABOUT TWO YEARS FROM NOW THERE SHOULD BE ENOUGH PLACES FOR ALL PRIMARY SCHOOL LEAVERS IF WE INCLUDE PRIVATE SCHOOLS. SINCE FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES ARE NOT ONE OF THE IMPORTANT REASONS DETERRING SUCH CHILDREN FROM CONTINUING SCHOOLING, THE WHITE PAPER HAS DEALT WITH THIS PROBLEM ONCE AND FOR ALL,+ MR. BRAY SAID.

HOWEVER, HE ADDED THAT WITH ADEQUATE SCHOOL PLACES FOR NORMAL CHILDREN IN THESE AGE GROUPS+ A DIFFERENT PROBLEM COMES INTO GREATER PROMINENCE+ -- CHILDREN UNABLE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF NORMAL SCHOOLING OR UNWILLING TO GO TO SCHOOL AT ALL.

REFERRING TO THIS LATTER GROUP, MR. BRAY SAID THAT CHILDREN WITH BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS NEEDED PROPER GUIDANCE. IT WAS NOT YET KNOWN WHAT WAS LIKELY TO BE THE BEST FORM OF +RESCUE OPERATION+ FOR THEM, MANY OF WHOM WERE ON THE +PATH TO DELINQUENCY+.

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ORDINARY SCHOOL PLACES WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE, BUT THE SCHOOL SYSTEM SHOULD BE ABLE TO HELP, AND OTHER PILOT PROJECTS OUTSIDE THE SYSTEM HAVE ALSO BEEN LAUNCHED.

THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS ALSO REVEALED THAT THE GOVERNMENT PLANNED TO SET UP AS MANY MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS AS THE CAPACITY OF THE HOME AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT ALLOWS. HE DESCRIBED THE MAC AS AN ORGANISATION WHICH WAS OF GREAT VALUE TO CITY DWELLERS.

EXPERIENCE HAD SHOWN, HOWEVER, THAT PEOPLE IN MULTI-STORY BUILDINGS HESITATED TO APPROACH EACH OTHER TO FORM MACS AND THAT A CATALYST WAS NECESSARY. IN THIS CASE THE CATALYST IS THE PERMANENT AND PART-TIME STAFF OF THE DEPARTMENT.

MR. BRAY ADDED THAT THE PROBLEM MUST BE APPROACHED WITH A CERTAIN DEGREE OF FLEXIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT NUMBERS ARE NOT ACHIEVED AT THE EXPENSE OF QUALITY.

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LAND TO BE GRANTED ON NEW PRIORITY SYSTEM

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A SPECIAL COMMITTEE HAS BEEN SET UP BY THE GOVERNMENT TO STREAMLINE THE PROCESSING OF LAND GRANTS FOR MAJOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND TO REDUCE DELAYS TO A MINIMUM.

ANNOUNCING THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. JAMES ROBSON, SAID HE BELIEVED THAT MUCH OF THE DELAY IN THE PAST HAD ARISEN FROM A FAILURE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE IMPORTANT AND LESS IMPORTANT PROJECTS AND ASPECTS OF LAND WORK.

BECAUSE OF THIS, A PRIORITY SYSTEM HAS BEEN DEVISED TO ENSURE THAT PROJECTS WHICH WILL BE MOST BENEFICIAL TO HONG KONG SHOULD PROCEED AS FAST AS POSSIBLE AND THAT EFFORTS SHOULD BE CONCENTRATED ON THOSE PROJECTS FOR WHICH FINANCE IS AVAILABLE.

MR. ROBSON ADDED THAT +WE MUST DO ALL WE CAN TO ENCOURAGE EMPLOYMENT, TO ATTRACT CAPITAL INVESTMENT AND TO PREPARE OUR BUILDING INDUSTRY FOR THE NEXT PERIOD OF ECONOMIC EXPANSION.+

HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT PROJECTS WOULD BE GIVEN PRIORITY SPARINGLY, AND THEN ONLY FOR VERY MAJOR ONES.

MR. ROBSON EMPHASISED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS FULLY AWARE THAT WITH ANY PRIORITY SYSTEM THERE +WILL BE ALLEGATIONS OF CORRUPT PRACTICES, PARTICULARLY FROM THOSE WHO DO NOT RECEIVE PRIORITY, AND OUR PROCEDURES ARE BEING PLANNED WITH THIS IN MIND.+

ONCE A SCHEME IS PLACED ON THE PRIORITY LIST, THE LAND AUTHORITIES MUST TREAT IT WITH +URGENCY AND AUTOMATIC PRIORITY WILL BE GIVEN BY THE BUILDING AUTHORITY AND FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT TO ANY BUILDING PLANS SUBMITTED IN RESPECT OF IT,+ HE ADDED.

TURNING TO THE PROPOSAL FOR AN OIL REFINERY - PETROCHEMICAL COMPLEX, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AGREED THAT THERE WAS A NEED TO TAKE AN EARLY DECISION ON THIS PROJECT.

HE SAID THE PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS SUBMITTED BY THE TWO APPLICANTS HAD BEEN APPRAISED AND CONSULTANTS APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNMENT HAD ADVISED THAT WITH PROPER CONTROLS, THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF SUCH A COMPLEX WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE.

+BUT IN THE MEANTIME THE ORIGINAL PROPOSALS WERE OVERTAKEN BY THE WORLD OIL CRISIS AND THERE HAS BEEN AN OBVIOUS NEED FOR THE TWO CONSORTIA TO REASSESS VIABILITY OF THE SCHEME, THE POTENTIAL SOURCES OF CRUDE OIL AND THE MARKETS FOR THE PRODUCTS.+

AT PRESENT THEY ARE PREPARING DETAILED PROPOSALS COVERING ALL ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT AND IT WAS HOPED THESE WOULD BE RECEIVED SOON.

/MEANWHILE,

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MEANWHILE, A WORKING GROUP COMPRISING THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES AND MR. ROBSON HAS BEEN SET UP TO CONSIDER THE PROPOSALS ONCE THEY HAVE BEEN RECEIVED.

MR. ROBSON ADDED: +WE SHALL NOT APPLY EXCESSIVE OR UNREASONABLE POLLUTION CONTROLS AND CONDITIONS ON THIS OR ANY OTHER NEW INDUSTRY WISHING TO SET UP IN HONG KONG. NEVERTHELESS POLLUTION MUST BE KEPT WITHIN TOLERABLE BOUNDS.+

FROM HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CONSORTIA IT WAS CLEAR, HE SAID, THAT THEY WERE AWARE OF THIS AND WOULD HAVE LITTLE DIFFICULTY IN MEETING THE STANDARDS OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION NECESSARY.

WITH REGARD TO POLLUTION GENERALLY, MR. ROBSON SAID HE HAD PUT FORWARD PROPOSALS FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF CONSULTANTS TO HELP WITH THE PREPARATION OF COMPREHENSIVE LEGISLATION AND TO ADVISE ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION CONTROL AGENCY.

ON THE QUESTION OF TRANSPORT TO AND FROM THE AIRPORT, MR. ROBSON DISCLOSED THAT THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT IS INVESTIGATING, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE AIRPORT MANAGER, THE INTRODUCTION OF ANOTHER HIRE CAR SERVICE WITH SET CHARGES UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE GOVERNMENT.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT COULD NOT EXERT ANY CONTROL OVER THE CHARGES MADE BY THE PRESENT LIMOUSINE CAR SERVICE FOR WHICH THE CHARGES, AS FOR ANY PUBLIC CAR SERVICE, ARE DETERMINED BY A CONTRACT BETWEEN THE OPERATOR AND THE HIRER.

+WHILST THESE LIMOUSINE CARS PROVIDE A USEFUL SERVICE FOR SOME, THEY MAY BE TOO EXPENSIVE FOR OTHERS,+ MR. ROBSON SAID.

AT THE SAME TIME, HE SAID THE POLICE TRIAD SOCIETY BUREAU WILL BE INVESTIGATING AN ALLEGATION OF RACKETEERING IN THE TAXI TRADE AT THE AIRPORT, AND THAT SURVEILLANCE OF GROUND FACILITIES WILL BE INCREASED. THIS WILL BE ENHANCED WHEN THE PUBLIC HIRE CAR AND TAXI RANKS ARE MOVED TO A MORE SPACIOUS AREA IN FRONT OF THE TERMINAL BUILDING EARLY NEXT YEAR.

ON AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT, MR. ROBSON SAID THAT IN THE FIVE FINANCIAL YEARS BEGINNING 1970/71 AND ENDING WITH THE PRESENT YEAR 1974/75, A TOTAL OF SOME \$350 MILLION WILL HAVE BEEN SPENT ON CAPITAL WORKS AT KAI TAK. IN THE NEXT FOUR YEARS CAPITAL WORKS VALUED AT \$320 MILLION ARE PLANNED +AND THIS EXPENDITURE PLUS A REASONABLE RETURN WILL HAVE TO BE RECOUPED THROUGH THE CHARGES FOR USING THE AIRPORT.+

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PRESSURE FOR EQUAL TREATMENT IN EEC TO CONTINUE

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THE DIRECTOR OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, THE HON. DAVID JORDAN, TODAY DESCRIBED THE REMOVAL OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST HONG KONG'S FOOTWEAR AS A SMALL MEASURE OF SUCCESS FOR HONG KONG'S STRENUOUS EFFORTS= AND HE PLEDGED THAT HIS DEPARTMENT WOULD CONTINUE ITS STRUGGLE FOR A BETTER DEAL FOR LOCAL TEXTILE EXPORTS.

+THE DOOR IS NOT YET OPEN BUT AT LEAST IT IS AJAR, WHEREAS BEFORE IT WAS FIRMLY SHUT,+ HE TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MR. JORDAN WAS REFERRING TO THE NEWS THAT THE EEC'S COUNCIL OF MINISTERS HAD AGREED TO THE REMOVAL OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST HONG KONG'S FOOTWEAR, BUT COULD NOT REACH A SIMILAR DECISION ON HONG KONG'S TEXTILES.

MR. JORDAN, WHO WAS SPEAKING IN THE RESUMED DEBATE AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, POINTED OUT THAT THE EEC DID AGREE, HOWEVER, TO RECORD IN ITS MINUTES THAT +THE CASE OF HONG KONG WILL BE REVIEWED WHEN THE COMMUNITY'S GENERALISED PREFERENCES SCHEME FOR 1976 IS DRAWN UP.+

+THE VERY IMPORTANT COROLLARY OF THIS,+ MR. JORDAN EXPLAINED, +IS THAT THE ARGUMENT THAT THE 'HONG KONG CASE' WAS DEFINITELY SETTLED IN 1971, HAS BEEN ABANDONED.+

MR. JORDAN WENT ON TO SAY THAT DURING THE COMING YEAR, THEREFORE, THE STRUGGLE FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF HONG KONG'S POSITION IN THE EEC'S GENERALISED PREFERENCES SCHEME FROM WHICH HONG KONG'S TEXTILES ARE EXCLUDED, WOULD CONTINUE TO BE ONE OF HIS DEPARTMENT'S PRINCIPAL CONCERNS IN THE EXTERNAL FIELD.

HE SAID HE TOOK SOME ENCOURAGEMENT FROM THE FACT THAT THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS HAD ALSO AGREED THAT THERE SHOULD BE A THOROUGH-GOING REVIEW OF THE WHOLE SCHEME AND THAT THIS SHOULD START EARLY IN THE NEW YEAR.

OTHER EXTERNAL MATTERS THAT WILL BE ON HIS DEPARTMENT'S SCHEDULE FOR 1975 WILL BE THE NEGOTIATION OF A BILATERAL AGREEMENT ON HONG KONG'S TEXTILE EXPORTS TO THE COMMUNITY AND THE GATT MULTILATERAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS,+ MR. JORDAN DISCLOSED.

HE ADDED: +IF THE UNITED STATES TRADE BILL IS PASSED BEFORE THE END OF THIS YEAR, THIS NEGOTIATION WILL REALLY GET STARTED IN 1975.

+OUR PRINCIPAL INTEREST IN IT IS THE SUBJECT KNOWN AS +SAFEGUARDS+, THAT IS TO SAY, THE APPLICATION AND POSSIBLE MODIFICATION OF ARTICLE XIX OF THE GATT WHICH PERMITS MEMBER COUNTRIES TO TAKE ACTION TO LIMIT IMPORTS WHERE THESE IMPORTS ARE CAUSING OR THREATENING TO CAUSE SERIOUS INJURY TO DOMESTIC INDUSTRY.+

/IN HIS WIDE-RANGING

IN HIS WIDE-RANGING SPEECH, MR. JORDAN ALSO SPOKE ABOUT THE PROBLEMS CONFRONTING INDUSTRY AT HOME= ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT'S MODIFIED LAND POLICY= THE PREVENTIVE SERVICE AND THE WORK OF HIS DEPARTMENT AND THE OCCASIONAL NEED TO RE-ORGANISE SOME OF THE DIVISIONS TO MEET UNEXPECTED TROUBLE SUCH AS THE OIL CRISIS.

ON THE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR, MR. JORDAN SAID THAT TEXTILES AND PLASTICS HAD BEEN TWO OF THE HARDEST HIT INDUSTRIES -- INDUSTRIES WHICH WERE ALREADY FACING STRONG COMPETITION FROM OVERSEAS.

MORE RECENTLY THE ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY HAS SUFFERED -- BUT SOME SECTORS OF IT REMAIN STRONG, MR. JORDAN SAID, ADDING THAT A SIMILAR PICTURE RECURS IN THE OTHER INDUSTRIES TOO.

+THE DIFFICULTIES THAT SOME INDUSTRIES HAVE FACED THIS YEAR HAVE BEEN CONSIDERABLE BUT THEY HAVE, I THINK, ALSO BROUGHT ABOUT A VALUABLE RE-APPRAISAL BY THE MANUFACTURERS CONCERNED OF THE FUTURE OF THEIR INDUSTRIES,+ MR. JORDAN SAID.

ON THE MODIFIED LAND POLICY, HE SAID THAT UNDER IT THE GOVERNMENT HAD ALREADY PROVIDED TWO LARGE AMERICAN COMPANIES WITH SUBSTANTIAL INDUSTRIAL LAND SITES FOR COMPLETELY NEW PROJECTS.

+WE ARE CONSIDERING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN OIL REFINERY AND PETROCHEMICAL COMPLEX -- IT SHOULD NOT BE TOO LONG BEFORE FURTHER DETAILED PROPOSALS BY THE COMPETING CONSORTIA ARE WITH THE GOVERNMENT FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION -- AND WE ARE DEALING WITH SEVERAL OTHER POSSIBLE INDUSTRIAL VENTURES WHICH ARE IN THE SAME GENERAL CATEGORY THAT IS, LAND AND CAPITAL INTENSIVE PROJECTS WHICH WOULD REQUIRE SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF LAND,+ HE EXPLAINED.

MR. JORDAN SAID THAT THERE WAS INTEREST BOTH HERE AND OVERSEAS IN SETTING UP NEW PROJECTS WHICH FIT OUR DEVELOPING LAND POLICY.

ON HIS OWN DEPARTMENT, MR. JORDAN SAID THAT HE +HIVED-OFF+ A NEW DIVISION IN JANUARY THIS YEAR PARTLY IN ORDER TO ENABLE THE INDUSTRY DIVISION TO CONCENTRATE ON ITS JOB IN THE FIELD OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION.

+THIS BRINGS TOGETHER UNDER ONE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ALL THAT PART OF THE DEPARTMENT'S WORK THAT IS CONNECTED WITH NECESSARY CONTROLS THAT WE EXERCISE EXCEPT FOR CONTROL OF TEXTILE EXPORTS WHICH REMAINS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COMMERCIAL RELATIONS SIDE OF THE DEPARTMENT,+ HE EXPLAINED.

MR. JORDAN SAID THAT HE HAD RECENTLY TRANSFERRED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE RICE CONTROL SCHEME TO THE TRADE DIVISION.

+FOR THE FUTURE THE DIVISION, WHICH IS ALREADY RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR LIAISON WITH THE CONSUMER COUNCIL, EXPECTS ITS WORK TO GROW AS WE MOVE FURTHER INTO THE FIELD OF CONSUMER PROTECTION,+ HE POINTED OUT.

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ON THE PREVENTIVE SERVICE, HE SAID THAT DURING THE PAST YEAR THE SERVICE SEIZED 380 KILOGRAMMES OF DANGEROUS DRUGS, WITH A RETAIL VALUE OF THREE AND A HALF MILLION DOLLARS AND MADE 4,389 ARRESTS.

+WE HAVE ALSO AT LAST HAD SOME SUCCESS IN ACTION AGAINST THE ILLEGAL IMPORTATION OF ACETIC ANHYDRIDE, AN IMPORTANT CHEMICAL USED IN THE MANUFACTURE OF HEROIN,+ MR. JORDAN SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THE SERVICE SEIZED 2,000 KILOGRAMMES OF THIS SUBSTANCE, A QUANTITY WHICH WOULD HAVE ENABLED THE DRUG TRAFFICKERS TO MANUFACTURE OVER 1,600 KILOGRAMMES OF HEROIN.

MR. JORDAN CONTINUED: +THE SERVICE HAS ALSO BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN DRASTICALLY REDUCING THE NUMBER OF OPIUM AND HEROIN DIVANS WHICH FLOURISHED PREVIOUSLY AND THEY WERE SUCCESSFUL IN DESTROYING THE SYNDICATE WHICH HAD FOR SO MANY YEARS OPERATED IN THE NOTORIOUS MA SHAN AREA, AND IN SMASHING THE HEROIN SYNDICATE WHICH HAD OPERATED IN THE SHEUNG SHUI AREA FOR A CONSIDERABLE PERIOD OF TIME.+

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PUBLIC CO-OPERATION VITAL IN FIGHT AGAINST CRIME

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THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON. LEWIS DAVIES, SAID TODAY THAT A REDUCED LEVEL OF CRIME COULD BEST BE ACHIEVED BY MORE PUBLIC CO-OPERATION AND ASSISTANCE.

HE TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THAT THERE WAS NO COMPLACENCY IN THE POLICE OR IN THE GOVERNMENT OVER THE SERIOUS STATE OF CRIME.

THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE AND HIS OFFICERS, MR. DAVIES SAID, WOULD DO ALL THEY COULD TO ENSURE THAT THE FORCE WAS GEARED TO MEET THE THREATS TO THE PUBLIC AND THE DEMAND MADE UPON IT.

BUT HE REITERATED THAT THEY HAD TO RELY HEAVILY UPON THE SUPPORT OF THE PUBLIC TO BRING INCIDENTS TO NOTICE, TO REPORT CRIME AND TO UPHOLD THE FORCE OF LAW AND ORDER.

OUTLINING SOME OF THE WORK OF THE POLICE FORCE IN ITS CONTINUING EFFORT TO FIGHT CRIME, HE SAID THAT IN THE KOWLOON DISTRICT, WHERE THE MAJORITY OF CRIME WAS COMMITTED, THE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT WAS RECONSTRUCTED IN JULY.

+THE AIM OF THE REORGANISATION HAS BEEN TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY IN THE COLLATING OF CRIMINAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE DETECTION AND PREVENTION OF CRIME,+ MR. DAVIES SAID.

THE RE-ORGANISATION INVOLVES, AT BOTH DISTRICT AND DIVISIONAL LEVEL, THE PROVISION OF MORE INVESTIGATION TEAMS, TO UNDERTAKE INVESTIGATION OF SERIOUS OR COMPLEX CRIMES, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF C.I.D. PATROL AND SUPPORT SQUADS FOR CRIME PREVENTION ACTION, MORE EFFICIENT METHODS OF COLLECTION, COLLATION, ASSESSMENT AND DISSEMINATION OF CRIMINAL INTELLIGENCE.

HE SAID : +THOUGH IT IS TOO EARLY TO ASSESS RESULTS, THE RESTRUCTURING IS ALREADY SEEN TO BE AN IMPROVEMENT ON THE PREVIOUS ARRANGEMENTS.+

ON THE OPERATIONAL SIDE, MR. DAVIES SAID GOOD PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE WITH THE PLANNING OF THE BEAT RADIO SCHEME.

THE PLAN, HE ADDED, ENVISAGED THAT EVERY POLICEMAN ON THE BEAT SHOULD HAVE A PERSONAL RADIO THUS FORMING A VITAL LINK IN THE FORCE'S COMMUNICATIONS AND CRIME FIGHTING CAPACITY.

AS IT IS EXPECTED TO BE A MAJOR OPERATIONAL BREAKTHROUGH, MR. DAVIES SAID, +THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE IS GIVING PROPOSALS CONCERNING THE INTRODUCTION OF THIS SCHEME VERY HIGH PRIORITY.+

/HE STRESSED

HE STRESSED THAT THESE CHANGES AND PLANS, TOGETHER WITH THOSE SUGGESTED BY THE GOVERNOR, SHOULD BEGIN TO SHOW SOME RESULTS IN IMPROVING DETECTION RATES AND DISCOURAGING THUGS.

HOWEVER, HE EMPHASISED THAT THE GREATEST SINGLE IMPROVEMENT WOULD BE ACHIEVED BY THE INCREASING CO-OPERATION OF, AND ASSISTANCE FROM, THE PUBLIC.

TURNING TO THE PRISONS DEPARTMENT, MR. DAVIES SAID : +IT IS NOT ONLY FACING THE PROBLEMS OF AN INCREASING PRISON POPULATION BUT, EQUALLY IMPORTANT AND DEMANDING, IT NOW HAS TO PROVIDE FACILITIES FOR A MUCH GREATER NUMBER OF TOUGHER, YOUNGER AND MORE TRUCULENT PRISONERS SERVING LONGER SENTENCES.

+THIS POSES DISCIPLINARY AND SECURITY PROBLEMS WHICH THE COMMISSIONER AND HIS OFFICERS ARE MEETING WITH DETERMINATION, DESPITE THE DIFFICULTIES THAT SHORTAGE OF ACCOMMODATION IMPOSES.+

APART FROM SECURITY IMPROVEMENTS IN CERTAIN INSTITUTIONS, HE SAID, CONSIDERATION WAS BEING GIVEN TO PROPOSALS FOR A MORE EFFECTIVE RADIO COMMUNICATION SYSTEM AND FINANCIAL APPROVAL HAD BEEN GIVEN TO CONSTRUCT A REFRACTORY BLOCK FOR THE BETTER ENFORCEMENT OF DISCIPLINE WITHIN STANLEY PRISON.

SITE FORMATION WORK HAD ALSO BEGUN FOR A NEW KOWLOON RECEPTION CENTRE FOR THOSE ON REMAND. THIS CENTRE WOULD EVENTUALLY RELIEVE THE OVERCROWDING AND UNSATISFACTORY CONDITIONS IN THE VICTORIA RECEPTION CENTRE IN HONG KONG.

ON THE STAFFING OF THE PRISON SERVICE, MR. DAVIES SAID IT WAS BETTER THAN IT HAD EVER BEEN.

+SINCE THE PRISON SERVICE PAY REVISION ANNOUNCED IN MAY THIS YEAR THERE HAS BEEN A WELCOME AND PROGRESSIVE REDUCTION OF VACANCIES AT ALL LEVELS IN THE STAFF OF THE PRISONS DEPARTMENT,+ HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THE STRENGTH OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICE THIS MONTH WAS 2,200 COMPARED WITH 1,600 A YEAR AGO, A 37 PER CENT INCREASE.

ON THE QUESTION OF DRUGS, MR. DAVIES SHARED THE WIDELY HELD VIEW THAT TO CONTROL CRIME AND REDUCE IT THE ILLICIT DRUG TRADE MUST BE SMASHED AND TREATMENT OF DRUG ADDICTS EXPANDED AND DEVELOPED.

HE REFERRED TO THE BIG SEIZURES MADE BY THE NARCOTICS BUREAU OF THE POLICE AND THE PREVENTIVE SERVICE AND ADDED THAT THE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES IN BURMA, THAILAND AND ELSEWHERE HAD ALSO ACHIEVED NOTABLE SUCCESSES WHICH INDIRECTLY +HELP OUR POSITION+.

/HE POINTED OUT:

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HE POINTED OUT : +NEVER HAVE HEROIN AND OPIUM BEEN IN SUCH SHORT SUPPLY IN HONG KONG AND NEVER HAVE THEY BEEN SO EXPENSIVE.+

REFERRING TO TREATMENT OF DRUG ADDICTS, MR. DAVIES SAID : +THE ACTION COMMITTEE AGAINST NARCOTICS IS NOW CONSIDERING AN OUTLINE PHASE ONE TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMME WHICH, SUBJECT TO THE PROVISION OF THE NECESSARY FINANCE, AIMS TO INCREASE THE TREATMENT FACILITIES FOURFOLD - THAT IS, FROM ABOUT 4,000 PER ANNUM TO SAY, 16,000.+

HE TRUSTED THAT MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL WOULD SUPPORT THESE PLANS WHICH, HE SAID, WOULD HAVE A MAJOR EFFECT ON THE DRUG SCENE.

IN CONCLUSION, MR. DAVIES SAID : +THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE AND THE SECURITY BRANCH ARE CURRENTLY WORKING IN THE CLOSEST CO-OPERATION ON LONG TERM PLANNING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FORCES OF LAW AND ORDER TO ENSURE THAT ALL THE FACILITIES NECESSARY ARE AVAILABLE TO DEAL WITH AND EVENTUALLY REDUCE THE LEVELS OF CRIME.+

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WATER POSITION BETTER -- BUT CRITICAL PERIOD AHEAD
PUBLIC AGAIN REMINDED TO KEEP CONSUMPTION DOWN

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THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, THE HON. WILLIAM BELL, TODAY GAVE A WARNING THAT ALTHOUGH THE WATER STORAGE SITUATION HAD BEEN DRAMATICALLY TRANSFORMED BY THE RECENT TROPICAL STORMS, +IT SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED THAT WE ARE OUT OF THE WOODS YET.+

HE SAID THAT THE WINTER, OR DRY, SEASON OF 1975/76 WOULD BE A +CRITICAL PERIOD+, AND VERY CAREFUL STOCK WOULD HAVE TO BE TAKEN OF OUR POSITION IN THE SUMMER OF 1975. +TO MINIMISE THE POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER RESTRICTIONS DURING THIS PERIOD, THEREFORE, EACH ONE OF US CAN PLAY AN IMPORTANT PART IN REDUCING CONSUMPTION BY USING LESS WATER.+

MR. BELL WAS SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON A MOTION OF THANKS TO THE GOVERNOR'S OPENING ADDRESS TO THE NEW SESSION.

WHILE IT WAS NOW POSSIBLE TO RETAIN FULL SUPPLIES THROUGHOUT THE WINTER, +THE CONTINUING INCREASE IN DEMAND LEAVES NO ROOM FOR COMPLACENCY.+

IN THE MEANTIME WORK WAS WELL UNDER WAY ON TWO PROJECTS PLANNED TO AUGMENT OUR RESOURCES IN THE LATTER HALF OF THIS DECADE. +THESE ARE THE 40 MILLION GALLONS A DAY DESALTING PLANT AT LOK ON PAI, WHICH IS EXPECTED TO COMMENCE PRODUCTION IN EARLY 1975 AND REACH ITS DESIGNED OUTPUT BY MID-1976, AND THE HIGH ISLAND WATER SCHEME, WITH A STORAGE CAPACITY OF 60,000 MILLION GALLONS, WHICH WILL BECOME PROGRESSIVELY MORE AND MORE USEFUL TO US DURING THE PERIOD 1976 TO 1978.+

MR. BELL SAID THAT, LOOKING FURTHER AHEAD, THE MEANS OF MEETING STILL FURTHER DEMAND FOR WATER INCLUDED THE POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER MAJOR DESALTING PLANTS, ALTHOUGH DUE TO THE INCREASE IN OIL PRICES EARLY THIS YEAR, THE UNIT COST OF WATER PRODUCED BY THIS METHOD HAD INCREASED SUBSTANTIALLY.

+FURTHER CONSIDERATION IS THEREFORE BEING GIVEN TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL CONVENTIONAL RESOURCES WHICH MAY NOW BE ECONOMICALLY FEASIBLE. THE CONTRIBUTION OF THESE, ALTHOUGH USEFUL, IS NOT CONSIDERED LIKELY TO OBTAIN THE NEED FOR LARGE-SCALE DESALTING PLANTS IN THE 1980S.+

TURNING TO CONSUMER SERVICES, MR. BELL SAID THAT WHILE PLANS TO PROVIDE WATER RESOURCES TO MEET FUTURE DEMAND COULD BE VIEWED WITH SOME CONFIDENCE, LITTLE PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE IN PROVIDING AN ACCEPTABLE STANDARD OF SERVICE TO THE 592,000 CUSTOMERS.

+ON THE BRIGHTER SIDE, HOWEVER, AS THE RESULT OF A SPECIAL STUDY ON THE USES OF COMPUTERS WITHIN THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, IT HAS BEEN AGREED AT THE TECHNICAL LEVEL THAT THE WATERWORKS ACCOUNTS SHOULD BE COMPUTERISED.+

/TURNING TO PRIVATE

TURNING TO PRIVATE BUILDING DEVELOPMENT, MR. BELL SAID THAT WHILE WORK IN PROGRESS HAD FALLEN OFF DURING THE YEAR, THERE WERE NOW ENCOURAGING SIGNS THAT THIS DECLINE WAS LEVELLING OFF. +THE RATE OF SUBMISSIONS OF NEW BUILDING PLANS AT SOME 150 PER MONTH IS NOW VERY STEADY AND REPRESENTS A HEALTHY POTENTIAL WORKLOAD FOR THE BUILDING CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY.+

WITH VERY FEW EXCEPTIONS, BUILDING PLANS WERE NOW BEING PROCESSED WITHIN THE APPROPRIATE STATUTORY PERIODS, HE WENT ON, BUT IT WAS NOT YET POSSIBLE TO RETURN TO THE SITUATION WHERE ALL GENERAL BUILDING PLANS RECEIVE DETAILED CHECKING.

+A STEADY PROGRAMME OF INSPECTIONS OF BUILDING SITES WHERE WORK IS IN PROGRESS HAS BEEN MAINTAINED AND TO DATE, DESPITE THE LACK OF DETAILED CHECKING AT THE PLANNING STAGE, NO BUILDINGS HAVE BEEN FOUND TO CONTAIN MAJOR DIVERGENCES FROM THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE. THIS, I THINK, REFLECTS AN INCREASING SENSE OF DISCIPLINE IN THE BUILDING INDUSTRY.+

THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE WAS STILL CONSIDERABLY UNDER STRENGTH. +UNTIL THE VACANCIES ARE FILLED, I CAN FORESEE LITTLE POSSIBILITY OF DEALING WITH THE COMPLEX PROBLEM OF ILLEGAL WORKS WHICH BLIGHTS THE BUILDINGS OF HONG KONG. IT IS STILL ONLY POSSIBLE AT PRESENT TO DEAL WITH THOSE UNAUTHORISED WORKS WHICH REPRESENT A SERIOUS RISK TO LIFE.+

ON THE ROLE OF THE ARCHITECTURAL OFFICE, THE DIRECTOR SAID THAT, ON THE PUBLIC HOUSING FRONT ALONE, WORK FOR THE HOUSING AUTHORITY WAS IN PROGRESS ON 43 DOMESTIC BLOCKS IN SEVEN ESTATES, TOGETHER WITH ONE VILLAGE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT, WHICH WHEN COMPLETED WILL HOUSE OVER 165,000 PEOPLE. ANOTHER 15 BLOCKS IN A FURTHER FOUR ESTATES WERE UNDER ACTIVE PLANNING AND WOULD PROVIDE ACCOMMODATION FOR A FURTHER 71,000 PEOPLE.

ON THE ENGINEERING SIDE, MR. BELL SAID THAT TO PROVIDE MORE LAND FOR DEVELOPMENT, ENGINEERING INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE FEASIBILITY OF LAND FORMATION WERE A PRIORITY FUNCTION OF THE CIVIL ENGINEERING OFFICE. AREAS UNDER INVESTIGATION INCLUDED THE KOWLOON FOOTHILLS, TAT CHEE AVENUE AND LA SALLE ROAD IN KOWLOON TONG, TAI HOM AND KWUN TONG.

+RECENT SITE FORMATION WORKS HAVE PROVIDED SOME 12 ACRES OF TERRACED SITES AT HO MAN TIN FOR GOVERNMENT, EDUCATIONAL, RESIDENTIAL AND OTHER COMMUNITY USES, WHILE RECLAMATIONS AT KOWLOON BAY AND GIN DRINKERS BAY HAVE MADE AVAILABLE SOME 60 ACRES AND 10 ACRES OF LAND RESPECTIVELY FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT. SEVERAL OTHER RECLAMATION WORKS ARE IN HAND, INCLUDING THOSE AT CHAI WAN, ALDRICH BAY, CENTRAL AND SHAM SHUI PO.+

TURNING TO COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORT, MR. BELL SAID THE EXISTING NETWORK OF HIGHWAYS CONTINUED TO BE EXPANDED AND IMPROVED AND SOME 26 HIGHWAY SCHEMES WERE COMPLETED DURING THE YEAR, INCLUDING THE LION ROCK INTERCHANGE, WHILE 16 MAJOR PROJECTS WERE PUT IN HAND.

THE HONG KONG COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORT STUDY, WHICH WOULD FORM THE BASIS ON WHICH FUTURE ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMMES WOULD BE COMPILED, WOULD BE COMPLETED EARLY IN 1975.

+OTHER PARALLEL STUDIES COMPLETED INCLUDED THE ISLAND EASTERN CORRIDOR SCHEME, WHICH INVOLVES A HIGH-CAPACITY LINK AS AN EXTENSION OF THE WATERFRONT ROAD THROUGH NORTH POINT TO SHAU KEI WAN AND CHAI WAN, AND THE WEST KOWLOON CORRIDOR SCHEME DESIGNED TO PROVIDE A FAST NEW TRAFFIC ARTERY LINKING THE CROSS HARBOUR TUNNEL APPROACHES IN THE EAST TO THE CONTAINER FACILITIES AT KWAI CHUNG IN THE WEST.

+THE FIRST CONTRACT FOR THIS SCHEME -- THE SECTION GASCOIGNE ROAD TO THE YAU MA TEI MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK -- WAS LET, WHILE TENDERS FOR A SECOND CONTRACT TO EXTEND THE ROAD THROUGH TO TONG MI ROAD WILL BE INVITED FAIRLY SOON.

+ANOTHER MAJOR PROJECT LIKELY TO BE RECOMMENDED TO THE PUBLIC WORKS SUB-COMMITTEE FOR UPGRADING TO CATEGORY A OF THE PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME AS SOON AS FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS ARE COMPLETED, IS THE ABERDEEN TUNNEL AND ASSOCIATED APPROACHES.+

M.T.R. AND THE HANDICAPPED

MR. BELL THEN TURNED TO MASS TRANSIT. HE SAID THAT IN READINESS FOR THE START OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE RAILWAY NEXT YEAR, PLANS FOR THE NECESSARY TRAFFIC DIVERSIONS WERE NEARING COMPLETION.

+IN FAIRNESS TO THE PUBLIC AT LARGE, HOWEVER, I WOULD LIKE TO SOUND A CAUTIONARY WARNING THAT, DESPITE THIS ADVANCE PLANNING, CONGESTION LEADING TO CONSIDERABLE DELAYS IS INEVITABLE IN MANY AREAS WHERE THE RAILWAY IS TO BE CONSTRUCTED. IT WILL BE OUR AIM HOWEVER TO KEEP THESE TO AN ABSOLUTE MINIMUM.+

ON THE QUESTION OF SPECIAL FACILITIES FOR HANDICAPPED PERSONS TO USE THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY, MR. BELL SAID THIS MATTER WAS VERY FULLY CONSIDERED BY A GROUP COMPRISING FIVE UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND TWO UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL IN JUNE THIS YEAR.

+MY COLLEAGUES THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT AND DIRECTOR OF MASS TRANSIT STUDIES AND I HELD A VERY FULL DISCUSSION WITH THESE UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS, WHO CONCLUDED THAT THE PROVISION OF SUCH SPECIAL FACILITIES COULD NOT BE SUPPORTED.

+IN REACHING THIS CONCLUSION, AS MUCH CONSIDERATION WAS GIVEN TO THE FEELINGS OF THE HANDICAPPED PERSONS AS TO THE COST OF PROVIDING SPECIAL FACILITIES FOR THEM. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT ON THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY IT WILL BE +RUSH-HOUR+ ALL DAY LONG, THERE BEING ONLY AN EIGHT PER CENT REDUCTION FORECAST IN THE NUMBER OF PERSONS USING THE RAILWAY IN THE +OFF-PEAK+ PERIODS, SUCH AS THEY WILL BE,+ HE SAID.

/TRAINS, HE NOTED,

TRAINS, HE NOTED, WERE SCHEDULED TO STOP FOR 20 SECONDS ONLY AND THEIR DOORS WOULD OPEN AUTOMATICALLY AND SHUT QUICKLY. THERE WOULD BE SURGES OF PASSENGERS ON AND OFF THE TRAINS, WHILE INSIDE THE CARRIAGES THERE WOULD BE SEATS FOR ONLY 20 PER CENT OF THE PASSENGERS, THE REMAINDER HAVING TO STAND.

+IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT IS CONSIDERED UNLIKELY THAT TRULY DISABLED PERSONS WILL WANT TO USE THE RAILWAY. + I SAY +TRULY DISABLED+ BECAUSE I THINK THAT DR. FANG'S ESTIMATE OF (AND I QUOTE) +SOME 300,000 PEOPLE OF RESTRICTED MOBILITY+ (WHICH IS IN ITSELF SOME TEN TIMES THE GOVERNMENT ESTIMATE BASED ON THE 1971 CENSUS) INCLUDES A LARGE NUMBER WHO ARE CAPABLE OF WALKING, EVEN IF WITH THE AID OF A STICK. FOR THOSE DISABLED PERSONS WHO CAN WALK, THE STAIRCASES AND ESCALATORS WHICH WILL BE PROVIDED WILL BE ADEQUATE.

+FOR DISABLED PERSONS WHO CANNOT WALK, I SUGGEST THE PROVISION OF SPECIAL FACILITIES ON THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY IS NOT THE ANSWER. +

MR. BELL ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT THE GOVERNMENT FULLY APPRECIATED THE IMPORTANCE OF PROVIDING SURFACE TRANSPORT FACILITIES APPROPRIATE TO THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF THE PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED. +I UNDERSTAND FROM MY COLLEAGUES, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, THAT A WORKING GROUP, CHAIRED BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT, HAS BEEN SET UP TO INVESTIGATE WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT THIS. +

TURNING TO THE NEW TOWNS, MR. BELL RECALLED THAT LAST YEAR A NEW ORGANISATION, THE NEW TERRITORIES DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT, WAS FORMED WITHIN THE P.W.D. TO UNDERTAKE DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATED WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S TEN-YEAR HOUSING PROGRAMME, MUCH OF WHICH WOULD BE CONCENTRATED IN THE THREE NEW TOWNS AT TUEN MUN, TSUEN WAN AND SHA TIN.

+SINCE THAT TIME A LOT OF ESSENTIAL GROUND WORK HAS BEEN DONE IN THE WAY OF PREPARATION OF DETAILED PLANS AND IN DEVISING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES, INCLUDING THE CO-ORDINATION OF THE PROGRAMMES OF ALL OTHER DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES INVOLVED IN THESE VAST UNDERTAKINGS. +

ACTUAL CONSTRUCTION WORK IN THE THREE NEW TOWNS HAD BEEN GOING AHEAD AT A STEADY PACE. +SITES ARE BEING FORMED FOR PUBLIC HOUSING, GOVERNMENT, INSTITUTIONAL AND COMMUNITY USE AND FOR PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL AND INDUSTRIAL PURPOSES. AT THE SAME TIME, ESSENTIAL ENGINEERING INFRASTRUCTURES SUCH AS ROADS, DRAINS, SEWERS AND WATER SUPPLY ARE BEING BUILT.

/+SOME 1,340 ACRES

+SOME 1,340 ACRES OF LAND ARE, OR WILL SHORTLY BECOME, AVAILABLE IN THE THREE TOWNS, WHILE THE IMPETUS OF CURRENT BUILDING PROJECTS IS BEING MAINTAINED WITH 175,000 UNITS OF PUBLIC HOUSING CURRENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION.

+IN ADDITION, PROPOSALS ARE WELL ADVANCED FOR PRIVATE DEVELOPERS TO FORM SOME 240 ACRES OF LAND, RETAINING 64 ACRES FOR PRIVATE HOUSING AND HANDING THE REMAINDER BACK TO GOVERNMENT FOR PUBLIC HOUSING, COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND OTHER USES.+

SUMMING UP, MR. BELL SAID THE PAST YEAR HAD BEEN ONE OF CONTINUING ENDEAVOUR AND MUCH HAD BEEN ACHIEVED. +AS TO THE FUTURE, WORKS WILL CONTINUE ON A BROAD FRONT.+

MUCH HAD BEEN SAID ABOUT +CUTS+ IN THE PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME. +THIS IS SIMPLY NOT TRUE ALTHOUGH A REASSESSMENT OF PRIORITIES HAS RESULTED IN A REPHASING OF CERTAIN PROJECTS.

+AS EVIDENCE OF THE MAGNITUDE OF THE CAPITAL WORKS IN THE PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME, EXPENDITURE IN THE CURRENT FISCAL YEAR IS EXPECTED TO BE ABOUT \$1,500 MILLION, WHICH IS SOME 50 PER CENT MORE THAN THAT SPENT IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR. EVEN ALLOWING FOR INFLATIONARY TRENDS AND HIGHER COSTS OF CONSTRUCTION, THIS SUM STILL REPRESENTS A FORMIDABLE INCREASE.+

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CONSTRUCTION COST SHOULD INCLUDE HUMAN SUFFERING

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A REMINDER THAT THE COST OF CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS COULD BE MEASURED IN LIVES AND INJURIES AS WELL AS CASH WAS GIVEN TODAY BY MR. WILLIAM BELL, THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS.

ADDRESSING THE OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE ON ACCIDENT PREVENTION IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY, ORGANISED BY THE JARDINE INSURANCE LTD., MR. BELL SAID THAT PEOPLE WERE INCLINED TO SPEAK ALL TOO GLIBLY OF THE COST OF CONSTRUCTION WORK IN TERMS ONLY OF DOLLARS.

HE NOTED THAT PERHAPS THERE WOULD BE A GREATER AWARENESS OF THE TRUE COST IF IT WERE COMPULSORY FOR STATISTICS OF INDUSTRIAL INJURIES TO BE PUBLISHED ON COMPLETION OF ANY PROJECT.

+IF, INSTEAD OF PROUDLY ANNOUNCING THAT OUR NEW BUILDING, BRIDGE OR HIGHWAY HAD COST \$X MILLION TO BUILD, WE HAD TO ANNOUNCE THAT IT HAD COST \$X MILLION, THREE LIVES AND TWENTY PERMANENT DISABILITIES, WE MIGHT ALL THINK MORE SERIOUSLY ABOUT CONSTRUCTION SITE SAFETY,+ HE SAID.

EVEN IF THERE ARE THOSE EMPLOYERS AND DEVELOPERS WHO ARE UNMOVED BY THE PERSONAL TRAGEDIES OF OTHERS, HE WENT ON, THEY WOULD STILL BE FORCED TO COUNT THE COST OF COMPENSATION AND TO IMPROVE THEIR SAFETY RECORD ON THAT SCORE ALONE.

PART OF THE CONFERENCE, MR. BELL NOTED, WOULD BE DEVOTED TO DISCUSSION OF THE NEW CONSTRUCTION SITE SAFETY REGULATIONS WHICH CAME INTO FORCE IN MAY.

+I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT YOU WILL EXPRESS YOUR OPINIONS ON THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THEY GO TOO FAR OR WHETHER THEY HAVE NOT GONE FAR ENOUGH. MY OWN VIEW IS THAT THEY ARE A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.+

TURNING TO SCAFFOLDING - AN ITEM NOT YET COVERED BY THE REGULATIONS, HE SAID THAT HE HAD NOTHING AGAINST BAMBOO SCAFFOLDING, WHICH WAS +STRONG, VERSATILE AND MOST SKILFULLY ERECTED.+

BUT HE FELT THAT WHEREAS THE SCAFFLODERS WERE PAID FOR BOTH SKILL AND DANGER, THIS DID NOT APPLY TO THE PLASTERERS, PAINTERS, TILERS AND OTHER WORKMEN WHO HAVE TO CARRY OUT THEIR WORK ON THE OUTSIDE OF BUILDINGS STRADDLED PRECARIOUSLY ACROSS A SINGLE BAMBOO POLE TWENTY STOREYS ABOVE THE GROUND.+

/MR. BELL CONTINUED

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MR. BELL CONTINUED : +ANY FACTORY INSPECTOR ACCUSTOMED TO U.K. PRACTICE, WHERE IT IS COMPULSORY TO HAVE DOUBLE SCAFFOLDING, PROPERLY SECURED PLANK FOOTWAYS, AND PROPER TOE-BOARDS TO PREVENT OBJECTS BEING KICKED OFF THE FOOTWAYS ON TO PEOPLE BELOW, WOULD BE HORRIFIED, ON ARRIVING IN HONG KONG, AT THE AMOUNT OF POTENTIAL DANGER IN THIS RESPECT WHICH HE WOULD SEE, FOR EXAMPLE, ON THE SHORT RIDE FROM KAI TAK TO HIS HOTEL.+

HE COMMENDED TO THE CONFERENCE THE VALUE OF THE FREE TRAINING COURSES FOR SITE SUPERVISING STAFF RUN BY THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT.

HE URGED ANY CONTRACTOR WHO HAS NOT TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF THE OFFER TO DO SO. +IT CAN ONLY BE TO HIS BENEFIT,+ HE SAID.

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SLOW PROGRESS IN COMPLIANCE WITH SAFETY REGULATIONS

SOME OF THE LARGER BUILDING CONTRACTORS ARE MAKING THEIR OWN INTERPRETATIONS OF OFFICIAL SAFETY REGULATIONS, WHILE MANY SMALLER CONTRACTORS ARE STILL IGNORANT OF THE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS, A LABOUR DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL SAID TODAY.

MR. STAN TSAO, LABOUR OFFICER IN CHARGE OF THE INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS UNIT, SAID THE IDEAS OF THE CONTRACTORS REGARDING THE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS WERE OFTEN RATHER LESS THAN THOSE ENVISAGED BY THE LAW.

SPEAKING AT A SAFETY SEMINAR ORGANISED BY JARDINE'S INSURANCE AT THE HONG KONG COUNTRY CLUB, MR. TSAO SAID THE LOCAL BUILDERS HAD SO FAR BEEN GIVEN MORE THAN TWO YEARS TO GET TO KNOW THE PROVISIONS OF THE CONSTRUCTION SITES (SAFETY) REGULATIONS WHICH CAME INTO FORCE IN MAY.

+AFTER 28 MONTHS OF GIVING PATIENT EXPLANATIONS AND ADVICE, WE HAVE SEEN ONLY SLOW PROGRESS IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE NEW REGULATIONS,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID CONTRACTORS WERE NOT CARRYING OUT SOME OF THE SIMPLEST REQUIREMENTS OF THE REGULATIONS.

FOR EXAMPLE, THEY WERE REQUIRED TO SUPPLY CERTAIN INFORMATION TO THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR WITHIN SEVEN DAYS OF STARTING AND FINISHING A PROJECT.

THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT EVEN PROVIDED CONTRACTORS WITH A PRINTED FORM TO MAKE IT EASY AND CONVENIENT TO MEET THIS REQUIREMENT.

YET IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF THE REGULATIONS COMING INTO FORCE, THE DEPARTMENT HAD RECEIVED THE STIPULATED INFORMATION FROM ONLY ONE THIRD OF THE BUILDING SITES IN HONG KONG.

MR. TSAO SAID THE WHOLE PICTURE OF WORK SAFETY ON CONSTRUCTION SITES WAS HOWEVER NOT COMPLETELY PITCH BLACK.

IN THE TWO MONTHS AFTER THE REGULATIONS WERE INTRODUCED - REQUIRING THE WEARING OF SAFETY HELMETS - THERE WAS AN ACUTE SHORTAGE OF SAFETY HELMETS ON THE MARKET.

+OUR ABLE MERCHANTS WASTED NO TIME AND WERE SOON ABLE TO SATISFY THEIR CUSTOMERS,+ HE SAID.

+SAFETY HELMETS OF A VARIETY OF COLOURS HAVE NOW BECOME A FEATURE IDENTIFIABLE WITH CONSTRUCTION SITES IN HONG KONG.+

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1974.

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WATER SITUATION REPORT

THE TOTAL WATER STORAGE IN ALL RESERVOIRS AS AT 9 A.M. TODAY (THURSDAY) STOOD AT 54,379 MILLION GALLONS, REPRESENTING 80.8 PER CENT OF THE FULL CAPACITY OF 67,300 MILLION GALLONS. AT THIS TIME LAST YEAR THERE WERE 59,142 MILLION GALLONS IN STORE.

THIS MORNING'S STORAGE AT PLOVER COVE WAS 38,343 MILLION GALLONS, COMPARED WITH 46,031 MILLION GALLONS ON THE SAME DAY LAST YEAR. PLOVER COVE'S PRESENT STORAGE REPRESENTS 75.9 PER CENT OF ITS FULL CAPACITY OF 50,500 MILLION GALLONS.

NO RAINFALL WAS RECORDED AT THE ROYAL OBSERVATORY DURING THE PAST 24 HOURS ENDING AT 9 A.M. TODAY. TOTAL RAINFALL RECORDED SO FAR THIS YEAR IS 2,112.3 MM (83.16 IN).

THE MEAN AVERAGE RAINFALL SINCE JANUARY 1 STANDS AT 2,117.5 MM (83.37 IN), REPRESENTING A SHORTFALL OF 0.25 PER CENT.

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1974

SUPPLIES AND WHOLESALE PRICES OF MARINE FISH
(FMO CHEUNG SHA WAN WHOLESALE FISH MARKET)

SPECIES	AVAILABILITY OF SUPPLY	WHOLESALE PRICE (\$/CATTY)		
		HIGH	LOW	MODE
GOLDEN THREAD	LIMITED	6.30	2.40	4.80
BIG-EYES	NORMAL	3.50	1.30	2.50
SQUID	LIMITED	5.20	3.00	4.00
HAIR-TAILS	GOOD	3.00	5.00	1.60
LIZARD FISHES	LIMITED	4.00	1.30	2.80
CROAKERS	NORMAL	3.20	0.80	1.60
CONGER-PIKE-EELS	NORMAL	3.50	2.50	2.80
MELON COAT	GOOD	4.00	1.80	2.70
BREAMS	SCARCE	6.50	4.70	5.00
YELLOW BELLY	NORMAL	1.80	1.00	1.20
MACKERELS	LIMITED	6.00	4.50	5.50
RED GOAT FISH	NORMAL	1.00	0.70	0.80
FORK-TAIL	---	---	---	---
HORSE-HEAD	SCARCE	6.00	2.80	4.70
MELON SEED	NORMAL	3.00	2.50	2.80
POMFRETS	LIMITED	11.00	7.00	8.50
GARROUPAS	LIMITED	10.00	7.50	9.00
YELLOW CROAKER	GOOD	6.50	3.50	5.00

SUPPLIES AND WHOLESALE PRICES OF LOCALLY PRODUCED VEGETABLES
(V.M.O. CHEUNG SHA WAN WHOLESALE VEGETABLE MARKET)

TYPE OF VEGETABLE	AVAILABILITY OF SUPPLY	WHOLESALE PRICE (\$/CATTY)		
		HIGH	LOW	MODE
FLOWERING CABBAGE	SCARCE	3.50	1.20	2.60
WHITE CABBAGE	LIMITED	2.20	0.80	1.60
CHINESE LETTUCE	LIMITED	2.40	0.80	1.60
WATER SPINACH	SCARCE	0.80	0.20	0.50
CHINESE KALE	SCARCE	3.20	1.20	2.50
STRING BEANS	SCARCE	2.60	1.50	2.20
SPRING ONION	NORMAL	1.50	0.30	0.80
SPINACH	SCARCE	3.50	1.20	2.50
WATER CRESS	LIMITED	3.00	1.80	2.50
LEAF MUSTARD CABBAGE	SCARCE	2.60	0.80	1.80
CHINESE SPINACH	---	NO SALE		
TOMATO	SCARCE	4.00	2.00	3.00

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1974.

CONSUMER ADVISORY SERVICE

THE FOLLOWING PRICES WERE REALISED TODAY (THURSDAY) AT SALE UNDER THE RICE CONTROL SCHEME AND AT THE VEGETABLE MARKETING ORGANISATION WHOLESALE MARKET AND THE FISH MARKETING ORGANISATION WHOLESALE MARKET AT CHEUNG SHA WAN, KOWLOON:

SUPPLIES AND WHOLESALE PRICES OF RICE

<u>GRADE OF RICE</u>	<u>AVAILABILITY OF SUPPLY</u>	<u>WHOLESALE PRICE (\$/CATTY)</u>
<u>CHINA RICE</u>		
SEE MEW	GOOD	1.94
S.C. JIEN	GOOD	1.78
PO NGAI	GOOD	--
CHU CHO	GOOD	--
<u>THAI RICE</u>		
100% WHOLE	GOOD	1.77
10-15% BROKENS	GOOD	1.68
A1 SUPER EXTRA	GOOD	1.66
A1 SUPER	GOOD	1.39
WHOLE GLUTINOUS	GOOD	1.72
<u>U.S. RICE</u>	GOOD	1.91
<u>AUSTRALIAN RICE</u>	GOOD	1.88
<u>PAKISTAN RICE</u>	GOOD	--
<u>TAIWAN RICE</u>	GOOD	--

SUPPLIES AND WHOLESALE PRICES OF SWINE

(ALL SOURCES)

AVAILABILITY OF SUPPLY	-	GOOD
WHOLESALE PRICES OF PORK (\$/PICUL-LIVE WEIGHT)	-	340 (AVERAGE)

/SUPPLIES AND