



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON EDUCATION WHITE PAPER

Government planners involved in the White Paper on Secondary Education have made a thorough analysis of the situation and "now can see pretty clearly what can be done and what cannot," the Director of Education, the Hon. Kenneth Topley, told the Legislative Council today.

"I am confident that this year I shall be able to make some progress in implementing the White Paper," he said.

He said however that this was the most he should and could go and he could not anticipate the budget proposals.

Mr. Topley was replying in an adjournment debate to three Unofficials -- the Hon. Hilton Cheong-Leen, the Hon. Mrs. Joyce Symons and the Hon. Miss Ko Siu-wah -- who had urged the Government to implement the White Paper in the coming financial year.

He said: "The Education Department and the Finance and Social Services Branches of the Secretariat have been locked not in battle but in deep discussion of how we can meet the deep-felt wish of members, indeed of the whole community, for decisive action in the realm of secondary education".

He said that children leaving primary school without completing it were the "true drop-outs," as distinguished from those who had no secondary education because no secondary places were available.

"They leave school of their own volition in many cases because they don't like it and are therefore ill-prepared for life, vulnerable to bad influences and in some cases turn to crime.

"I am establishing a departmental Working Party to look at the age structure of our primary school population to find out why children enter school late in some instances and leave school without completing the course in others.

/"I am also

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"I am also placing increasing stress upon 'activity' approach in primary schools with a view to creating better conditions for learning," he said.

He hoped that when he could abolish the Secondary School Entrance Examination, the atmosphere of primary schools, with a broader curriculum in primary five and six, would further improve.

As for the 12 to 14 year olds not at school, Mr. Topley said there appeared to be general agreement, and it was the conclusion of the Inter-departmental Committee on Services for Youth, that the main and vital thing to be done for them was to get them into school.

He gave an assurance that the Committee would be commissioning further activities and studies.

Mr. Cheong-Leen had in his speech said one of the prime reasons for the serious state of violent crime was the build-up over the past years of a hard-core number of primary school drop-outs and 12-14 year olds who could not continue school or find work lawfully.

He noted that surveys had been completed on primary school drop-outs and the 12-14 year youngsters not in school in Wong Tai Sin and Chai Wan. "I suggest that steps be taken urgently to initiate similar surveys in all the other districts, he said.

He urged that plans be formulated to pinpoint and to reduce the number of primary school drop-outs to the absolute minimum.

"The out-reach programme has to be expanded quickly together with other suitable programmes to take care of the hard-core elements in the 12-14 age group, before they are led astray into a life of chronic and hardened crime," he added.

/Hong Kong's

Hong Kong's greatest asset was its people, and the quality of that asset was in their educational, intellectual, technological and moral standard, Mr. Cheong-Leen said.

He asked how this standard could be improved if every year more than 30,000 children were still either primary school drop-outs or could not find places in a secondary school.

Mrs. Symons asked that the 1976 target of the White Paper be reached at the very least by one or other or all of the methods of expansion suggested.

"The time has come for action," she said, "and there will be little good-will shown to Government in general and the Education Department in particular if the implementation of the White Paper is not firmly begun this September."

The methods suggested by the White Paper were: building of new schools, the use of converted primary schools or other under-utilised government buildings, extended day and flotation and judicious buying of places.

Mrs. Symons said the Education Department by now would have the correct figures and costings of the target number of public sector places in forms I to III in September 1976, provisionally given as 136,961 in the White Paper.

"I conclude my appeal confident that given the necessary funds the Education Department will see that the target is reached, if not surpassed this coming September," she said.

Miss Ko Siu-wah was concerned about possible criminal influence on the young school drop-outs.

According to the recent report on "Social Causes of Violent Crimes Among Young Offenders in Hong Kong", offenders were more often found among youngsters who did not attend school, she said.

/"Being poorly

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"Being poorly equipped with knowledge and skill, some are likely to take up early employment, receiving low economic reward and tending to drift from job to job. Some will remain idle.

"Under such circumstances, they are more likely to encounter the triad elements, who some would view as daring and exciting, and thus become delinquents," she said.

She urged that before nine-year education could be provided for all children, more organisations run evening schools for children of the 12-14 age group and provide more opportunities for pre-vocational training.

She also urged that the Youth Guidance Projects with an out-reaching approach be expanded as soon as possible in different districts.

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APPRENTICESHIP BILL INTRODUCED INTO LEGCO

A bill to improve existing and future apprentice training in certain trades was introduced in the Legislative Council by the Commissioner for Labour, the Hon. Ian Price, today.

Moving the second reading of the Apprenticeship Bill 1975, he said: "I regard this Bill as an important beginning on which to build much good for industry and for the young who acquire their skills in industry."

Mr. Price said an apprenticeship was a form of systematic training for three or four years whereby a youth acquired the skills and knowledge needed for his trade.

"The practical element of such training takes place under supervision within the employer's undertaking; and the related technical education is normally provided by a part-time day-release course run in a technical education institution.

"Experience elsewhere has shown that an apprenticeship along these lines provides the best and most economical method of training skilled manpower because apprentices are exposed to the pressures of industrial conditions, and are usefully and productively employed," he said.

The essence of the Bill is that an employer may engage a young person in a designated trade only if he has entered into a contract of apprenticeship, or he has already completed an apprenticeship in that trade and holds a certificate.

"A valid contract of apprenticeship is both the principal element of the legal framework of the Bill and the lynchpin of proper apprentice training," the Commissioner said.

/The original

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The original intention was to limit the Bill to craft trades only. However, Mr. Price said the various bodies associated with industrial training had consistently advised that technicians, as well as craftsmen, were best trained through apprenticeship; and voluntary training schemes for technician apprentices have made considerable progress.

"Therefore, it is both realistic, and consistent with the needs of industry, to make provision within the Bill for the eventual inclusion of technician apprentices," he said.

The Bill would initially apply to young people aged between 14 and 16 employed in designated craft trades and to their employers.

He stressed that this was just the first step towards the long term objective of bringing within the scope of this legislation apprentice training in all designated trades for all people under 21 employed in these trades.

Under the Bill, an employer is required to provide adequate training, and to make returns and reports, while an apprentice must attend a related technical course in addition to his practical training.

/If the Bill

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If the Bill was passed into law, Mr. Price said he would introduce regulations to provide for detailed terms and conditions to be included in an apprenticeship contract.

He told the Council that he would consult the Hong Kong Training Council before tendering advice to the Governor in respect of raising the upper age limit in the definition of a "young person", or specifying a trade or occupation as a designated trade.

The Commissioner went on to say that the Training Council at its meeting on January 13 would decide which trades to recommend in the first instance for designation by the Governor.

This first batch of trades would be selected on the basis of the degree of skills involved, their numbers and importance to industry, and with regard to the availability of related technical education facilities.

He assured the Council that ample notice would be given before a trade was designated, and that the law would be enforced with discretion in the early stages.

Officers of the Labour Department's Industrial Training Division, he added, would assist to the greatest possible extent any employer who needed help in understanding or carrying out the requirements of the Bill.

On the need for this proposed legislation, Mr. Price pointed out that about 2,500 craft apprentices and 500 technician apprentices were now undergoing adequate training in voluntarily registered schemes.

But according to the latest manpower surveys, about 15,000 apprentices or trainees at the craft level and 2,000 at the technician level were under some form of training. "These figures clearly show that many apprentices or trainees are not receiving proper training."

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QUESTION OF HONG KONG'S "EXCESS" TEXTILE EXPORTS
TO EEC SETTLED

The Director of Commerce and Industry, the Hon. David Jordan, confirmed today that the question of Hong Kong's "excess" textile exports to the European Economic Community had now been settled.

The last in a series of talks on this issue took place in the middle of last month.

These consultations, Mr. Jordan explained to Legislative Council today, had been sought by the EEC to settle difficulties arising from exports that exceeded the notional limits for 1975 set out in the agreement between Hong Kong and the Community.

He described these limits as notional because they clearly could not be applied in all cases.

Hong Kong and the EEC did not reach agreement until July 18, over half-way through the year.

In some cases, where the trade had up to then been under no restriction at all, exports had already reached or nearly reached the so-called "limits".

"It was clearly out of the question to reduce exports to nil or to a mere trickle until December 31. This would have been contrary to the basic purposes of the agreement and indeed of the international arrangement under which we negotiated", Mr. Jordan pointed out.

"So some 'excesses' over these notional limits were inevitable from the start. The question was what - if anything - should be done about them," he said.

Mr. Jordan continued: "We finally agreed on a number of different ways of dealing with them: in some cases the so-called 'excesses' were not

/very large

very large and we agreed to write them off; in others we used the flexibility provisions in the agreement itself to reduce them to nil; in others we transferred unused quota from one member state to another; in some we transferred quota from one category to another; and finally in a limited number of cases, where the so-called "excesses" were very considerable, where in other words we had in 1975 exported a lot more than the 1975 notional limit, we agreed to deduct a proportion of the excesses from the 1976 quotas.

"In conducting these consultations my principal concern was to preserve for Hong Kong at least as much a quota for 1976 as we had for 1975. This would also ensure that we had enough quota in 1976 to be able to make a full allocation to every quota-holder who qualifies by exporting at least 95% per cent of his quota in 1975, that is to say that in 1976 he will get no less than his quota for the five-and-a-half months from July 18, 1975 grossed up for a twelve-month period.

"In only one case, that of knit shirts exported to Denmark, is there a possibility (depending on the final export figures) that we may not be able fully to meet this requirement, but if this happens we shall be able to compensate the quota-holders concerned by offering them quota in the same category for another Member State or in another category for Denmark.

"The outcome of consultations like these can never be entirely satisfactory for both sides but in this case I believe it represents a reasonable compromise between positions that were originally very far apart, and at least it provides stability and certainty for 1976".

NEW LEGISLATION TO PROTECT COUNTRYSIDE

The Country Parks Bill will give comprehensive protection to the countryside and develop it for open air recreation, the Secretary for the Environment, the Hon. James Robson, said in the Legislative Council today.

In moving the second reading of the bill, he said the legislation seeks to create a special authority with the powers to control and protect the countryside and the responsibility to develop for informal recreation those areas under its control and protection.

Under the bill, the Director of Agriculture and Fisheries, who is already responsible for the development of country parks and recreational facilities in the countryside, will be the Country Parks Authority.

He will be assisted by a Country Parks Board of not fewer than ten members, of whom at least five will be public officers.

"The Board is intended to be a high powered one so as to give the Authority the full support of both the community and the Government," Mr. Robson said.

The powers given to the Authority were comprehensive, he said. Once the draft map prepared by the Authority showing proposed country parks is gazetted, new development within the area without the prior approval of the Authority would be prohibited.

Objections to the draft map would be heard by the Country Parks Board and the area shown in the map, amended where necessary, would be designated as a country park on approval by the Governor in Council.

Mr. Robson said that a considerable area would be designated, much of which would be in the New Territories and much within Waterworks catchment areas.

/"In view of

"In view of our land shortage and the many uses to which land is put in Hong Kong, it is very necessary to protect the interests of those whose land will lie within the boundaries of any country park or special area designated under the Bill," he said.

The control of land in these areas would remain with the appropriate Land Authority. However, the Country Park Authority may request the relevant Land Authority to require the occupier of any leased land to stop or modify any use of his land which is incompatible with the purpose of the country park.

The Governor will also be empowered to exclude from any country park any village areas, traditional burial grounds, temples, buildings of historic value, and any area leased for purposes of recreation and tourism.

"The Secretary for the New Territories is now drawing up a plan which will delineate these areas and I think it can be accepted that he will protect the legitimate interests of New Territories villagers should any conflict arise between them and the Country Parks Authority," Mr. Robson said.

Under the Bill, landowners would have a right to claim compensation if:

- * the Authority refuses to approve new development permitted by the lease conditions under which the land is held; or
- * the occupier is required by the Land Authority to stop or modify an otherwise legitimate use of any land.

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PROPOSALS AGAINST NOISE POLLUTION UNDER STUDY

Proposed measures to reduce noise nuisance created by construction works are being examined by various branches and departments of government.

The Director of Public Works, the Hon. David McDonald, said this in his reply in the Legislative Council today to the Hon. Alex Wu's question on noise pollution arising from piling works.

He said that one of these proposed measures, put forward by the Noise Pollution Sub-Committee of EPCOM, was to extend the present ten hour ban on piling works to cover the period between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m.

However, Mr. McDonald emphasised that though further reduction of noise pollution was highly desirable, "consideration must be given to the overall effects of restricting working hours".

In the case of extending the ban on piling works, he said it was thought that this would not have a serious effect on programming or costs in the construction industry.

Mr. Wu also asked whether the Government would make it compulsory for employers of piling workers to provide such workers with protective hearing equipment while operating pile-drivers.

In reply, the Commissioner for Labour, the Hon. Ian Price, said the Government would certainly consider what practical steps should be taken to protect workers' hearing.

"However, at this stage I prefer to keep open the options as to whether such protection should be by the method suggested in the question and whether or not it should be limited only to workers employed on pile drivers," Mr. Price added.

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CRIME REPORTING SYSTEM UNDER CONSTANT REVIEW

The Commissioner of Police will continue to keep under review the system of reporting and recording crime with a view to reducing to the minimum the time spent by members of the public in making reports.

The Secretary for Security, the Hon. Lewis Davies, said this in the Legislative Council today in reply to the Hon. Hilton Cheong-leen's question on the simplification of the crime reporting system.

Mr. Davies said that the system had been simplified and improved in a number of ways since 1973.

The improvements include provision of separate facilities in most urban police stations for members of the public making reports, a streamlining of actual reporting and recording procedures and an increase in the number of places where a report can be made.

As for simplification of procedures, Mr. Davies said that in the case of a minor crime, basic essential details were recorded directly onto a proforma, and into the investigator's notebook, thereby eliminating the lengthy process of taking statements verbatim. However, the taking of a statement was still required in cases of a more serious nature, he added.

Mr. Davies said: "Though the system of reporting and recording crime is under continual review, there is a limit to the extent to which the system can be further simplified."

"The primary purpose of reporting crime is to enable the criminal to be identified and brought to court," he said. "Consequently it is essential that the Police obtain all the relevant facts to enable a successful prosecution to take place."

He said that to achieve this goal, "a degree of inconvenience to the public is inevitable".

/Mr. Davies

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Mr. Davies thought that the emphasis should be on greater co-operation between the **Police** and members of the public.

He said that the **Police** had tried to get this message across through a campaign, the **Police Call**, the **Junior Police Call**, the **Voice of Junior Police Call**, various **Radio Hong Kong** programmes, **Press** releases and a **Press** conference.

Mr. Hilton Cheong-Leen also suggested making available at **CCO's**, **Kaifong** offices and other suitable places a simple report form for use by members of the public who were not prepared to use the normal channels to report crime.

In reply, Mr. Davies said: "A system such as my Honourable colleague proposes would detract from the present satisfactory trend of increased reporting of crime to the **Police** by members of the public."

He said that by providing the simple report forms, "it would probably produce more reports, but I believe it would also produce more paper and perhaps confusion."

"Certainly their reliability and content would be of a much lower standard than those made direct to a police officer so their use for investigative and statistical purposes would be lessened," he added.

It might also give a wrong impression that it was sufficient to fill in a form in reporting crime.

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GOVERNMENT AID TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS: SCHEME BEING STUDIED

The Director of Education, the Hon. Kenneth Topley, told the Legislative Council today that the proposed scheme of government assistance submitted by the Hong Kong Private Anglo-Chinese Schools Association was being examined in the context of two considerations.

"First, Government must be satisfied that any scheme of assistance to independent private schools that may be agreed upon does not constitute subsidising profits.

"Second, it would not be appropriate, in my view, to consider the proposals in isolation from the Department's plans to expand secondary education and to implement the 1974 White Paper," Mr. Topley said.

However, he assured the Hon. Mrs. Joyce Symons who asked about the proposed scheme that the Education Department had always recognised the contribution of private schools in the provision of education in Hong Kong. "For this reason, its policy has always been to try to help private schools whenever possible," he said.

Financial assistance to independent private schools at present is generally limited to fee assistance for pupils occupying bought places in these schools.

The proposed scheme, the Director said, concerned an extension of government assistance "over and above the present arrangements."

In reply to the Hon. Miss KO Siu-wah's question on the better use of government school playgrounds and premises after school or in the evenings for recreational activities, Mr. Topley said that the Sports and Recreation Unit of the Education Department was investigating ways of expanding the present evening and weekend use of all school premises for recreation and sports programmes.

/A pilot

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A pilot scheme, involving the use of school premises as district games centres on Saturday afternoons, was being conducted in four districts, he said.

At present, government schools are used to a near maximum.

For fresh venues for welfare and educational activities out of school hours, it would be necessary generally to look to the aided schools, Mr. Topley said.

"If there is an unsatisfied demand from voluntary welfare agencies for the use of premises, then requirements should be worked out carefully, co-ordinated through the Hong Kong Council for Social Service, and put to me," he said.

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LEGISLATION GOVERNING PROFESSIONS IN MEDICAL FIELD

Two working drafts of proposed legislation to govern the professions supplementary to medicine have already been prepared and considered, the Director for Medical and Health Services, Dr. the Hon. Gerald Choa, said this afternoon.

He was replying to a question raised in the Legislative Council by Dr. the Hon. Harry Fang as to what progress had been made by a working party set up some two years ago to consider such legislation.

Dr. Choa said, "the working party had concluded that such legislation was both "feasible and desirable". Referring to the two working drafts, he said, "some amendments still require to be made."

He said that once the Ordinance had been enacted, it would be necessary for regulations to be prepared to deal with each of the seven professions concerned.

He pointed out that a first rough draft had, in fact, been prepared of regulations dealing with medical laboratory technicians and this would be considered as soon as the Ordinance had been finalised.

"It is hoped that this set of regulations, when in complete form, will provide a pattern on which the regulations for the other professions can be based," he said.

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PILOT SCHEME TO INSTALL AIR DIFFUSERS IN KOWLOON BAY

An application has been made to include in the Public Works Programme a pilot study of air diffusers in Kowloon Bay in an attempt to improve the water quality there.

In reply to a question by the Hon. Roger Lobo in the Legislative Council today, the Hon. James Robson, Secretary for the Environment, said: "It is hoped that this will be implemented during the 1976/77 financial year."

The pilot scheme would involve the installation of 20 air diffusers at a cost of about \$300,000, Mr. Robson said. It was endorsed by the Advisory Committee on Environmental Pollution.

A technical report produced by the Public Works Department last June stated that air diffusers fixed to the sea bottom would be the most suitable method of improving water quality. These diffusers would bubble air through the polluted water to increase levels of dissolved oxygen, thus improving water quality and eliminating smells.

Preliminary investigations indicated that about 420 air diffusers would probably be needed at a capital cost of \$3.5 million, and an annually recurrent costs of \$800,000.

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MILLS APPOINTED TO GENEVA POST

The Director of Commerce and Industry, Mr. David Jordan, announced today the appointment of Mr. Lawrence Mills as an alternate member of the Textile Surveillance Body (TSB) which is based in Geneva.

The TSB is set up to oversee the workings of the Arrangement covering international trade in textiles. Membership for this year consists of representatives from the United States, the European Economic Community, Japan, Korea, Egypt, Finland and Mexico. The eighth seat will be shared by Austria, Jamaica and Singapore.

"The composition of the Body also allows for 'alternatè' representatives and we have been invited by the Government of the Republic of Korea for a nomination to serve as their alternate", Mr. Jordan explained. Mr. Mills has been Hong Kong's chief textile negotiator for the past two years. He will replace Mr. Bill Dorward who was nominated as a member in the TSB, for 1975.

Mr. Mills is already in Geneva to take up his new post. In Hong Kong, Mr. Peter Tsao has been appointed Deputy Director of Commerce and Industry (Commercial Relations) in place of Mr. Mills, in which capacity Mr. Tsao will become Hong Kong's chief trade negotiator. Mr. Dorward will return to Hong Kong to take up the post of Deputy Director of Commerce and Industry (Industry and Administration) in March.

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NO REPRIEVE FOR SHEUNG SHUI TANNERIES

The Government has no intention of granting any further relief to the Sheung Shui tannery owners and will clear the land by July 31 this year.

This was stated by the Secretary for the New Territories, the Hon. David Akers-Jones, in the Legislative Council meeting this afternoon.

In a reply to the Hon. Roger Lobo, Mr. Akers-Jones pointed out that the owners of tanneries at Sheung Shui had been given every assistance and encouragement to develop their new sites at Kwai Chung.

He noted that nearly four years had elapsed since the owners were warned that they would have to move to Kwai Chung or shut down.

"Building plans have been approved but no one has started to build and it is clear that the tannery owners have made no serious effort to move," he told the Council.

He said: "We can no longer tolerate the appalling pollution of Sheung Shui caused by the tanneries."

Mr. Akers-Jones recalled that the sites at Kwai Chung were granted to the tannery owners in 1973 when the land then was valued at \$20 to \$40 per square foot depending on the date of the land exchange entitlements being surrendered.

Furthermore, he said, the owners were given the benefit of paying this in 20 annual instalments at five per cent interest.

"Even when one takes the cost of the acquiring land exchange rights into consideration, no one would, I think, disagree if I said that these terms were far from onerous and, in fact, payment of premium instalments is up-to-date," he said.

He said that during the past two years since the grants were executed, none of the owners had started to construct any new factory buildings.

"It is most unlikely that any suitable premises will be completed and ready for the tanneries to move into before July 31, 1976," he added.

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BILLS PASSED

Three Bills, including the Deposit-taking Companies Bill 1975, passed through their committee stage and third reading in the Legislative Council today.

The other two were the Bankruptcy (Amendment) Bill 1976 and the Pensions (Amendment) Bill 1976.

Four new Bills were introduced into the Council. They were the Companies (Amendment) Bill 1976, the Country Parks Bill 1976, the Wild Animals Protection Bill 1976, and the Apprenticeship Bill 1975.

Debate on them was adjourned.

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