



WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19, 1977

DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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GAMBLING (AMENDMENT) BILL SUPPORTED

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THE RESPONSIBILITY WHICH HAS BEEN LAID ON THE JOCKEY CLUB TO PROVIDE A COMPETITIVE ALTERNATIVE TO ILLEGAL AND UNCONTROLLED GAMBLING IS NOT EASY TO DISCHARGE, THE HON. P.G. WILLIAMS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE GAMBLING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976, HE SAID THE CLUB HAD BEEN REQUIRED TO DIVERT GAMBLING NOT TO PROMOTE IT AND IT HAD TO DO SO AT SOME DISADVANTAGE TO ITS ILLEGAL COMPETITORS WHO COULD OFFER DISCOUNTS AND CONVENIENCE.

MR. WILLIAMS, WHO IS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE STEWARDS OF THE JOCKEY CLUB, POINTED OUT THAT THE ILLEGAL BOOKMAKERS COULD ALSO OFFER CREDIT WHICH IT WOULD BE IMPROPER FOR THE CUSTODIAN OF STAKES TO DO AND WOULD BE AN UNDESIRABLE ENCOURAGEMENT OF BETTING.

ON THE OTHER HAND, HE EMPHASISED, THE JOCKEY CLUB HAD ALWAYS ENJOYED THE ADVANTAGE OF COMPLETE INTEGRITY AS STAKE HOLDERS.

HE STRESSED THAT NO SMALL EFFORT HAD GONE INTO THE PLANNING OF THE OFF COURSE BETTING (OCB) SYSTEM.

+I AM AFRAID THAT TO SOME EXTENT ITS OPENNESS HAS WORKED AGAINST IT,+ HE STATED.

+THERE HAS BEEN A DELIBERATE POLICY TO MAKE THE CENTRES BRIGHT AND CLEAN, SO THAT THEY CAN BE WELL POLICED AND WILL NOT BECOME A HANGOUT FOR UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS.

+BY THAT VERY POLICY, I SUPPOSE, ATTENTION HAS BEEN DRAWN TO LEGAL OPERATIONS AND AWAY FROM THE CROOKS WHO SKULK IN CORNERS AND STAIRCASES TO THE EXTENT THAT MANY WELL-MEANING PEOPLE MAY HAVE LOST SIGHT, OR MAY NEVER EVEN HAVE BEEN AWARE OF THE EVIL WHICH MUST BE COMBATED.+

HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT NO SMALL AMOUNTS OF MONEY HAD GONE INTO THIS EFFORT IN THE LAST THREE YEARS DURING WHICH, THE CLUB HAD SPENT ON OCB CENTRES \$159 MILLION IN CAPITAL AND RUNNING COSTS WHICH HAD YIELDED \$242 MILLION TO GENERAL REVENUE IN BETTING DUTY AND \$63 MILLION TO THE CLUB AS A CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS RACING ADMINISTRATION AND CHARITIES.

MR. WILLIAMS STRESSED THAT THE JOCKEY CLUB WAS DOING THE UTMOST TO COUNTER ILLEGAL BOOKMAKERS AND WAS MAKING GOOD PROGRESS.

+I AM CONFIDENT THAT IT WILL NOT BE LONG BEFORE THE VAST MAJORITY WILL HAVE NO NEED, INCLINATION NOR WISH TO USE AN ILLEGAL CHANNEL IN ORDER TO BET,+ HE ASSERTED.

MR. WILLIAMS EXPLAINED THAT SOME 40 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL JOCKEY CLUB TURNOVER WAS BET ON THE COURSE AND OF THIS, 70 PER CENT CAME FROM ABOUT 7,000 RACEGOERS IN THE MEMBERS' ENCLOSURES.

/HE SAID

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HE SAID THAT ONLY 30 PER CENT OF THE TURNOVER CAME FROM THE PUBLIC ENCLOSURES WHERE THE AVERAGE ATTENDANCE WAS AROUND 25,000.

+PUT ANOTHER WAY MEMBERS OF THE JOCKEY CLUB AND THEIR GUESTS CONSTITUTE ABOUT TWO OR THREE PER CENT OF THE BETTING PUBLIC BOTH ON AND OFF THE COURSE AND YET ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR 30 PER CENT OF ALL WAGERING,+ HE SAID.

+FROM MY OBSERVATION AND KNOWLEDGE, IN THE MEMBERS' ENCLOSURE THE MAJORITY BET IN MODEST SUMS AND THERE IS NO DOUBT AT ALL THAT A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF THE TOTAL IS WAGERED BY A TINY GROUP OF VERY BIG GAMBLERS.

+THIS IS ALSO REFLECTED IN THE TELEPHONE BETTING WHERE FIVE PER CENT OF THE ACCOUNTS MAKE UP 20 PER CENT OF THE AMOUNT BET BY TELEPHONE.+

HE ADDED THAT ILLEGAL BOOKMAKERS COULD STILL FLOURISH BY CONFINING THEIR TARGET TO A SMALL GROUP OF VERY BIG PUNTERS, LARGELY ATTRACTED BY THE DISCOUNTS OFFERED.

+WITH A SMALL NUMBER OF PEOPLE IT IS NOT DIFFICULT TO DEVISE SECRET METHODS OF OPERATING WHICH WILL BE HARD TO DETECT. THE VERY HEAVY PENALTIES PROPOSED IN THIS BILL ON BOTH THE ILLEGAL BOOKMAKER AND THE ILLEGAL BETTOR ARE MOST WELCOME AND WILL BE A GREAT DETERRENT,+ HE STRESSED.

FOUR OTHER UNOFFICIALS WHO ALSO SPOKE ON THE BILL WERE THE HON. T.S. LO, THE HON. JAMES WU, DR. THE HON. HENRY HU AND THE HON. OSWALD CHEUNG.

MR. LO SAID A LAW AGAINST GAMBLING WHICH COULD NOT BE ENFORCED ENCOURAGED CORRUPTION IN A MOST LUCRATIVE ACTIVITY.

HENCE, HE CONTINUED, MODERN LEGISLATION SHOULD BE FOCUSED AGAINST ORGANISED EXPLOITATION OF GAMBLING AND SHOULD BE ENFORCEABLE.

+THE INTENTION OF THE GAMBLING BILL 1976 IS JUST THIS,+ HE SAID. +UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL HAVE STUDIED IT AND AS CONVENOR OF AD HOC GROUP I SHOULD REPORT THAT WE ARE GENERALLY IN ACCORD WITH ITS PRINCIPAL AIMS.+

WHILE STRESSING THAT HE DID NOT +LIKE OR APPROVE OF GAMBLING+, MR. WU SAID HE SUPPORTED THE PROVISIONS OF THE PROPOSED BILL WHICH SAFEGUARDED THE GAMBLERS FROM THE ILLEGAL SYNDICATES AND BOOKMAKERS.

HOWEVER, HE SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW GOVERNMENT'S VIEW ON THE PROBLEM OF ILLEGAL BOOKMAKERS FLOURISHING ON MACAU'S GREYHOUND RACING.

MR. WU WENT ON TO SAY THAT THERE WAS LITTLE SURPRISE THAT LOWER PRODUCTIVITY OCCURRED IN COUNTRIES WHERE GAMBLING, LEGAL OR OTHERWISE, WAS TOLERATED AND WIDESPREAD.

/+FOR,

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+FOR, QUITE APART FROM THE MILLIONS OF DOLLARS OF STAKES THAT ARE LOST, THE SOCIETY BEGINS TO LOSE IN MAN-HOURS OF PRODUCTIVE WORK WHEN THE GAMBLER PUTS HIS MIND TO STUDYING THE TIPS AND SELECTING HIS BETS,+ HE SAID.

+THERE IS REALLY NO ADVANTAGE IN LEGALISING GAMBLING, AS IS PROVEN BY THE INTRODUCTION OF OFF-COURSE BETTING CENTRES TO COMPETE WITH THE ILLEGAL SYNDICATES. EVEN MORE HARMFUL WOULD BE THE INTRODUCTION OF FANCIFUL PRIZES TO ENTICE GAMBLERS,+ HE POINTED OUT.

DR. HU SAID IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT THE AIM OF THE BILL WAS TO CONTAIN GAMBLING WITHIN SENSIBLE LIMITS AND TO MINIMISE ITS EVILS.

HOWEVER, HE POINTED OUT, THE SUCCESS OF THE BILL DEPENDED LARGELY ON ITS IMPLEMENTATION.

+AT PRESENT THE ROYAL HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN SUPPORTING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE BILL ESPECIALLY IN ELIMINATING ILLEGAL BOOKMAKING OR OFF-COURSE BETTING,+ HE SAID.

THE HON. OSWALD CHEUNG EXPRESSED FEAR THAT THERE WOULD STILL BE A LACUNA IN HONG KONG'S LAWS EVEN THOUGH THE BILL WAS ENACTED.

HE POINTED OUT THAT DOG RACING FLOURISHED IN MACAU AND IT COMMANDED SUFFICIENT ATTENTION IN HONG KONG TO INDUCE LOCAL NEWSPAPERS, CHINESE AND ENGLISH, TO DEVOTE MANY COLUMNS TO THE RUNNERS, THEIR FORM AND PROSPECTS.

YET, HE EMPHASISED, THERE WERE NO LEGITIMATE CHANNELS THROUGH WHICH WAGERS COULD BE LAID.

+I SUSPECT THAT A FAIR SIZED INDUSTRY EXISTS TO ACCEPT ILLEGAL BETS ON DOGS AND I WOULD ALSO SUSPECT THAT THE INDUSTRY RECEIVES CORRUPT PROTECTION. IT IS AN UNHEALTHY STATE OF AFFAIRS,+ MR. CHEUNG SAID.

+AFTER THIS BILL HAS BEEN PASSED,+ HE POINTED OUT, +I WOULD URGE GOVERNMENT TO EXAMINE THIS PROBLEM IN SOME DEPTH, AND IN THE PROCESS GOVERNMENT MAY WISH TO CONSULT THOSE WITH KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE OF THESE MATTERS. THIS SUGGESTION HAS THE SUPPORT OF ALL MY UNOFFICIAL COLLEAGUES.+

REPLYING TO POINTS RAISED BY THE UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON. JOHN HOBLEY, SAID THAT MR. LO AND MR. CHEUNG HAD RIGHTLY FACED UP TO THE PROBLEM OF BETTING ON MACAU'S DOG RACING AND ASKED THE GOVERNMENT TO WATCH THE SITUATION CLOSELY WITH A VIEW TO REVIEW IF NECESSARY.

/+WE SHALL

+WE SHALL BE DOING SO,+ HE PROMISED.

HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE BILL ATTACKED EQUALLY ALL FORMS OF GAMBLING WHICH WERE NOT SPECIFICALLY AUTHORISED BY IT AND THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CERTAINLY WISH TO CONSIDER WHAT FURTHER STEPS WERE NECESSARY IF THE NEW LAW AND THE ALTERNATIVE LAWFUL WAYS OF BETTING WHICH WERE NOW AVAILABLE DID NOT SOLVE THE PROBLEM.

HE CONFIRMED THAT HE WOULD BE MOVING AMENDMENTS IN COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO THE VARIOUS MATTERS TO WHICH REFERENCE HAD BEEN MADE.

HE CONTINUED: +I ALSO READILY CONFIRM THAT THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT INTEND THAT THE BILL SHOULD DEPRIVE MR. CHEUNG, AND OTHERS OF LIKE MIND, OF THEIR OCCASIONAL +FLUTTER+, ON THE DERBY OR OTHER SUCH RACE.+

MR. HOBLEY PRAISED THE JOCKEY CLUB FOR ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GOVERNMENT POLICY IN RELATION TO GAMBLING BY PROVIDING CONTROLLED FACILITIES FOR BETTING AS A COUNTER TO THE WIDESPREAD ILLEGAL BETTING OPERATIONS.

HE SAID: +THE GOVERNMENT ACKNOWLEDGES THAT CONTRIBUTION AND THE IMAGINATIVE WAY IN WHICH IT HAS BEEN MADE.

+IT IS ALSO CONFIDENT THAT THE CLUB WILL CONTINUE TO MEET THE PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY ACCEPTED BY MR. WILLIAMS AS RESTING WITH IT. HE PUTS THE POSITION VERY ACCURATELY WHEN HE SAYS THAT THE CLUB'S ROLE IS TO DIVERT NOT TO PROMOTE IT, AT THE OFF-COURSE BETTING CENTRES.+

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MOVE TO PROTECT PICNICKERS
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THE POLICE ARE ON THE LOOKOUT TO IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THEIR PRESENCE IN POPULAR RURAL AREAS, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON. LEWIS DAVIES, SAID TODAY.

FOR INSTANCE, HE SAID, A RURAL POLICE UNIT WAS FORMED RECENTLY FOR EXPERIMENTAL PURPOSES ON HONG KONG ISLAND.

+THESE OFFICERS PATROL THROUGHOUT THE RECREATIONAL AREAS ON HONG KONG ISLAND AND THE NEW TERRITORIES, NOT LIMITING THEMSELVES TO THE AREAS EASILY ACCESSIBLE BY ROAD,+ HE SAID. +IN ADDITION SOME HELICOPTER SURVEILLANCE IS PROVIDED.+

MR. DAVIES WAS REPLYING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. ALEX WU ON PROTECTION AGAINST ROBBERIES PROVIDED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO HOLIDAY-MAKERS IN REMOTE AREAS.

HE SAID THE MOST IMPORTANT MEANS OF PROTECTION WAS BY POLICE PATROLS ON FOOT AND IN VEHICLES AND BY THE USE OF POLICE DOGS, THE FREQUENCY OF PATROLS DEPENDING ON THE POPULARITY OF THE AREA AND INCREASING AT WEEKENDS AND ON PUBLIC HOLIDAYS.

PROTECTION AGAINST ROBBERY IN OTHER PARTS OF HONG KONG WERE PROVIDED BY THE SAME MEANS, HE SAID. HOWEVER, HE WARNED THAT THERE WAS NEED TO BE CAREFUL NOT TO DILUTE THE POLICE PRESENCE IN URBAN AREAS.

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GOVT. URGED TO FURTHER PROMOTE ADULT EDUCATION
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THE HON. MISS KO SIU-WAH TODAY URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO FURTHER PROMOTE ADULT EDUCATION IN HONG KONG.

SPEAKING IN THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, SHE STRESSED THE NEED FOR A WELL-DEFINED POLICY FOR ADULT EDUCATION.

SHE POINTED OUT THAT THERE SHOULD BE A SYSTEMATIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE FUNDING OF ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMMES.

IN PARTICULAR, CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE PROVISION OF FINANCIAL OR OTHER SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTARY BODIES AND INCREASING THE PRESENT LOW PAY FOR TEACHING STAFF OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S ADULT EDUCATION SECTION.

A POLICY SHOULD BE FORMULATED, SHE SAID, FOR THE USE OF EXISTING SCHOOL BUILDINGS FOR ADULT EDUCATION.

ON TEACHING MATERIALS, MISS KO SAID THOSE AVAILABLE AT PRESENT WERE INTENDED FOR CHILDREN OF SCHOOL AGE ONLY. SHE FELT THAT THEY SHOULD BE CONTINUALLY UP-DATED AND IMPROVED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ADULT STUDENTS.

MISS KO ALSO SAW THE NEED TO RECRUIT MORE PROFESSIONAL STAFF AND PROVIDE IN-SERVICE OR FURTHER TRAINING FOR THE EXISTING STAFF IN THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S ADULT EDUCATION SECTION.

SHE ALSO CALLED FOR MORE COOPERATION AND COORDINATION BETWEEN THE EXISTING VOLUNTARY BODIES, GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, EDUCATIONAL BODIES AND THE MASS MEDIA TO MAKE FULL USE OF RESOURCES AVAILABLE AND TO AVOID DUPLICATION.

MISS KO SAID THAT IN HER VIEW ADULT EDUCATION CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE COMMUNITY IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS :

- * TO HELP TO BETTER OUR SOCIETY BY EDUCATING THE INDIVIDUALS TO BECOME MORE RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS BY DEVELOPING IN THEM A SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS, A CONCERN FOR SOCIETY, AND A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY,
- * TO HELP PREVENT VIOLENCE AND CRIME BY FOSTERING A HEALTHY SENSE OF VALUES AND ALSO BY PROVIDING MEANINGFUL PURSUITS FOR PEOPLE TO OCCUPY THEMSELVES,
- * TO PROMOTE THE LEVEL OF GENERAL EDUCATION ON WHICH THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNITY RELIES HEAVILY,

/* TO ENRICH

- * TO ENRICH ONE'S LIFE BY EDUCATING PEOPLE TO BE BETTER PARENTS. A COMMUNITY OF BETTER PARENTS WHO PROVIDE A BETTER HOME LIFE FOR THEIR FAMILIES, IS MUCH LESS LIKELY TO BREED VIOLENCE AND CRIME,
- * TO HELP DEVELOP THE INDIVIDUAL'S ABILITY TO ADJUST TO CHANGE AND TO COPE WITH NEW SITUATIONS AND PROBLEMS, AND
- * TO TEACH PEOPLE THE ART OF LIVING AND TO IMPROVE HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS.

SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF MISS KO'S VIEWS, THE HON. JAMES WU FELT THAT THE UNIVERSITIES, THE POLYTECHNIC AND TECHNICAL INSTITUTES SHOULD EXPLORE AND IMPLEMENT FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADULTS TO RETURN TO THE EDUCATIONAL STREAM BY A VARIETY OF FLEXIBLE COURSES.

MR. WU THOUGHT THAT RECURRENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR TECHNICAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION SHOULD BE AVAILABLE TO PEOPLE OF ALL AGES REGARDLESS OF MINIMUM FORMAL EDUCATIONAL ENTRY REQUIREMENTS OR OF CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS.

MR. WU DESCRIBED ADULT EDUCATION AS AN IMPORTANT COMPONENT OF HONG KONG'S RESOURCES THAT +MAKES FOR A SKILLED AND ADAPTABLE LABOUR FORCE, PERSONAL WORK SATISFACTION, TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH.+

+I BELIEVE THAT GOVERNMENT NOW TRULY RECOGNISES THE IMPORTANCE OF TECHNICAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION IN THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE VOCATIONAL COMPETENCE OF OUR PEOPLE THAT IS SO VITAL TO OUR ECONOMIC WELL-BEING.+

REPLYING TO THE POINTS RAISED BY THE TWO UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS, THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, THE HON. KENNETH TOPLEY, SAID THAT A WELL DEFINED POLICY ON ADULT EDUCATION IMPLIED WELL-DEFINED PRIORITIES.

HE HOPED THAT THE GREEN PAPER ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF SENIOR SECONDARY AND TERTIARY EDUCATION WOULD PROVIDE FIRM GUIDELINES FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT.

+THE AIM MUST BE TO ACHIEVE A WELL-DEFINED POLICY, BUT I BELIEVE A CERTAIN GRADUALISM IS INEVITABLE BECAUSE WE MUST TAKE ACCOUNT OF WHAT IS ALREADY BEING DONE ON THE GROUND AND WHICH WE WILL NOT WISH TO SWEEP AWAY BUT RATHER TO MOULD TO LONG TERM AIMS,+ HE SAID.

FOR THE MEDIUM TERM, MR. TOPLEY INDICATED THAT HE WOULD NEED TO STRENGTHEN THE BASE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION IN THAT SECTION OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT +NOT JUST TO CONDUCT OUR OWN OPERATIONS IN THE FIELD MORE EFFECTIVELY, BUT ALSO TO PROVIDE A SOURCE OF ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE TO OTHER AGENCIES.+

+THERE IS SOME IMMEDIATE POTENTIAL FOR BETTER COORDINATION PARTICULARLY FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR OF ADULT EDUCATION AND I HOPE TO BE ABLE TO TAKE AN EARLY INITIATIVE IN THIS FIELD.+

THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION REFERRED TO THE THREE CHARACTERISTICS OF ADULT EDUCATION WHICH DISTINGUISH IT FROM OTHER FIELDS OF EDUCATION AND WHICH MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO SET WELL-DEFINED PRIORITIES IN A WELL-DEFINED POLICY.

THE FIRST IS THE PART-TIME AND VOLUNTARY NATURE OF STUDENT PARTICIPATION WHICH MEANS THAT THE COURSES ARE SUBJECT TO MARKET CONSIDERATIONS.

+ADULTS ATTEND COURSES BECAUSE THEY WANT TO. IF COURSES DO NOT ATTRACT THEM, THEY DO NOT REGISTER. IF COURSES DO NOT PLEASE THEM, THEY STOP COMING. WE MUST PLEASE THE CUSTOMER,+ HE EXPLAINED.

THE SECOND IS THAT ADULT EDUCATION RELIES LARGELY ON THE BETTER USE OF EXISTING RESOURCES. MR. TOPLEY EXPLAINED THAT SOME TEACHERS WERE PREPARED TO DO MORE IN THEIR SPARE TIME AND SOME BUILDINGS WERE NOT FULLY USED THROUGHOUT THE DAY OR YEAR.

+NOT TO USE THESE VALUABLE RESOURCES BUT TO BASE ADULT EDUCATION CHIEFLY ON FRESH RESOURCES IN STAFF AND ACCOMMODATION WOULD BE MUCH MORE EXPENSIVE AND COULD BE DESCRIBED AS WASTEFUL,+ HE SAID.

THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION POINTED OUT THAT THE MARSHALLING AND DEPLOYMENT OF EXISTING RESOURCES WERE ALSO SUBJECT TO CONSTRAINTS BECAUSE THERE WAS NO COMPULSION ON TEACHERS TO TEACH ADDITIONAL COURSES AND THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR SCHOOL PREMISES MUST BE PERSUADED TO RELEASE ACCOMMODATION FOR SUCH CLASSES.

+MARKET CONSIDERATIONS ARE AGAIN IMPORTANT AND BOTH TEACHERS AND OWNERS OF PREMISES MUST BE OFFERED A DEAL SUFFICIENTLY ATTRACTIVE TO ENCOURAGE THEIR WILLING COOPERATION,+ HE SAID.

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STAGGERED WORKING HOURS

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THE GOVERNMENT IS IN PRINCIPLE PREPARED TO CONSIDER ANY PRACTICAL SUGGESTION ON A STAGGERED WORKING HOURS SYSTEM WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE CIVIL SERVICE TO ALLEVIATE THE PROBLEM OF TRAFFIC CONGESTION AND OVERCROWDING IN RESTAURANTS DURING PEAK HOURS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON. DENIS BRAY, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. WONG LAM IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MR. BRAY INDICATED THAT MATERIAL WAS BEING ASSEMBLED ON THE SUBJECT IN ORDER TO SEEK THE VIEWS OF THE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

+IN PRINCIPLE, THE GOVERNMENT IS PREPARED TO CONSIDER ANY PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS THAT EMERGE ABOUT ENCOURAGEMENT OF STAGGERING WORKING HOURS, BUT IT WOULD STOP SHORT OF COERCION,+ HE SAID.

MR. BRAY NOTED THAT THERE WAS A SPREAD OF NORMAL WORKING HOURS BETWEEN 8.30 A.M. AND 5.30 P.M. WITHIN THE CIVIL SERVICE, WITH SHIFT AND OVERTIME WORK TAKING PLACE OUTSIDE THESE HOURS.

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BETTER PROTECTION FOR WORKERS PROPOSED

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THREE BILLS DESIGNED TO GIVE WORKERS BETTER PROTECTION IN THE EVENT OF BANKRUPTCY OF AN EMPLOYER OR LIQUIDATION OF A COMPANY WERE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THEY ARE THE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1977, THE BANKRUPTCY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1977, AND THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1977.

MOVING THE MOTION FOR THE SECOND READING OF THE THREE BILLS, THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, MR. IAN PRICE, SAID THE PURPOSE OF THE FIRST BILL WAS TO AMEND THE COMPANIES ORDINANCE IN THREE WAYS -- THE FIRST BEING TO INCORPORATE INTO THE ORDINANCE THE EXISTING PROVISIONS CONTAINED IN THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ORDINANCE= THE SECOND BEING TO INCLUDE PAYMENT OF WAGES IN LIEU OF NOTICE (PROVIDED UNDER THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE) INTO THE LIST OF DEBTS WHICH HAVE STATUTORY PRIORITY OVER OTHER DEBTS IN THE EVENT OF LIQUIDATION OF A COMPANY AND THE THIRD BEING TO RAISE THE LIMIT OF PRIORITY DEBTS FOR SALARY, WAGES AND SEVERANCE PAYMENTS TO \$8,000 FOR ANY ONE CREDITOR.

THE SECOND BILL, SAID MR. PRICE, WAS TO AMEND IN THE SAME MANNER THE BANKRUPTCY ORDINANCE DEALING WITH THE DISTRIBUTION OF PROPERTY OF A BANKRUPT EMPLOYER WHILE THE THIRD WAS TO REPEAL THE PRESENT PROVISIONS ON PRIORITY PAYMENT FOR WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION IN THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ORDINANCE BECAUSE IT WAS CONSIDERED MORE APPROPRIATE TO HAVE THESE EMBODIED IN THE COMPANIES ORDINANCE AND THE BANKRUPTCY ORDINANCE.

EXPLAINING THE PROPOSAL TO INCLUDE PAYMENT OF WAGES IN LIEU OF NOTICE INTO THE LIST OF DEBTS WHICH HAD PRIORITY, MR. PRICE SAID : +THIS CHANGE IS SUGGESTED BECAUSE THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE PLACES A LEGAL OBLIGATION ON AN EMPLOYER TO PAY WAGES IN LIEU OF NOTICE TO AN EMPLOYEE ON TERMINATION OF A CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT WITHOUT NOTICE.

+HOWEVER,+ HE SAID, +IN THE EVENT OF THE WINDING UP OF A COMPANY WAGES IN LIEU OF NOTICE, THOUGH A STATUTORY RIGHT, ARE PRESENTLY RANKED ONLY AS ORDINARY DEBTS.

+IN A NUMBER OF CASES, THIS HAS MEANT THAT A DISMISSED WORKER HAS BEEN DEPRIVED OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IN THE FORM OF WAGES IN LIEU OF NOTICE -- AND THIS IS PARTICULARLY UNFAIR WHERE THE AMOUNT OF WAGES, WHICH RANKED FOR PRIORITY, WAS SMALL OR WHERE THE EMPLOYEE DID NOT QUALIFY FOR SEVERANCE PAY UNDER THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE.

+IT IS CONSIDERED THAT TO INCLUDE WAGES IN LIEU OF NOTICE AMONGST PRIORITY CLAIMS IN THE EVENT OF INSOLVENCY, WOULD GREATLY FACILITATE THE SOLVING OF CERTAIN TYPES OF DISPUTES, WOULD TAKE MUCH OF THE HEAT OUT OF THEM, AND INDEED MIGHT PREVENT SOME DISPUTE FROM ARISING,+ MR. PRICE ADDED.

+WITH REGARD TO THE LIMIT OF \$2,000 FOR ANY ONE CREDITOR IN RESPECT OF WAGES IN LIEU OF NOTICE, THIS FIGURE HAS BEEN DECIDED UPON BECAUSE IT IS IN LINE WITH THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE WHICH STATES THAT THE ORDINANCE DOES NOT APPLY TO A PERSON EMPLOYED OTHERWISE THAN BY WAY OF MANUAL LABOUR WHOSE WAGES EXCEED \$2,000 A MONTH,+ MR. PRICE SAID.

ON THE RAISING OF THE LIMIT OF PRIORITY DEBTS FOR SALARY, WAGES AND SEVERANCE PAYMENTS TO \$8,000 FOR ANY ONE CREDITOR FROM THE PRESENT LEVEL OF \$6,000 MR. PRICE EXPLAINED THAT PREVIOUSLY THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE FIXED THE FIGURE OF \$1,500 A MONTH -- \$6,000 BEING FOUR TIMES \$1,500 -- AND THE CHANGE TO AN \$8,000 LIMIT FOR THESE PAYMENTS REFLECTED THE FACT THAT THE FIGURE IN THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE WAS RAISED IN 1974 FROM \$1,500 TO \$2,000 A MONTH. IN OTHER WORDS THE NEW CEILING SHOULD BE FOUR TIMES \$2,000 WHICH EQUALLED \$8,000, THE NEW FIGURE.

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NEED TO INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF SMOKING HAZARDS
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THE GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED AGAINST INTRODUCING ANY LEGISLATION TO PROHIBIT ADVERTISING OF CIGARETTES OR TO MAKE IT MANDATORY FOR CIGARETTE PACKETS TO CARRY A HEALTH WARNING NOTICE.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR. THE HON. HENRY HU, THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, THE HON. F.K. LI, EXPLAINED THAT THE DECISION WAS REACHED AFTER A CAREFUL CONSIDERATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS ON SEVERAL COUNTRIES WHERE SUCH RESTRICTIONS WERE IMPOSED.

+THOUGH THESE FINDINGS DIFFER IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES,+ MR. LI SAID, +THE GENERAL CONCLUSION IS THAT NEITHER MEASURE HAS ANY SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON CIGARETTE CONSUMPTION.+

HE ADDED THAT AT THE THIRD WORLD CONFERENCE ON SMOKING AND HEALTH HELD IN NEW YORK IN JUNE 1975, THE MAJORITY OF MEDICAL EXPERTS ATTENDING CONCLUDED THAT HEALTH WARNINGS ON CIGARETTE PACKETS, RESTRICTIONS ON ADVERTISING, ANTI-SMOKING CAMPAIGNS AND THE STEADILY INCREASING TOBACCO TAX IN WESTERN COUNTRIES SEEMED TO HAVE DONE LITTLE TO INHIBIT SMOKING.

HOWEVER, THE SECRETARY TOLD THE COUNCIL THAT THE GOVERNMENT RECOGNISED THE NEED TO INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF SMOKING HAZARDS AND HAD DECIDED TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM IN THREE DIFFERENT WAYS.

THE FIRST IS TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC, ESPECIALLY THE YOUNG, ON THE DANGERS OF SMOKING.

THE SECOND IS TO ADOPT PERSUASIVE MEASURES TO REDUCE SMOKING IN PUBLIC ENCLOSED PLACES AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND THE THIRD IS TO SEEK THE COOPERATION OF THE CIGARETTE INDUSTRY IN DRAWING UP A VOLUNTARY CODE OF ADVERTISING PRACTICE.

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NO DEFINITE PLANS FOR A PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
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CONSIDERABLE THOUGHT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO THE POSSIBLE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF A PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE ALTHOUGH NO DEFINITE PLANS HAVE YET BEEN FORMULATED, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, TOLD LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. F.W. LI WHO HAD ASKED IF THE GOVERNMENT HAD ANY DEFINITE PLANS FOR SUCH A COMMITTEE TO ENSURE THAT THE FUNDS PROVIDED BY THE COUNCIL THROUGH THE APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE WERE SPENT IN THE WAY INTENDED.

MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID THE PRACTICE ELSEWHERE HAD BEEN RESEARCHED BY THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT AND HE ENVISAGED THAT SUCH A COMMITTEE WOULD BE A COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL, WITH THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT, THE DEPUTY FINANCIAL SECRETARY, AND THE DIRECTOR OF ACCOUNTING SERVICES IN ATTENDANCE.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID: +WE HAVE NOT YET WORKED OUT JUST HOW SUCH A COMMITTEE MIGHT FIT INTO OUR EXISTING CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS, BUT THE AIM WOULD BE TO COMPLETE THE PROCESS OF THIS COUNCIL'S CONTROL OVER THE USE OF PUBLIC FUNDS WHICH BEGINS WITH THE PASSING OF THE APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE.

+THIS WOULD BE DONE BY, FIRST, EXAMINING THE ACCOUNTS OF THE GOVERNMENT AND POSSIBLY THOSE OF OTHER ORGANISATIONS FINANCED WHOLLY OR PARTLY FROM PUBLIC FUNDS.

+AND THIS IS DONE, SECONDLY, BY ENQUIRING INTO MATTERS RAISED BY THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT IN HIS REPORTS TO THE GOVERNMENT ON THE ACCOUNTS WHICH REPORTS ARE LAID BEFORE THIS COUNCIL.+

+THE COMMITTEE WOULD REPORT ON ITS ENDEAVOURS TO THIS COUNCIL,+ HE ADDED.

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CAKESHOP ROBBERIES
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WITHIN THE LAST 15 MONTHS THE SEVEN CAKESHOPS OPERATED BY MARIA BAKERY LIMITED WERE ROBBED ON 22 OCCASIONS AND ONE OF THEM WAS ROBBED SIX TIMES DURING THE PERIOD.

THIS WAS DISCLOSED TODAY BY THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON. LEWIS DAVIES, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS FROM THE HON. JAMES WU.

+TO MINIMISE THE CHANCES OF FURTHER ROBBERIES IN THIS CHAIN CAKESHOPS, THE PREVENTION OF CRIME OFFICER CONCERNED HAS INTERVIEWED VARIOUS MEMBERS OF THE COMPANY'S STAFF ON SECURITY PROCEDURES,+ MR. DAVIES SAID.

+ON-SITE INSPECTIONS HAVE BEEN MADE OF SOME OF THE PREMISES AND THE POLICE HAVE ALSO INVESTIGATED THE CASES IN CONSIDERABLE DEPTH AND ARE CONTINUING TO DO SO, HE ADDED. +UNFORTUNATELY, TO DATE NO ARRESTS HAVE BEEN MADE.+

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19, 1977

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EFFICIENT USE OF PUBLIC FUNDS

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IT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S OBJECTIVE TO ENSURE THAT PUBLIC FUNDS ARE USED EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. MISS LYDIA DUNN WHO ASKED IF THE GOVERNMENT WAS SATISFIED THAT EXISTING REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES WERE ADEQUATE TO ENSURE THE EFFICIENT EXPENDITURE OF PUBLIC FUNDS, AS NO FEWER THAN 19 PARAGRAPHS OF THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT'S ANNUAL REPORT ON THE GOVERNMENT'S ACCOUNTS FOR 1975-76 WERE DEVOTED TO HEADS OF EXPENDITURE RELATING TO THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID: +REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES DESIGNED TO HELP IN ACHIEVING THIS OBJECTIVE CAN NEVER BE PERFECTLY DRAFTED, LET ALONE INVARIABLY OBEYED. BUT I THINK WE DO LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE AND I THINK WE MAKE IMPROVEMENTS WHENEVER WE CAN.

+IN THIS CONTEXT, THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT ON THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS IS INVALUABLE. HE COMMENTS - AND PUBLICLY -- OVER A MUCH WIDER RANGE OF SUBJECTS THAN DOES A COMMERCIAL AUDITOR AND IN RECENT YEARS HE HAS PLACED MORE AND MORE EMPHASIS ON THE VALUE FOR MONEY ASPECTS.+

AS FOR THE 19 PARAGRAPHS OF THE REPORT DEVOTED TO HEADS OF EXPENDITURE RELATING TO THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID, HE DID NOT THINK ANY INFERENCE COULD BE DRAWN.

+AFTER ALL THERE WERE 12 SUCH HEADS, OUT OF A TOTAL OF 69, ACCOUNTING FOR OVER 28 PER CENT OF TOTAL EXPENDITURE IN 1975-76.

+AND, IN FAIRNESS, THERE IS ANOTHER POINT TO BE MADE: NOT ALL OF THE DECISIONS WHICH ATTRACTED CRITICISM IN THE RELEVANT PARAGRAPHS OF THE REPORT WERE TAKEN BY THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS OR MEMBERS OF HIS STAFF,+ HE SAID.

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CAMPAIGN TO REDUCE EXHAUST SMOKE FROM VEHICLES
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THE GOVERNMENT WILL SHORTLY BE MOUNTING A PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN TO PERSUADE MOTORISTS TO KEEP THEIR VEHICLES PROPERLY MAINTAINED SO AS TO REDUCE THE EMISSION OF EXHAUST SMOKE.

THE CAMPAIGN, TO BE CARRIED OUT WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION, WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY STEPPED UP EFFORTS TO RIGOROUSLY ENFORCE THE LAW AGAINST SUCH OFFENCES.

THIS WAS REVEALED TODAY BY THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. ROGER LOBO IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MR. JONES SAID THAT GIVEN THE PRESENT STATE OF THE LAW, THE GOVERNMENT WAS SATISFIED THAT EVERYTHING POSSIBLE WAS BEING DONE TO REDUCE TO A MINIMUM THE POLLUTION AND CONSEQUENTIAL HEALTH HAZARD CAUSED BY VEHICLES EMITTING EXCESSIVE SMOKE.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE QUESTION OF WHAT CONSTITUTED EXCESSIVE SMOKE HAD BEEN +A MATTER OF SUBJECTIVE JUDGEMENT+ WHICH COULD CAUSE DIFFICULTIES IN SOME CASES.

+FOR THIS REASON, THE GOVERNMENT IS NOW PROPOSING TO SEEK AMENDMENT TO THE REGULATIONS SO AS TO LAY DOWN EXACT EXHAUST EMISSION STANDARDS AND TO TEST THESE BY MEANS OF SMOKEMETERS, WHICH CAN BE USED ON THE SPOT,+ MR. JONES SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THE POLICE AND THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT WERE BEING ISSUED WITH THESE SMOKEMETERS AND THEIR USE WOULD MAKE IT EASIER TO ENFORCE THE REGULATIONS.

THE SECRETARY NOTED THAT VEHICLES REPORTED TO BE EMITTING EXCESSIVE SMOKE WERE REQUIRED TO BE PRESENTED FOR INSPECTION AND THEIR OWNERS WERE THEN ASKED TO RECTIFY ANY MECHANICAL FAULTS.

LAST YEAR, 3,000 VEHICLES WERE INSPECTED FOR THIS CAUSE, HE SAID.

MR. JONES FURTHER POINTED OUT THAT EVERY VEHICLE CALLED IN FOR INSPECTION, FOR WHATEVER REASON, WAS ALSO CHECKED FOR EXCESSIVE SMOKE AND, WHERE NECESSARY, REMEDIAL WORK WAS REQUIRED TO BE DONE.

BESIDES, ALL NEW VEHICLES IMPORTED INTO HONG KONG ARE NOW REQUIRED BY LAW TO MEET THE HIGH STANDARDS OF EXHAUST EMISSION ADOPTED IN THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY.

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DEMAND FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT HIGHER AT PEAK HOURS
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THERE IS A HIGHER DEMAND FOR ALL FORMS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT, INCLUDING TAXIS, DURING PEAK HOURS, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. PETER C. WONG, HE SAID: +THE PROBLEM IS MADE WORSE IN THE EVENING PEAK BY THE UNFORTUNATE HABIT ADOPTED BY THE TAXI TRADE OF CHANGING SHIFTS AT ABOUT THAT TIME.+

IN REPLY TO MR. WONG'S SECOND QUESTION, MR. JONES SAID WHEN TAXI LICENCES WERE TRANSFERRED, THE CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS MADE BETWEEN PARTIES CONCERNED DID NOT HAVE TO BE REPORTED.

HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE MARKET PRICE FOR THE TRANSFER OF TAXI LICENCES WAS AS HIGH AS \$180,000 IN SOME CASES.

TURNING TO THE ISSUE BY TENDER OF MORE TAXI LICENCES, HE SAID IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO CALL TENDERS FOR 100 ADDITIONAL TAXI LICENCES EVERY MONTH.

HOWEVER, HE POINTED OUT THAT IT WOULD NOT BE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST TO INCREASE THIS MONTHLY FIGURE ABOVE 100.

+ALL NEW TAXIS HAVE TO BE INSPECTED BY THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT BEFORE THEY CAN GO ON THE ROADS, AND, THEREAFTER, THEY ARE RE-INSPECTED EVERY 12 MONTHS AND THEIR METERS EVERY SIX MONTHS,+ HE SAID.

+GIVEN THE DEMANDS NOW BEING PLACED ON THE DEPARTMENT'S INSPECTION FACILITIES, IT CANNOT AT PRESENT HANDLE MORE THAN 100 ADDITIONAL TAXIS PER MONTH,+ HE ADDED.

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PILLAR POSTING BOXES IN CENTRAL ADEQUATE

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THERE ARE 13 PILLAR POSTING BOXES IN THE HEART OF CENTRAL DISTRICT WITHIN AN AREA OF 0.16 SQUARE MILE BOUNDED BY QUEEN'S ROAD CENTRAL TO THE SOUTH, THE WATERFRONT IN THE NORTH, MURRAY ROAD IN THE EAST AND GILMAN STREET TO THE WEST, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON. DAVID JEAFFRESON, SAID TODAY.

+IN ADDITION+, HE CONTINUED, +20 OFFICE BUILDINGS ARE PROVIDED WITH MAIL CHUTES TO WHICH THE GENERAL PUBLIC HAS ACCESS= AND THERE ARE THREE POST OFFICES AT WHICH LETTERS CAN BE POSTED.+

+THIRTY-SIX POSTING POINTS IN THIS SMALL AREA DOESN'T SEEM TO ME TO CONSTITUTE AN ACUTE SHORTAGE+, HE SAID, IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS BY THE HON. P.G. WILLIAMS ON THE ADEQUACY OF POSTING BOXES IN HONG KONG, PARTICULARLY IN THE HEART OF THE CENTRAL DISTRICT.

MR. JEAFFRESON SAID THAT THERE WERE 235 PILLAR BOXES ON HONG KONG ISLAND, 185 IN KOWLOON AND 139 IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, AND HE UNDERSTOOD THE POSTMASTER GENERAL HAD RECEIVED NO COMPLAINTS IN RECENT YEARS THAT THE NUMBER WAS INADEQUATE.

HE SAID THAT THE GPO BUILDING HAD BEEN LITTLE MORE THAN MOVED FROM ONE SIDE OF CONNAUGHT ROAD TO THE OTHER AND EVEN SO, TWO DAYS AFTER THE OLD GPO BUILDING WAS CLOSED, THE POSTMASTER GENERAL PUT A PILLAR BOX A FEW YARDS AWAY FROM THE OLD BUILDING, ON THE OTHER SIDE OF PEDDER STREET.

HE DID NOT REALLY THINK HE HAD A CASE TO ANSWER ON THE NEED TO INSTALL MORE POSTING BOXES FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

+PERHAPS THE PROBLEM IS THAT THE PILLAR BOXES ARE NOT CONSPICUOUS ENOUGH, ONE POINT I SHALL ASK THE POSTMASTER GENERAL TO CONSIDER,+ HE SAID.

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BILL PASSED

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ONE BILL PASSED THE COMMITTEE STAGE AND THIRD READING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

IT WAS THE POUNDS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1977.

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CAMERA-SHY PRISONERS PROTECTED BY PRISON RULE
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THERE IS IN REALITY LITTLE THAT CAN PROPERLY OR PRACTICABLY BE DONE TO PREVENT A PRISONER FROM COVERING HIS FACE WHEN FACING REPORTERS AND TV CAMERAS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING SOLICITOR GENERAL, THE HON. D.R. BOY, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR. THE HON. S.Y. CHUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

+ANY PHYSICAL ACTION ON THE PART OF THE POLICE OR PRISONS OFFICERS TO RESTRAIN A PRISONER'S EFFORTS TO COVER HIS FACE OR IN SOME OTHER WAY TO HIDE HIS FACE, WOULD TECHNICALLY CONSTITUTE AN ASSAULT,+ HE EXPLAINED.

IT WOULD ALSO BE LIKELY TO CONSTITUTE AN UGLY SPECTACLE, HE ADDED.

MR. BOY QUOTED PRISON RULE 20 WHICH PROVIDES THAT +WHEN PRISONERS ARE BEING REMOVED TO OR FROM PRISON, THEY SHALL BE EXPOSED TO PUBLIC VIEW AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE, AND PROPER SAFEGUARDS SHALL BE ADOPTED TO PROTECT THEM FROM INSULT OR CURIOSITY.+

IN ANSWER TO ANOTHER QUESTION, MR. BOY SAID THAT WHILE IT WAS UNDOUBTEDLY TRUE THAT CERTAINTY OF DETECTION AND PUBLIC SHAME WERE THE GREATEST DETERRENTS, +IT IS DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT THE FURTHER EXPOSURE INVOLVED IN PREVENTING A CRIMINAL FROM COVERING HIS FACE WOULD ADD SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE DETERRENT ELEMENT.+

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PROPER MAINTENANCE OF GAS APPLIANCES
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THE PROBLEM OF DEATHS CAUSED BY SUFFOCATION FROM LACK OF OXYGEN IN POORLY VENTILATED PLACES IS DIFFICULT TO COMBAT BECAUSE IT HAPPENS IN THE PRIVACY OF PEOPLES' HOMES, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES, TOLD LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. MISS KO SIU WAH, HE POINTED OUT THAT DEATHS OF THE SORT REFERRED TO BY MISS KO WERE NOT CAUSED BY GAS POISONING AS SUCH BUT BY SUFFOCATION FROM LACK OF OXYGEN TOGETHER WITH AN ACCUMULATION OF CARBON MONOXIDE DUE TO FAULTY MAINTENANCE OF THE GAS HEATING APPLIANCE.

HOWEVER, MR. JONES SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS EXAMINING THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THESE DEATHS TO SEE IF ANYTHING COULD BE DONE TO REDUCE THE CHANCES OF SIMILAR OCCURRENCES IN THE FUTURE.

+MEANWHILE, THE BEST ADVICE THAT CAN BE GIVEN TO THE PUBLIC IS TO MAKE SURE, AT ALL TIMES WHEN GAS HEATERS ARE TURNED ON, THAT THERE IS SOME FORM OF VENTILATION IN THE ROOM, SUCH AS A WINDOW OR AN OPEN DOOR= AND ALSO TO ENSURE THAT ALL GAS APPLIANCES ARE PROPERLY MAINTAINED,+ HE SAID.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19, 1977

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THREE-YEAR SECONDARY EDUCATION
FOR ALL PRIMARY SCHOOL LEAVERS BY 1978

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THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, THE HON. KENNETH TOPLEY, TODAY GAVE AN ASSURANCE THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL ATTAIN THE OBJECTIVE OF MAKING A THREE-YEAR SECONDARY EDUCATION AVAILABLE FOR ALL COMPLETING THEIR PRIMARY EDUCATION BY 1978.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, HE SAID THAT SUFFICIENT SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES TO MEET THIS OBJECTIVE WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE THROUGH THE BUILDING OF NEW SCHOOLS, THE OPERATION OF FLOATING CLASSES AND EXTENDED DAY TIME-TABLES IN GOVERNMENT AND AIDED SCHOOLS, THE CONVERSION OF A NUMBER OF UNDER-UTILISED GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOLS INTO SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND THE BUYING OF ADDITIONAL PLACES IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS.

+THIS PROGRAMME HAS ALREADY BEEN OUTLINED IN A PAPER SUBMITTED TO FINANCE COMMITTEE IN OCTOBER, 1976,+ MR. TOPLEY SAID.

A FEATURE OF THE PAPER, HE ADDED, WAS A FULLER BUILDING PROGRAMME THAN HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN PLANNED WITH THE MAJORITY OF THE NEW SCHOOLS TO BE BUILT IN THE NEW DEVELOPING CENTRES OF POPULATION.

THE DIRECTOR POINTED OUT THAT THE EXPANSION OF PUBLIC SECTOR PLACES WAS PROCEEDING SATISFACTORILY. IN SEPTEMBER 1976, 6,800 ADDITIONAL FORM I PLACES WERE PROVIDED. THIS ENABLED THE PULL-THROUGH RATE IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL ENTRANCE EXAMINATION ALLOCATION TO RISE FROM 51 PER CENT IN 1975 TO 65 PER CENT IN 1976.

+IT IS NOW PLANNED TO PROVIDE A FURTHER 11,000 FORM I PLACES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN SEPTEMBER 1977,+ MR. TOPLEY SAID.

+OF THESE, 2,000 WILL BE IN EXISTING AND NEW GOVERNMENT AND AIDED SCHOOLS, 3,000 IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS BECOMING AVAILABLE FROM THE CONVERSION OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS, 3,000 FROM FLOATING CLASSES AND EXTENDED DAY OPERATION IN GOVERNMENT AND AIDED SCHOOLS, AND A FURTHER 3,000 BOUGHT PLACES IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS.+

HE SAID THAT WOULD MEAN THAT SOME 75 PER CENT OF THOSE SITTING THE S.S.E.E. WOULD BE ALLOCATED A FORM I PLACE IN 1977.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19, 1977

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QUESTION OF PAID MATERNITY LEAVE

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS NO PLANS TO AMEND PART III OF THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE RELATING TO MATERNITY PROTECTION FOR FEMALE EMPLOYEES, THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON. IAN PRICE, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HE WAS REPLYING TO THE HON. LEUNG TAT-SHING WHO ASKED WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT HAD ANY PLANS TO INTRODUCE PAID MATERNITY LEAVE FOR MARRIED WOMEN UNDER PART III OF THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE.

MR. PRICE SAID: +INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONVENTION NO. 103 ON MATERNITY PROTECTION STATES, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT IN NO CASE SHALL THE EMPLOYER BE INDIVIDUALLY LIABLE FOR THE COST OF MATERNITY BENEFITS DUE TO WOMEN EMPLOYED BY HIM.+

HOWEVER, HE ADDED, THIS CONVENTION HAD BEEN RATIFIED BY ONLY 17 COUNTRIES, OF WHICH NONE WERE IN ASIA.

+SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT DECIDE TO CONSIDER IN FUTURE THE PROBLEMS RELATING TO MATERNITY ALLOWANCES, IT WILL HAVE TO CONSIDER CAREFULLY WHAT WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG AS WELL AS THE PRACTICES IN ASIAN COUNTRIES AND THE PROVISIONS OF THE RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONVENTION,+ MR. PRICE SAID.

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138 CHILD CARE CENTRES APPLY FOR REGISTRATION

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THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, THE HON. THOMAS LEE, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY THAT BY JUNE THIS YEAR, MOST IF NOT ALL OF THE 212 CHILD CARE CENTRES NOW IN OPERATION WOULD BE ABLE TO COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS AND BE REGISTERED UNDER THE CHILD CARE CENTRES ORDINANCE.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. MISS KO SIU-WAH, HE SAID THAT 138 CENTRES HAD APPLIED FOR REGISTRATION SINCE THE ORDINANCE CAME INTO OPERATION ON JUNE 1, 1976.

+SO FAR ONLY TWO CENTRES HAVE BEEN REGISTERED,+ MR. LEE SAID. +BY THE END OF THIS MONTH, ANOTHER FIVE CENTRES WILL HAVE BEEN REGISTERED.+

+HOWEVER+, HE SAID, +THERE ARE 76 CENTRES WHICH ARE MAKING ALTERATIONS TO THEIR PREMISES IN ORDER TO COMPLY WITH THE REGULATIONS AND MANY OF THESE CENTRES ARE BEING ASSISTED FINANCIALLY TO CARRY OUT THESE ALTERATIONS.+

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19, 1977

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TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS IN N.T. FOR 'WALK FOR A MILLION'
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TEMPORARY TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE INTRODUCED ON SUNDAY, (JANUARY 23) IN CONNECTION WITH THE '+WALK FOR A MILLION+' IN TSUEN WAN, NEW TERRITORIES.

ON THAT DAY, A NUMBER OF ROADS WILL BE CLOSED TO VEHICULAR TRAFFIC FROM 7 A.M. TO ABOUT 2 P.M. THEY ARE KWOK SHUI ROAD BETWEEN SHING MUN ROAD AND FU UK ROAD, SHING MUN ROAD BETWEEN WO YI HOP ROAD AND PINE APPLE DAM (SHING MUN RESERVOIR), TING FUNG STREET, TING KWOK STREET, FU UK ROAD, YAU MA HOM ROAD AND CHEUNG WING ROAD BETWEEN YAU MA HOM ROAD AND WO YI HOP ROAD.

PARKING SPACES IN THESE ROADS AND IN THE UNNAMED STREET OPPOSITE THE TSUEN WAN POLICE STATION LEADING TO THE TSUEN WAN TECHNICAL SECONDARY SCHOOL WILL BE TEMPORARILY CLOSED TO ALL VEHICLES EXCEPT FOR OFFICIAL AND EMERGENCY VEHICLES. PARKING SPACES AT TAI HA STREET WILL BE RESERVED FOR COACHES OF ORGANISED GROUPS TAKING PART IN THE WALK.

DURING THE SAME PERIOD, KMB ROUTE NO. 32 WILL BE SUSPENDED AND ROUTE NO. 36 WILL BE DIVERTED TO RUN ALONG CASTLE PEAK ROAD INSTEAD OF KWOK SHUI ROAD ON BOTH EASTBOUND AND WESTBOUND JOURNEYS.

AS LARGE CROWDS ARE EXPECTED, MOTORISTS ARE ADVISED TO DRIVE WITH EXTRA CARE.

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DIRECTOR OF IMMIGRATION TO VISIT MACAU
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THE DIRECTOR OF IMMIGRATION, MR. MARTIN ROWLANDS, WILL VISIT MACAU TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

HE WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF IMMIGRATION, MR. JIM MURPHIE, AND OTHER SENIOR OFFICERS.

DURING HIS STAY, MR. ROWLANDS WILL CALL ON THE GOVERNOR OF MACAU, COL. GARCIA LEANDRO- THE COMMANDER OF THE SECURITY FORCES, COL. CHITO RODRIGUES AND THE DIRECTOR OF CIVIL ADMINISTRATION, DR. A. PIRES ESTREALA. THE OTHER IMMIGRATION OFFICERS IN THE PARTY WILL HAVE TALKS ON MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST WITH OFFICIALS OF THE MACAU ADMINISTRATION.

COMMENTING ON THE FORTHCOMING VISIT, MR. ROWLANDS SAID: '+WE HAVE LONG ENJOYED A CLOSE AND FRUITFUL RELATIONSHIP WITH MACAU ON IMMIGRATION MATTERS. I SHALL BE THANKING THE MACAU AUTHORITIES FOR THEIR READY CO-OPERATION AND ASSURING THEM OF OUR CONTINUED DESIRE TO HELP IN THIS TWO-WAY PROCESS.+

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19, 1977.

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FIRST AREA INSPECTION BY FIREMEN SUCCESSFUL

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HUNDREDS OF FACTORIES IN FOUR INDUSTRIAL BLOCKS IN WONG CHUK HANG, ABERDEEN, WERE INSPECTED BY OFFICERS FROM THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THIS IS THE FIRST AREA TO BE VISITED SINCE THE SCHEME ON AREA INSPECTIONS WAS LAUNCHED EARLIER THIS MONTH.

DURING A FLOOR BY FLOOR CHECK, THE OFFICERS DISCOVERED A NUMBER OF HAZARDS SUCH AS OBSTRUCTIONS TO MEANS OF ESCAPE, COMMON AREAS AND EXITS.

A FIRE SERVICES SPOKESMAN SAID: +DESPITE THIS, IT IS MOST GRATIFYING TO NOTICE THAT THE SITUATION IN THESE FACTORIES HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED.+

MOST FACTORIES VISITED TODAY HAD KEPT THEIR MEANS OF ESCAPE FREE OF OBSTRUCTIONS AND THE FIRE SERVICE INSTALLATIONS CLEARLY SEEN.

AS A RESULT, ONLY 25 FIRE HAZARD ABATEMENT NOTICES NEEDED TO BE ISSUED. THE OFFENDERS WERE GIVEN ONE OR TWO HOURS TO ABATE THESE HAZARDS.

+WHILE THIS COULD BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE ANNOUNCEMENTS OF OUR FORTHCOMING VISITS THROUGH THE MASS MEDIA AND THE STREET BROADCASTS DURING THE PAST FEW DAYS,+ THE SPOKESMAN STATED,+IT NEVERTHELESS SHOWS THAT WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF THE OWNERS, PREMISES, BE THEY DOMESTIC OR INDUSTRIAL, CAN BE MADE SAFE PLACES TO LIVE OR WORK IN.+

FIRE SERVICES OFFICERS WILL CONTINUE THE INSPECTIONS IN WONG CHUK HANG TOMORROW (THURSDAY), BEGINNING FROM 9.30 A.M.

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SWD FAMILY SERVICES CENTRE MOVED

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THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT'S CHAI WAN FAMILY SERVICES CENTRE HAS MOVED TO ITS NEW PREMISES AT 29-36, HANG HING HOUSE, HING WAH ESTATE, GROUND FLOOR, CHAI WAN.

THE TELEPHONE NUMBERS OF THE FAMILY SERVICES CENTRE ARE 5-561839 AND 5-560803.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19, 1977

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WATER CUT IN WONG TAI SIN

WATER SUPPLY TO CERTAIN PREMISES IN WONG TAI SIN WILL BE SUSPENDED FOR FIVE HOURS FROM 1 A.M. ON FRIDAY (JANUARY 21) TO ALLOW STAFF OF THE WATER SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT TO CARRY OUT A NIGHT LEAKAGE TEST.

THE AREA AFFECTED IS BOUNDED BY LUNG CHEUNG ROAD, FUNG MO STREET, FU MEI STREET, WANG TAU HOM EAST ROAD AND WANG TAU HOM NORTH ROAD, INCLUDING BLOCK NOS. 5 TO 9 OF WANG TAU HOM ESTATE, YAN OI SAN TSUEN AND MORSE PARK SWIMMING POOL.

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