



## DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 18, 1979

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HK'S ECONOMY BEGINNING TO ADJUST IN THE WAY INTENDED

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THE EXCHANGE VALUE OF THE HONG KONG DOLLAR SHOULD STRENGTHEN WHEN IT BECOMES APPARENT THAT THE RATE AT WHICH THE VISIBLE TRADE GAP IS WIDENING HAS SLOWED DOWN, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON WHAT MEASURES THE GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE TO PREVENT THE FURTHER DECLINE IN VALUE OF THE HONG KONG DOLLAR, MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID: +INDEED, I BELIEVE THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT THE ECONOMY IS NOW BEGINNING TO ADJUST IN THE WAY INTENDED.+

ON THE WEAKENING OF THE HONG KONG DOLLAR AGAINST THE U.S. DOLLAR, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID HE HAD EXPLAINED IN THE BUDGET SPEECH THAT MEASURES HAD TO BE TAKEN TO BRING THE GROWTH RATE OF TOTAL FINAL DEMAND MORE INTO LINE WITH THE GROWTH RATE OF THE ECONOMY'S OUTPUT, AND HAD STRESSED THAT THIS SHOULD BE DONE IN SUCH A WAY AS TO FACILITATE A RELATIVE SHIFT OF RESOURCES IN FAVOUR OF EXPORTS.

+THE MEASURES ANNOUNCED IN THE BUDGET ARE BEING PROGRESSIVELY IMPLEMENTED AND THEY ARE HAVING THEIR INTENDED EFFECT,+ MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY ALSO EXPLAINED THAT PART OF THE RECENT DECLINE IN THE EXCHANGE VALUE OF THE HONG KONG DOLLAR, AS MEASURED BY ITS TRADE WEIGHTED EXCHANGE RATE INDEX, REFLECTED THE CURRENT WEAKNESS OF THE U.S. DOLLAR AGAINST OTHER MAJOR CURRENCIES.

+TO THE EXTENT THAT ANY MEASURES TAKEN BY THE U.S. AUTHORITIES SUCCEED IN STABILISING THE EXCHANGE VALUE OF THE U.S. DOLLAR, THE EXCHANGE VALUE OF THE HONG KONG DOLLAR WILL ALSO BE STABILISED TO SOME DEGREE,+ HE SAID.

HOWEVER, MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR THE EXCHANGE FUND TO INTERVENE IN THE FOREIGN EXCHANGE MARKET BY SELLING U.S. DOLLARS OR OTHER CURRENCIES, SO AS TO PROP UP THE EXCHANGE VALUE OF THE HONG KONG DOLLAR.

+IT IS OUR LONG ESTABLISHED PRACTICE TO INTERVENE ONLY TO SMOOTH OUT -- OR ATTEMPT TO SMOOTH OUT -- EXCESSIVE DISTORTIONS IN THE MARKET RATE.

+EXPERIENCE ELSEWHERE CLEARLY INDICATES THAT TO ATTEMPT TO PRESERVE A GIVEN EXCHANGE RATE, OR EVEN A RANGE OF EXCHANGE RATES, THROUGH INTERVENTION ALONE WILL FAIL AND AT A COST IN RESOURCES WHICH CAN BE ILL SPARED,+ HE SAID.

IN REPLY TO A SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION BY MR. CHEONG-LEEN ON WHAT EXACTLY THE EVIDENCE WAS THAT THE ECONOMY WAS BEGINNING TO ADJUST, MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID IT COULD BE BEST ANSWERED WITH REFERENCE TO THE GROWTH RATES OF THE MAIN TRADE AND MONETARY AGGREGATES IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF THIS YEAR COMPARED WITH THE SAME PERIOD OF LAST YEAR.

/AS FOR .....

AS FOR THE TRADE AGGREGATES, HE SAID, THE VALUE OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS IN THE FIRST HALF OF THIS YEAR WAS UP BY 33 PER CENT ON THE FIRST HALF OF LAST YEAR AND BETWEEN THE FIRST AND SECOND QUARTERS OF THIS YEAR THE GROWTH RATE OF DOMESTIC EXPORTS ACCELERATED.

+THE VALUE OF TOTAL EXPORTS IN THE FIRST HALF OF THIS YEAR WAS 37 PER CENT UP ON THE FIRST HALF OF LAST YEAR, WHILST THE VALUE OF IMPORTS WAS UP BY RATHER LESS AT 36 PER CENT.

+THIS IS IN CONTRAST TO THE POSITION IN 1978 OVER 1977 WHEN THE GROWTH RATE OF IMPORTS AT 29 PER CENT EXCEEDED THE GROWTH RATE OF TOTAL EXPORTS AT 20 PER CENT,+ MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID.

FURTHERMORE, HE CONTINUED, THE VISIBLE TRADE DEFICIT IN THE FIRST HALF OF THIS YEAR WAS ONLY JUST SLIGHTLY MORE THAN 16 PER CENT OF TOTAL IMPORTS, COMPARED WITH 17.2 PER CENT IN THE FIRST HALF OF LAST YEAR.

+AND SO NOT ONLY DO I EXPECT THE ABSOLUTE SIZE OF THE VISIBLE TRADE GAP TO BE RATHER LESS THAN THE FIGURE OF \$12,000 MILLION FORECAST IN THE BUDGET SPEECH, BUT ALSO — AND THIS IS THE REALLY SIGNIFICANT POINT — THE VISIBLE TRADE GAP, AS A PERCENTAGE OF IMPORTS, HAS CEASED TO WIDEN,+ HE SAID.

AS FOR THE MONETARY AGGREGATES, MR. HADDON-CAVE CONTINUED, THE ANNUALISED GROWTH RATE OF M2 (NOTES AND COINS IN CIRCULATION AND DEMAND DEPOSITS AT LICENSED BANKS PLUS TIME AND SAVING DEPOSITS) WAS 18 PER CENT IN THE SECOND QUARTER OF THIS YEAR COMPARED WITH THE RATE CALCULATED ON THE SAME BASIS IN THE SECOND QUARTER OF LAST YEAR WHEN IT WAS 32 PER CENT.

+AGAIN, M2 INCREASED BY NINE PER CENT IN THE FIRST HALF OF THIS YEAR COMPARED WITH 13.4 PER CENT IN THE FIRST HALF OF LAST YEAR.

+THESE ESTIMATES INDICATE THAT THE GROWTH RATE OF THE MONEY SUPPLY IS ROUGHLY IN LINE WITH THE FORECAST GROWTH RATE OF G.D.P. IN MONEY TERMS IN 1979,+ MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID.

ON THE GROWTH RATE OF BANK LOANS AND ADVANCES, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID IT WAS TAKING LONGER TO SLOW DOWN, ALTHOUGH HE BELIEVED THAT HIGHER INTEREST RATES WERE BEGINNING TO HAVE A CONSTRAINING EFFECT.

+IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF THIS YEAR THE GROWTH RATE OF BANK LOANS AND ADVANCES WAS 10 PER CENT COMPARED WITH NO LESS THAN 14 PER CENT DURING THE FOURTH QUARTER OF 1978.

+IN THE SECOND QUARTER OF THIS YEAR THE GROWTH RATE WAS STILL LOWER AT 7.4 PER CENT, WHICH ON AN ANNUALISED BASIS, WAS ABOUT 33 PER CENT.

+THIS IS LESS THAN THE GROWTH RATE IN 1978 OF 43 PER CENT, BUT IT IS STILL FAR TOO HIGH AND CONTINUES TO BE A CAUSE OF CONCERN AND ATTENTION,+ MR. HADDON-CAVE ADDED.

PAY REVISION FOR CIVIL SERVANTS

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THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) APPROVED A PAY REVISION FOR CIVIL SERVANTS.

THE AVERAGE INCREASE IS ABOUT EIGHT PER CENT, RANGING FROM ABOUT 10.5 PER CENT FOR THE LOWEST PAID TO ABOUT SIX PER CENT FOR TOP OFFICIALS IN THE DIRECTORATE.

THE AWARD WILL BE BACK-DATED TO APRIL 1 AND ARREARS WILL BE PAID AT THE END OF AUGUST.

THE SECRETARY FOR CIVIL SERVICE, MR. SELWYN ALLEYNE, SAID APPROVAL FOLLOWED A DETAILED REVIEW OF PAY MOVEMENTS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR FOR THE YEAR ENDING APRIL 1, 1979, CONDUCTED BY THE PAY INVESTIGATION UNIT AND DISCUSSIONS WITH THE THREE MAIN STAFF ASSOCIATIONS.

HE ADDED THAT THE REVISION WAS IN ACCORDANCE WITH GOVERNMENT'S POLICY OF ADJUSTING CIVIL SERVICE SALARIES IN LINE WITH THE EVIDENCE OF PAY MOVEMENTS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

DISCIPLINED SERVICES WILL RECEIVE COMPARABLE INCREASES.

INCREASES WILL BE APPLIED TO SUBVENTED ORGANISATIONS IN LINE WITH ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS.

THE TOTAL COST OF THE INCREASES IS ESTIMATED AT OVER \$350 MILLION FOR THE CURRENT YEAR.

DETAILS OF THE NEW PAY SCALES ARE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST.

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GOVERNMENT URGED TO HELP MIDDLE-INCOME GROUP BUY OWN HOME

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MIDDLE-INCOME HONG KONG BELONGERS LIVING IN FLATS BUILT AFTER 1973 ARE PAYING RENTS OUT OF ALL PROPORTION TO THEIR INCOME, AND YET THEY DO NOT HAVE THE MEANS TO BUY A MEDIUM SIZE FLAT AT TODAY'S PRICES, THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN SAID AT AN ADJOURNMENT DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE DESCRIBED THE WORSENING HOUSING PROBLEM FOR THIS GROUP OF RESIDENTS WHO EARN BETWEEN \$5,000 AND \$10,000 A MONTH AND ASKED WHAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD DO ABOUT IT.

THOSE WHO RENT FLATS BUILT AFTER 1973 ARE SUBJECT TO UNLIMITED RENT INCREASES UPON RECEIVING THE PRESCRIBED NOTICE. +A NEW MEDIUM FLAT OF BETWEEN 1,000 - 1,700 SQUARE FEET IS CURRENTLY SELLING AT \$800,000 TO \$2 MILLION,+ HE EXPLAINED.

HE HAD TWO SUGGESTIONS: EXTEND THE HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME AND REVIEW THE LIMITS AND ELIGIBILITY FOR LOAN APPLICATIONS TO THE HONG KONG BUILDING AND LOAN AGENCY LTD. SO AS TO ACCOMMODATE THOSE WITHIN THIS INCOME BRACKET.

/HE REBUTTED .....

HE REBUTTED THE ARGUMENT THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOT COMPETE WITH PRIVATE ENTERPRISE IN PROVIDING HOMES FOR THOSE WITH THIS SALARY.

+IT CAN BE ARGUED WITH EVEN GREATER FORCE THAT THE GOVERNMENT HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME FOR LOWER INCOME GROUPS HAS HELPED TO STABILISE THE PRICES OF SMALL FLATS, AND HAS IN NO WAY DETERRED PRIVATE ENTERPRISE FROM BUILDING MORE SMALL FLATS,+ HE SAID.

UNDER MR. CHEONG-LEEN'S PROPOSAL, THE GOVERNMENT PROVIDES LAND AT FAIR MARKET VALUE AND ENTRUSTS THE BUILDING OF FLATS TO REPUTABLE PRIVATE DEVELOPERS ON THE SAME BASIS AS THE EXISTING SCHEME. INSTALMENT PAYMENT TERMS UP TO 15 YEARS AT 10 PER CENT ANNUAL INTEREST SHOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE AND THE PROJECT COULD BE TAKEN UP BY THE HONG KONG HOUSING SOCIETY SO THAT THE HOUSING AUTHORITY CAN CONCENTRATE ON PROVIDING HOMES FOR LOWER INCOME FAMILIES.

PARTICIPANTS WILL HAVE TO HAVE LIVED AND WORKED IN HONG KONG FOR AT LEAST TEN YEARS AND WILL NOT BE ABLE TO RESELL THEIR FLAT FOR AT LEAST SEVEN YEARS AFTER OCCUPYING IT.

MR. CHEONG-LEEN REFERRED TO THE DISMAL FORECAST FOR NEW MEDIUM AND LARGE FLATS SET OUT IN THE +PROPERTY REVIEW 1979+. OUT OF A TOTAL 65,255 PRIVATE AND PUBLIC DOMESTIC UNITS EXPECTED TO BE BUILT THIS YEAR, THERE WILL ONLY BE 1,160 MEDIUM AND 355 LARGE FLATS. NEXT YEAR, OUT OF A TOTAL 66,705 UNITS, ONLY 615 WILL BE MEDIUM AND 350 LARGE FLATS.

HE SAID THERE WAS MUCH CONCERN AT THE SHARP INCREASES, OF BETWEEN 50 TO 150 PER CENT, OF BOTH RENTALS AND SELLING PRICES OF THESE FLATS WITHIN THE PAST 12 MONTHS, AND GAVE FOUR REASONS FOR THE INCREASES:

- \* THE ARRIVAL OF EXPATRIATE PERSONNEL, WITH THE OPENING UP OF CHINA AND THE LICENSING OF MORE BANKS, WHO HAVE TO FIND QUICK AND PAY TOP PRICES FOR ACCOMMODATION,
- \* MONEY HAS BEEN COMING IN FROM FAR EASTERN COUNTRIES FOR INVESTMENT IN REAL ESTATE,
- \* THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT HAVE AN ADEQUATE BUILDING PROGRAMME TO HOUSE CIVIL SERVANTS WHO ARE ENTITLED TO SUCH FLATS, AND
- \* SPECULATION BY INDIVIDUALS OR COMPANIES SEEKING A QUICK TURNOVER AND BIG PROFITS ON A SELLERS' MARKET.

HE POINTED OUT THAT ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT WILL SOON RELEASE A NUMBER OF SITES FOR HIGH-QUALITY PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, SUCH ACCOMMODATION WILL NOT COME ON-STREAM IN TWO TO FOUR YEARS TIME.

HONG KONG'S MIDDLE-INCOME BELONGERS ARE THE BACKBONE OF THE COMMUNITY. +THEY SHOULD NOT BE BLAMED FOR BEING CRITICAL OF GOVERNMENT'S APPARENT INDIFFERENCE TO THEIR PLIGHT,+ MR. CHEONG-LEEN SAID.

ANOTHER UNOFFICIAL COUNCILLOR, DR. THE HON. HO KAM-FAI SPOKE ON HOUSING FOR MIDDLE-INCOME HONG KONG BELONGERS WITHIN THE CIVIL SERVICE AND QUASI-GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS.

HE SAID THE CONSIDERABLE SUM OF MONEY THE GOVERNMENT PAYS THEM EACH YEAR ON HOUSING ALLOWANCES SHOULD BE PUT TO BETTER USE BY HELPING THEM BUY THEIR OWN HOMES THROUGH A MORTGAGE SCHEME.

SUCH A SCHEME WILL IN THE LONG TERM BENEFIT THE GOVERNMENT WHICH WOULD HAVE ONLY A LIMITED FINANCIAL COMMITMENT UNTIL THE MORTGAGE IS PAID OFF, AND THE CIVIL SERVANTS WHO WOULD NOT HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THEIR ACCOMMODATION WHEN THEY RETIRE.

IT WOULD BOOST THE MORALE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE AND ENCOURAGE MORE YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE RIGHT CALIBRE TO JOIN IT, HE SAID.

HE URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO IMPLEMENT SUCH A SCHEME AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE BEFORE FURTHER PRICE ESCALATIONS PREVENT THE SCHEME FROM BEING VIABLE.

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+INCONSISTENT+ TO HOUSE  
\$10,000 A MONTH FAMILIES  
\* \* \* \*

TO EXTEND ELIGIBILITY FOR HOME OWNERSHIP FLATS TO FAMILIES EARNING UP TO \$10,000 PER MONTH WOULD MAKE NEARLY 98 PER CENT OF THE POPULATION ELIGIBLE FOR THEM.

THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON. DONALD LIAO, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN ANSWER TO SUGGESTION BY THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN THAT THE SCHEME BE EXTENDED TO COVER MIDDLE-INCOME HONG KONG BELONGERS EARNING UP TO THAT AMOUNT.

MR. LIAO SAID: +THIS WOULD BE UNPRECEDENTED EVEN IN PLANNED ECONOMIES AND WOULD CERTAINLY BE INCONSISTENT WITH THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN HONG KONG.

+MOREOVER, SUCH ACTION WOULD ONLY DILUTE THE EFFORTS TOWARDS ASSISTING LOWER-INCOME FAMILIES.+

MR. LIAO SAID THE INCOME LIMIT FOR HOME OWNERSHIP FLATS HAD RECENTLY BEEN REVISED TO \$5,000 PER MONTH, PUTTING THEM WITHIN REACH OF NEARLY 90 PER CENT OF THE POPULATION.

ON THE SUBJECT OF MEDIUM AND LARGE FLATS FOR HIGHER-INCOME BELONGERS, HE SAID THAT A NUMBER OF SITES FOR SUCH PREMISES HAD BECOME AVAILABLE RECENTLY, AND THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE TRYING TO REMEDY THE SITUATION BY +TACKLING THE CRUX OF THE PROBLEM, WHICH IS LAND SUPPLY.+

AS REGARDS HOUSING LOANS FOR CIVIL SERVANTS, MR. LIAO SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE MATTER WAS RECEIVING ATTENTION.

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GOVERNMENT ENCOURAGES THE USE OF IDENTITY CARD  
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THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON. LEWIS DAVIES, REASSURED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE INTENTION OF THE REGISTRATION OF PERSONS (AMENDMENT)(NO. 2) BILL WAS TO ENCOURAGE THE USE OF IDENTITY CARDS IN DEALING WITH GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

+WE DID NOT THINK IT RIGHT TO MAKE IT AN OFFENCE FOR A PERSON TO FAIL TO USE THE NAME ON HIS IDENTITY CARD IN HIS DEALINGS WITH GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS. NEITHER IS IT INTENDED THAT A PERSON SHOULD BE REFUSED A SERVICE IF HE DOES NOT OR CANNOT PRODUCE HIS IDENTITY CARD. FOR EXAMPLE, IT WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE TO DENY A PERSON MEDICAL TREATMENT IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES,+ MR. DAVIES SAID.

THE REMARKS WERE MADE DURING THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE BILL AFTER CONCERN WAS EXPRESSED BY THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN ON THE REPERCUSSIONS ON ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS WHO HAVE FOUND EMPLOYMENT AND SETTLED IN HONG KONG FOR SOME TIME.

BUT, MR. DAVIES POINTED OUT THAT IN SOME CIRCUMSTANCES PROOF OF IDENTITY WOULD BE REQUIRED, FOR EXAMPLE, AS A PRECONDITION FOR THE ISSUE OF CERTAIN LICENCES AND PERMITS AND WHEN THIS WAS REQUIRED THE TRANSACTION WOULD BE COMPLETED USING THE NAME OF THE IDENTITY CARD.

MR. CHEONG-LEEN HAD ASKED WHETHER A GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT WOULD IN PRACTICE REFUSE TO DEAL WITH A PERSON UNLESS HE PRODUCED AN IDENTITY CARD, AND TO WHAT EXTENT THE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS COULD BE SUBJECT TO BLACKMAIL, INTIMIDATION OR REGARDED AS OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORRUPTION IN THEIR EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.

HE ALSO ASKED WHETHER THERE HAD BEEN ANY ASSESSMENT OF THEIR NUMBERS AND WHETHER THERE WERE ANY REQUIREMENTS OR GUIDELINES UNDER WHICH THEY CAN SURFACE AND APPLY FOR IDENTITY CARDS.

COMMENTING ON THE PUBLISHING OF GUIDELINES UNDER WHICH ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS COULD SURFACE AND APPLY FOR IDENTITY CARDS, MR. DAVIES SAID HE COULD NOT SUPPORT THE PROPOSAL.

+I WOULD NOT WISH TO DEPART FROM THE GENERAL PRINCIPLE OF IMMIGRATION CONTROL THAT EACH CASE IS DEALT WITH ON ITS MERITS,+ HE SAID.

MR. DAVIES POINTED OUT THAT ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS FROM CHINA USUALLY PRESENTED THEMSELVES FOR REGISTRATION WITHIN A FEW WEEKS OF THEIR ARRIVAL AND THAT THEY COULD DO SO IS GIVEN WIDE PUBLICITY IN THE MEDIA.

+THERE IS OF COURSE SOME RISK THAT BETWEEN THE TIME OF THEIR ARRIVAL AND OF REGISTRATION THEY MAY BE SUBJECT TO CRIMINAL VICTIMISATION, BUT THIS IS INHERENT IN THE FACT OF THEIR ILLEGAL ENTRY IN THE FIRST PLACE AND THEIR SUBSEQUENT STAY,+ HE SAID.

IT WAS DIFFICULT TO ESTIMATE HOW MANY ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS AND OVERSTAYERS WERE CURRENTLY LIVING IN HONG KONG WITHOUT HAVING REGISTERED, BUT HE BELIEVED THAT THE NUMBER WAS NOT LARGE.

THE BILL WAS LATER PASSED.

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WORKING REFUGEES SHOULD PAY FOR FOOD

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THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON. LEWIS DAVIES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT IT WAS NOT THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO CONTINUE PROVIDING VIETNAMESE REFUGEES WHO ARE WORKING WITH FREE FOOD AT PUBLIC EXPENSE.

+SUCH ASSISTANCE IS ALREADY BEING REDUCED,+ HE SAID IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. FRANCIS TIEN.

MR. DAVIES SAID: +IT IS THE POLICY OF THE ADMINISTRATION THAT, AFTER AN INITIAL PERIOD OF ABOUT TWO WEEKS IN (OPEN CAMPS), REFUGEES SHOULD BEGIN TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE COSTS OF THEIR OWN CARE AND MAINTENANCE.

+ON THIS BASIS A PROGRESSIVE REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF REFUGEES FOR WHOM RATIONS ARE PROVIDED IN THIS TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION HAS ALREADY COMMENCED. IT WILL CONTINUE TO THE POINT WHERE RATIONS ARE GIVEN ONLY TO THOSE WHO ARE UNABLE TO PROVIDE FOR THEMSELVES OR WHOSE CIRCUMSTANCES JUSTIFY IT.+

MR. DAVIES ALSO SAID THAT A SCHEME FOR THE RECOVERY OF RENT WAS NOT BEING RULED OUT BUT AS YET NO SIMPLE AND EFFECTIVE SCHEME HAD BEEN EVOLVED.

THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS ARE THAT ALL REFUGEES ON ARRIVAL REMAIN IN THEIR BOATS WHILST THEY ARE PROCESSED. THEREAFTER ACCOMMODATION IS ARRANGED FOR THEM ASHORE.

THE FIRST ACCOMMODATION IS INVARIABLY IN THE GOVERNMENT DOCKYARD. AFTER A PERIOD OF ABOUT A FORTNIGHT THERE, THEY ARE MOVED INTO OPEN CAMPS OR OTHER FLATTED ACCOMMODATION. DURING ALL THESE PERIODS THEY RECIEVE FREE FOOD.

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SKYLUCK SEIZED UNDER THE SHIPPING AND PORT CONTROL ORDINANCE

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THE REFUGEE SHIP +SKYLUCK+ HAS BEEN SEIZED BY THE DIRECTOR OF MARINE UNDER THE SHIPPING AND PORT CONTROL ORDINANCE, THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WAS TOLD TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON. DAVID T.K. WONG IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. WONG LAM.

HE SAID THAT THE DIRECTOR OF MARINE, WHO WOULD BE PUBLICISING THE SEIZURE IN THE GAZETTE, WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO DISPOSE OF THE VESSEL UNTIL A REASONABLE PERIOD HAD BEEN ALLOWED FOR THE LODGING OF POSSIBLE CLAIMS.

MR. WONG SAID THE SEIZURE WAS MADE BECAUSE THERE HAD BEEN NO RESPONSE FROM THE VESSEL'S OWNER TO A DIRECTION MADE BY THE DIRECTOR OF MARINE UNDER THE SHIPPING AND PORT CONTROL ORDINANCE.

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UNDER THE ORDINANCE, THE DIRECTOR OF MARINE MAY GIVE TO AN OWNER OF A VESSEL WHICH IS ABANDONED IN THE WATERS OF HONG KONG SUCH DIRECTIONS AS HE THINKS FIT IN RESPECT OF THE REMOVAL, MOVEMENT, ANCHORING, MOORING, SECURING, RAISING OR DESTRUCTION OF THE VESSEL.

+ON JULY 5 THE DIRECTOR ISSUED TO THE OWNER OF THE 'SKYLUCK' A DIRECTION TO REMOVE THE VESSEL FROM ITS PRESENT POSITION AT SHEK KOK TSUI, LAMMA ISLAND, BY 8 A.M. ON JULY 16,+ MR. WONG SAID.

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#### SMALLER DRIVING LICENCES FROM 1980

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THE GOVERNMENT WILL INTRODUCE A SMALLER DRIVING LICENCE OF APPROXIMATELY THE SAME SIZE AS A CREDIT CARD SOMETIME IN 1980 DEPENDING ON THE AVAILABILITY OF STAFF AND COMPUTER RESOURCES, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON. LEWIS DAVIES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. PETER C. WONG ON THE POSSIBILITY OF SCALING DOWN THE H.K. IDENTITY CARD AND DRIVING LICENCE TO A SIZE THAT CAN BE CONVENIENTLY PLACED IN AN AVERAGE SIZED CARD HOLDER OR WALLET, MR. DAVIES SAID THAT IT WAS AGREED THAT SMALLER DOCUMENTS WOULD BE A CONVENIENCE.

+IT IS NOT MANDATORY TO CARRY IDENTITY CARDS EXCEPT IN PING CHAU BUT IN CONSIDERING THE LONG TERM PLANS TO IMPROVE THE REGISTRATION OF PERSONS SYSTEM, THE ISSUE OF A MORE CONVENIENT SIZE OF CARD OR DEVICE WILL NOT BE OVERLOOKED,+ HE SAID.

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STEPS TO CURB UNAUTHORISED BUILDING OF HUTS SUPPORTED  
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THERE WERE VARIOUS REASONS WHY MANY VILLAGE HOUSES WERE BUILT ON AGRICULTURAL LAND OR CONVERTED FOR DOMESTIC OR OTHER USES WITHOUT THE GOVERNMENT'S APPROVAL, THE HON. CHARLES YEUNG SAID TODAY.

THESE WERE MISUNDERSTANDING BY AND IGNORANCE OF THE VILLAGE PEOPLE, INCONVENIENT COMMUNICATIONS IN THE PRE-WAR DAYS, ABSENCE OF A CIVIL GOVERNMENT DURING AND IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE WAR YEARS, AND THE FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN THEIR WAY OF LIFE FORCED UPON THEM BY THE INFLUX OF NEW-COMERS SINCE 1949.

WHILE IT IS RIGHT THAT THE GOVERNMENT BE GIVEN EFFECTIVE POWERS TO CONTROL THE ILLEGAL BUILDING OF SHANTY HUTS AND COTTAGE FACTORIES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, IT IS NEITHER FAIR NOR JUSTIFIABLE TO CHALLENGE THESE LONG-ESTABLISHED BUILDINGS OR CONVERSIONS, MR. YEUNG SAID.

MR. YEUNG WAS COMMENTING ON THE CROWN LAND (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979 AT ITS SECOND READING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE BILL WAS STUDIED AT LENGTH BY AN AD HOC GROUP OF UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS CONVENED BY HIM. THE UNOFFICIALS SUPPORTED ITS INTENTION TO STEP UP CONTROL OVER THE BUILDING OF SQUATTER HUTS BY RACKETEERS FOR SALE TO UNSUSPECTING BUYERS. HOWEVER THEY HAD RESERVATIONS OVER SEVERAL POINTS.

ON THE QUESTION OF UNAUTHORISED BUILDINGS ON LEASED LAND, MR. YEUNG WANTED TO BE ASSURED THAT THE EXISTING POLICY WILL NOT BE AFFECTED BY THE BILL AND +IN FACT GOVERNMENT WILL, ON APPLICATION OF THE LANDOWNERS, LEGALISE SUCH BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES OF LONG STANDING BY GRANTING SUCH MODIFICATION OR PERMIT UPON SUCH CONDITIONS AS IF APPLICATIONS WERE MADE AT THE TIME OF ERECTION OF SUCH BUILDINGS+.

AS FOR UNAUTHORISED USAGE OF AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS, MR. YEUNG NOTED THAT THE BILL MERELY STRENGTHENED THE HAND OF GOVERNMENT IN DEALING WITH THEM BUT SINCE IT WAS SOMETHING NEW IN LAW, HE ASKED FOR A CUT-OFF DATE FOR ITS OPERATION AS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE AND FAIRNESS.

HE ASKED THE GOVERNMENT NOT TO USE THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE TO REQUIRE THE LANDOWNER TO REPORT UNAUTHORISED STRUCTURES BUILT BY A THIRD PARTY ON HIS LAND UNLESS, FOR EXAMPLE, THERE WAS COLLUSION BETWEEN THE LANDOWNER AND THE THIRD PARTY.

IN ORDER TO ENCOURAGE CO-OPERATION BY LANDOWNERS, HE ALSO ASKED THE GOVERNMENT TO ASSIST THEM IN DEMOLISHING SUCH UNAUTHORISED STRUCTURES, PROVIDED THE STRUCTURES WOULD BE SUBJECT TO SIMILAR AND OTHER ACTION IF FOUND ILLEGALLY ERECTED ON UNLEASED CROWN LAND.

/MR. YEUNG .....

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MR. YEUNG QUERIED THE MOVE TO EXTEND THE POWERS OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY UNDER THE ORDINANCE TO ALL OF THE NEW TERRITORIES. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY APPLICABLE TO THE NEW TERRITORIES HAD FOR SEVEN DECADES BEEN ADMINISTRATIONED BY THE NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION, WHICH WAS CHARGED TO RECOGNISE LOCAL CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS AND TO PAY REGARD TO PARTICULAR NEW TERRITORIES CIRCUMSTANCES.

IN ANY EVENT, THE HOUSING AUTHORITY, BEING AN INDEPENDENT STATUTORY BODY, IS OUTSIDE THE DIRECT CONTROL OF THE LEGISLATURE OR GOVERNMENT AND THEREFORE NOT SUITABLE FOR THE PURPOSE. IF THE POWERS WERE TO BE VESTED AT ALL IN AN ADDITIONAL AUTHORITY, THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING WILL BE A BETTER CHOICE, HE SAID.

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NEW LAW WILL NOT BRING DRASTIC CHANGE  
TO CONTROL OVER LEASED LAND  
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THE SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, THE HON. DAVID AKERS-JONES TODAY (WEDNESDAY) ASSURED NEW TERRITORIES LAND OWNERS THAT THE PRESENT PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND DECIDING WHETHER OR NOT AN ILLEGAL STRUCTURE ON PRIVATE LEASED LAND SHOULD BE DEMOLISHED WOULD NOT BE CHANGED.

MR. AKERS-JONES GAVE THIS ASSURANCE AT THE RESUMED DEBATE OF THE CROWN LAND (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN RESPONSE TO DOUBTS AND ANXIETIES WHICH HAD BEEN EXPRESSED ESPECIALLY BY THE HEUNG YEE KUK WHEN IT WAS EARLIER CONSULTED ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BILL.

HE SAID: +THERE IS NO INTENTION ON THE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT TO BE ANY LESS THOROUGH IN THE PROCESS OF ESTABLISHING THE OWNERSHIP OF ANY LAND OR STRUCTURE, ANY PREVIOUS TOLERATION GRANTED AS A RESULT OF A SQUATTER CONTROL SURVEY, OR ANY OF THE OTHER FACTORS WE TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION AT PRESENT.

+AS AN ADDITIONAL RE-ASSURANCE BEFORE ANY ACTION IS TAKEN AGAINST A STRUCTURE ON PRIVATE LAND, THE LAW REQUIRES US TO POST NOTICES UPON IT AND PERSONS AFFECTED BY THESE NOTICES HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE REPRESENTATIONS TO THE DISTRICT OFFICE.+

MR. AKERS-JONES EXPLAINED THAT THE INTRODUCTION OF THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AS AN AUTHORITY FOR SQUATTER CONTROL IN THE NEW TERRITORIES WOULD MAKE NO DIFFERENCE IN ITSELF TO THE PRACTICE OF SQUATTER CONTROL.

+IT AFFECTS NOBODY'S STATUS, NOBODY'S RIGHTS, NOR MY ROLE AS THE LAND AUTHORITY IN THE NEW TERRITORIES,+ HE STRESSED.

/MR. AKERS-JONES .....

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MR. AKERS-JONES ALSO ASSURED PROPERTY OWNERS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES THAT NO ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN AGAINST STRUCTURES WHICH HAD BEEN IN EXISTENCE FOR A LONG TIME EVEN THOUGH THERE MIGHT BE NO RECORD OF THEM ON OFFICE FILES BECAUSE THEY WERE BUILT WHEN THE ADMINISTRATION TO RECORD THEM WAS LACKING OR DURING THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION.

IN APPROPRIATE CASES, HE SAID, THESE STRUCTURES WILL BE RECORDED AND PAST OMISSION RECTIFIED.

AS TO THE QUESTION OF WHAT ACTION GOVERNMENT WILL TAKE WHEN UNLAWFUL STRUCTURES ON LEASED LAND ERECTED BY TENANTS OR TRESPASSERS WERE REPORTED BY THE LAND OWNER, MR. AKERS-JONES SAID: +IF THE OFFENCE IS LONG-STANDING, TOLERATED AFTER RECOGNITION IN A SURVEY, WE SHALL NOT TAKE ACTION.+

+IN SUCH CASES, A LAND OWNER MAY WELL HAVE RECOURSE AT THE CIVIL LAW, BUT THAT IS A DIFFERENT MATTER.+

+OUR AIM IS FAIRNESS IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE ORDINANCE,+ HE ADDED.

THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON. DONALD LIAO, ALSO ASSURED THAT THE HAND-OVER TO THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR SQUATTER CONTROL IN THE NEW TERRITORIES WOULD NOT BRING ANY DRASTIC CHANGE CONCERNING LEASED LAND.

IN WINDING UP THE DEBATE ON THE CROWN LAND (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979, MR. LIAO SAID LAND-OWNERS AND TENANTS WOULD FIND THAT +IN THIS CASE THE DEVIL THEY DO NOT KNOW AS YET IS LITTLE WORSE (OR SHOULD I SAY BETTER) THAN THE DEVIL WHO IS ALREADY WITH THEM.+

THE HAND-OVER OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR SQUATTER CONTROL, FROM THE NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION TO THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT, WOULD BE A GRADUAL PROCESS, HE SAID.

IT SPRANG FROM A RECOGNITION THAT THE TWIN PROBLEMS OF PREVENTION OF SQUATTING AND PROVISION OF PUBLIC HOUSING WOULD BE BETTER HANDLED BY THE ONE DEPARTMENT.

MR. LIAO SAID HE WAS SATISFIED WITH THE EXISTING CHANNELS OF APPEAL WHERE NOTICES WERE POSTED ON UNAUTHORISED STRUCTURES ON LEASED LAND.

+I WOULD ASSURE MEMBERS THAT IN THE POSTING OF THE NOTICE ITSELF, THE OPPORTUNITY IS PROVIDED TO ENABLE THE LEASEE TO RE-CONVERT HIS STRUCTURES TO AN AUTHORISED USE OR TO TAKE UP WITH THE LAND AUTHORITY THE QUESTION OF WHETHER SUCH USE IS PROPER OR NOT,+ HE SAID.

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## REVISED STRUCTURE FOR LAND ADMINISTRATION TO BE PROPOSED

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THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSALS ON A REVISED STRUCTURE FOR LAND ADMINISTRATION WILL BE MADE LATER IN THE YEAR, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. GRAHAM BARNES TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. LYDIA DUNN, MR. BARNES SAID THAT SINCE APRIL, EFFORTS HAD BEEN DIRECTED LARGELY TOWARDS SECURING THE STAFF FOR STRATEGIC LAND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING WITHIN THE SECRETARIAT.

+THERE IS AS YET NO AGREED VIEW ON ANY CHANGES IN THE ORGANISATION OF THE LAND ADMINISTRATION,+ HE SAID.

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## MORE COOKED FOOD STALL BAZAARS PLANNED FOR KWUN TONG

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THE GOVERNMENT IS PLANNING TO BUILD THREE MORE COOKED FOOD STALL BAZAARS IN KWUN TONG WITHIN THE NEXT TWO TO THREE YEARS, WHICH WILL MORE THAN DOUBLE THE AREA OF EXISTING COOKED FOOD STALLS IN THE DISTRICT.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, THE HON. JOHN CHAMBERS IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR. CHAMBERS SAID THAT AS IN MOST INDUSTRIAL AREAS, LUNCH-TIME CATERING FACILITIES FOR INDUSTRIAL WORKERS IN KWUN TONG WERE FAR FROM ADEQUATE.

+FOR FIRE SAFETY REASONS PUBLIC RESTAURANTS ARE NOT ALLOWED IN INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS, AND THERE ARE COMPARATIVELY FEW NON-INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS IN THESE AREAS,+ HE SAID.

AS FAR AS COOKED FOOD STALLS ARE CONCERNED, MR. CHAMBERS SAID, THE STANDARDS PLANNING PROVISION FOR INDUSTRIAL AREAS IS 0.6 HECTARES FOR EVERY 100,000 WORKERS.

THERE ARE AT PRESENT FIVE MAJOR COOKED FOOD STALL BAZAARS IN THE KWUN TONG INDUSTRIAL AREA, WHICH MADE UP ONLY ABOUT 30 PER CENT OF THE STANDARD PROVISION, HE SAID.

MR. CHAMBERS SAID THAT UNDER THE EXISTING FOOD BUSINESS BY-LAWS, IT IS POSSIBLE FOR INDUSTRIAL FACTORIES TO PROVIDE CANTEENS ON THEIR PREMISES FOR THEIR OWN WORKERS.

HOWEVER, HE POINTED OUT THAT SMALL OR MEDIUM SIZE FACTORIES HAVE FOUND IT UNECONOMICAL TO SET ASIDE SPACE FOR THIS PURPOSE AND IN KWUN TONG THERE ARE ONLY 14 SUCH CANTEENS.

+IN ORDER TO ENCOURAGE MORE FACTORIES TO PROVIDE CATERING FACILITIES FOR THEIR WORKERS THE GOVERNMENT AND THE COUNCIL ARE AT PRESENT CONSIDERING A PROPOSAL TO CREATE A NEW CLASS OF FACTORY CANTEEN WHICH WILL HAVE TO BE LICENSED, BUT WOULD BE SUBJECT TO LESS STRINGENT REQUIREMENTS THAN ARE APPLIED TO PUBLIC RESTAURANTS- AND UNLIKE THE PRESENT CANTEENS THEY WOULD BE ALLOWED TO SERVE WORKERS FROM A NUMBER OF NEARBY FACTORIES,+ MR. CHAMBERS SAID.

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URBAN COUNCIL (AMENDMENT) BILL

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THE URBAN COUNCIL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979 AIMED AT AMENDING AND SIMPLIFYING SOME OF THE URBAN COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL PROCEDURES WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. GRAHAM BARNES SAID ONE OF THE AMENDMENTS SOUGHT TO SIMPLIFY EXISTING ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES BY ENABLING THE URBAN COUNCIL TO PRESENT ITS ANNUAL ACCOUNTS IN THE FORM OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENT INSTEAD OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE.

DELEGATION OF POWERS TO INVEST COUNCIL FUNDS ON FIXED DEPOSIT WITH A LICENSED BANK WAS ALSO PROVIDED FOR BY THE BILL, MR. BARNES SAID.

ONE OF THE CLAUSES IN THE BILL WOULD MAKE EXPLICIT THE COUNCIL'S RIGHT TO REVISE ITS ANNUAL BUDGET AND ANOTHER CLAUSE SOUGHT TO FURTHER ALLOW THE COUNCIL, WITHIN SPECIFIC LIMITS, TO MAKE BY-LAWS DELEGATING THE POWER OF REVISION, INCLUDING THE POWER TO REVISE BY AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURE IN EXCESS OF THE BUDGET PROVISION, MR. BARNES ADDED.

ANOTHER PROVISION OF THE BILL WOULD PERMIT THE COUNCIL TO PRESCRIBE FEES FOR THE SIGNING OF OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS BY PUBLIC OFFICERS ON BEHALF OF THE COUNCIL AND TO REDUCE, VARY, REMIT OR REFUND ANY FEE OR CHARGE PAYABLE TO THE COUNCIL.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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DANGEROUS DRUGS (AMENDMENT) BILL

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THE DANGEROUS DRUGS (AMENDMENT) BILL, AIMED AT MAKING IT MANDATORY FOR THE COURTS TO OBTAIN A DRUG ADDICTION TREATMENT CENTRE SUITABILITY REPORT ON MINOR DRUG OFFENDERS WHEN A CUSTODIAL SENTENCE IS INTENDED, WAS INTRODUCED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON. LEWIS DAVIES, TOLD THE COUNCIL THAT PRIOR TO AN OFFENDER BEING SENT TO AN ADDICTION TREATMENT CENTRE, WHICH IS SPECIALLY DESIGNED FOR THE TREATMENT OF DRUG ADDICTS, THE COURT WAS REQUIRED TO FIRST CONSIDER A REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER OF PRISONS ON THE SUITABILITY OF SUCH PERSON FOR CURE AND REHABILITATION AND ON THE AVAILABILITY OF A PLACE AT A CENTRE.

HOWEVER, THERE WAS NO SUCH PROVISION UNDER THE DANGEROUS DRUGS ORDINANCE PRIOR TO A MINOR DRUG OFFENDER BEING SENT TO IMPRISONMENT, HE SAID.

THERE ARE GENERALLY TWO TYPES OF SENTENCES WHICH A COURT CAN IMPOSE ON A MINOR DRUG OFFENDER.

THE FIRST ARE NON-CUSTODIAL, SUCH AS A FINE OR A PROBATION ORDER. THE SECOND ARE CUSTODIAL SENTENCES EITHER TO A PRISON AS PROVIDED UNDER THE DANGEROUS DRUGS ORDINANCE OR TO A DRUG ADDICTION TREATMENT CENTRE AS PROVIDED UNDER THE DRUG ADDICTION TREATMENT CENTRES ORDINANCE.

SINCE 1977 ABOUT 20 TO 25 PER CENT OF ALL PERSONS ADMITTED INTO PRISONS PROPER WERE SENTENCED TO IMPRISONMENT FOR OFFENCES AGAINST VARIOUS SECTIONS OF THE DANGEROUS DRUGS ORDINANCE, WHICH RELATE GENERALLY TO THE TAKING OF DRUGS AND THE POSSESSION OF EQUIPMENT FOR THE PURPOSE, MR. DAVIES SAID.

+MANY OF THESE PERSONS CAN PROBABLY BE BETTER DEALT WITH BY BEING SENT TO A DRUG ADDICTION TREATMENT CENTRE THAN DIRECTLY TO PRISONS WHERE THERE ARE NO SPECIALISED TREATMENT AVAILABLE FOR THEIR PROBLEMS OF ADDICTION.

+IT IS TO ALLOW THIS COURSE TO BE FOLLOWED AND FOR AT LEAST A REPORT ON A DRUG OFFENDER TO BE OBTAINED THAT THE AMENDMENT IS PROPOSED,+ MR. DAVIES EXPLAINED.

+THEREFORE A COURT, AFTER CONSIDERING A SUITABILITY REPORT, WILL BE ABLE EITHER TO SEND AN OFFENDER TO A TREATMENT CENTRE OR TO A PRISON DEPENDING ON ITS JUDGMENT OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND NATURE OF EACH CASE.+

THE DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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TIME LIMIT ON PROCEEDINGS UNDER CLEAN AIR ORDINANCE  
EXTENDED TO ONE YEAR  
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UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) SUGGESTED THAT THE TIME LIMIT ON THE INSTITUTION OF PROCEEDINGS FOR AN OFFENCE COMMITTED UNDER THE CLEAN AIR ORDINANCE SHOULD BE EXTENDED TO ONE YEAR FROM SIX MONTHS.

THE CLEAN AIR (AMENDMENT) BILL WHICH WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE COUNCIL ON JULY 4 BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON. NEIL HENDERSON, HAD PROPOSED THE EXTENSION FROM SIX MONTHS TO TWO YEARS.

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE BILL TODAY, THE HON. PETER C. WONG, SAID UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS GENERALLY FELT THAT AN EXTENSION TO TWO YEARS WAS UNDESIRABLE.

+AFTER A LAPSE OF TWO YEARS, AN OFFENDER MAY FIND IT DIFFICULT TO REMEMBER ACCURATELY THE FACTS OF HIS CASE AND MATERIAL WITNESSES MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE,+ HE EXPLAINED.

THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR AGREED WITH THE UNOFFICIALS AND THE APPROPRIATE CLAUSE WAS AMENDED DURING COMMITTEE STAGE.

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PUBLIC HEALTH AND URBAN SERVICES  
(AMENDMENT) BILL SUPPORTED

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DUE TO THE SHORTAGE OF LAND IN THE URBAN AREAS, THE URBAN COUNCIL HAS PLANS TO BUILD MORE MULTI-PURPOSE BUILDING WHERE MARKET FACILITIES AND COOKED FOOD CENTRES CAN BE COMBINED WITH CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL SERVICES SUCH AS DISTRICT LIBRARIES AND INDOOR GAMES HALLS, THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE WAS SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND URBAN SERVICES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979 DURING THE RESUMED DEBATE.

MR. CHEONG-LEEN SAID THE COMBINED COOKED FOOD CENTRES AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES WERE A NEW CONCEPT WHICH COULD BE TRANSPLANTED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW TOWNS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES IN ORDER TO MAKE OPTIMUM USE OF AVAILABLE LAND.

+MANY URBAN COUNCIL PUBLIC LIBRARIES ALREADY HAVE A WIDE RANGE OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS STORY HOURS FOR CHILDREN, ADULT EDUCATION TALKS, FILM SHOWS AND VARIOUS EXHIBITIONS,+ HE SAID.

+RECORD LISTENING SECTIONS AND VIDEO CASSETTE FACILITIES ARE ALREADY PROVIDED IN SOME OF THE LARGE URBAN COUNCIL LIBRARIES. THERE ARE ALSO ROTATING MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS AT MANY LIBRARIES.+

MR. CHEONG-LEEN ADDED THAT THESE EXTENSION SERVICES HAVE ARISEN OUT OF NEW AND CHANGING DEMANDS ON THE PART OF THE PUBLIC LIVING IN DIFFERENT URBAN DISTRICTS.

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BAN ON EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN IN FACTORIES GETS SUPPORT

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THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN WELCOMED THE EMPLOYMENT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL 1979 WHICH EXTENDS THE PROHIBITION OF EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN TO NON-INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS, BUT WAS CONCERNED THAT A 13-YEAR-OLD CHILD IS PERMITTED TO WORK DURING THE SUMMER HOLIDAYS FOR UP TO EIGHT HOURS BETWEEN 7 A.M. AND 7 P.M.

SPEAKING DURING THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE BILL IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) HE SAID THESE EIGHT HOURS WOULD ACTUALLY BE 6 A.M. TO 6 P.M. DURING SUMMER TIME AND IF THE CHILD LIVES SOME DISTANCE FROM WORK, HE WOULD MOST LIKELY HAVE TO WAKE UP AT 5 A.M.

+WORKING EIGHT HOURS A DAY DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS, ESPECIALLY IF A CHILD HAS TO RISE AT SUCH AN EARLY HOUR DAILY, GOES AGAINST THE SPIRIT AND PURPOSE OF SCHOOL SUMMER HOLIDAYS,+ HE SAID.

HE ASKED THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR TO MONITOR THE SITUATION CAREFULLY TO SEE WHETHER ANY CHANGE IS REQUIRED NEXT YEAR.

/HE ALSO .....

HE ALSO ASKED HIM NOT TO RELAX HIS EFFORTS IN ELIMINATING CHILD LABOUR DESPITE THE ENORMOUSLY IMPROVED SITUATION, AND RALLY THE SUPPORT OF GRASS-ROOTS ORGANISATIONS SUCH AS CDO COMMITTEES AND MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES IN EXERTING CONTINUOUS SOCIAL PRESSURE TOWARDS ITS COMPLETE ELIMINATION.

SUPPORT FOR THE BILL ALSO CAME FROM THE HON. JAMES WU, WHO SAID THAT AT THE PRESENT STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT AND WITH THE TRADITIONAL CONCERN OF CHINESE PARENTS FOR THE EDUCATION AND WELL-BEING OF THEIR CHILDREN, HE DID NOT FORESEE ANY HARDSHIP AND DIFFICULTY IN THE ENFORCEMENT OF THIS BILL, BEARING IN MIND THAT MOST FOREIGN CRITICISMS OF CHILD-LABOUR IN HONG KONG IN THE PAST WERE EITHER ILL-INFORMED, OR HARBOURING ULTERIOR MOTIVES PARTICULARLY BY TRADE-PROTECTIONISTS.

+ON THE CONTRARY, AS HONG KONG IS FORCED TO MECHANISE AND DIVERSIFY INTO MORE SOPHISTICATED INDUSTRIES, A MORE MATURE AND EDUCATED WORKFORCE IS PARAMOUNT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HIGHER CAPABILITY AND PRODUCTIVITY THAT ARE SO ESSENTIAL FOR MEETING COMPETITION. FOR THIS REASON, CHILD-LABOUR WILL BY ITSELF VANISH FROM OUR INDUSTRIAL SCENE, SO WILL THOSE WHO BELIEVE THAT SUCH ARE STILL PROFITABLE TO EXPLOIT,+ MR. WU SAID.

IN REPLY, THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON. NEIL HENDERSON, THANKED UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS FOR THEIR VALUABLE COMMENTS IN SUPPORT FOR THE BILL.

CONCERNING CHILDREN WHO MAY BE PERMITTED TO WORK UP TO THE ENTIRE SUMMER HOLIDAY PERIOD, MR. HENDERSON ASSURED THE COUNCIL THAT HE WOULD WATCH THIS CAREFULLY.

HE EMPHASISED THAT THIS PERMISSION WAS SUBJECTED TO PARENTAL CONSENT, LIMITED TO NON-INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT, AND COULD NOT BE GIVEN TO PROHIBITED OCCUPATIONS.

+SO GENERALLY SPEAKING, THE EMPLOYMENT WILL NOT BE HEAVY, UNHEALTHY OR HAZARDOUS IN NATURE,+ HE ADDED.

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#### GOVERNMENT TO REDUCE NUMBER OF ABANDONED VEHICLES

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THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. GRAHAM BARNES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO REDUCE SUBSTANTIALLY THE NUMBER OF ABANDONED VEHICLES NEXT YEAR.

THERE ARE ABOUT 1,150 ABANDONED VEHICLES ON THE ROADS -- 50 ON HONG KONG ISLAND, 500 IN KOWLOON AND 600 IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, MR. BARNES SAID IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN.

+THE RECENT INCREASE IS LARGELY DUE TO A HITCH IN THE CHAIN OF PROCEDURES INVOLVED IN CLEARING AN ABANDONED CAR FROM THE ROADS, CAUSED BY THE GOVERNMENT CONTRACTOR FOR CRASHING THE ABANDONED CARS LOSING HIS WORKS SITE TO THE MTR,+ MR. BARNES SAID.

+BUT A VERY URGENT SEARCH IS GOING ON FOR A NEW ONE, AND PROVIDED THE CONTRACTOR, OR A CONTRACTOR, CAN BE RE-ESTABLISHED, IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO MAKE SOME IMPACT ON THE PRESENT BACKLOG.+

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GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE STEPPED UP  
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THE GOVERNMENT HAS STEPPED UP ITS EFFORTS IN RECENT YEARS TO IMPROVE BOTH THE BASIC SOCIAL SERVICES AND THE GENERAL ENVIRONMENT IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN HONG KONG, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, THE HON. JOHN CHAMBERS SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM DR. THE HON. HO KAM-FAI IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR. CHAMBERS SAID: +IN PARTICULAR, THERE HAS BEEN A RAPID EXPANSION OF EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES- AS FROM SEPTEMBER LAST YEAR ALL PRIMARY SCHOOL LEAVERS WILL HAVE THREE YEARS OF JUNIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR.+

+THIS WILL CLOSE THE GAP BETWEEN SCHOOL AND EMPLOYMENT WHICH IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN THE CAUSE OF MUCH DELINQUENCY HITHERTO,+ HE SAID.

IN ADDITION, MR. CHAMBERS SAID, A WIDE VARIETY OF RECREATIONAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES HAD BEEN DEVELOPED AND ALL THESE DEVELOPMENTS HELP BY PROVIDING HEALTHY AND CONSTRUCTIVE OUTLETS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

FURTHERMORE, HE ADDED, THE POLICE FORCE MOUNTS A CONSIDERABLE EFFORT AT ALL LEVELS TO COUNTER THE THREAT POSED BY GANGS AND QUASI-TRIAD ORGANISATIONS, AND THE JUNIOR POLICE CALL MOVEMENT, WHICH HAS ABOUT 230,000 MEMBERS, EXERTS A POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON YOUNG PEOPLE AND HELPS TO IMPROVE THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE POLICE.

ON PRIVATE PARTIES, MR. CHAMBERS SAID THEY WERE OF COURSE NOT SUBJECT TO ANY FORM OF LICENSING, BUT IF THE POLICE HAD INFORMATION THAT OFFENCES HAD BEEN COMMITTED AT ANY OF THESE PARTIES, ACTION WAS TAKEN IN THE FORM OF RAIDS AND PROSECUTIONS WHERE APPROPRIATE.

+I WOULD THEREFORE LIKE TO URGE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE SUBJECT TO ANY FORM OF INTIMIDATION OR OTHER PRESSURE TO JOIN SUCH GROUPS, TO SEEK THE AID OF THE POLICE TO ENABLE THEM TO TAKE ACTION,+ HE SAID.

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FLUORIDATION OF WATER REDUCES  
DENTAL CARIES  
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THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN REGULARLY MONITORING THE EFFECTS OF FLUORIDATION TO PREVENT DENTAL CARIES AMONG CHILDREN, THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES, DR. THE HON. S.F. LAM TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. ANDREW SO, DR. LAM SAID THAT SUCH ROUTINE MONITORING HAD BEEN IN OPERATION SINCE THE INTRODUCTION OF FLUORIDATION OF WATER IN HONG KONG IN 1961.

+ALSO, A STUDY DONE IN 1968 SHOWED THAT THERE WAS A GENERAL REDUCTION OF 50 PER CENT IN THE INCIDENCE OF DENTAL CARIES AMONG THE ATTENDANTS IN THE CLINICS,+ HE ADDED.

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GOVERNMENT TAKE OVER OF SHOUSON HILL AMMUNITION DEPOT  
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THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. GRAHAM BARNES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE OLD AMMUNITION DEPOT AT SHOUSON HILL WAS RELEASED TO THE GOVERNMENT BY THE SERVICES ON JULY 1, 1975.

MR. BARNES WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. JOHN BREMRIDGE.

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13 BILLS PASSED  
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THIRTEEN BILLS WERE PASSED INTO LAW IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THEY ARE THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) (NO.6) BILL 1979= THE SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979= THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND URBAN SERVICES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979= THE REGISTRATION OF PERSONS (AMENDMENT)(NO. 2) BILL 1979= THE BIRTHS AND DEATHS REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979= THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979= THE CLEAN AIR (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979= THE EMPLOYMENT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL 1979= THE CROWN LAND (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979= THE WIDOWS' AND CHILDREN'S PENSIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979= THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979= THE MERCHANT SHIPPING (RECRUITING OF SEAMEN) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979 AND THE SHIPPING AND PORT CONTROL (AMENDMENT) (NO.2) BILL 1979.

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 18, 1979

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ACTING GOVERNOR TO VISIT FORESTRY WORK CAMPS  
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THE ACTING GOVERNOR, SIR JACK CATER, WILL VISIT TWO SCHOOL FORESTRY WORK CAMPS IN THE TAI MO SHAN AREA TOMORROW.

SIR JACK, ACCOMPANIED BY LADY CATER, WILL VISIT THE CAMPS AT TWISK COUNTRY PARK MANAGEMENT CENTRE AND CHUEN LUNG COUNTRY PARK MANAGEMENT CENTRE WHERE SOME 35 STUDENTS WILL BE CONSTRUCTING FOOTPATHS, MAINTAINING RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND TENDING TO FOREST PLANTATIONS.

THE SUMMER PROGRAMME, ORGANISED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT, IS BEING ATTENDED BY 1,500 STUDENTS AT 75 CAMPS IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE NEW TERRITORIES.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO SEND REPRESENTATIVES TO COVER SIR JACK CATER'S VISIT AT THE TWISK COUNTRY PARK MANAGEMENT CENTRE, 12-1/2 MILESTONE ON ROUTE TWISK AT 10 A.M. ON THURSDAY. OFFICIAL TRANSPORT WILL LEAVE KOWLOON PUBLIC PIER AT 8.45 A.M. PRESS REPRESENTATIVES ASSIGNED TO COVER THE VISITS ARE REQUESTED TO ASSEMBLE AT THE PIER 15 MINUTES EARLIER.

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APPOINTMENT OF SIR Y.K. KAN, AS CHAIRMAN OF THE  
TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL  
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SIR Y.K. KAN HAS BEEN APPOINTED CHAIRMAN OF THE HONG KONG TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL WITH EFFECT FROM OCTOBER 1, A GOVERNMENT STATEMENT ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE SUCCEEDS MR. T.K. ANN, WHO HAS HELD THE POST SINCE OCTOBER 1975, AND IT MARKS A RENEWAL OF SIR Y.K.'S LONG ASSOCIATION WITH THE COUNCIL.

SIR Y.K. HAD PREVIOUSLY SERVED AS CHAIRMAN OF THE T.D.C. FROM 1970 TO 1975.

THE TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1966 AS A STATUTORY BODY TO PROMOTE AND DEVELOP HONG KONG'S OVERSEAS TRADE.

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 18, 1979

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TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF CARNARVON ROAD

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT FROM 10 A.M. ON FRIDAY (JULY 20) CARNARVON ROAD AT ITS JUNCTION WITH NATHAN ROAD WILL BE CLOSED TO VEHICULAR TRAFFIC FOR FOUR WEEKS TO FACILITATE REINSTATEMENT OF THE CARRIAGEWAY.

IN ADDITION, THE SECTION OF MODY ROAD BETWEEN NATHAN ROAD AND BRISTOL AVENUE WILL BE RE-ROUTED ONE WAY EASTBOUND.

PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC IN CARNARVON ROAD WILL BE MAINTAINED AND APPROPRIATE TRAFFIC SIGNS WILL BE SET UP TO INDICATE THE CLOSURE.

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WATER CUT

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THE WATER SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT FRESH WATER SUPPLY TO A NUMBER OF PREMISES IN JARDINE'S LOOKOUT AND YUEN LONG WILL BE STOPPED FOR SEVERAL HOURS ON FRIDAY (JULY 20) FOR NIGHT LEAKAGE TESTS.

IN JARDINE'S LOOKOUT, THE AREA BOUNDED BY MT. BUTLER ROAD, MOORSOM ROAD, PERKINS ROAD, COOPER ROAD AND WILSON ROAD, INCLUDING CREASY ROAD, HENDERSON ROAD, GOLDSMITH ROAD, PURVES ROAD AND PRICE ROAD, WILL BE WITHOUT WATER SUPPLY FOR SEVEN HOURS FROM 11 P.M. ON FRIDAY TO 6 A.M. THE FOLLOWING DAY.

THE AREA IN YUEN LONG, BOUNDED BY TAI SUN STREET, TAI TONG ROAD, MAIN NULLAH, HOP YICK ROAD AND KAU YUK ROAD, INCLUDING MA TIN TSUEN, WILL HAVE NO WATER SUPPLY FOR SIX HOURS FROM MIDNIGHT TO 6 A.M. ON FRIDAY.

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