



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

WEDNESDAY, MAY 24, 1978

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DEBATE ON GREEN PAPER ON PERSONAL SOCIAL SERVICES

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AN UMELCO AD HOC GROUP HAD ASKED FOR A MORE INTEGRATED AND COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO OUR YOUTH PROBLEM.

THE GROUP, CONVENED BY THE HON. MRS. KWAN KO SIU-WAH TO STUDY THE GREEN PAPER ON DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONAL SOCIAL WORK AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE FELT THAT PREVENTION OF DELINQUENCY INVOLVED A WIDE RANGE OF PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES, SUCH AS HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, HEALTH CARE AND RECREATION, ALL OF WHICH HAVE A BEARING ON THE PROCESS OF GROWING UP.

THEY SUGGESTED THAT THE INTER-RELATION BETWEEN THE VARIOUS PROGRAMMES SHOULD BE CLEARLY SPELT OUT, BECAUSE THEY WERE COMPLEMENTARY IN PREVENTING DELINQUENCY.

MOVING THE DEBATE ON THE GREEN PAPER IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, MRS. KWAN KO SIU-WAH SUGGESTED THAT IF IT WAS PREMATURE NOW TO FORMULATE A COMPREHENSIVE YOUTH POLICY, THERE COULD BE MORE JOINT PLANNING, BETTER CO-ORDINATION, AND CLOSER CO-OPERATION AMONG ALL THE PARTIES CONCERNED TO MAXIMISE THE UTILISATION OF RESOURCES.

SHE FURTHER URGED THAT ONE WHITE PAPER ON SOCIAL WELFARE BE PRODUCED IN THE FUTURE TO COVER ALL THE VARIOUS AREAS IN THE FIELD, BECAUSE THEY ARE SO CLOSELY RELATED.

FOUR OTHER UNOFFICIALS SPOKE ON THE GREEN PAPER DURING DEBATE ON THE MOTION AND ALL WERE IN FAVOUR OF A WIDER APPROACH TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH WORK.

THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN NOTED THAT IF AN INTEGRATED SERVICE APPROACH COULD BE PLANNED FOR THE ELDERLY, THERE WAS NO REASON WHY AN EQUALLY INTEGRATED APPROACH IN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT COULD NOT BE PLANNED FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

HE SAID THERE WAS AN APPARENT NEED TO SET UP AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE, CHAIRED BY AN UNOFFICIAL MEMBER, TO MONITOR AND CO-ORDINATE THE PROPOSALS IN THE GREEN PAPER.

CO-ORDINATION AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL SHOULD FOLLOW THE TEAM APPROACH IN WHICH THE CITY DISTRICT OFFICER, THE COMMUNITY YOUTH OFFICER AND REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS WOULD BE INVOLVED.

THE HON. ALEX WU CALLED FOR A SENSE OF PROPORTION IN OUR YOUTH SERVICES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME. HE SAID WHILE THERE WAS A NEED FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FOR THOSE WHO SHOWED SYMPTOMS OF DELINQUENCY, SUCH SERVICES SHOULD ALWAYS BE REGARDED AS ONLY A PART OF A LARGER PROGRAMME OF CONSTRUCTIVE DEVELOPMENT.

THE REV. THE HON. JOYCE M. BENNETT SAID THAT THERE WAS A DANGER IN OUR CURRENT SERIES OF GREEN PAPERS IN FRAGMENTING OUR PROBLEMS AND OUR RESOURCES.

SHE AGAIN URGED THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES TO CO-ORDINATE ALL THE WORK AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE.

/THE HON. WONG

THE HON. WONG LAM ALSO THOUGHT THAT ONLY COMPREHENSIVE AND INTEGRATED PLANNING WOULD OBTAIN FRUITFUL RESULTS IN YOUTH GUIDANCE.

HE SAID PERSONAL PROBLEMS VERY OFTEN ARE BUT A REFLECTION OF THE PROBLEMS OF THE WHOLE COMMUNITY, OR HAVE ARISEN FROM CERTAIN SOCIAL PROBLEMS.

IT IS INSUFFICIENT TO RELY SOLELY ON THE WORK OF SOCIAL WORKERS= THE CO-OPERATION OF MANY OTHER SECTORS, SUCH AS THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND EDUCATIONISTS, THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT, AND THE MEDIA MUST ALSO BE ENLISTED IF WE HOPE TO ACHIEVE GOOD RESULTS.

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK

THE UNOFFICIALS COMMENTED ON PARTICULAR ASPECTS OF THE GREEN PAPER WHICH THEY THOUGHT SHOULD BE IMPROVED.

MRS. KWAN KO SIU-WAN SAID THAT THE PROPOSED ASSIGNMENT OF ONE PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORKER TO FOUR SECONDARY SCHOOLS OR 4,000 PUPILS WAS INADEQUATE AS WELL AS ARBITRARY. IT WAS ALSO INFLEXIBLE BECAUSE IN PRACTICE NOT ALL SCHOOLS HAVE THE SAME NEED FOR SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK SERVICE.

AS AN ALTERNATIVE, SHE SUGGESTED A DISTRICT BASED SERVICE, +WITH THE SCHOOLS IN EACH DISTRICT SERVED BY A TEAM OF SOCIAL WORKERS WHO WOULD THEN WORK FLEXIBLY WITH THE SCHOOLS WITHIN THEIR DISTRICT, AND DETERMINE THE KIND OF CONTACT AND APPROACH THAT THEY SHOULD ESTABLISH WITH EACH SCHOOL.+

THE TEAM MAY ALSO BE ATTACHED TO A VOLUNTARY WELFARE AGENCY TO MAKE THE BEST USE OF AVAILABLE COMMUNITY SERVICES TO SUPPLEMENT THEIR WORK WITH THE STUDENTS.

MR. ALEX WU THOUGHT THAT BECAUSE OF THE INADEQUATE PROVISION OF PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORKERS, +IT WOULD INEVITABLY BE A CASE OF REFERRING A STUDENT TO THE SOCIAL WORKER WHICH WOULD IN ITSELF BE A STIGMA.+ THE DISGRACE ITSELF COULD CREATE LONG LASTING ILL EFFECTS FOR THE STUDENT.

WITH THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE AD HOC GROUP, MR. WU FELT THERE WAS WITHOUT DOUBT A NEED FOR PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORKERS TO ADVISE AND CONSULT, +BUT NOT TO TAKE THE PLACE OF TEACHERS, ANY MORE THAN THEY SHOULD TAKE THE PLACE OF PARENTS.+

HE SUGGESTED THAT IT WOULD BE MORE CONSTRUCTIVE, AND MORE ECONOMICAL TO DEVOTE RESOURCES TO EQUIPPING SCHOOL TEACHERS WITH MORE KNOWLEDGE OF BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS AND THEIR SOLUTION.

THE UMELCO AD HOC GROUP AGREED THAT TEACHERS WITH SUITABLE PERSONALITY, THE NECESSARY APTITUDES AND ADQUATE TRAINING COULD BE RECRUITED TO BE STUDENT GUIDANCE OFFICERS.

MRS. KWAN KO SIU-WAH HOPED HOWEVER THAT IN FUTURE ONLY PERSONS WITH APPROPRIATE SOCIAL WORK TRAINING WOULD BE RECRUITED FOR THESE POSTS.

MISS BENNETT WONDERED WHAT THE STUDENT GUIDANCE OFFICERS WITH THREE MONTHS' TRAINING COULD ACHIEVE. SHE ASKED WHY THE RATIO OF TEACHERS TO PRIMARY SCHOOL CLASSES COULD NOT BE INCREASED, +SO THAT THE CLASS TEACHER CAN BECOME THE TRUE GUIDE, PHILOSOPHER AND FRIEND OF THE PRIMARY CHILD.+ IT WOULD BE MUCH EASIER FOR THE STUDENT GUIDANCE OFFICERS TO DO A SATISFACTORY JOB IF THEY WERE FULLY INTEGRATED INTO THE PRIMARY SCHOOL, SHE ADDED.

SHE THOUGHT THEY WOULD THEMSELVES NEED GUIDANCE FROM THE PRINCIPALS AND SENIOR TEACHERS ON THEIR EXACT ROLE IN THE SCHOOL, WHICH WAS NOT LAID DOWN CLEARLY IN THE GREEN PAPER.

SHE ALSO THOUGHT THAT SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS SHOULD BE BASED IN FAMILY CENTRES SO AS TO GIVE HELP TO THE WHOLE FAMILY UNIT. +OUR WORKERS WILL NOT SUCCEED UNLESS THEY HELP THE FAMILIES TO HELP THEIR PROBLEM CHILDREN HELP THEMSELVES,+ SHE SAID.

MR. CHEONG-LEEN ASKED WHY THE SAME PLANNING RATIO OF ONE STUDENT GUIDANCE OFFICER FOR 3,000 PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN URBAN AREAS AND 2,000 PUPILS IN RURAL AREAS COULD NOT BE PROVIDED FOR THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS WHERE THE PROBLEMS OF STUDENTS COULD BE EVEN MORE COMPLICATED AND TIME-CONSUMING.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE TO COME UP WITH A SOLUTION TO PLACE THE 5,000 SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN WHO ARE NOT YET IN SCHOOL.

HE WAS ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT THE SEVERAL THOUSAND OTHER YOUNGSTERS WHO DO NOT FINISH PRIMARY SCHOOL AND DO NOT GO UP TO FORM 1.

HE SAID THERE WAS A CLEAR-CUT NEED TO REVERT BACK TO FULL DAY SESSION FOR ALL GOVERNMENT AND AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOLS AS WELL AS TO REDUCE THE MAXIMUM PERMITTED CLASS SIZE IF WE WERE TO HIT AT THE ROOT OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY.

MR. WONG LAM TOO HAD RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE DEPLOYMENT OF STUDENT GUIDANCE OFFICERS. HE THOUGHT AN IMPORTANT PART OF A TEACHER'S RESPONSIBILITY IS TO HELP STUDENTS SOLVE THEIR PERSONAL PROBLEMS AND BY DIVORCING SUCH DUTY FROM THE TEACHER'S WORK, COUNTER-EFFECTS MAY POSSIBLY BE PRODUCED. TEACHERS WOULD IMPERCEPTIBLY BE ENCOURAGED TO ATTACH IMPORTANCE ONLY TO THE IMPARTING OF KNOWLEDGE, WHILE THE STUDENTS WHO ARE OFFERED GUIDANCE MAY FEEL EMBARRASSED OR ASHAMED.

MR. WONG ALSO THOUGHT THAT REDEPLOYING PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS AS STUDENT GUIDANCE OFFICERS MIGHT NOT BE AS DESIRABLE AS WAS THOUGHT. THERE MAY NOT BE ENOUGH TEACHERS WILLING OR SUITABLE TO BE TRAINED, AND ANY COMPULSORY TRANSFER WOULD EASILY LEAD TO DISCONTENT AND IMPAIR THE SCHEME.

THEY ARE ALSO EXPECTED TO POSSESS A HIGH LEVEL OF PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND IT IS DOUBTFUL WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT CAN WITHIN A SHORT TIME TRAIN UP A LARGE NUMBER OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS TO BE GOOD STUDENT GUIDANCE OFFICERS.

SOCIAL WORK AMONG UNATTACHED YOUTH

MRS. KWAN KO SIU-WAH DISAGREED WITH THE CAUTION EXPRESSED IN THE GREEN PAPER ON THE EXPANSION OF OUTREACHING SOCIAL WORK.

SHE SAID THAT DESPITE THE PROVISION OF THREE YEARS OF SUBSIDISED SECONDARY EDUCATION, MANY YOUNG PEOPLE WOULD CONTINUE TO LEAVE SCHOOL AT AN EARLY AGE. SHE URGED SOCIAL WORK TRAINING INSTITUTIONS TO GIVE MORE EMPHASIS TO DEVELOPING THE SKILLS OF THEIR STUDENTS IN WORKING WITH UNATTACHED YOUNG PEOPLE.

MR. WONG LAM HOWEVER THOUGHT THAT PAST RESULTS OF SUCH SOCIAL WORK SHOULD BE ASSESSED FIRST BEFORE THE GOVERNMENT COMMITS A LARGE AMOUNT OF MANPOWER AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES IN IT.

IF IT IS UNCERTAIN WHAT POSITIVE RESULTS COULD BE OBTAINED, IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO INVEST OUR VALUABLE RESOURCES IN A HURRY, HE SAID.

MR. CHEONG-LEEN SUGGESTED THAT OUTREACHING WORK TEAMS WOULD HAVE TO BE LOCATED IN THE DENSELY POPULATED URBAN OR NEW TERRITORIES AREAS WHERE A HIGHER INCIDENCE OF DELINQUENCY EXISTS.

THE WORK OF THESE TEAMS WOULD HAVE TO BE CONTINUOUSLY MONITORED AND IN THE ABSENCE OF OTHER MORE EFFECTIVE MEASURES, THEY SHOULD BE EXPANDED AND INCREASED AS FAST AS THE NEED BECOMES APPARENT OR CAN BE ANTICIPATED AND TRAINING RESOURCES PERMIT.

THE AD HOC GROUP OF UNOFFICIALS SUPPORTED THE WORK OF THE POLICE DISCRETIONARY SCHEME AND PROPOSED CLOSER LIAISON BETWEEN THE POLICE AND THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT IN REHABILITATING JUVENILE DELINQUENTS.

THEY WERE PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT GIRLS FOUND IN VICE ESTABLISHMENTS DURING POLICE RAIDS AND SUGGESTED THAT PROCEDURES SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED FOR THEM TO BE AUTOMATICALLY AND EXPEDITIOUSLY REFERRED TO SOCIAL WORKERS FOR IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE.

RESIDENTIAL HOMES OR REFUGE FOR BOYS AND GIRLS WITH PROBLEMS WHICH NOW PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN REHABILITATION WORK SHOULD ALSO BE MADE MORE WIDELY KNOWN AND FURTHER EXPANDED.

FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

THE AD HOC GROUP SUPPORTED THE EXPANSION AND CONSCIOUS PROMOTION OF FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES AND SUGGESTED THAT FUNDS SHOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR TRAINING OR FOR WELFARE ORGANISATIONS TO DEVELOP RESOURCE MATERIALS.

THEY ALSO RECOMMENDED THAT LIAISON BETWEEN THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT, VOLUNTARY AGENCIES, RADIO TELEVISION HONG KONG, GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES, AND THE MASS MEDIA IN GENERAL SHOULD BE STRENGTHENED.

/MR. CHEONG-LEEN

MR. CHEONG-LEEN POINTED OUT THAT THE FAMILY HAS ALWAYS PLAYED AN ESSENTIAL ROLE IN CHINESE TRADITION AND CIVILIZATION. THE SCHEME NOW AIMS TO AMELIORATE THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF LIVING IN AN INDUSTRIALISED COMMUNITY AND ENCOURAGES THE HARMONIOUS PRESERVATION OF THE FAMILY AS A SOCIAL UNIT TO BENEFIT BOTH YOUNG PEOPLE AS WELL AS PARENTS IN THEIR OLD AGE.

MISS BENNETT REGRETTED THAT LITTLE DEPTH ON FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION WAS COVERED BY THE GREEN PAPER AND TRUSTED THAT THERE WOULD BE AMPLIFICATION IN THE COMING WHITE PAPER.

MR. WONG LAM QUERIED HOW THE STAFFING RATIO OF ONE PROFESSIONAL WORKER TO EVERY 10,000 POPULATION WAS ARRIVED AT IN THE GREEN PAPER. HE SAID THIS WOULD ONLY MEAN A FEW DOZENS SUCH SOCIAL WORKERS FOR THE WHOLE POPULATION. HE ALSO ASKED HOW RELIABLE WAS THE PAST EXPERIENCE WHICH WAS USED AS A BASIS FOR WORKING OUT THIS RATIO.

ROLE OF THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES

MRS. KWAN KO SIU-WAH POINTED OUT THAT VOLUNTARY AGENCIES HAVE BEEN TAKING AN IMPORTANT PART IN PROVIDING YOUTH SERVICES AND HAVE PROVED THEIR SUITABILITY AND EFFECTIVENESS IN PILOTING NEW SCHEMES.

SHE SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD ADMITTED THAT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VARIOUS PROPOSALS WOULD RELY TO A LARGE EXTENT ON THEIR SUPPORT. THE GREEN PAPER, HOWEVER, MADE NO FIRM FINANCIAL COMMITMENT TO ASSIST THEM IN PROVIDING THEIR SERVICES. IT EVEN WARNED THAT IF FUNDS WERE INSUFFICIENT, THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE EITHER A SLOWING DOWN IN EXPANSION OR A LOWERING OF STANDARD.

SHE SAID THIS WAVERING ATTITUDE WOULD MAKE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES MOST RESISTANT TO VENTURE INTO NEW, AND ESPECIALLY EXPERIMENTAL, AREAS.

MR. ALEX WU DOUBTED WHETHER THE POTENTIAL FOR SOCIAL WORK AMONG UNATTACHED YOUNG PEOPLE BY EXISTING AGENCIES HAS BEEN EXHAUSTED.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE OBJECTIVES OF THE GREEN PAPER ARE SHARED BY A LARGE NUMBER OF VOLUNTARY AGENCIES ALREADY AT WORK IN THE COMMUNITY AND IN MANY CASES RECEIVING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE GOVERNMENT.

IT WOULD SEEM THAT FURTHER CONSIDERATION IS NECESSARY BEFORE A WHOLE NEW MACHINERY IS PROPOSED TO DO THE SAME WORK, HE SAID.

HE HOPED THAT BEFORE THE WHITE PAPER IS APPROVED, THERE WOULD BE IN-DEPTH CONSULTATIONS WITH ALL THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES WORKING IN THIS FIELD.

SOCIAL ATTITUDES TRAINING AND MORAL EDUCATION

MRS. KWAN KO SIU-WAH SAID SHE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT HAS PREPARED AND IS MAKING IMPROVEMENT TO THE SYLLABUSES ON MORAL EDUCATION AND SOCIAL ATTITUDES TRAINING.

/SHE SAID

SHE SAID HOWEVER THAT THESE VALUES SHOULD NOT BE TAUGHT ONLY BY PRECEPT BUT BY EXAMPLE. PROPER USE OF LITERATURE AND PARTICIPATION IN ARTISTIC ENDEAVOURS WOULD DO MORE FOR THE YOUNGER GENERATION THAN LEARNING DREARY TEXTBOOKS ON MORAL BEHAVIOUR.

MR. CHEONG-LEEN REGRETTED THAT THE RECOMMENDED SYLLABUSES PREPARED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT HAVE NOT YET BEEN ADOPTED ON A WIDE SCALE BY THE SCHOOLS.

HE SAID ALL SCHOOL GUIDANCE OFFICERS AND PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORKERS SHOULD PROMOTE SUCH EDUCATION THROUGH TALKS, SEMINARS AND DISCUSSIONS. WITH MR. WONG LAM, HE URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO MAKE THE SYLLABUSES AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM.

RESEARCH AND TRAINING

MEMBERS OF THE AD HOC GROUP FELT THAT THE FORECAST OF THE DEMAND FOR SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK WAS EXTREMELY ARBITRARY AND SUGGESTED THAT MORE RESEARCH BE CONDUCTED TO PROVIDE MORE ACCURATE INFORMATION FOR THE PLANNERS.

THEY ALSO FELT STRONGLY ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING IN THE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSALS IN THE GREEN PAPER.

MISS BENNETT REGRETTED THAT THE METHODS OF TRAINING WERE NOT CLEARLY LAID DOWN. SHE SAID EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS AND PSYCHIATRISTS WERE DESPERATELY SHORT AND THERE WAS AN URGENT NEED TO ATTRACT BACK THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN TRAINED AND ARE WORKING OVERSEAS, TO SERVE THE FUTURE YOUNG PEOPLE OF HONG KONG.

IN REPLY, THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, MR. E.P. HO SAID THE AIM OF PERSONAL SOCIAL WORK IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GREEN PAPER IS TO GUIDE AND HELP THOSE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE MORE VULNERABLE TO DELINQUENT INFLUENCES, TO BECOME BETTER ADJUSTED MEMBERS OF SOCIETY.

HE SAID THIS IS AN AREA OF RELATIVELY NEW ENDEAVOUR, AND HONG KONG IS NOT ALONE IN THIS REGARD.

+BUT IN THE GOVERNMENT'S VIEW THIS IS WHERE WE HAVE SOME LEEWAY TO CATCH UP AND WHERE WE ARE LIKELY TO ACHIEVE THE MOST PROGRESS WITH THE LIMITED PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO US,+ HE SAID.

HE ALSO EMPHASISED THAT THE GOVERNMENT ATTACHES GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE INTO MATURE, RESPONSIBLE AND CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS OF SOCIETY.

+EVIDENCE OF THIS IS AVAILABLE IN THE SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN THE RANGE OF ACTIVITIES IN RECENT YEARS WHICH CATER SPECIFICALLY OR LARGELY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, UNDER THE GENERAL GUIDANCE AND OVERALL DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS.

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MR. HO POINTED OUT THAT MORE THAN ONE THIRD OF ALL YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE AGE RANGE FROM 6 TO 20 ARE TAKING PART IN SOME FORM OF ORGANISED YOUTH OR RECREATION ACTIVITY IN THEIR SPARE TIME.

+WE BELIEVE THAT THIS PROPORTION WILL CONTINUE TO INCREASE IN THE YEARS AHEAD AS ADDITIONAL FACILITIES ARE PROVIDED IN THE COUNTRY PARKS AND NEW TOWNS BY THE URBAN COUNCIL, AND AS THE VARIOUS YOUTH AND RECREATION SERVICES ARE DEVELOPED BY THE GOVERNMENT AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR.

HE SAID THAT THE RELIEF OF OVERCROWDING, IMPROVED STANDARDS OF HOUSING AND A BETTER GENERAL ENVIRONMENT CAN ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO A LESSENING OF TENDENCIES TOWARDS DELINQUENCY, AND ASSURED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO SLACKENING OF EFFORT IN THESE VARIOUS DIRECTIONS.

REPLYING TO SOME OF THE POINTS RAISED BY THE UNOFFICIALS IN THE DEBATE, MR. HO SAID THE CRITICISM THAT THE STAFFING RATIOS PROPOSED IN THE GREEN PAPER FOR SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK ARE INADEQUATE MAY WELL BE VALID, BUT +WE MUST BE REALISTIC AND MAKE AN EARLY START WITH THE MANPOWER RESOURCES LIKELY TO BE AVAILABLE.+

HE SAID TAKING INTO ACCOUNT ALL RELEVANT FACTORS AND HAVING REGARD TO THE DEMAND FOR SOCIAL WORKERS IN OTHER FIELDS OF ACTIVITY, THE PROPOSALS IN THE GREEN PAPER REPRESENT A REASONABLE STARTING POINT.

+OF COURSE, I INTEND TO HAVE THEM REVIEWED ANNUALLY IN THE LIGHT OF ACTUAL DEMAND AND OPERATING EXPERIENCE,+ MR. HO SAID.

HE ALSO ASSURED THAT ALL CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTIONS MADE BY THE PUBLIC AND THE UNOFFICIALS INCLUDING MRS. KWAN KO SIU-WAH'S PROPOSAL TO COMBINE THE THREE GREEN PAPERS IN SOCIAL WELFARE FIELD INTO A SINGLE WHITE PAPER WOULD BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED BEFORE ANY FINAL CONCLUSIONS ARE REACHED.

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SOCIAL SERVICES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES
UNDER INCREASING PRESSURE FROM IMMIGRANTS

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THE ACTING CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY THAT OUR SOCIAL SERVICES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES ARE INEVITABLY UNDER INCREASING PRESSURE FROM THE IMMIGRANTS WHO CONTINUE TO FLOW INTO HONG KONG.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN, MR. HADDON-CAVE REVEALED THAT A TOTAL OF 23,500 LEGAL AND 6,500 ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS (EXCLUDING THOSE ARRESTED AND REPATRIATED) FROM ALL SOURCES ARE ESTIMATED TO HAVE ARRIVED IN HONG KONG SO FAR THIS YEAR.

+THESE FIGURES COULD IMPLY A TOTAL GROSS INTAKE FOR THE YEAR BETWEEN 75-80,000,+ MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID.

MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID THE PRESENCE OF THESE IMMIGRANTS INITIALLY EITHER CONTRIBUTES TO THE NUMBERS WHO CONTINUE TO SQUAT ON CROWN LAND OR EXACERBATES OVERCROWDING IN TENEMENTS AND HOUSING ESTATES.

+IMMIGRANTS ADD, THEREFORE, TO THE POTENTIAL REQUIREMENT FOR PUBLIC HOUSING. DEPENDING ON THEIR AGE AND NEEDS, THEY ADD TO THE DEMAND, AND IMMEDIATELY, FOR OUR EDUCATION AND MEDICAL SERVICES,+ MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID.

+THEN, WITHIN PRESCRIBED PERIODS OF TIME, THEY BECOME ELIGIBLE FOR OTHER FORMS OF ASSISTANCE FROM PUBLIC FUNDS: FOR EXAMPLE, PUBLIC ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE AFTER ONE YEAR'S RESIDENCE AND INFIRMITY ALLOWANCES AFTER FIVE YEARS,+ HE ADDED.

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BUS AND TRAM PRIORITY SCHEME FOR NORTH POINT
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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED TODAY THAT A BUS AND TRAM PRIORITY SCHEME ALONG KING'S ROAD IN NORTH POINT WILL COME INTO EFFECT FROM 10 A.M. ON SUNDAY (MAY 28).

UNDER THIS SCHEME THE WEST-BOUND KERB-SIDE LANE OF KING'S ROAD, BETWEEN A NUMBER OF POINTS, WOULD BE RESERVED FOR THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF FRANCHISED BUSES BETWEEN 7 A.M. AND 7 P.M. DAILY.

IT IS AN OFFENCE FOR ANY VEHICLE OTHER THAN A FRANCHISED BUS, TO ENTER THE +BUS ONLY+ LANE BETWEEN THESE HOURS.

THE +BUS ONLY+ LANE WILL BE MARKED OUT BY A CONTINUOUS WHITE LINE. THE WORDS +BUS ONLY+ WILL BE PAINTED ON THE ROAD SURFACE AND APPROPRIATE TRAFFIC SIGNS WILL BE POSTED AT THE BEGINNING OF EACH OF THE LANES.

THE TRAFFIC LANE ON THE EAST-BOUND TRAM TRACKS, IN TWO SECTIONS, WILL BE RESERVED FOR THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF TRAMS 24 HOURS DAILY.

THE STARTING POINT OF EACH OF THE TWO SECTIONS OF THE TRAM RESERVE WILL BE MARKED BY A +KEEP LEFT+ BOLLARD WITH WHITE WORDS AND CHARACTERS +TRAM ONLY+ PAINTED ON THE ROAD SURFACE.

THE NORTHERN EDGE OF THE TRAM RESERVE WILL BE MARKED BY DOUBLE-WHITE LINES.

IT IS AN OFFENCE FOR ANY VEHICLE TO ENTER THE TRAM RESERVATION.

TIN CHIU STREET BETWEEN TSAT TSZ MUI ROAD AND KING'S ROAD WILL BE DESIGNATED A PUBLIC LIGHT BUS CLEARWAY. PLB'S WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO PICK UP OR SET DOWN PASSENGERS ALONG THE CLEARWAY ZONE BETWEEN 7 A.M. AND MIDNIGHT.

THE EXISTING PLB CLEARWAY RESTRICTION ON THE WESTBOUND CARRIAGEWAY OF KING'S ROAD WILL BE EXTENDED EASTWARDS TO NEAR THE JUNCTION WITH JAVA ROAD.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT SAID THAT THE OBJECT OF THE BUS AND TRAM PRIORITY SCHEME IS TO GIVE PRIORITY TO THESE FORMS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT OVER THIS SECTION OF KING'S ROAD TO IMPROVE THEIR OPERATING SPEED AND RELIABILITY.

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ELECTRIFICATION OF KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY
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THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL HAS ACCEPTED A FINANCIAL COMMITMENT OF UP TO \$400 MILLION TO UNDERTAKE THE PROJECT OF ELECTRIFICATION OF THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY AFTER THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL APPROVED SUCH PROPOSALS IN JANUARY THIS YEAR.

THIS WAS REVEALED BY THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. PETER C. WONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MR. JONES SAID THE FINANCIAL COMMITMENT WILL BE ON TOP OF THE PROGRAMME OF CIVIL ENGINEERING WORKS WHICH IS NOW UNDERWAY TO DOUBLE TRACK THE RAILWAY LINE, BUILD A NEW BEACON HILL TUNNEL AND IMPROVE STATIONS.

HE SAID SUCH DEVELOPMENTS CAME AFTER THE CONSULTANTS -- TRANSMARK -- THE CONSULTANCY ARM OF BRITISH RAILWAYS, SUBMITTED A REPORT TO THE GOVERNMENT IN NOVEMBER LAST YEAR.

THE CONSULTANTS HAVE RECOMMENDED THE USE OF THREE CAR ELECTRIC MULTIPLE UNITS, POWERED BY A 25 KILOVOLT ALTERNATING CURRENT OVERHEAD TRACTION SYSTEM.

+THE UNITS CAN BE LINKED TO PROVIDE TRAINS OF FROM THREE TO TWELVE CARS IN LENGTH, AND THE PURCHASE OF SOME 60 SETS SHOULD PERMIT THE RUNNING OF UP TO 16 TRAINS AN HOUR IN EACH DIRECTION,+ MR. JONES SAID.

+A MAINTENANCE AND STABLING DEPOT FOR THE ROLLING STOCK WILL BE CONSTRUCTED AT SHA TIN NEAR THE RACE COURSE.

+THE CONSULTANTS HAVE NOW BEEN ASKED TO EXAMINE CERTAIN ASPECTS ON THE CRITICAL PATH OF THE PROJECT AND, WHEN THIS HAS BEEN COMPLETED, A FULL SCALE CONSULTANCY WILL BE COMMISSIONED TO PREPARE DETAILED DESIGNS AND TO LET CONTRACTS,+ MR. JONES ADDED.

HE SAID THE AIM OF SUCH MOVES IS TO BEGIN ELECTRIC SERVICES AT LEAST TO RACECOURSE STATION IN SHA TIN BY THE MIDDLE OF 1981 WHICH HE STRESSED IS AN +EXTREMELY AMBITIOUS TARGET.+

ON OTHER DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR THE RAILWAY, MR. JONES SAID THREE NEW STATIONS WILL BE BUILT TO SERVE SHA TIN NEW TOWN AND ITS ENVIRONS AND ANOTHER NEW STATION IS BEING PLANNED AT KOWLOON TONG TO PROVIDE A VERY NECESSARY INTERCHANGE WITH MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY,+ HE ADDED.

+THE SYSTEM WILL ALSO REQUIRE THE INSTALLATION OF A SOPHISTICATED COLOUR LIGHT SIGNALLING SYSTEM,+ HE SAID.

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GOVERNMENT WILL CONSIDER ISSUE OF \$5 NOTES
IF DEMAND WARRANTS IT
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THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONSIDER THE RE-INTRODUCTION OF FIVE-DOLLAR NOTES IF THERE IS A SUBSTANTIAL AND WIDE-SPREAD DEMAND FOR THEM AND THE COST IS NOT EXCESSIVE.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. DAVID JEAFFRESON, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. PETER C. WONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MR. JEAFFRESON REMINDED THAT THE REPLACEMENT OF THE \$5 NOTE BY A COIN WAS ONE OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COINAGE REVIEW COMMITTEE SET UP IN NOVEMBER 1973.

+THE COMMITTEE CONSULTED WIDELY ON THE USES OF COINS AND BANK NOTES AND ITS CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS WERE ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT IN SEPTEMBER 1974 AND ITS REPORT WIDELY CIRCULATED,+ MR. JEAFFRESON SAID.

HE ADDED THAT MANY COUNTRIES HAVE, IN RECENT YEARS, INTRODUCED HIGHER VALUE COINS AS INFLATION DEPRECIATES THE VALUE OF LOW DENOMINATION NOTES.

+MOREOVER, SMALL DENOMINATION NOTES HAVE A VERY SHORT LIFE, IN THIS CASE LESS THAN ONE YEAR, WHEREAS A COIN MAY HAVE A LIFE OF UP TO 50 YEARS,+ HE SAID.

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COMPENSATION FOR RESUMED LAND
IS REALISTIC AND REASONABLE
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THE GOVERNMENT IS SATISFIED THAT THE PRESENT COMPENSATION ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE RESUMPTION OF PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT ARE REALISTIC AND REASONABLE, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. WONG LAM, MR. JONES SAID THE TERMS FOR THE ACQUISITION OF PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY FOR A PUBLIC PURPOSE HAD BEEN CONSIDERABLY ADJUSTED IN RECENT YEARS AND NOW INCLUDED A COMBINATION OF STATUTORY AND EX-GRATIA COMPENSATION, AS WELL AS AN OFFER OF REHOUSING.

+THE GOVERNMENT WILL KEEP A CLOSE WATCH ON CURRENT AND FUTURE CLEARANCE TO ENSURE THAT COMPENSATION ARRANGEMENTS CONTINUE TO BE APPROPRIATE TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES,+ MR. JONES ADDED.

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PLACES OF PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENT ORDINANCE TO BE AMENDED

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THE GOVERNMENT PLANS TO EXTEND THE SCOPE OF THE PLACES OF PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENT ORDINANCE TO COVER SUCH TRADITIONAL CHINESE FESTIVALS AS THE CHEUNG CHAU BUN FESTIVAL AND THE STRUCTURES USED IN THEM, THE SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, THE HON. DAVID AKERS-JONES, SAID TODAY.

HE TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THAT A REVIEW WAS NOW IN HAND AND HOPED THAT THE NECESSARY LEGISLATION WOULD BE BROUGHT BEFORE THE COUNCIL DURING THE NEXT SESSION.

MR. AKERS-JONES WAS REPLYING TO POINTS RAISED BY THE HON. LYDIA DUNN REGARDING THE COLLAPSE OF TWO BUN TOWERS DURING THE RECENT CHEUNG CHAU BUN FESTIVAL.

HE SAID THE MOST PROBABLE CAUSE OF THE COLLAPSE WAS THE USE OF POOR MATERIALS IN THE BUN TOWER THAT TOPPLED FIRST. +AS IT FELL, IT HIT A GUY ROPE OF ANOTHER TOWER, CAUSING IT ALSO TO COLLAPSE SINCE IT WAS NOT DESIGNED TO WITHSTAND THE IMPACT OF ANOTHER COLLAPSING TOWER,+ HE ADDED.

+THESE TOWERS, LIKE MANY OTHER STRUCTURES ERECTED IN CONNECTION WITH TRADITIONAL CHINESE FESTIVALS, ARE BUILT IN ACCORDANCE WITH TIME TESTED DESIGNS AND TRADITIONAL METHODS OF CONSTRUCTION.+

HE SAID THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE INSPECTS STRUCTURES CAPABLE OF ACCOMMODATING THE PUBLIC AS REQUIRED UNDER THE PLACES OF PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENT ORDINANCE CAP. 172.

BUT BUN TOWERS DID NOT COME WITHIN THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ORDINANCE, AND HAVE NOT HITHERTO BEEN INSPECTED OR SPECIFICALLY LICENSED BY ANY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT.

ARISING FROM THE CONSIDERATION OF THE FINDINGS OF THE SEK KONG COMMISSION OF INQUIRY, AND NOW THE INCIDENT ON CHEUNG CHAU, THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSED TO EXTEND THE SCOPE OF THE ORDINANCE, MR. AKERS-JONES ADDED.

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MOTOR VEHICLES (FIRST REGISTRATION TAX) AMENDMENT BILL 1978
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A BILL TO IMPLEMENT THE BUDGET PROPOSAL TO INTRODUCE NEW RATES OF TAX AS FROM MARCH 2 THIS YEAR IN RESPECT OF THE FIRST REGISTRATION OF PRIVATE CARS, WAS INTRODUCED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

SPEAKING AT THE SECOND READING OF THE MOTOR VEHICLES (FIRST REGISTRATION TAX)(AMENDMENT) BILL 1978, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. DAVID JEAFFRESON, SAID THE BILL SEEKS TO IMPLEMENT THE PROPOSAL THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY MADE IN HIS BUDGET SPEECH THAT THE FIRST REGISTRATION TAX IN RESPECT OF CARS WITH A VALUE ABOVE \$20,000 AND UP TO \$30,000 SHOULD BE AT 35 PER CENT AND FOR THOSE OVER \$30,000 THE TAX SHOULD BE AT 40 PER CENT.

THE FIRST REGISTRATION TAX FOR CARS VALUED UP TO \$20,000 REMAINS AT 30 PER CENT.

MR. JEAFFRESON SAID THE PROVISIONS OF THE BILL BECAME EFFECTIVE FROM MARCH 2, THIS YEAR AS A RESULT OF AN ORDER SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR UNDER THE PUBLIC REVENUE PROTECTION ORDINANCE AND THE ESTIMATED YIELD TO THE REVENUE FROM THE NEW RATES IS \$15 MILLION FOR 1978-79.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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DUTIABLE COMMODITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978

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A BILL TO IMPLEMENT A PROPOSAL MADE IN THIS YEAR'S BUDGET SPEECH TO MAKE IT AN OFFENCE TO RUN A CAR -- OR ANY OTHER VEHICLE -- ON KEROSENE OR A MIXTURE OF DIESEL OIL AND KEROSENE WAS INTRODUCED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

IN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE DUTIABLE COMMODITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978, THE DIRECTOR OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND CUSTOMS, THE HON. DAVID JORDAN SAID OFFICERS OF THE CUSTOMS AND EXCISE SERVICE HAD DISCOVERED THAT AN INCREASING NUMBER OF VEHICLE OWNERS AND DRIVERS WERE MIXING KEROSENE WITH DIESEL OIL IN THEIR FUEL TANKS.

HE SAID: +AS THE LAW NOW STANDS THEY ARE DOING NOTHING ILLEGAL AND, SINCE KEROSENE IS A CHEAPER FUEL THAN DIESEL OIL, IT MIGHT BE SAID THAT THEY ARE DISPLAYING THAT ENTERPRISE AND INGENUITY THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED SO MUCH TO OUR ECONOMIC SUCCESS.+

MR. JORDAN RECALLED THAT DUTY ON KEROSENE AND CERTAIN OTHER HYDROCARBON OILS WAS ABOLISHED IN 1972 ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE DUTY TENDED TO ADD TO INDUSTRIAL COSTS AND THE COST OF LIVING.

BUT DUTY CONTINUED TO BE LEVIED ON HYDROCARBON OILS USED FOR ROAD VEHICLES SINCE IT WAS CONSIDERED THAT ROAD USERS SHOULD THUS CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS THE COST OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED FOR THEM.

NOTING THAT THERE WERE ALSO ENVIRONMENTAL ARGUMENTS, MR. JORDAN SAID A MIXTURE OF KEROSENE AND DIESEL PRODUCED EVEN MORE UNPLEASANT EXHAUST FUMES THAN DIESEL ALONE.

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MOTION TO GIVE LEGISLATIVE EFFECT
TO RAISE DUTY ON TOBACCO AND CIGARETTES

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A MOTION TO GIVE LEGISLATIVE EFFECT TO THE BUDGET PROPOSAL TO RAISE THE EXCISE DUTY ON IMPORTED TOBACCO AND CIGARETTES FROM MARCH 1 WAS ADOPTED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

IN MOVING THE MOTION, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. DAVID JEAFFRESON, SAID THE BUDGET PROPOSAL TO INCREASE THE RATE OF DUTY ON IMPORTED CIGARETTES BY \$1.65 PER POUND TO \$20.15 PER POUND WAS IMPLEMENTED WITH EFFECT FROM MARCH 1 AS A RESULT OF AN ORDER SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR.

EXPLAINING THE DUTY INCREASE PROPOSAL, MR. JEAFFRESON SAID THERE HAS BEEN A GROWING TENDENCY FOR IMPORTED CIGARETTES TO BE MADE OF TOBACCO WHICH HAS BEEN SPECIALLY TREATED SO THAT, FOR A GIVEN WEIGHT, THE VOLUME IS INCREASED.

THE USE OF THIS KIND OF TOBACCO IN CIGARETTES HAS RESULTED IN LESS TOBACCO, BY WEIGHT, BEING INCLUDED IN CERTAIN BRANDS OF IMPORTED CIGARETTES AND THUS THE AMOUNT OF DUTY PAYABLE PER PACKET OF CIGARETTES HAS DECLINED, WITH A LOSS OF ABOUT \$11 MILLION A YEAR IN REVENUE, MR. JEAFFRESON SAID.

HE NOTED THAT THE INCREASE HAD THE EFFECT OF ADDING SIX CENTS TO THE DUTY LEVIED ON A PACKET OF 20 IMPORTED CIGARETTES.

MR. JEAFFRESON ALSO NOTED THAT DURING THE BUDGET DEBATE THIS YEAR, AN UNOFFICIAL MEMBER, THE HON. SIR SZE-YUEN CHUNG, HAD ASKED WHY THE GOVERNMENT HAD NOT FOLLOWED THE PRINCIPLE ENUNCIATED BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY IN 1966 THAT DUTY SHOULD BE RAISED IN MULTIPLES OF 10 CENTS A PACKET.

+THE ANSWER IS THAT IN THIS PARTICULAR CASE WE WERE CONCERNED SOLELY WITH RESTORING THE REVENUE YIELD AND WE FELT WE COULD DO NO MORE THAN THAT,+ MR. JEAFFRESON SAID.

+BUT I CAN ASSURE MY HONOURABLE FRIEND THAT THE 1966 PRINCIPLE HAS BEEN NEITHER FORGOTTEN NOR DISCARDED,+ HE ADDED.

SPEAKING IN THE DEBATE ON THE MOTION, SIR SZE-YUEN SAID IT IS RATHER A PITY THAT THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY HAS IGNORED THE 1966 PRINCIPLE IN THIS CASE.

+IN CONSEQUENCE, IN ORDER TO RECOUP THE \$11 MILLION ANNUAL LOSS OF REVENUE FROM THE CONSUMERS, THE IMPORTERS AND DEALERS ARE PRESENTED WITH A GIFT OF \$7 MILLION A YEAR AND THE CONSUMERS HAVE TO PAY OUT A TOTAL OF \$18 MILLION A YEAR,+ SIR SZE-YUEN SAID.

+I SIMPLY CANNOT SEE THE LOGIC OF LETTING THE IMPORTERS AND DEALERS RECEIVE THIS WINDFALL WHICH COULD HAVE EASILY BEEN DIRECTED INTO PUBLIC REVENUE.

+ALTHOUGH THE SUM OF \$7 MILLION IS TRIVIAL WHEN WE HAVE AN ANNUAL SURPLUS OF \$1,000 MILLION, YET IT IS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE,+ SIR SZE-YUEN SAID.

GOVERNMENT PLANS A RANGE OF
CULTURAL FACILITIES IN NEW TERRITORIES

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THE THREE NEW TOWNS OF SHA TIN, TUEN MUN AND TSUEN WAN ARE TO HAVE MAJOR AUDITORIA WITH RELATED CULTURAL FACILITIES, WHILE THE DEVELOPING MARKET TOWNS ARE TO HAVE SCALED DOWN FACILITIES WHICH WILL COMPLEMENT RATHER THAN COMPETE WITH THE ARTISTIC ACTIVITIES OF THE THREE MAJOR CENTRES.

THE SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, THE HON. DAVID AKERS-JONES SAID THIS TODAY IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. CHARLES YEUNG ON THE PROVISION OF AUDITORIA AND THE PROMOTION OF CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

MR. AKERS-JONES POINTED OUT THAT SHA TIN AND TUEN MUN WOULD EACH HAVE A POPULATION OF HALF A MILLION PEOPLE WHILE THE POPULATION OF TSUEN WAN WOULD EVENTUALLY REACH NEAR A MILLION AND THE BASIS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY WAS TO PROVIDE MAJOR CENTRES OF CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN EACH OF THESE TOWNS.

+THE FACILITIES IN THESE MAJOR CENTRES WILL INCLUDE AN AUDITORIUM WHERE CONCERTS, DRAMAS, CHINESE OPERAS AND OTHER PERFORMANCES CAN BE HELD, AND WILL BE CAPABLE OF SEATING AN AUDIENCE OF 1,500.

+IN ADDITION, THERE WILL BE MUSIC PRACTICE ROOMS, LECTURE ROOMS AND AN EXHIBITION OR CONFERENCE HALL,+ HE SAID.

MR. AKERS-JONES NOTED THAT WORK HAD ALREADY STARTED ON THE AUDITORIUM AT TSUEN WAN AND SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY THE END OF NEXT YEAR, WHILE BUILDING WORK ON THE CENTRES AT TUEN MUN AND SHA TIN WOULD BEGIN IN THE MIDDLE OF 1979.

+THESE THREE MAJOR CENTRES WILL SERVE THE NEW TOWNS AND THE RURAL AREAS ADJACENT TO THEM, BUT THERE ARE OTHER TOWNS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES THAT WILL ALSO GROW TO HAVE SUBSTANTIAL POPULATIONS - PARTICULARLY TAI PO, FANLING/SHEUNG SHUI AND YUEN LONG.

+OUR THINKING IS THAT CULTURAL FACILITIES IN THESE PLACES SHOULD BE SCALED DOWN PROPORTIONATELY TO COMPLEMENT RATHER THAN TO COMPETE WITH THE THREE LARGE CENTRES OF ARTISTIC ACTIVITY AND THAT BUILDINGS SHOULD, IF POSSIBLE, BE ABLE TO BE USED FOR OTHER RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES.

+ON THIS BASIS, APPROVAL IS BEING SOUGHT TO IMPROVE AND EXTEND A SECONDARY SCHOOL HALL BEING BUILT IN YUEN LONG TO PROVIDE AN AUDITORIUM FOR LOCAL PURPOSES.

+IN FANLING/SHEUNG SHUI IT IS PROPOSED TO BUILD A TOWN HALL WITH A SEATING CAPACITY OF 1,000 AND WHICH WILL INCORPORATE OTHER FACILITIES. A SIMILAR SCHEME IS BEING CONSIDERED FOR TAI PO,+ MR. AKERS-JONES SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT IN PLACES WITH FEW PEOPLE - SAI KUNG, FOR EXAMPLE - WHERE THE DEMAND FOR CULTURAL ACTIVITIES WAS NOT SO GREAT, NEVERTHELESS THE GOVERNMENT RECOGNISED THAT THERE WAS A NEED FOR A COMMUNITY HALL TO STAGE A WIDE VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES.

+BUT THE PRECISE NEED FOR AND TIMING OF PROVISION OF FACILITIES WILL VARY FROM PLACE TO PLACE,+ HE ADDED.

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IMPROVEMENTS BEING MADE TO ARRIVAL ARRANGEMENTS AT AIRPORT
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THE GOVERNMENT IS NOT SATISFIED WITH THE EXISTING PASSENGER ARRIVAL ARRANGEMENTS AT KAI TAK AIRPORT BUT THESE ARE BEING IMPROVED UNDER THE RE-DEVELOPMENT OF THE TERMINAL BUILDING WHICH WILL BE COMPLETED IN 1981.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON. DAVID T.K. WONG IN A REPLY TO THE HON. PETER C. WONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MR. WONG SAID THE EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS AT THE BUFFER ARRIVAL HALL WERE ONLY TRANSITIONAL.

+THEY FORM ONLY ONE PHASE OF A \$300 MILLION PROGRAMME TO RE-DEVELOPE AND EXPAND THE AIRPORT TERMINAL BUILDING,+ HE SAID.

MR. WONG SAID THIS PROGRAMME INVOLVED TEARING DOWN AND RE-BUILDING MUCH OF THE INTERNAL PART OF THE TERMINAL BUILDING WHILST MAINTAINING AT THE SAME TIME ITS FULL OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY.

+THIS IS NO EASY TASK WHEN THE FLOW OF IN-COMING AND OUT-GOING PASSENGERS EXCEEDS 4,000 PERSONS PER HOUR AT THE PEAK. UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES CONDITIONS MUST OF NECESSITY BE LESS THAN IDEAL,+ HE ADDED.

IMPROVEMENTS, HOWEVER, WERE BEING MADE TO THE BUFFER HALL AS AND WHEN DEFICIENCIES CAME TO LIGHT AND WHEN PROGRESS IN CONSTRUCTION PERMITTED, MR. WONG SAID.

+FOR EXAMPLE, DURING THE LAST TWO MONTHS DEFICIENCIES IN THE SYSTEM OF DIRECTIONAL SIGNS IN THE HALL BECAME APPARENT.

+AS A CONSEQUENCE, TEMPORARY SIGNS HAVE BEEN PUT UP AND PERMANENT SIGNS ARE BEING REDESIGNED, RELOCATED AND INCREASED IN NUMBER.+

MR. WONG STATED THAT SINCE MONDAY, THE COMPLETION OF ANOTHER PHASE OF THE CONSTRUCTION WORK PERMITTED THE OPENING OF A THIRD EXIT FROM THE BUFFER HALL.

THE ADDITIONAL EXIT LEADS TO THE SEPARATE PARKING AREA SET ASIDE FOR BUSES CATERING FOR TOUR GROUPS.

+HITHERTO, TOUR GROUPS HAD TO SHARE THE KERB SPACE ALLOCATED TO HOTEL TRANSPORT, THUS LEADING TO A DEGREE OF CONGESTION. SINCE TOUR GROUPS ACCOUNT FOR 41 PER CENT OF ARRIVING TOURISTS, THIS HAS GREATLY EASED THE CONGESTION AT THE KERB-SIDES,+ MR. WONG NOTED.

HE ADDED THAT OTHER IMPROVEMENTS WOULD PROGRESSIVELY BE MADE UNTIL THE ENTIRE RE-DEVELOPMENT OF THE TERMINAL BUILDING IS COMPLETED BY THE END OF 1981.

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MORE THAN \$3.6 MILLION PAID OUT IN CHOI YUEN TSUEN CLEARANCE

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ONLY ABOUT 10 PER CENT OF THE FAMILIES INVOLVED IN THE CLEARANCE OF CHOI YUEN TSUEN ARE OWNER OCCUPIERS, THE SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, THE HON. DAVID AKERS-JONES, SAID TODAY.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. CHARLES YEUNG HE POINTED OUT THAT MORE THAN 80 PER CENT OF THE FAMILIES WERE OCCUPANTS OF UNAUTHORISED STRUCTURES ON CROWN LAND OR LEASED LAND.

MR. AKERS-JONES SAID THAT 1,147 PEOPLE BELONGING TO 255 FAMILIES WILL HAVE BEEN CLEARED FROM CHOI YUEN TSUEN BY THE END OF THIS MONTH. THE LAND COVERS AN AREA OF 102,000 SQUARE METRES (1.1 MILLION SQUARE FEET) AND MORE THAN \$3.6 MILLION WOULD BE PAID IN COMPENSATION OR EX-GRATIA ALLOWANCES.

HE SAID: +OF THE PEOPLE CLEARED, THOSE OCCUPYING STRUCTURES SURVEYED IN 1968 OR COVERED BY VALID LICENCE HAVE BEEN OFFERED PUBLIC HOUSING, THE NEAREST BEING WO CHE AT SHA TIN.

+THOSE WHOSE STRUCTURES WERE BUILT LATER AND FIRST RECORDED IN THE 1976 SURVEY HAVE BEEN OFFERED TEMPORARY PUBLIC HOUSING IN THE FANLING TEMPORARY HOUSING AREA.

+A DOMESTIC REMOVAL ALLOWANCE, MEANS-TESTED, IS PAYABLE TO BOTH CATEGORIES TO ASSIST THEM AT A RATE OF \$600/800/1,000 FOR 1-2/3-5/5+ PERSON FAMILIES.+

MR. AKERS-JONES GAVE THE FOLLOWING BREAKDOWN OF COMPENSATION AND EX-GRATIA ALLOWANCES:

STATUTORY COMPENSATION:

- * AGRICULTURAL LAND IN THE AREA HAS BEEN VALUED AT \$5 PER SQUARE FOOT, BUT LANDOWNERS ACCEPTING LAND EXCHANGE ENTITLEMENT DOCUMENTS (LETTER B) HAVE HAD A VALUE OF \$10 ATTRIBUTED TO THEIR AGRICULTURAL LAND, INCLUDING A \$5 EX-GRATIA ALLOWANCE.
- * LANDOWNERS ACCEPTING CASH COMPENSATION HAD RECEIVED \$17 PER SQUARE FOOT - \$12 EX-GRATIA ALLOWANCE ADDED TO THE BASIC AGRICULTURAL VALUE OF \$5 PER SQUARE FOOT.

EX-GRATIA ALLOWANCES:

- * CROPS HAD BEEN ASSESSED BY AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT STAFF AT CURRENT MARKET VALUE WITH AN ADDITIONAL DISTURBANCE ALLOWANCE OF \$1 PER SQUARE FOOT FOR LAND UNDER CULTIVATION.
- * PIG BREEDERS RECEIVE AN ALLOWANCE OF \$11.50 PER SQUARE FOOT OF PIGSTY, SUBJECT TO A LIMIT OF \$40,000 FOR PIGSTIES NOT COVERED BY A VALID LICENCE.

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- * POULTRY BREEDERS ARE PAID ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF BIRDS KEPT, WITH A MINIMUM OF 30 REQUIRED FOR ASSESSMENT. THE RATES IN SUCH CLEARANCES ARE \$4.50 PER CHICKEN, \$4 PER DUCK, \$8 PER PIGEON, \$1 PER QUAIL AND \$4 FOR EACH GOOSE, SUBJECT TO AN UPPER LIMIT OF \$10,000 ON POULTRY SHEDS NOT COVERED BY A VALID LICENCE.
- * MINOR IMPROVEMENTS TO LAND ATTRACT COMPENSATION ACCORDING TO THEIR CURRENT REPLACEMENT VALUE AS ASSESSED BY NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION WORKS STAFF AND COVER SUCH ITEMS AS WELLS, FENCES, THRESHING FLOORS AND SIMILAR PERMANENT IMPROVEMENTS.
- * WORKSHOPS ARE ASSESSED BY HOUSING DEPARTMENT STAFF, AND \$7,000 IS PAYABLE FOR THE FIRST 200 SQUARE FEET, WITH 50 SQUARE FEET SET AS A QUALIFYING MINIMUM, AND \$20 PER SQUARE FOOT THEREAFTER UP TO A MAXIMUM OF \$100,000.
- * TROPICAL FISH IN COVERED AQUARIA ARE ASSESSED ON THE SAME BASIS AS WORKSHOPS, BUT IN OPEN AIR PONDS THEY ARE ASSESSED AS THOUGH THEY WERE OPEN (INDUSTRIAL) WORKING AREAS, USING THE SAME RATE BUT WITH AN UPPER LIMIT OF \$50,000.
- * SHOPS ARE COMPENSATED AT A RATE OF \$120 FOR THE FIRST 75 SQUARE FEET, \$30 PER SQUARE FOOT FOR THE NEXT 425 SQUARE FEET AND \$20 PER SQUARE FOOT THEREAFTER, WITH AN UPPER LIMIT OF \$50,000.

MR. AKERS-JONES TABLED A DETAILED BREAKDOWN OF THE FIGURES RELATING TO THE CLEARANCE.

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CHAI WAN TEMPORARY HOUSING AREA TO BE CLOSED --
FAMILIES TO GET FLATS AT YUE WAN

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A TEMPORARY HOUSING AREA AT CHAI WAN SUBJECT TO FLOODING AFTER VERY HEAVY RAIN IS DUE TO BE CLOSED IN AUGUST, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON. DONALD LIAO, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR. THE HON. HENRY HU.

ABOUT 300 ELIGIBLE FAMILIES LIVING THERE ARE TO BE OFFERED PUBLIC HOUSING AT THE ADJOINING YUE WAN ESTATE.

MR. LIAO EARLIER VISITED THE AFFECTED TEMPORARY HOUSING AREA, SAW FOR HIMSELF THE DRAINAGE PROBLEM RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FLOODING, SPOKE WITH RESIDENTS AND A MUTUAL AID COMMITTEE MEMBER, AND TOLD THEM THAT MODERN FLATS IN THE LATEST PHASE OF YUE WAN HAD BEEN EARMARKED FOR THE 1,500 PEOPLE CONCERNED.

IN HIS REPLY IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY MR. LIAO SAID THERE WERE ALTOGETHER FOUR TEMPORARY HOUSING AREAS AT CHAI WAN WITH A TOTAL CAPACITY FOR 10,900 PEOPLE BUT AT PRESENT ONLY 7,500 PEOPLE WERE LIVING THERE.

ONLY ONE OF THE FOUR WAS AN OLD-STYLE TEMPORARY HOUSING AREA, AND THIS WAS SUBJECT TO FLOODING BECAUSE CONSIDERABLE ENGINEERING WORKS IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD HAD LOWERED THE LEVEL OF THE AREA WHILE RECLAMATION WORK HAD BLOCKED TWO OF THE THREE DRAINAGE OUTLETS.

+TO ALLEVIATE FLOODING THE WATER DRAINS WERE RE-CHANNELLED LAST MONTH,+ SAID MR. LIAO. +TWENTY FAMILIES WHO WERE AFFECTED BY THE RECENT FLOODING HAVE BEEN OFFERED AND HAVE ACCEPTED PUBLIC HOUSING IN NEARBY ESTATES.+

MR. LIAO SAID THE OTHER THREE TEMPORARY HOUSING AREAS WERE THE MORE MODERN TYPE WITH PART-BUILT STRUCTURES, ELECTRICITY AND WATER SUPPLIES TO INDIVIDUAL HOMES, SECURITY AND CLEANSING SERVICES.

+THESE AREAS ARE SPACIOUS BY COMPARISON AND LIVING CONDITIONS THERE ARE GOOD,+ HE SAID.

THE ONLY REMAINING PROBLEM WAS THE ACCESS ROAD TO THE NEWEST TEMPORARY HOUSING AREA, AN UNMETALLED ROAD WHICH ALSO PROVIDED ACCESS TO THE MASS TRANSIT WORKS AREA AND WHICH HAD DETERIORATED BADLY FROM HEAVY USE.

TO REMEDY THE SITUATION THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT WAS CONSTRUCTING AN ACCESS FOOTPATH AND A DRAIN, WITH THE WORK DUE TO BE COMPLETED IN JULY. ALSO, HE SAID, THE CONDITION OF THE ROAD ITSELF WAS BEING IMPROVED.

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PLANS IN HAND TO REMOVE SMELL NUISANCE IN
NGAU TAU KOK

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PLANS ARE IN HAND TO REMOVE THE SMELL PERMEATING THE STRETCH OF KWUN TONG ROAD IN THE MIDDLE OF NGAU TAU KOK ESTATE, THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, THE HON. DAVID MCDONALD SAID TODAY.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE REV. THE HON. JOYCE M. BENNETT AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MR. MCDONALD SAID: +WHEN THE NULLAH DECKING IN KWUN TONG ROAD WAS CONSTRUCTED, A SMALL SECTION IN THE CENTRAL DIVIDER OF THE ROAD WAS LEFT OPEN TO ACCOMMODATE THE PROJECTING VALVES ON A LARGE WATER MAIN WHICH CROSSES OVER THE NULLAH.

+THIS OPENING ALLOWS THE EMISSION OF SMELLS PRODUCED IN THE NULLAH BY THE DISCHARGE OF SULLAGE WATER FROM THE OLD RESETTLEMENT BLOCKS AT JORDAN VALLEY AND THE WASTE FROM SQUATTER AREAS UPSTREAM OF THE NULLAH.+

HE SAID THAT PLANS WERE IN HAND TO REMOVE THE NUISANCE BY CONSTRUCTING A DECK OVER THE OPENING WITH A HOUSING FOR THE WATERWORKS INSTALLATION.

IN REPLY TO ANOTHER QUESTION, MR. MCDONALD SAID THERE WAS NO PLAN AT PRESENT TO COVER THE NULLAH IN THE JORDAN VALLEY ESTATE.

HOWEVER, HE ADDED, DECKING OF THE NULLAH WOULD BE RECONSIDERED WHEN DETAILED PLANNING FOR REDEVELOPMENT OF THE AREA WAS BEING PREPARED.

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QUERY ON INITIAL ATTENDANCE AT MAGISTRATE COURTS

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THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON. JOHN HOBLEY, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY THAT THE SUGGESTION TO ALLOW A DEFENDANT WHO INTENDS TO PLEAD NOT GUILTY TO DO SO BY POST IS BEING EXAMINED IN DETAIL.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN, WHO HAS ASKED: +WILL GOVERNMENT REVIEW THE LEGISLATION IN REGARD TO MAGISTRATE COURTS SO THAT A DEFENDANT WHO INTENDS TO PLEAD NOT GUILTY CAN DO SO BY POST AND BE SUBSEQUENTLY NOTIFIED BY LETTER OF THE DATE OF THE HEARING IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT SUCH CASES ARE INVARIABLY ADJOURNED TO A LATER DATE FOR HEARING AND THEREFORE A WASTE OF THE TIME OF BOTH THE COURT AND THE DEFENDANT?+

MR. HOBLEY SAID THAT AT FIRST SIGHT, THE REGISTRAR OF THE SUPREME COURT WAS HOPEFUL THAT MR. CHEONG-LEEN'S SUGGESTION COULD BE IMPLEMENTED.

BUT MR. HOBLEY STRESSED THAT THE EXISTING JUDICIARY SYSTEM OF REQUIRING AN INITIAL ATTENDANCE AT COURT HAS +REAL ADVANTAGES.+

ON SUCH AN INITIAL APPEARANCE, THE MAGISTRATE IS CONCERNED WITH MORE THAN MERELY FIXING DATES FOR A TRIAL, MR. HOBLEY EXPLAINED.

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 24, 1978

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PARKING ALLOWED FOR ONLY TWO DAYS

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NO VEHICLES ARE ALLOWED TO BE PARKED IN A PARKING PLACE FOR MORE THAN TWO DAYS ACCORDING TO THE LAW, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

ANSWERING A QUESTION FROM THE REV. THE HON. JOYCE M. BENNETT, MR. JONES SAID WHERE A CASE WAS FOUND THE POLICE NORMALLY NOTIFIED THE REGISTERED OWNER AND ASKED HIM TO REMOVE THE VEHICLE. IF HE FAILED TO DO SO, ANY POLICE OFFICER OF THE RANK OF SERGEANT OR ABOVE MAY AUTHORISE THE REMOVAL OF THE VEHICLE.

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POST OFFICE FOR OI MAN ESTATE

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THE GOVERNMENT DOES CONSIDER IT DESIRABLE TO ESTABLISH POST OFFICES IN LARGE COMMUNITIES AS A PUBLIC SERVICE, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON. DAVID T.K. WONG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HE WAS ANSWERING A QUESTION FROM THE HON. OSWALD CHEUNG, WHO HAS ASKED: +DOES GOVERNMENT CONSIDER IT DESIRABLE TO ESTABLISH POST OFFICES IN LARGE COMMUNITIES LIKE OI MAN ESTATE, BOTH AS AN ESSENTIAL PUBLIC SERVICE AND AS ENCOURAGEMENT TO USE SUCH SERVICE THUS CONTRIBUTING TO ITS PROFITABILITY?+

+SO FAR AS OI MAN ESTATE IS CONCERNED,+ MR. WONG REPLIED, +THE POSTMASTER GENERAL HAS IN FACT RECENTLY COMPLETED A SURVEY OF THE AREA AND HE HAS COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT A POST OFFICE IS NEEDED AT OI MAN ESTATE.+

+HE IS NOW IN THE PROCESS OF PREPARING A FORMAL PROPOSAL TO THIS EFFECT.+

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NUMBER OF REGISTERED MOTORCYCLES

THERE WERE 16,464 MOTORCYCLES REGISTERED AT THE END OF MARCH THIS YEAR -- AN INCREASE OF NINE PER CENT OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS, THE HON. DEREK JONES, SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, SAID TODAY.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. ROGER LOBO AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MR. JONES ALSO SAID, IN REPLY TO ANOTHER QUESTION BY MR. LOBO, THERE IS NO UP-TO-DATE RECORD OF THE NUMBER OF ESTABLISHMENTS FOR HIRING MOTORCYCLES BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT REQUIRED TO BE LICENSED.

+HOWEVER, WHEN THE POLICE CHECKED OUT THEIR INSURANCE COVER LAST YEAR, THERE WERE FOUND TO BE 12 ESTABLISHMENTS OPERATING IN KOWLOON,+ HE SAID.

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GOVERNMENT GUARANTEE TO MTRC LOAN

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY ADOPTED A MOTION WHICH SEEKS AUTHORITY FOR A GOVERNMENT GUARANTEE TO ENABLE THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION TO BORROW HK\$204 MILLION FOR THE PURCHASE OF 70 RAILCARS.

IN MOVING THE MOTION, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. DAVID JEAFFRESON SAID: +AS THE LOAN WHICH COVERS 85 PER CENT OF THE CONTRACT PRICE IS DENOMINATED IN HK DOLLARS, THE GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT IN RESPECT OF THE GUARANTEE WILL BE ENTIRELY FREE FROM EXCHANGE RISKS.+

THE LOAN WITH INTEREST RATE FIXED AT 7-3/4 PER CENT PER ANNUM WILL BE REPAYABLE OVER A PERIOD OF EIGHT AND A HALF YEARS FROM MAY 1981.

THE ~~LOAN~~ GUARANTEE WILL BRING THE GOVERNMENT'S TOTAL AMOUNT OF GUARANTEE TO HK\$6,890 MILLION.

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 24, 1978

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BILLS PASSED
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FOUR BILLS WERE PASSED INTO LAW TODAY IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

THEY WERE THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS BILL 1978, THE AUXILIARY FORCES PAY AND ALLOWANCE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978, THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE (AMENDMENT) (NO.3) BILL 1978 AND THE RAILWAYS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978.

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COMMONWEALTH GROUP VISITS SHA TIN NEW TOWN
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SIXTEEN MEMBERS OF THE COMMONWEALTH INTERCHANGE STUDY GROUP TO SOUTH-EAST ASIA TODAY TOOK A FIRST-HAND LOOK AT THE FAST-GROWING SHA TIN NEW TOWN AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN KWAI CHUNG AND TSING YI.

THE GROUP, COMPRISING GOVERNMENT OFFICERS, EXECUTIVES FROM COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY AND OFFICIALS FROM PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTIONS FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM, STARTED THE DAY WITH A BRIEFING BY THE SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, MR. DAVID AKERS-JONES.

THEY THEN WENT UP TO A VANTAGE POINT BEHIND SHA TIN WEI FOR A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE NEW TOWN.

THE GROUP WAS BRIEFED ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW TOWN INTO A BALANCED, SELF-CONTAINED COMMUNITY OF HALF A MILLION PEOPLE BY MID-1980'S.

THEY LATER WENT TO THE NEW TOWN'S FIRST PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATE - LEK YUEN ESTATE.

IN THE AFTERNOON, THE GROUP SAILED ON +CLEMENTI+ FROM TSUEN WAN TO QUEEN'S PIER IN CENTRAL AND SAW DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN KWAI CHUNG AND TSING YI EN ROUTE.

THEY WERE ACCOMPANIED ON THE DAY-LONG TOUR BY THE DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, MR. JOHN TODD, THE DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR INFORMATION, MR. BARRIE WIGGHAM, AND THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES (DEVELOPMENT), MR. ROBERT UPTON.

THE GROUP IS ON THE THIRD AND LAST LEG OF THEIR SOUTH-EAST ASIAN TOUR UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY, HAVING VISITED SINGAPORE AND MALAYSIA. THEY WILL FLY BACK TO LONDON ON FRIDAY (MAY 26).

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FIRE OFFICERS MAKE SURPRISE CHECKS ON FACTORY PREMISES
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A TEAM OF FIRE OFFICERS THIS (WEDNESDAY) MORNING MADE SURPRISE CHECKS ON FACTORIES IN TAI YAU STREET, SAN PO KONG IN AN EFFORT TO REDUCE FIRE HAZARDS.

THE TEAM COMPRISING 18 OFFICERS AND TEN FIREMEN INSPECTED MORE THAN 1,000 FACTORIES IN 33 INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS IN THE AREA.

THEY DISCOVERED A NUMBER OF POTENTIAL FIRE HAZARDS SUCH AS STAIRCASES PILED WITH PAPER CARTONS AND STACKS OF UNFINISHED PRODUCTS, OBSTRUCTIONS TO EXITS AND USING LIFT LOBBIES AS STORAGE AREAS.

AS A RESULT 70 FACTORIES HAVE BEEN GIVEN FIRE HAZARD ABATMENT NOTICES REQUIRING THEIR OWNERS TO CLEAR THE OBSTRUCTIONS WITHIN THE STIPULATED PERIOD.

SUMMONSES WILL BE TAKEN OUT AGAINST TEN FACTORIES THAT FAILED TO COMPLY WITH REQUIREMENTS IN ABATMENT NOTICES PREVIOUSLY SERVED ON THEM.

DURING THE INSPECTION THE OFFICERS ALSO FOUND 22 CASES OF UNAUTHORISED BUILDING ALTERATIONS, ILLEGAL ROOFTOP STRUCTURES OR USING THE PREMISES FOR OTHER PURPOSES. THESE WILL BE REFERRED TO RELEVANT DEPARTMENTS FOR THEIR ATTENTION.

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