



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1980

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RENT CONTROL BILL BECOMES LAW
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THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION)(AMENDMENT) BILL 1980 WHICH SEEKS TO EXTEND RENT CONTROL TO ALL DOMESTIC PREMISES WAS PASSED INTO LAW WITH SOME AMENDMENT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THE AMENDED LEGISLATION WILL TAKE EFFECT RETROSPECTIVELY FROM DECEMBER 18, 1979, AND THE CONTROLS WILL REMAIN IN FORCE FOR TWO YEARS UNTIL DECEMBER 18, 1981.

ONE OF THE AMENDMENTS WAS PROPOSED BY THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING THE HON ALAN SCOTT TO PROVIDE THAT A LANDLORD SEEKING A POSSESSION ORDER WILL HAVE TO SHOW THAT HE HAS A REASONABLE CASE FOR REQUIRING THE PREMISES FOR HIMSELF OR HIS IMMEDIATE FAMILY. MOVING THE AMENDMENT AT THE COMMITTEE STAGE OF THE BILL, MR SCOTT SAID +ONCE A LANDLORD HAS SHOWN A REASONABLE REQUIREMENT, IT WILL BE OPEN TO THE TENANT TO REPUDIATE THE LANDLORD'S CLAIM, BY SHOWING THAT A POSSESSION ORDER WOULD MANIFESTLY BE NOT JUST AND EQUITABLE IN ALL THE CIRCUMSTANCES.+

THE NEW PROVISION WOULD APPLY AS BETWEEN LANDLORDS AND TENANTS ONLY- THE EXISTING PROVISIONS INCLUDING THE REQUIREMENT TO SHOW +GREATER HARDSHIP+, WOULD CONTINUE TO APPLY AS BETWEEN PRINCIPAL TENANTS AND SUB-TENANTS.

MR SCOTT BELIEVED THAT THE AMENDMENT WENT AS FAR AS WAS REASONABLE AT THIS STAGE TO MEET THE GENUINE DIFFICULTIES FACED BY LANDLORDS WANTING POSSESSION, AND THAT THE PRACTICAL EFFECTS OF THIS CHANGE SHOULD BE STUDIED BEFORE CONSIDERING FURTHER CHANGE.

HE ALSO DISCLOSED THAT A COMMITTEE OF REVIEW OF THE LANDLORD AND TENANT LEGISLATION WOULD SHORTLY BE APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR. ITS MEMBERSHIP WILL INCLUDE BOTH UNOFFICIALS AND OFFICIALS.

THE COMMITTEE WILL INVITE WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS AS WELL AS ANY INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP FOR DISCUSSIONS WHETHER OR NOT THEY HAVE SUBMITTED WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS.

IN ADDITION IT WILL BE ABLE TO REFER TO THE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITY FOR INFORMATION ON OTHER MATTERS - SUCH AS THE HOUSING AUTHORITY AND THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON LAND PRODUCTION.

MR SCOTT SAID THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE SHOULD PROCEED EXPEDITIOUSLY BECAUSE IN GOOD TIME BEFORE THE EXPIRY OF THE AMENDED LEGISLATION IN TWO YEARS, +WE MUST REACH THE POINT OF PUTTING A FRESH BILL BEFORE THIS COUNCIL FOR CONSIDERATION AND DEBATE, BECAUSE A REASONABLE PERIOD OF NOTICE MUST BE GIVEN TO ALL CONCERNED BEFORE BRINGING INTO EFFECT THE PROVISIONS OF NEW LEGISLATION.

+BEARING IN MIND THE COMPLEXITY OF THE PROBLEMS AND THE NEED FOR FULL PUBLIC CONSULTATION, WHICH WILL INCLUDE THE PUBLICATION OF THE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENABLE PUBLIC COMMENT AND DISCUSSION,+ HE HOPED THAT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO HAVE THE NEW BILL BEFORE THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DURING THE FIRST QUARTER OF NEXT YEAR.

/ON RESOURCES

ON RESOURCES TO POLICE THE NEW MEASURES IN THE AMENDED LEGISLATION, MR SCOTT SAID: +PROPOSALS ARE IN HAND TO EXPAND THE RENT CONTROL AND RELATED SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE COMMISSIONER OF RATING AND VALUATION, INCLUDING AN ENFORCEMENT UNIT TO BACK UP THE CRIMINAL SANCTIONS PROPOSED IN THIS BILL.

+THE COMMISSIONER WILL ESTABLISH A REGISTER OF CASES WHERE A LANDLORD HAS OBTAINED A COURT ORDER FOR POSSESSION UNDER SECTION 53(2) (B) AND (C), AND WILL FOLLOW UP THESE CASES BY REGULAR INSPECTIONS AT THE PREMISES AND BY CHECKS FROM OTHER SOURCES.

+THE COMMISSIONER WILL ALSO ENDEAVOUR TO INFORM ANY FORMER TENANT WHO MAY BE ABLE TO INITIATE A CIVIL ACTION FOR DAMAGES WHERE A LANDLORD IS FOUND TO BE IN CONTRAVENTION OF A COURT ORDER,+ HE SAID.

MR SCOTT ALSO REPLIED TO OTHER POINTS RAISED BY UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS IN THE RENT BILL DEBATE.

ADEQUACY OF MAXIMUM 21 PER CENT INCREASE OVER TWO YEARS:

HE REITERATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS AN OPEN MIND ON THIS ISSUE, BUT WOULD PREFER NOT TO ALTER THE MAXIMUM BEFORE THE COMMITTEE OF REVIEW HAS HAD THE CHANCE TO CONSIDER THE SEVERAL EXISTING DIFFERENT LEVELS OF CONTROLLED RENTS, AND CAN RECOMMEND APPROPRIATE FORMULAE OF INCREASE.

GOVERNMENT, CONSULATE AND COMPANY LEASES:

HE EXPLAINED THE NEED AT THIS TIME TO INCLUDE SUCH TENANCIES AS AN INTERIM MEASURE IN THE DEBATE ON JANUARY 16 AND HE DID NOT WISH TO REPEAT IT WHILE THE COMMITTEE OF REVIEW GETS ON WITH ITS TASK. THE COMMITTEE WILL ALSO EXAMINE THE PROBLEMS OF SETTING CRITERIA TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN OVERSEAS AND LOCAL COMPANIES, LARGE AND SMALL COMPANIES, COMPANIES OF CONVENIENCE AND BONA FIDE COMPANIES, OR EVEN COMPANIES AND THEIR EMPLOYEES.

PUBLIC HOUSING TENANTS:

HE SAID THE EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC HOUSING TENANTS FROM RENT CONTROL WENT BACK TO 1963 WHEN IT WAS CONCLUDED THAT PUBLIC HOUSING TENANTS WERE ADEQUATELY PROTECTED IN REGARD TO SECURITY OF TENURE AND RENT INCREASES.

SUB-TENANTS:

THEY ARE PROTECTED BY EXISTING LAW AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE SO PROTECTED.

MOTELS:

THE ORDINANCE PROVIDES THAT ANY USE OF PREMISES AS A BOARDING OR LODGING HOUSE IS A USE OTHER THAN AS A +DWELLING+ AND IS THEREFORE NOT SUBJECT TO RENT CONTROLS.

ASSURANCE:

MR SCOTT REITERATED THAT A DECISION TO GO BACK ON GOVERNMENT'S ASSURANCES ABOUT NON-IMPOSITION OF RENT CONTROL CAN ONLY BE TAKEN, AND WAS ONLY TAKEN, AFTER THE WEIGHTIEST CONSIDERATION OF THE WIDER PUBLIC INTEREST AND THE GOVERNMENT STOOD READY TO BE JUDGED BY THE PUBLIC AT LARGE IN THIS DECISION. HE BELIEVED THAT THE PUBLIC HAS IN THE PAST FEW WEEKS ENDORSED IT.

IN SUMMING UP HE SAID A PRINCIPAL OBJECT OF THIS LEGISLATION WAS TO ASSIST IN BRINGING A MEASURE OF STABILITY TO THE DOMESTIC PROPERTY MARKET. IT HAS UNDOUBTEDLY HAD THAT EFFECT ALREADY, AND HE CONFIRMED THAT THE GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO KEEP CLOSELY UNDER REVIEW WHETHER FURTHER MEASURES TOWARDS THAT END ARE NECESSARY.

FOLLOWING THE ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING IN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN CONFIRMED THAT ANY PERSON OR GROUP WISHING TO MAKE REPRESENTATIONS SHOULD ADDRESS THEM TO THE SECRETARY, COMMITTEE OF REVIEW, LANDLORD AND TENANT LEGISLATION, C/O GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT, LOWER ALBERT ROAD, HONG KONG, PREFERABLY BY MARCH 15, 1980.

UNOFFICIALS SUPPORT RENT CONTROL

TWO MORE UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS, DR THE HON RAYSON HUANG AND THE HON F.K. HU COMMENTED ON THE BILL DURING THE RESUMED DEBATE.

DR HUANG SAID UNDER THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, RENT CONTROL MEASURES WERE NOT ONLY DESIRABLE BUT QUITE NECESSARY.

+IT WILL REDUCE THE HARDSHIP OF MANY PEOPLE AND GIVE THE GOVERNMENT A BREATHING SPACE TO WORK OUT LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS. IF THE DISEASE HAS ALREADY BEEN ALLOWED TO DEVELOP, SURELY IT IS ONLY SENSIBLE TO ALLEVIATE THE SYMPTOM IMMEDIATELY WHILE DEALING WITH THE DISEASE ITSELF, AT A TIME WHEN THE SYMPTOM IS ALREADY CAUSING UNBEARABLE PAIN,+ HE SAID.

DR HUANG CONCEDED THAT RENT CONTROL CAN +ONLY BE A TEMPORARY MEASURE TO COMBAT THE PROBLEMS AT HAND: FOR THE LONG TERM THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION TO AN INCREASED PRODUCTION OF HOUSING, AND TO THIS THE GOVERNMENT MUST WITHOUT DELAY ADDRESS ITSELF.+

HE SAID: +IN THE PAST THREE YEARS AND IN PARTICULAR DURING THE PAST YEAR, RENT HAS BEEN GOING UP SO FAST THAT IN SOME CASES INCREASES REACH SEVERAL HUNDRED PER CENT.

+THIS SITUATION IS ECONOMICALLY UNJUSTIFIABLE AND SOCIALLY UNDESIRABLE, AND IF ALLOWED TO CONTINUE UNABATED, WOULD LEAD TO SERIOUS INSTABILITY IN OUR SOCIETY.

+IT IS ECONOMICALLY UNJUSTIFIABLE BECAUSE THIS RAPID RISE IN RENT HAS HAD ONLY A LIMITED EFFECT ON STIMULATING THE SUPPLY OF HOUSING, IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT LAND IS SCARCE AND IS MONOPOLISED BY THE GOVERNMENT.+

THE RAPID INCREASE IN RENT HAS ALSO RESULTED IN A TRANSFER OF INCOME FROM TENANTS TO LANDLORDS - A DIRECTION OF INCOME REDISTRIBUTION THAT IS SOCIALLY UNDESIRABLE FROM THE EQUITY POINT OF VIEW, HE SAID.

ALTHOUGH HE AGREED THAT RENT CONTROL SHOULD ONLY BE A TEMPORARY MEASURE, HE WONDERED WHETHER HONG KONG WOULD BE IN A POSITION TO TAKE OFF ALL CONTROL IN TWO YEARS' TIME.

HE SAID INCREASING THE SUPPLY OF HOUSING WAS A SLOW PROCESS AND NO ONE WOULD IMAGINE THAT IN TWO YEARS' TIME THE IMBALANCE IN SUPPLY AND DEMAND WOULD BE COMPLETELY ERADICATED.

+NEVERTHELESS, IF GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE IMMEDIATE STEPS TO IMPROVE THE SUPPLY SITUATION SHORTAGE SHOULD BE EASED CONSIDERABLY BY THE END OF TWO YEARS, AND THE MEASURES NOW PROPOSED COULD THEN BE MADE LESS RESTRICTIVE,+ HE ADDED.

DR HUANG DID NOT AGREE WITH THOSE WHO ARGUED THAT THE PROPOSED EXTENSION OF RENT CONTROL WOULD BRING ABOUT THE SAME DAMAGING EFFECTS ON THE ECONOMY AS THE BANKING CRISIS DID IN 1965.

HE SAID WITH THE BANKING ORDINANCE NOW IN FORCE, BANK LOANS AND ADVANCES MADE TO INDIVIDUALS AS AT SEPTEMBER 1979 FOR THE PURCHASE OF RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY CONSTITUTED ONLY ABOUT TEN PER CENT OF TOTAL BANK LOANS.

MOREOVER, THE LEVEL OF RENT WAS NOT THE ONLY FACTOR WHICH INDUCED PURCHASE OF PROPERTY, EQUALLY IMPORTANT FACTORS WERE THE CAPITAL GAIN AND THE HEDGE AGAINST INFLATION.

UNDER THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, HE SAID, IT IS MOST UNLIKELY THAT RENT CONTROL WILL LEAD TO MORTGAGE DEFAULT AND DIFFICULTIES OVER THE RECOVERY OF LOANS BY FINANCIAL HOUSES, THEREBY PLUNGING HONG KONG INTO ECONOMIC RECESSION.

DR HUANG SUPPORTED CONTROLLING LUXURY FLATS AND PREMISES RENTED BY CORPORATIONS AND GOVERNMENTS BECAUSE IF THEY WERE NOT CONTROLLED, THERE WOULD BE A FILTERING EFFECT PRODUCING GREATER PRESSURE ON THE DEMAND FOR MEDIUM AND SMALL FLATS.

+THE ARGUMENT THAT FOREIGN CORPORATIONS AND GOVERNMENTS SHOULD NOT BE PROTECTED BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT HONG KONG BELONGERS SEEMS TO ME UNTENABLE.

+IN THE HIGHLY INTERDEPENDENT WORLD ECONOMY TODAY, IT IS BAD POLICY TO ADOPT A BEGGAR-THY-NEIGHBOUR ATTITUDE.

+BESIDES, WHY SHOULD FOREIGN CORPORATIONS AND GOVERNMENTS SUBSIDISE LANDLORDS IN HONG KONG MANY OF WHOM ARE INCIDENTALLY NOT HONG KONG BELONGERS?+ HE ASKED.

DR HUANG SAID IF CORPORATIONS HAD TO PAY EXCESSIVELY HIGH RENTS, THIS EXPENDITURE MIGHT WELL BE PASSED ON TO THE CONSUMERS RESULTING IN HIGHER PRICES AND HENCE THE GENERAL PUBLIC SUBSIDISING THE LANDLORDS.

/SIMILARLY,

SIMILARLY, IF THE GOVERNMENT HAD TO PAY EXCESSIVELY HIGH RENT, GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE WOULD BE INCREASED AND THIS COULD ONLY BE MET BY INCREASED TAXATION, THE RESULT OF WHICH WOULD BE THE TAX-PAYERS SUBSIDISING THE LANDLORDS.

DR HUANG ALSO QUERIED THE EQUITY OF THE 21 PER CENT CEILING FOR RENT INCREASE FOR ALL CATEGORIES OF PREMISES.

HE AGREED THAT A 21 PER CENT INCREASE EVERY TWO YEARS SEEMED REASONABLE FOR PREMISES TO BE BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL AS FROM DECEMBER 18, 1979 BUT SUGGESTED A HIGHER PERCENTAGE OF INCREASE FOR THOSE ALREADY UNDER CONTROL BEFORE THAT DATE SO AS TO NARROW THE GAP BETWEEN THE CONTROLLED LEVEL AND THE PREVAILING MARKET RENT.

MR F.K. HU ALSO CALLED FOR A HIGHER CEILING OF RENT INCREASES.

THE 21 PER CENT INCREASE, INTRODUCED IN 1973, COULD HARDLY COVER THE BANK PRIME RATE AND IS BELOW THE CURRENT INFLATION RATE, HE SAID.

+ALLOWANCE MUST BE MADE FOR THE LANDLORD TO ADJUST RENT FIXED IN 1976 AND EARLIER, 1977 AND 1978, TO 1979 LEVEL BEFORE THE 21 PER CENT INCREASE IS APPLIED.+

BASED ON THE PUBLISHED COST OF LIVING INDEX, MR HU SUGGESTED AN EIGHT PER CENT INCREASE A YEAR FOR RENT FIXED IN 1976 AND EARLIER, 1977 AND 1978, SUBJECT TO THE FINAL CALCULATED FIGURE BEING NOT MORE THAN FAIR MARKET RENT IN 1979.

HE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THE RENT INCREASE FOR LUXURY FLATS OF RATEABLE VALUE OVER \$60 000 IN 1976 ASSESSMENT, OR OVER \$30 000 IN THE 1973 ASSESSMENT, AND PREMISES RENTED BY CORPORATIONS AND GOVERNMENTS SHOULD BE A MINIMUM OF 15 PER CENT A YEAR AT THE 1979 LEVEL, AND THAT A 12 PER CENT A YEAR INCREASE BE ALLOWED FOR RENTS FIXED BEFORE 1979.

ON THE PROVISION OF LAND, MR HU AGAIN CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO ENCOURAGE PRIVATE DEVELOPERS TO PARTICIPATE MORE ACTIVELY IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION SCHEME OF THE HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME.

HE SAID MORE SITES IN URBAN AREAS SHOULD BE RELEASED FOR TENDER FOR THIS PURPOSE AND EMPHASIS SHOULD BE PLACED ON SOLVING THE HOUSING PROBLEM RATHER THAN FINANCIAL GAIN OR LOSS ON THE TENDER PREMIUM.

+INCREASING THE SUPPLY OF LAND MAY SLOW DOWN THE INCREASE IN FLAT SELLING PRICE OR RENT BUT IT DOES NOT NECESSARILY LOWER THE FLAT SELLING PRICE OR RENT FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE LOW AND MEDIUM INCOME GROUPS,+ HE SAID.

IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO COMBINE THIS AND THE LETTER B EXCHANGE SCHEME, HE SUGGESTED.

/AS THERE

AS THERE COULD BE PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES IN SUCH A COMBINATION, HE PROPOSED THAT 25 PER CENT OF LAND PRODUCED IN THE NEW TERRITORIES SHOULD BE RESERVED FOR AUCTION, 25 PER CENT FOR LETTER B EXCHANGE AND THE REMAINING 50 PER CENT FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION SCHEME.

HE HOPED THAT A COMPREHENSIVE AND LONG-TERM HOUSING POLICY COULD BE AGREED UPON AND PUBLISHED BY THE GOVERNMENT BEFORE THE EXPIRY OF THE AMENDED LEGISLATION.

COMMITTEE STAGE

SPEAKING AT THE COMMITTEE STAGE OF THE BILL MR SCOTT SUGGESTED THAT THE PROPOSALS MADE BY UNOFFICIAL MEMBER, THE HON T.S. LO TO AMEND THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) (AMENDMENT) BILL BE LEFT TO THE NEW COMMITTEE OF REVIEW TO CONSIDER.

MR LO PROPOSED THAT 'LUXURY' FLATS AND FLATS RENTED BY CERTAIN CATEGORIES OF CORPORATIONS, FIRMS, PUBLIC BODIES AND GOVERNMENTS BE EXCLUDED FROM THE PROPOSED RENT CONTROL. THE PROPOSALS DID NOT HAVE THE ENDORSEMENT OF THE COUNCIL.

MR SCOTT, IN REPLY TO HIS PROPOSAL THAT FLATS WITH A RATEABLE VALUE OF OVER \$100 000 AND AN INTERNAL FLOOR AREA OF OVER 2 300 SQ FT BE EXCLUDED FROM CONTROL, POINTED OUT THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT TO ARRIVE AT A SATISFACTORY DEFINITION OF 'LUXURY PREMISES'.

+ANY DEFINITION WILL INVOLVE MARGINAL CASES, AND I SUGGEST STRONGLY TO MEMBERS THAT SUCH DEFINITIONS -- AND MORE IMPORTANT, WHETHER SUCH CATEGORISATION IS REQUIRED -- SHOULD BE LEFT TO THE COMMITTEE OF REVIEW TO EXAMINE IN THE WHOLE CONTEXT OF THE LEGISLATION,+ HE SAID.

HE NOTED THAT MR LO'S PROPOSAL WOULD EXCLUDE LESS THAN 500 TENANCIES FROM RENT CONTROL.

AS TO THE OTHER TENANCIES PROPOSED FOR EXCLUSION BY MR LO, MR SCOTT SAID THAT UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES, THERE WAS SOME STRENGTH IN THE ARGUMENT THAT RENTS WERE A PART OF THE EXPENDITURE OF PROFIT-MAKING ORGANISATIONS, AND AS SUCH THEY SHOULD NOT BENEFIT BY RENT CONTROL.

HE SAID HOWEVER THE PRESENT SITUATION WAS ABNORMAL, WHICH WAS THE REASON FOR THE BILL, AS A HOLDING OPERATION.

HE ALSO NOTED WITH INTEREST THE POINTS MADE BY ANOTHER UNOFFICIAL MEMBER, DR RAYSON HUANG TODAY WHO ASKED WHY GOVERNMENTS AND CORPORATIONS, AND TAX PAYERS, SHOULD SUBSIDISE LANDLORDS.

MR SCOTT DETAILED SOME DIFFICULTIES AND INEQUITIES WHICH WOULD ARISE IF MR LO'S PROPOSAL TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN SUBSIDIARIES OF FIRMS AND CORPORATIONS SET UP BEFORE OR AFTER FEBRUARY 15, 1973 IN CONFERRING PROTECTION WAS ACCEPTED.

/HE HOPED

HE HOPED HE HAD ILLUSTRATED THE DESIRABILITY OF PUTTING PROPOSALS SUCH AS THIS TO THE COMMITTEE OF REVIEW +FOR MATURE AND DELIBERATE EXAMINATION+.

AMENDMENT WITHDRAWN

THE HON ALEX WU WITHDREW HIS PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO CLAUSE 5 OF THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION)(AMENDMENT) BILL DURING THE COMMITTEE STAGE.

CLAUSE 5 SPECIFIES CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH A LANDLORD MAY REGAIN POSSESSION BUT RECOGNISES THAT THIS NATURAL RIGHT MAY HAVE TO BE LIMITED.

MR WU SAID THAT SINCE THE LIMITATIONS CANNOT BE SPECIFIED IN ADVANCE, OUR INTENTIONS MUST BE CLEAR TO THE COURTS WHEN THEY COME TO APPLY THE LAW IN INDIVIDUAL CASES.

+EXPERIENCE SHOWS THAT WE SHOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO REDUCE THE ROOM FOR DOUBT.

+THIS IS A PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION BECAUSE WE ARE NOT ONLY LOOKING AT THIS TEMPORARY HOLDING LEGISLATION BUT WE ARE LOOKING TO THE FUTURE AND TO LONG TERM LEGISLATION WHICH WILL ESTABLISH CLEARLY AND FAIRLY THE RESPECTIVE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF TENANTS AND LANDLORDS,+ HE SAID.

MR WU POINTED OUT THAT HIS PROPOSED AMENDMENT WOULD IN EFFECT BE TO DELETE THE PROVISO RELATING TO THE MAKING OF A REPOSSESSION ORDER AND TO RELY ON THE SEVERE PENALTIES PRESCRIBED UNDER THE BILL TO DETER ANY LANDLORD WHO MIGHT BE TEMPTED ABUSE THE REPOSSESSION PROVISION.

HE NOTED THAT AFTER HEARINGS FROM THE UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS, THE LATEST GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT AS PROPOSED BY THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING GOES SOME WAY TOWARDS MEETING THEIR OBJECTIONS.

IN PARTICULAR, IT DISTINGUISHES BETWEEN THE CASES OF A LANDLORD AND A PRINCIPAL TENANT WHICH THE UNOFFICIALS THINK IS AN IMPORTANT DISTINCTION.

+I HAVE CONCLUDED THAT THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING'S AMENDMENT COMES CLOSE ENOUGH TO MY VIEW, TO PERSUADE ME THAT WE SHOULD NOT NOW OPPOSE IT: OUR ENERGIES WILL BE BETTER DIRECTED TO A LONG-TERM ANSWER RATHER THAN TO FURTHER REFINEMENT OF THIS MAKESHIFT MEASURE.

+ACCORDINGLY I ASK LEAVE TO WITHDRAW MY AMENDMENT.

+NEVERTHELESS, I HOPE THAT THIS ACCOUNT OF OUR DELIBERATIONS INDICATE THE DEEP CONCERN WHICH UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS HAVE FELT OVER THIS LEGISLATION AND THE EFFORTS WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE TO ENSURE THAT IT MEETS OUR PRESENT NEED BUT DOES NOT FRUSTRATE OUR SEARCH FOR A SOLUTION WHICH WILL BE INTRINSICALLY JUST AND EQUITABLE,+ MR WU SAID.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1980

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PRINCESS ALEXANDRA VISITS TAI O AND CHEUNG CHAU
* * * *

HRH PRINCESS ALEXANDRA TODAY (WEDNESDAY) VISITED TAI O, THE OLDEST FISHING VILLAGE ON LANTAU ISLAND, AND THE RURAL TOWNSHIP OF CHEUNG CHAU.

THE PRINCESS WAS DELIGHTED WITH THE VISIT AND DESCRIBED IT AS WONDERFUL.

THE PRINCESS ARRIVED AT TAI O IN A WESSEX HELICOPTER PILOTED BY FL. LT. T.E. DUGGAN OF 28 SQUADRON ROYAL AIR FORCE STATIONED AT SEK KONG.

SHE WAS ACCOMPANIED ON THE 15-MINUTE FLIGHT FROM HMS TAMAR BY HER HUSBAND, THE HON ANGUS OGILVY, AND THE GOVERNOR, SIR MURRAY MACLEHOSE.

ALSO ON BOARD WAS GROUP CAPTAIN TOM BENNETT, COMMANDER, RAF.

AT TAI O PRINCESS ALEXANDRA WAS MET BY SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, MR DAVID AKERS-JONES, WHO PRESENTED THE DISTRICT OFFICER ISLANDS, MR NICKY LO, TO HER.

MR LO THEN PRESENTED SEVEN LEADERS OF THE LANTAU RURAL COMMUNITY, ONE OF WHOM, MR YUE YUN-HEI, CHAIRMAN OF TAI O RURAL COMMITTEE, GAVE AN ADDRESS OF WELCOME. HE SAID TAI O, ONE OF HONG KONG'S THREE BIG FISHING HARBOURS, HAD RETAINED ITS CHARACTER AS A FISHING VILLAGE.

+THE LONG HISTORY OF THIS FISHING VILLAGE HAS A NEW AND MEANINGFUL PAGE ADDED WITH THE GRACEFUL PRESENCE OF YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS, WHICH RADIATES WARMTH AND FILLS OUR HEARTS WITH JOY,+ MR YUE SAID.

ALSO GREETING THE PRINCESS WERE HUNDREDS OF FLAG WAVING AND CHEERING SCHOOL CHILDREN FROM FIVE LOCAL SCHOOLS AS WELL AS A LARGE CROWD OF LOCAL INHABITANTS, MANY OF THEM FISHERFOLK. MANY CALLED +HELLO! HELLO!+ AS THE PRINCESS PASSED.

A LION DANCE WAS PERFORMED BY THE TUNG HING SHE BEFORE THE PRINCESS SET OFF TO WALK ALONG WING ON STREET, WHICH WAS LINED WITH WAVING RESIDENTS AND CHILDREN. DOZENS OF YOUNGSTERS SWARMED ALONG BEHIND THE ROYAL PARTY. THE PRINCESS CONTINUALLY WAVED TO THE CHILDREN.

PRINCESS ALEXANDRA THEN BOARDED THE ROPE FERRY TO CROSS TAI O CREEK. THE FERRY, THE ONLY ONE OF ITS KIND IN HONG KONG, IS OPERATED BY THE LOCAL RURAL COMMITTEE ON A NON-PROFIT MAKING BASIS FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CREEK, THE PRINCESS WALKED UP MARKET STREET, ALSO LINED WITH RESIDENTS.

/SHE STOPPED

SHE STOPPED TO TALK TO SEVERAL PEOPLE. SHE ALSO STOPPED AT A STORE AND BOUGHT A PACKET OF JOSS STICKS FOR \$4 FROM MRS CHOW MOON-YEE, THE STORE PROPRIETRESS.

HER NEXT STOP WAS AT THE FAMOUS KWAN TAI TEMPLE, A POPULAR PLACE OF WORSHIP FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS, PARTICULARLY DURING THE ANNUAL KWAN TAI FESTIVAL WHICH FALLS ON THE 13TH DAY OF THE FIFTH MOON IN THE LUNAR CALENDAR.

STILL THE CHILDREN SWARMED AROUND TO GET A GLIMPSE -- OR IN SOME CASES PICTURES -- OF THE ROYAL VISITOR.

PRINCESS ALEXANDRA THEN HAD TEA WITH RURAL LEADERS IN TAI O RURAL COMMITTEE OFFICE, SITUATED NEXT TO THE TEMPLE, DURING WHICH SHE WAS PRESENTED WITH A CHINESE CALLIGRAPHY SCROLL CARRYING THE WELCOMING ADDRESS BY MR YUE.

THE PRINCESS WISHED THE COMMITTEE A HAPPY NEW YEAR AND SHE AND HER HUSBAND SIGNED THE VISITORS' BOOK.

AS THE PRINCESS WALKED BACK TO THE ROPE FERRY, A STOREKEEPER RUSHED FORWARD AND PRESENTED HER WITH TWO PARCELS CONTAINING A STATUE OF BUDDHA AND A PAIR OF VASES. MANY ELDERLY RESIDENTS CALLED OUT +BYE-BYE+ TO THE PRINCESS.

THE PRINCESS WENT BY CAR TO MUI WO WHERE A LARGE CROWD WAS PRESENT TO WATCH HER BOARD THE +LADY MAURINE+ FOR CHEUNG CHAU.

ON THE 30-MINUTE TRIP TO CHEUNG CHAU PRINCESS ALEXANDRA WAS ACCOMPANIED BY THE GOVERNOR AND MR AKERS-JONES.

SHE WAS MET AT CHEUNG CHAU PUBLIC PIER BY MR NICKY LO, WHO PRESENTED CHEUNG CHAU, PENG CHAU AND NORTH LAMMA RURAL COMMITTEE OFFICIALS TO HER.

LINING THE PIER TO WELCOME HER WERE CHILDREN FROM NINE LOCAL PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS. ISLANDERS CROWDED ALONG BOTH SIDES OF THE PRAYA TO GET A CLOSE LOOK AT THE ROYAL VISITOR WHO WAVED AND STOPPED BRIEFLY TO TALK.

AFTER THE PRESENTATIONS, PRINCESS ALEXANDRA WALKED TO THE COUNTRY CLUB RESTAURANT TO ATTEND A CHINESE LUNCH HOSTED BY MR AKERS-JONES.

ON THE WAY SHE CALLED AT A RATTANWARE SHOP AND BOUGHT TWO BAMBOO HATS AND TWO SMALL FISH BAIT BASKETS FOR \$16 AFTER MR OGILVY TRIED ONE OF THE HATS.

THE PRINCESS ALSO STOPPED BRIEFLY AT THE CHEUNG CHAU FISHERIES JOINT ASSOCIATION SCHOOL AND TALKED TO THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL, MR YEUNG TSANG-TAK.

THE PRINCESS ASKED MR YEUNG ABOUT HIS SCHOOL AND WAS TOLD THAT IT WAS A NON-PROFIT-MAKING SCHOOL WITH 500 STUDENTS.

PASSING TWO +PAI LAUS+ PUT UP IN HER HONOUR, THE PRINCESS HAD A CHAT WITH A YOUNG BRITISH COUPLE HOLIDAYING ON THE ISLAND.

IN THE RESTAURANT THE PRINCESS SIGNED THE VISITORS' BOOK AND VIEWED A DISPLAY OF PHOTOGRAPHS OF CHEUNG CHAU BUN FESTIVALS.

SHE WAS THEN JOINED BY PROMINENT MEMBERS OF THE NEW TERRITORIES ISLANDS COMMUNITY AND OFFICIALS FROM VARIOUS GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

MR KWONG PING-YAU, CHAIRMAN OF CHEUNG CHAU RURAL COMMITTEE, GAVE A SHORT WELCOMING SPEECH BEFORE PRESENTING A SOUVENIR TO THE PRINCESS.

HE SAID CHEUNG CHAU HAD WITNESSED RAPID DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE LAST ROYAL VISIT BY PRINCESS MARGARET IN 1966.

+TODAY, THE WHOLE OF THE ISLAND IS AGAIN PRIVILEGED WITH THE PRESENCE OF YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS AND WE REJOICE IN OUR GOOD FORTUNE WHICH AUGURS WELL FOR THE FUTURE.+

AFTER LUNCH, THE PRINCESS WALKED ALONG TUNG WAN BEACH WHERE A SIX-STORY HOTEL AND A LARGE PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL PROJECT COMPRISING 48 BLOCKS OF SPANISH-TYPE HOUSES ARE TAKING SHAPE.

SHE WAS ALSO TOLD BY MR LO THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD EMBARKED ON A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMME TO DEVELOP THE ISLAND INTO A MODERN TOWNSHIP.

INCLUDED IN PLANS ARE A SECOND FERRY PIER, A PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATE FOR 2 000 PEOPLE, AS WELL AS LIGHT INDUSTRIAL AREAS AND SITES FOR BOATYARDS AND VILLAGE-TYPE HOUSING.

ALONG TUNG WAN BEACH ROAD, SHE STOPPED TO TALK TO SOME CAMPERS FROM A SECONDARY SCHOOL IN TSUEN WAN.

THE PRINCESS THEN WALKED ALONG SOME OF THE ISLAND'S BUSY STREETS AND VISITED THE FAMILY OF A LONG-TIME RESIDENT OF THE ISLAND, MR T.K. LAW, ON HER WAY TO THE 200-YEAR-OLD PAK TAI TEMPLE WHERE SHE WAS GREETED BY SEVERAL HUNDRED SCHOOL CHILDREN.

MR LAW IS THE PRESIDENT OF THE TSANG FOOK PIANO CO AND HIS FAMILY'S RESIDENCE ON CHEUNG CHAU DATED BACK TO THE CHING DYNASTY -- MORE THAN 150 YEARS AGO.

NEAR THE TEMPLE SHE SAW A DISPLAY OF COLOURFUL FLOATS, WHICH ARE TRADITIONALLY PUT ON PARADE DURING CHINESE FESTIVALS AND ON OTHER IMPORTANT OCCASIONS.

AT THE TEMPLE ENTRANCE, THE PRINCESS MET THE 11 EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS OF THE RURAL COMMITTEE AND THE TEMPLE KEEPER, MR PONG LING.

MR LO BRIEFED THE PRINCESS ON THE HISTORY OF THE TEMPLE WHICH IS DEDICATED TO THE SPIRIT OF THE NORTH, WHO, ACCORDING TO LEGEND, FREED THE ISLANDERS FROM A PLAGUE MORE THAN TWO CENTURIES AGO.

SHE ALSO SAW TWO MARTIAL GODS IN FRONT OF THE ALTAR - THE THOUSAND-EYE AND THE FAVOURABLE WIND EAR GODS - AN ANCIENT SWORD BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN MADE DURING THE SUNG DYNASTY, AND A GILDED WOODEN SEDAN CHAIR, MADE IN 1894, IN WHICH THE GOD OF SEA-FARERS IS CARRIED DURING FESTIVALS.

CONTAINED IN A GLASS CASE, THE SWORD IS FIVE FEET LONG AND THREE INCHES WIDE. ITS THEFT AND RECOVERY MADE HEADLINES IN THE EARLY 1970'S.

THE PRINCESS, AFTER LEAVING THE TEMPLE, WALKED BACK TO THE PIER WHERE SHE BOARDED A HONG KONG AND YAU MA TEI FERRY COMPANY HOVERCRAFT TO RETURN TO QUEEN'S PIER.

THE PRINCESS AND MR OGILVY WILL LEAVE HONG KONG FOR LONDON THIS EVENING.

THE FOLLOWING IS THE FULL TEXT OF THE WELCOME SPEECH BY MR KWONG PING-YAU, CHAIRMAN OF THE CHEUNG CHAU RURAL COMMITTEE:

+YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS, MR OGILVY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

+WE ARE MOST HONOURED TO WELCOME YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS AND MR OGILVY IN CHEUNG CHAU. IT GIVES US GREAT PLEASURE TO GREET YOU IN PERSON.

+CHEUNG CHAU, AN ISLAND WITH A SERENE ENVIRONMENT, HAS WITNESSED RAPID DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE LAST ROYAL VISIT SOME 10 YEARS AGO. TODAY, OUR WHOLE TOWN IS AGAIN PRIVILEGED WITH THE PRESENCE OF YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS AND WE REJOICE IN OUR GOOD FORTUNE WHICH AUGURS WELL FOR THE FUTURE. MAY I NOW PRESENT YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS WITH A SOUVENIR AS A TOKEN OF OUR HEARTIEST WELCOME, AND WISH EVERYONE HERE GOOD LUCK AND GOOD HEALTH.+

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PRINCESS ALEXANDRA VISITS BRITISH COUNCIL

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HRH PRINCESS ALEXANDRA AND THE HON ANGUS OGILVY THIS (WEDNESDAY) AFTERNOON PAID A VISIT TO THE BRITISH COUNCIL IN WAN CHAI IMMEDIATELY AFTER THEIR CHEUNG CHAU TOUR.

THE ROYAL COUPLE WERE GREETED ON ARRIVAL BY MR ANTHONY LEWIS, ACTING REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BRITISH COUNCIL AND MR DAVID LEE, DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION.

THE PRINCESS SIGNED THE VISITOR'S BOOK DURING HER TOUR OF THE COUNCIL'S STUDY ROOMS AND LIBRARY.

ABOUT 9 000 STUDENTS ATTEND SOME 350 ENGLISH COURSES RANGING FROM ELEMENTARY TO DIPLOMA IN ENGLISH LITERATURE.

THE COUNCIL EMPLOYS 90 TEACHERS TO RUN THE COURSES. THE PRINCESS SAW ONE CLASS IN SESSION.

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THE PRINCESS THEN WENT TO THE LIBRARY AND CHATTED WITH SEVERAL PEOPLE THERE. IN ADDITION TO SOME 10 000 BOOKS, THE LIBRARY HAS 500 SHORT 16 MM FILMS RANGING FROM BALLET TO NUCLEAR PHYSICS. THE FILMS ARE AVAILABLE FOR LOAN TO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES FREE OF CHARGE.

SHE WAS ALSO BRIEFED ON THE COUNCIL'S ACTIVITIES IN PROMOTING CULTURAL AND ARTS IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT, THE URBAN COUNCIL AND THE ARTS CENTRE.

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PRINCESS ALEXANDRA ENDS VISIT
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HRH PRINCESS ALEXANDRA AND THE HON ANGUS OGILVY LEFT HONG KONG FOR LONDON BY AIR AT 9.36 PM TONIGHT (WEDNESDAY) AFTER A NINE-DAY VISIT HERE.

THE ROYAL COUPLE WERE SEEN OFF BY THE GOVERNOR, SIR MURRAY MACLEHOSE AND LADY MACLEHOSE.

ALSO AT THE AIRPORT TO SAY FAREWELL TO THE PRINCESS WERE MR ANGUS STEVENSON-HAMILTON, THE GOVERNOR'S AIDE-DE-CAMP SIR DENYS ROBERTS, THE CHIEF JUSTICE- SIR JACK CATER, THE CHIEF SECRETARY AND LADY CATER- MAJOR-GENERAL SIR ROY REDGRAVE, THE COMMANDER BRITISH FORCES AND LADY REDGRAVE- SIR YUET-KEUNG KAN, THE SENIOR UNOFFICIAL MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL- MR OSWALD CHEUNG, THE SENIOR UNOFFICIAL MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND MRS CHEUNG- MR ROY HENRY, THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE, AND SIR JOHN CURLE, DIRECTOR OF PROTOCOL AND LADY CURLE.

BOTH THE PRINCESS AND THE HON ANGUS OGILVY ALSO THANKED THE MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES FOR THEIR COVERAGE OF THEIR VISIT TO HONG KONG BEFORE THEY BOARDED THE PLANE.

THE ROYAL COUPLE LEFT HONG KONG BY FLIGHT BA 018.

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MEASURES TO INCREASE LAND SUPPLY AND HOUSING

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THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON DEREK JONES TODAY OUTLINED VARIOUS MEASURES TO INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF LAND AND HOUSING.

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE RENT CONTROL BILL IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, MR JONES DIVIDED THE MEASURES INTO SHORT-TERM ONES WHICH ARE DESIGNED TO BOOST HOUSING PRODUCTION AND LONG-TERM ONES WHICH ARE DIRECTED TOWARDS INCREASED LAND PRODUCTION.

THE SHORT-TERM MEASURES ARE:

- (1) MEASURES ARE ALREADY BEING TAKEN TO CLOSELY MONITOR THE LAND SALES PROGRAMME TO ENSURE THAT ALL LAND THAT CAN BE SOLD IS INCLUDED IN THE PROGRAMME AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE AND TO REDUCE SLIPPAGES TO THE MINIMUM.
- (2) GOVERNMENT PLANS TO MODIFY VARIOUS RESTRICTIVE POLICIES ON DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING THE COVERAGE OF DENSITY ZONING CONTROLS.
- (3) THE GOVERNMENT, THROUGH THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON LAND PRODUCTION, IS MONITORING LAND PRODUCTION THROUGHOUT THE TERRITORY AND WORKING ON TARGETS DESIGNED TO MEET FUTURE NEEDS FOR VARIOUS PURPOSES INCLUDING HOUSING.
- (4) A SERIES OF MEASURES ARE IN HAND TO INCREASE THE OUTPUT OF HIGH CLASS AND MIDDLE INCOME HOUSING OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS WHERE THERE APPEARS TO BE A CRITICAL SHORTAGE OF SUPPLY AT PRESENT. SOME 11 LARGE SITES FOR THIS TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT ARE UNDER CONSIDERATION, AND IF DEVELOPED, THEY COULD PRODUCE UP TO 1 700 NEW FLATS.
- (5) A PROGRAMME IS BEING WORKED OUT OF JOINT VENTURE PROJECTS WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT AT HIGHER DENSITIES OF CERTAIN GOVERNMENT QUARTERS SITES.
- (6) POLICY PROPOSALS WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL SHORTLY ON PERMITTING REDEVELOPMENT AT INCREASED DENSITIES OF SITES WHICH WERE GRANTED MAINLY IN THE 50S AND 60S ON CONCESSIONARY TERMS TO VARIOUS FIRMS FOR WORKERS' QUARTERS. SOME 20 TO 30 LOTS INVOLVED HAVE SIGNIFICANT ADDITIONAL HOUSING POTENTIAL.
- (7) THE GOVERNMENT IS EXAMINING PROPOSALS TO SELL UNFORMED AND UNSERVICED LAND IN BULK FOR DEVELOPMENT BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

MR JONES SAID IN THE 15 MONTHS COVERING THE FIRST QUARTER OF 1980 AND THE FINANCIAL YEAR 1980/81 THE GOVERNMENT AIMED TO ACHIEVE SALES OF RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL/RESIDENTIAL LAND TOTALLING ABOUT 63 HECTARES, OR ABOUT 3-3/4 TIMES MORE THAN IN CALENDAR 1979. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THE SITES WOULD PRODUCE HOUSING FOR ABOUT 95 000 PEOPLE OVER THE NEXT TWO TO FIVE YEARS AS THE LAND IS DEVELOPED.

HE SAID MAKING ALLOWANCE FOR THE INEVITABLE SLIPPAGE IN THE SALES PROGRAMME, AND ASSUMED THAT ONLY 48 HECTARES ARE MADE AVAILABLE FOR HOUSING, THIS SHOULD STILL, WHEN DEVELOPED, PROVIDE HOUSING FOR SOME 72 000 PEOPLE. THE LAND SALES PROGRAMMES FOR THE FOLLOWING YEARS SHOULD ON AVERAGE PRODUCE THIS FIGURE, AT LEAST UNTIL 1985.

ON TOP OF THIS IS THE PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAMME OF 35 000 FLATS A YEAR OR ACCOMMODATION FOR ABOUT 175 000 PEOPLE PLUS THE SUBSTANTIAL REDEVELOPMENT OF PRIVATE LAND IN THE URBAN AREAS.

ALTOGETHER IT SHOULD PRODUCE AN ANNUAL INCREMENT OF NEW HOUSING SUFFICIENT TO ACCOMMODATE OVER 300 000 PEOPLE EVERY YEAR COMPARED WITH THE AVERAGE OF 230 000 PEOPLE HOUSED A YEAR IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS.

MR JONES SAID IF THE MARKET DEMAND WERE TO SLACKEN, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE READY, TO STEP UP THE PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAMME INCLUDING THE HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION SCHEME.

ON LONG-TERM MEASURES, MR JONES SAID NEW ITEMS HAVE BEEN INCLUDED IN THE PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME FOR THE EXTENSION OF SHA TIN INTO AN AREA ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE COVE AND FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF JUNK BAY INTO A NEW TOWNSHIP. +THIS SHOULD EVENTUALLY EXPAND THE POPULATION OF SHA TIN TO OVER 650 000 AND PROVIDE FOR HOUSING SOME 240 000 PEOPLE IN JUNK BAY,+ HE SAID.

IN ADDITION, AN OUTLINE STUDY HAS BEEN CONDUCTED ON POSSIBILITIES OF FURTHER DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTH WEST NEW TERRITORIES. THIS WILL BE EXPANDED IN THE NEAR FUTURE INTO A FULL SCALE PLANNING AND ENGINEERING INVESTIGATION AND WILL, IN ADDITION, TAKE IN THE NORTH EAST NEW TERRITORIES.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY ON NORTH LANTAU DEVELOPMENT IS NOW ALMOST COMPLETE AND THIS WILL FIT IN WITH THE MAJOR CONSULTANCIES ON THE DESIGN OF A FIXED CROSSING AND ON THE POSSIBLE CONSTRUCTION OF A REPLACEMENT AIRPORT AT CHEK LAP KOK.

+THESE STUDIES COULD, IN DUE COURSES, LEAD TO MAJOR NEW INDUSTRIAL AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ALL THROUGH THE NORTH EAST OF LANTAU, WHILE ANOTHER MAJOR POSSIBILITY WOULD LIE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE KAI TAK/KOWLOON BAY AREA, IN CONJUNCTION, PERHAPS, WITH CERTAIN RECLAMATIONS,+ HE ADDED.

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RESETTLEMENT OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES

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THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON LEWIS DAVIES, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) ESTIMATED THAT BETWEEN 3 000 AND 4 000 VIETNAMESE REFUGEES WOULD LEAVE HONG KONG THIS MONTH AND DURING THE NEXT TWO MONTHS FOR RESETTLEMENT OVERSEAS.

REPLYING TO QUESTIONS FROM THE HON LYDIA DUNN AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MR DAVIES SAID IT WAS HOPED TO MAINTAIN THAT RATE FOR THE REST OF THE YEAR BUT ANY FIRMER PREDICTION WOULD BE PREMATURE.

+THIS IS DIFFICULT TO ESTIMATE BECAUSE THE MONTHLY FIGURES OF DEPARTURES TO RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES VARY IN ACCORDANCE WITH FACTORS SUCH AS THE QUOTA ACTUALLY ALLOCATED, TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS, SPEED OF PROCESSING AND PROGRESS WITH ACTUAL RESETTLEMENT.

+FEW RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES MAKE DEFINITE COMMITMENTS MORE THAN THREE MONTHS AHEAD,+ HE SAID.

MR DAVIES NOTED THAT ON FEBRUARY 8 THIS YEAR THERE WERE 49 630 VIETNAMESE REFUGEES STILL REMAINING IN HONG KONG.

BETWEEN JANUARY 1, 1979 AND FEBRUARY 8 THIS YEAR, MR DAVIES SAID, 27 765 VIETNAMESE REFUGEES WERE RESETTLED OVERSEAS, REPRESENTING 36.3 PER CENT OF THE 76 412 REFUGEES WHO WERE IN HONG KONG ON JANUARY 1, 1979 PLUS THOSE WHO ARRIVED BETWEEN THAT DATE AND FEBRUARY 8, 1980.

+THIS PERCENTAGE OF 36.3 PER CENT COMPARES WITH A TOTAL OF ABOUT 105 000 BOAT REFUGEES RESETTLED FROM SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES DURING THE YEAR 1979, WHICH REPRESENTS ABOUT 57.6 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF BOAT REFUGEES WHO WERE IN THESE COUNTRIES ON JANUARY 1, 1979 PLUS THOSE WHO ARRIVED DURING 1979,+ HE ADDED.

RESETTLEMENT FIGURES FOR SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES FOR JANUARY 1980 WERE NOT YET AVAILABLE FOR COMPARISON.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

FOLLOWING IS A TABLE SHOWING THE BOAT REFUGEE POPULATION IN THE REGION AND RESETTLEMENT DURING 1979.

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A	B	C	
<u>COUNTRY/TERRITORY</u>	<u>BOAT REFUGEE POPULATION AT 31.12.78 PLUS 1979 ARRIVALS*</u>	<u>RESETTLEMENT IN 1979* (AS PERCENTAGE OF B)</u>	
1. <u>HONG KONG</u>	76 000	24 000	(32%)
2. <u>SOUTHEAST ASIA</u>			
MALAYSIA	103 000	69 000	(67%)
INDONESIA	51 000	19 000	(37%)
THAILAND**	15 000	9 000	(60%)
PHILIPPINES	9 000	4 000	(44%)
<u>SINGAPORE</u>	4 000	4 000	(100%)
SUB-TOTAL	<u>182 000</u>	<u>105 000</u>	<u>(57.6%)</u>
3. TOTAL (I.E. 1 AND 2)	258 000	129 000	(50.0%)

* TO THE NEAREST 1 000

** EXCLUDING LAND REFUGEES

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PHASING IN OF GENERAL RATE IN NT

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY ADOPTED A MOTION TO GIVE EFFECT TO EXISTING POLICY ON THE PHASING IN OF THE GENERAL RATE IN THE NEWLY RATED AREAS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

MOVING THE MOTION IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PHILIP HADDON-CAVE STRESSED THAT THE SOLE OBJECT OF THE MOTION IS TO MAKE A RESOLUTION UNDER SECTION 18 (1) OF THE RATING ORDINANCE IN ACCORDANCE WITH EXISTING POLICY FOR THE EXTENSION OF RATING TO THE DEVELOPING AREAS OF THE NEW TERRITORIES AND +NOTHING ELSE SHOULD BE READ INTO IT, GOOD OR BAD+.

UNDER THE EXISTING POLICY, THE GENERAL RATE FOR NEWLY ASSESSED AREAS, FROM AREA F ONWARDS, IS BEING PHASED IN.

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IN THE FIRST YEAR THE RATE APPLIED IS EQUAL TO 50 PER CENT OF WHATEVER THE GENERAL RATE FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES MIGHT BE, IN THE SECOND YEAR 60 PER CENT, IN THE THIRD YEAR 70 PER CENT AND SO ON UP TO 100 PER CENT IN THE SIXTH YEAR.

AS THE GENERAL RATE FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES IS 11 PER CENT, FOR 1980-81 THE PERCENTAGE TO BE APPLIED TO AREAS F TO M (FOR THEIR FIFTH YEAR OF ASSESSMENT) IS THEREFORE 90 PER CENT OF 11 PER CENT, OR 10 PER CENT, AND FOR AREA N (FOR ITS FOURTH YEAR OF ASSESSMENT) IT IS 80 PER CENT OF 11 PER CENT, OR 9 PER CENT, BOTH PERCENTAGES BEING ROUNDED UP TO THE NEAREST HALF POINT.

IN THE NEWLY ASSESSED AREAS P, Q, R AND S (CHEUNG CHAU, PENG CHAU, LANTAU AND MA WAN, AND LAMMA ISLANDS) WHICH ARE IN THEIR FIRST YEAR OF ASSESSMENT, THE PERCENTAGE IS 50 PER CENT OF 11 PER CENT, OR 5.5 PER CENT.

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EMPLOYMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1980 INTRODUCED INTO LEGCO

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A BILL SEEKING TO TRANSFER THE REGULATIONS COVERING THE EXISTING CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN AND YOUNG PERSONS FROM THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS ORDINANCE TO THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE WAS INTRODUCED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE EMPLOYMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1980, THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON J.N. HENDERSON, SAID THE TRANSFER WOULD LEAVE THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS ORDINANCE TO CONCENTRATE ON MATTERS CONCERNING THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF WORKERS.

+THE INTENTION HAS BEEN TO RATIONALISE THE POSITION SO THAT THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE WILL DEAL WITH MEASURES OF A SOCIAL NATURE RELATING TO EMPLOYMENT, LEAVING THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS ORDINANCE TO DEAL WITH SAFETY AT WORK,+ HE SAID.

MR HENDERSON STRESSED THAT THE AMENDMENTS WERE IN LINE WITH EXISTING PROVISIONS IN THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS ORDINANCE.

HOWEVER, ONE OF THE AMENDMENTS WOULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF EXTENDING THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR'S POWER TO REQUIRE THE POSTING UP OF NOTICES CONTAINING VARIOUS ABSTRACTS OF LABOUR LEGISLATION TO COVER ESTABLISHMENTS IN THE NON-INDUSTRIAL SECTOR, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF DOMESTIC PREMISES.

ONE NEW PROPOSAL, MR HENDERSON CONTINUED, SOUGHT TO BRING EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES DEALING SOLELY WITH DOMESTIC SERVANTS UNDER THE AMBIT OF THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE.

PART XII OF THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE, WHICH WAS ENACTED IN 1973 TO REGULATE PRIVATE EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES ESSENTIALLY BY LICENSING, DID NOT APPLY TO THOSE AGENCIES DEALING SOLELY WITH DOMESTIC SERVANTS.

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THE REASON FOR THE EXCLUSION WAS THAT AT THAT TIME SUCH AGENCIES WERE GENERALLY OPERATING ON A SMALL SCALE, MOST UNDER STAIRCASES OR ON THE ROADSIDE NEAR MARKETS, WITH NO PROPERLY IDENTIFIABLE PREMISES. FURTHERMORE, LOCAL DOMESTIC SERVANTS WERE IN SUCH SHORT SUPPLY THAT THERE WAS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD OF THEIR BEING EXPLOITED BY THE AGENCIES.

HOWEVER, THE SITUATION HAD NOW CHANGED DUE TO AN INFLUX OF DOMESTIC HELPERS FROM OVERSEAS, MAINLY FROM THE PHILIPPINES, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NUMBER OF AGENCIES DEALING SPECIFICALLY WITH FILIPINO DOMESTIC HELPERS AND THE RISE OF MALPRACTICES.

+IT IS THEREFORE FELT THAT FEE-CHARGING EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES DEALING SOLELY WITH DOMESTIC SERVANTS SHOULD NO LONGER BE EXCLUDED FROM THE AMBIT OF PART XII OF THE ORDINANCE,+ MR HENDERSON SAID.

THE COMMISSIONER ALSO SAID HE PROPOSED TO ALLOW A PERIOD OF THREE MONTHS BEFORE BRINGING THE LEGISLATION INTO OPERATION ON JULY 1, 1980 TO GIVE EMPLOYERS AND OPERATORS OF EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES SUFFICIENT TIME TO MAKE ANY NECESSARY OPERATIONAL ADJUSTMENTS TO COMPLY WITH THE CHANGES IN THE LAW.

MR HENDERSON ALSO MOVED THE SECOND READING OF THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1980 WHICH CONTAINS A NUMBER OF CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS MADE NECESSARY AS A RESULT OF THE TRANSFER OF THE PROVISIONS.

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PERMANENT USES FOR TEMPORARY HOUSING AREA SITES
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THE GOVERNMENT REGULARLY EXAMINES THE POSSIBILITY OF RE-ZONING EXISTING TEMPORARY HOUSING AREA SITES IN ITS CONTINUING SEARCH FOR SITES FOR THE HOUSING PROGRAMME, THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON ALAN SCOTT SAID TODAY IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM DR THE HON HENRY HU, MR SCOTT ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THERE WERE 47 TEMPORARY HOUSING AREAS, OCCUPYING ABOUT 300 ACRES OF TEMPORARILY ALLOCATED LAND ZONED FOR VARIOUS EVENTUAL PERMANENT USES.

+THE PERMANENT USES INCLUDE INDUSTRIAL PURPOSES, DISTRICT OR LOCAL OPEN SPACE, SWIMMING POOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS, HOSPITALS AND OTHER COMMUNITY USES,+ HE EXPLAINED.

SOME WERE ZONED FOR PERMANENT HOUSING, INCLUDING A SITE AT AP LEI CHAU TO BE CLEARED SHORTLY FOR A PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATE, ONE AT TAI PO FOR ANOTHER ESTATE TO BE BUILT IN 1985, AND ONE AT CHAI WAN WHICH WOULD LATER THIS YEAR MAKE WAY FOR A HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME PROJECT.

HOWEVER, HE REGRETTED THAT IT WAS UNLIKELY THAT ANY MORE SUCH SITES COULD BE REZONED FOR HOUSING ESTATES.

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SWD HELPS STREET SLEEPERS

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THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT, IN EACH CASE KNOWN OR REFERRED TO IT, ASSIGNS A SOCIAL WORKER FROM THE NEAREST FAMILY SERVICES CENTRE TO VISIT THE STREET SLEEPER, ASSESS HIS NEEDS AND OFFER APPROPRIATE ASSISTANCE.

THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, THE HON THOMAS LEE, SAID THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS RAISED BY DR THE HON HO KAM-FAI ON THE NUMBER OF STREET SLEEPERS AND THE MEASURES BEING TAKEN TO HELP THEM.

MR LEE SAID ASSISTANCE OFFERED MIGHT INCLUDE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE, OLD AGE ALLOWANCE, TEMPORARY SHELTER OR CHARITABLE FUND GRANTS, OR IN THE LONGER-TERM, COMPASSIONATE REHOUSING OR ADMISSION TO A DAY OR RESIDENTIAL CENTRE.

HE EMPHASISED THAT THE DEPARTMENT'S ABILITY TO HELP STREET SLEEPERS DEPENDED PRIMARILY ON THEIR WILLINGNESS TO BE HELPED, AND SAID THIS WAS BY NO MEANS ALWAYS THE CASE.

THE NUMBER OF STREET SLEEPERS BEING ASSISTED BY THE DEPARTMENT IS 155, HE SAID, BUT OBVIOUSLY THE TOTAL NUMBER IS LARGER THAN THIS BECAUSE MANY ARE UNWILLING TO ACCEPT HELP.

HE SAID IT WAS DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN AN ACCURATE OVERALL FIGURE LARGELY BECAUSE OF THE CONSIDERABLE SEASONAL FLUCTUATION IN NUMBERS, BUT BASED ON ESTIMATES FROM RECENT SURVEYS BY THE DEPARTMENT IN VARIOUS DISTRICTS, IT WAS BELIEVED THERE MIGHT BE BETWEEN 500 AND 1 000 STREET SLEEPERS OF VARIOUS KINDS.

MR LEE SAID THE DEPARTMENT INTENDED TO CARRY OUT A MORE DETAILED SURVEY COVERING THE WHOLE TERRITORY LATER THIS YEAR.

ON ACCOUNT OF THE RECENT COLD WEATHER, HE SAID SPECIAL MEASURES HAD BEEN TAKEN TO HELP STREET SLEEPERS.

SINCE JANUARY 31, HE SAID, A TOTAL OF 2 872 BLANKETS HAVE BEEN DISTRIBUTED THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT'S COMMUNITY CENTRES AND OFFICES OR BY DEPARTMENTAL STAFF IN THE STREETS.

IN ADDITION, FIVE COMMUNITY CENTRES OF THE DEPARTMENT HAVE BEEN KEPT OPEN OVERNIGHT SINCE FEBRUARY 8 AS TEMPORARY SHELTERS FOR THOSE WHO NEED THEM, HE ADDED.

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EMPHASIS ON CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN CIVIL SERVICE

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INCREASING EMPHASIS IS BEING PLACED ON CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND THE PROVISION OF MORE MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE TRAINING COURSES FOR CIVIL SERVANTS, THE SECRETARY FOR CIVIL SERVICE, THE HON MARTIN ROWLANDS SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON S.L. CHEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR ROWLANDS SAID: +OUR AIM IS TO EXTEND AND IMPROVE OUR TRAINING ARRANGEMENTS BUT IN CLOSE RELATION TO OUR TRAINING NEEDS.+

HE SAID SUPERVISORY MANAGEMENT TRAINING PACKAGES FOR GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS WERE ABOUT TO BE INTRODUCED AND THERE WAS ALSO A MOVE TOWARDS JOB-RELATED LANGUAGE COURSES TO HELP IMPROVE WORK EFFICIENCY IN DEPARTMENTS.

+MORE TRAINING CADRES AND TRAINING OFFICER POSTS ARE BEING CREATED EACH YEAR,+ HE ADDED.

MR ROWLANDS SAID THERE WERE IN ALL 35 GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS WITH THEIR OWN TRAINING FACILITIES AND THE CIVIL SERVICE, AS A WHOLE, NOW HAD 40 SEPARATE TRAINING CENTRES OR SCHOOLS EMPLOYING ALTOGETHER 870 TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF. THE TOTAL TEACHING ACCOMMODATION NOW STANDS AT 226 CLASSROOMS.

HE POINTED OUT THAT ABOUT 32 000 CIVIL SERVANTS WERE NOW RECEIVING SOME FORMAL TRAINING EACH YEAR ON BASIC OR INDUCTION COURSES AND ON TECHNICAL, PROFESSIONAL AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT COURSES.

+THE CIVIL SERVICE BRANCH'S OWN TRAINING DIVISION PROVIDES CENTRAL SUPPORT SERVICES SUCH AS MANAGEMENT AND LANGUAGE TRAINING AND ADVICE ON TRAINING PROGRAMMES.

+IT ALSO ADMINISTERS ALL EXTERNAL TRAINING, WHETHER IN LOCAL EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS OR OVERSEAS,+ MR ROWLANDS SAID.

THIS YEAR ABOUT 3 000 CIVIL SERVANTS ARE RECEIVING SUCH TRAINING LOCALLY AND OVER 300 IN OVERSEAS, EITHER AS PART OF THEIR CAREER DEVELOPMENT OR TO OBTAIN SPECIALIST KNOWLEDGE OR PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS NOT AVAILABLE IN HONG KONG, MR ROWLANDS ADDED.

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GOVERNMENT ENCOURAGES MEDICAL OFFICERS
TO OBTAIN QUALIFICATIONS ON MEDICAL ADMINISTRATION

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GOVERNMENT MEDICAL OFFICERS WHO WISH TO PURSUE A CAREER IN PUBLIC HEALTH ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNITY MEDICINE ARE ENCOURAGED TO TAKE ONE OF THE POST-GRADUATE MEDICAL QUALIFICATIONS WHICH COVER MEDICAL ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT, THE SECRETARY FOR CIVIL SERVICE, THE HON MARTIN ROWLANDS SAID TODAY.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM DR THE HON HARRY FANG, MR ROWLANDS SAID SUCH QUALIFICATIONS, FOR EXAMPLE THE DIPLOMA IN PUBLIC HEALTH OR THE MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PUBLIC HEALTH ALREADY ATTRACTED INCREMENTAL CREDIT.

HE ALSO UNDERSTOOD THAT THE DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES WAS CONSIDERING RECOGNITION OF OTHER SIMILAR QUALIFICATIONS.

REGARDING THOSE WHO WISH TO PURSUE THEIR CAREERS IN THE CLINICAL STREAM, MR ROWLANDS SAID THE PRESENT VIEW WAS THAT A FORMAL QUALIFICATION IN MANAGEMENT WAS NOT A PRE-REQUISITE FOR ADVANCEMENT.

HOWEVER, THEY WERE STILL ENCOURAGED RECENTLY TO UNDERTAKE SOME GENERAL MANAGEMENT TRAINING ALTHOUGH THESE COURSES DO NOT ATTRACT INCREMENTAL CREDIT IN LINE WITH THE POLICY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE AS A WHOLE.

+I FORESEE GREAT DIFFICULTY IN SINGLING OUT MEDICAL OFFICERS FOR SPECIAL TREATMENT IN THIS REGARD,+ HE ADDED.

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EXPANSION OF PSYCHIATRIC FACILITIES

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THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT PLANS TO EXPAND THE PSYCHIATRIC FACILITIES BY PROVIDING OVER 3 000 ADDITIONAL BEDS, INCREASING THE EXISTING DAY CENTRE PLACES AND BUILDING MORE OUT-PATIENTS CLINICS, THE DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES, DR THE HON K.L. THONG SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS AFTERNOON.

DR THONG SAID THE DEPARTMENT WOULD INTRODUCE A NEW FIELD OF PSYCHIATRIC SERVICE, NAMELY, PSYCHIATRIC COMMUNITY NURSING BY THE END OF THIS YEAR AS PART OF ITS REHABILITATION PROGRAMME FOR PSYCHIATRIC PATIENTS.

IN HIS REPLY TO QUESTIONS FROM THE HON ANDREW SO, DR THONG SAID THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PSYCHIATRIC CASES REQUIRING TREATMENT, BASED ON ATTENDANCES AT THE PSYCHIATRIC INSTITUTIONS, WAS ABOUT 30 000.

TO PROVIDE PSYCHIATRIC CARE FOR THESE PATIENTS, DR THONG POINTED OUT THAT 1 336 BEDS WOULD BE OPERATIONAL IN THE PRINCESS MARGARET HOSPITAL BY THE END OF THIS YEAR.

/HE SAID

HE SAID THAT, APART FROM THESE, AN ADDITIONAL 1 700 BEDS FOR PSYCHIATRIC PATIENTS ARE BEING PLANNED AS PART OF THE DEVELOPMENT OR EXTENSION PROGRAMMES FOR FIVE NEW GENERAL HOSPITALS AND THREE EXISTING HOSPITALS BY THE END OF THIS DECADE.

THE EXISTING CAPACITY OF 180 PLACES IN DAY CENTRES WILL NEARLY BE TRIPLED WHEN ANOTHER 300 PLACES ARE MADE AVAILABLE IN THE NEXT SEVEN YEARS, HE ADDED.

DR THONG SAID PLANS FOR MORE OUT-PATIENTS CLINICS ARE ALSO IN THE PIPELINE. IN ADDITION TO THE SEVEN EXISTING PSYCHIATRIC OUT-PATIENTS CLINICS, ANOTHER SIX SUCH CLINICS WILL ALSO BE BUILT IN THE NEXT SIX TO SEVEN YEARS, HE ADDED.

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BILL TO STRENGTHEN CONTROL OVER BILL POSTING AMENDED
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THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND URBAN SERVICES (AMENDMENT) BILL DESIGNED TO CONSOLIDATE AND STRENGTHEN THE CONTROL OVER THE POSTING OF BILLS WAS AMENDED ON THE SUGGESTION OF THE HON. PETER C. WONG.

THE AMENDMENT PROVIDES THAT AN OFFENDER UNDER THE NEW SECTION 104B, WHICH REQUIRES THAT A BILL OR POSTER SHALL BE MAINTAINED IN A CLEAN AND TIDY CONDITION TO THE REASONABLE SATISFACTION OF THE AUTHORITY, WILL BE GIVEN A NOTICE IN WRITING ON THE CONDITION OF THE POSTER AND ADEQUATE TIME TO REMOVE IT BEFORE PROSECUTION IS CONTEMPLATED.

SPEAKING AT RESUMED DEBATE OF THE BILL, MR WONG SAID IT WAS FELT THAT THE DUTY IMPOSED BY THE NEW SECTION ON THE PERSON DISPLAYING THE POSTER WAS UNREASONABLY ONEROUS BECAUSE THE POSTER MIGHT BECOME DIRTY AND UNTIDY DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER OR ACTS OF VANDALISM.

+UNLESS THE PERSON DISPLAYING THE POSTERS KEEPS A CONTINUOUS WATCH, HE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO CARRY THE DUTY IMPOSED UPON HIM,+ HE SAID.

THE AMENDMENT WILL HAVE THE DUAL ADVANTAGE OF REMOVING THE ONEROUS DUTY IMPOSED AND REDUCING THE NEED TO INSTITUTE PROCEEDINGS, WHICH ARE OFTEN TIME CONSUMING, HE ADDED.

THE BILL WAS PASSED WITH AMENDMENTS INTO LAW TODAY.

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1980

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NEW TELEPHONE SERVICES TO BUSINESS SUBSCRIBERS
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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY APPROVED THE CHARGES FOR A NEW SERVICE TO BE INTRODUCED BY THE TELEPHONE COMPANY SHORTLY TO BUSINESS SUBSCRIBERS.

MOVING THE MOTION IN THE COUNCIL TODAY, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON SAID THE CHARGES FOR THE +GOLD STAR SYSTEM+ WHICH WILL HAVE CAPACITIES FOR FOUR EXCHANGE LINES PLUS 10 EXTENSIONS OR 15 EXCHANGE LINES PLUS 40 EXTENSIONS, HAVE BEEN EXAMINED BY THE POSTMASTER GENERAL AND ARE CONSIDERED TO BE FAIR AND REASONABLE.

AT PRESENT THE TELEPHONE COMPANY OFFERS FOUR TYPES OF EXCHANGE CONNECTED INTERCOMMUNICATION SYSTEMS WITH CAPACITIES RANGING FROM TWO EXCHANGE LINES PLUS FIVE EXTENSIONS TO 10 EXCHANGE LINES PLUS 30 EXTENSIONS.

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BILLS PASSED
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SIX BILLS, INCLUDING AN UNOFFICIAL MEMBER'S BILL WERE PASSED INTO LAW IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THEY ARE THE BANKING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1980, THE SUMMARY OFFENCES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1980, THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION)(AMENDMENT) BILL 1980, THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND URBAN SERVICES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1980, THE WASTE DISPOSAL BILL 1979 AND THE UNOFFICIAL MEMBER'S HONG KONG ANTI-TUBERCULOSIS AND THORACIC DISEASES ASSOCIATION INCORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1980.

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1980

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MORE LAND TO BE PRODUCED IN SHA TIN

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SOME 450 MORE HECTARES OF LAND WILL BE PRODUCED AND SERVICED FOR BUILDING DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES IN SHA TIN WITHIN THE NEXT FOUR YEARS.

SO FAR, SOME 400 HECTARES HAD BEEN FORMED - 71 FOR PUBLIC HOUSING, 17 FOR PRIVATE HOUSING, 46 FOR FOR GOVERNMENT AND OTHER USES AND 15 FOR INDUSTRIAL PURPOSES.

THIS WAS DISCLOSED BY MR FONG CHUN-NAM, PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT'S PROJECT MANAGER FOR SHA TIN NEW TOWN, WHEN HE ADDRESSED THE LIONS CLUB OF VICTORIA TODAY.

OF THE 450 HECTARES TO BE PRODUCED AND SERVICED, HE SAID, NO LESS THAN 99 WOULD BE FOR PRIVATE HOUSING AND 45 FOR INDUSTRIAL USE.

REGARDING THE SUGGESTION THAT PRIVATE COMPANIES SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO FORM AND SERVICE LAND SO AS TO ACCELERATE THE AVAILABILITY OF BUILDING SITES, MR FONG SAID IT HAD HIS PERSONAL SUPPORT.

+IN FACT, WE HAVE BEEN DOING THIS IN SHA TIN. FOR EXAMPLE IN 1975, A PRIVATE DEVELOPER ENTERED INTO AN AGREEMENT BY TENDER WITH THE GOVERNMENT TO FORM 58 HECTARES OF LAND AND ON COMPLETION THE DEVELOPER RETAINED 16 HECTARES FOR HIS OWN PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT AND RETURNED 42 HECTARES TO GOVERNMENT FOR PUBLIC USE,+ HE SAID.

BASED ON HIS EXPERIENCE, HOWEVER, HE POINTED OUT THAT THERE WERE CERTAIN LIMITATIONS IN THIS APPROACH BECAUSE IN PRACTICE THERE WERE EXTREMELY FEW LOCATIONS WHERE THIS COULD BE POSSIBLE.

+THE REASONS BEING WHERE, FOR EXAMPLE, DOES THE RAW SEWAGE GO UNLESS ALL THE DEVELOPMENT TIES IN WITH GOVERNMENT SERVICING AND HOW DO THE PEOPLE GET IN AND OUT IF ADJACENT ROADS ARE NOT PROVIDED IN TIME.+

ELABORATING ON OTHER ASPECTS OF LAND DEVELOPMENT, MR FONG SAID THAT BY FAR THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO CONSIDER, ESPECIALLY IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, WAS THE FACT THAT DEVELOPMENT OF LAND PRODUCTION INVOLVED A HUMAN ELEMENT, SOMETIMES TO THE SAME DEGREE AS CONSTRUCTION PROBLEMS.

+THE DELICATE MATTER REGARDING TRADITIONAL VILLAGE LAND, CLEARANCE OF GRAVES, MATTERS INVOLVING FUNG SHUI, CROP COMPENSATIONS AND SO ON REALLY CAN ONLY BE TACKLED THROUGH GOVERNMENT,+ HE SAID.

+MUCH THOUGH WE WOULD LIKE TO ACCELERATE THE PROCESS OF LAND PRODUCTION THERE ARE DEFINITELY PRACTICAL LIMITATIONS EVEN THOUGH ONE MAY ASSUME HONG KONG HAS UNLIMITED FINANCIAL AND MANPOWER RESOURCES.

/+FOR THE

+FOR THE LIMITED RESOURCES AVAILABLE, INCLUDING THE LABOUR FORCE IN THE BUILDING INDUSTRY, HONG KONG HAS NOT BEEN DOING TOO BADLY COMPARED WITH OTHER COUNTRIES.

+BUT WE ARE NOT COMPLACENT AND A WAR HAS BEEN, AND IS BEING, VIGOROUSLY FOUGHT FOR THE PRODUCTION OF MORE LAND TO MEET THE DEMAND, A DEMAND WHICH IS CONTINUOUSLY INCREASING,+ HE SAID.

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CONTRACT FOR RECLAMATION IN TSUEN WAN
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THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT WILL AWARD A MAJOR CIVIL ENGINEERING CONTRACT TOMORROW (THURSDAY) FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF SEAWALL AND RECLAMATION AT THE WESTERN PORTION OF TSUEN WAN BAY.

THE CONTRACT, WORTH MORE THAN \$144 MILLION, IS THE BIGGEST SINGLE ONE LET BY PWD TO DATE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW TOWN.

IT WILL BE SIGNED AT THE TSUEN WAN NEW TOWN DEVELOPMENT OFFICE OF THE NEW TERRITORIES DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO SEND REPRESENTATIVES TO COVER THE CONTRACT SIGNING CEREMONY TO BE HELD IN TSUEN WAN NEW TOWN DEVELOPMENT OFFICE, TSUEN WAN AT 11.30 AM TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

PRESS TRANSPORT WILL BE PROVIDED. MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES WISHING TO MAKE USE OF THIS FACILITY ARE REQUESTED TO ASSEMBLE AT THE OPEN CAR PARK OUTSIDE THE RECEPTION OFFICE, MURRAY BUILDING, GARDEN ROAD, NOT LATER THAN 10.30 AM.

AFTER THE SIGNING CEREMONY, OFFICERS OF THE TSUEN WAN NEW TOWN DEVELOPMENT OFFICE WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEWS.

OFFICERS OF PWD'S PUBLICITY UNIT WILL BE ON HAND TO ASSIST THE PRESS.

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1980

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HOLIDAY ARRANGEMENTS FOR MARINE DEPARTMENT
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THE MARINE DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE FOUR PUBLIC CARGO WORKING AREAS IN WAN CHAI, YAU MA TEI, KWUN TONG AND TSUEN WAN WILL BE CLOSED ON THE LUNAR NEW YEAR DAY (FEBRUARY 16) AND THE FOLLOWING DAY.

HOWEVER, VESSELS WITH VALID PERMITS MAY BERTH AT THESE FOUR AREAS DURING THE HOLIDAYS.

THE PORT COMMUNICATION CENTRE OF THE DEPARTMENT WILL BE OPEN CONTINUOUSLY AND THE MACAU FERRY WHARF UNIT OFFICES WILL OPERATE DAILY FROM 7.30 AM TO 1.30 AM THE FOLLOWING DAY THROUGHOUT THE HOLIDAY PERIOD.

THE VICTORIA SMALL CRAFT LICENSING OFFICE AND THE ENTRY AND CLEARANCE OFFICE WILL BE OPEN FROM 9 AM TO 11 AM ON FEBRUARY 18 (MONDAY).

ALL OTHER OFFICES OF THE DEPARTMENT WILL BE CLOSED DURING THE LUNAR NEW YEAR HOLIDAYS.

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DUTY FREE BRANDY
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THE TRADE, INDUSTRY AND CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT PASSENGERS ARRIVING FROM MACAU DURING THE TWO DAYS FOLLOWING THE LUNAR NEW YEAR'S DAY (FEBRUARY 17 AND 18) MAY BRING INTO HONG KONG FREE OF DUTY ONE BOTTLE OF PORTUGUESE BRANDY CONTAINING NOT MORE THAN 1 LITRE.

THIS CONCESSION IS ALLOWED IN LIEU OF THE NORMAL ONE-QUART BOTTLE OF GRAPE WINE.

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