DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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WHITE PAPER MAPS OUT MASSIVE PROGRAMME OF REHABILITATION SERVICES

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A MASSIVE PROGRAMME OF REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED IN THE NEXT NINE YEARS UP TO 1985/86 COSTING AN ESTIMATED $1,760 MILLION IS OUTLINED IN A WHITE PAPER PUBLISHED TODAY.

THE WHITE PAPER ENTITLED +INTEGRATING THE DISABLED INTO THE COMMUNITY: A UNITED EFFORT+ SPELLS OUT THE VARIOUS MEASURES THE GOVERNMENT WILL TAKE TO PROVIDE SUCH COMPREHENSIVE REHABILITATION SERVICES AS ARE NECESSARY TO ENABLE THE DISABLED TO DEVELOP THEIR PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITIES TO THE FULLEST EXTENT WHICH THEIR DISABILITIES PERMIT.

THESE INCLUDE THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIAL SCHOOLS, SPECIAL CLASSES AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING= EXPANSION OF MEDICAL TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION SERVICES= THE INTRODUCTION OF A CENTRAL REGISTRY FOR THE DISABLED, A CENTRAL HEALTH EDUCATION UNIT, A COMPREHENSIVE DISABILITY OBSERVATION SCHEME AND OTHER SOCIAL REHABILITATION MEASURES.

THE PAPER ALSO RECOMMENDS THE SETTING UP OF A REHABILITATION DEVELOPMENT CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE WITH THE FOLLOWING TERMS OF REFERENCE :

* TO ADVISE ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND PHASED IMPLEMENTATION OF REHABILITATION SERVICES IN HONG KONG=

* TO ADVISE ON THE PRINCIPLES OF SUBVENTION APPLICABLE TO SUCH SERVICES=

* TO CO-ORDINATE REHABILITATION SERVICES IN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS AND TO ENSURE THAT AVAILABLE RESOURCES ARE PUT TO BEST USE=

* TO ADVISE ON THE RESPECTIVE ROLES OF THE GOVERNMENT, VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS AND OTHER BODIES PROVIDING REHABILITATION WORKERS.

THE PAPER OUTLINES THE DEVELOPMENT OF DISABILITY PREVENTION AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMMES AS FOLLOWS:

PREVENTION AND EARLY DIAGNOSIS

THE GOVERNMENT WILL IMPROVE THE EXISTING AND INTRODUCE NEW SCREENING SERVICES FOR BOTH CHILDREN AND ADULTS SO THAT DISABLING CONDITIONS ARE DISCOVERED AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE.

THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT WILL INTRODUCE IN 1978/79 A COMPREHENSIVE OBSERVATION SCHEME FOR CHILDREN FROM BIRTH TO THE AGE OF FIVE. FOR THOSE OVER THE AGE OF FIVE, SCREENING PROGRAMMES ORGANISED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WILL BE AVAILABLE IN SCHOOLS.

/A MULTI-DISCIPLINARY .....

A MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH WILL BE ADOPTED IN THE ASSESSMENT OF THE DISABLED AT ALL INSTITUTIONS WHERE ASSESSMENT SERVICES ARE PROVIDED INCLUDING HOSPITALS, CLINICS, REHABILITATION CENTRES AND EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT CENTRES.

TWO MULTI-DISCIPLINARY ASSESSMENT CENTRES - THE FIRST IN KOWLOON AND THE SECOND ON HONG KONG ISLAND - WILL BE ESTABLISHED WITHIN FIVE YEARS.

A CENTRAL REGISTRY FOR THE DISABLED WILL BE SET UP IN 1978/79, PROBABLY IN SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT, TO CENTRALISE ALL RECORDS OF DISABLED PERSONS.

A CENTRAL HEALTH EDUCATION UNIT WILL BE SET UP IN THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT IN 1978 TO PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL ADVICE ON HEALTH EDUCATION TO GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS WHICH ARE INTERESTED IN CARRYING OUT HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN THEIR SPECIAL FIELDS.

IN ADDITION, SIMPLE PRINCIPLES OF REHABILITATION, THE IMPORTANCE OF PREVENTION AND THE NEED TO SEEK EARLY PROFESSIONAL HELP IN THE EVENT OF ACCIDENT OR ILLNESS WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE CURRICULUM OF PRIMARY, AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND POST-SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

ALL DISABLED CHILDREN WILL BE PROVIDED WITH NINE YEARS OF EDUCATION, AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING WILL BE AVAILABLE BEYOND NORMAL SCHOOL-LEAVING AGE TO HELP THEM TO ACHIEVE THEIR POTENTIAL.

DISABLED CHILDREN WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO RECEIVE EDUCATION IN ORDINARY SCHOOLS. FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT BENEFIT FROM IT BECAUSE OF THE DEGREE OF DISABILITY, SPECIAL SCHOOLS, CLASSES AND PERIPATETIC SERVICES WILL BE PROVIDED.

SPECIAL PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING WILL BE GIVEN TO THE MORE SEVERELY DISABLED CHILDREN.

THE NUMBER OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PLACES FOR THE DISABLED WILL BE INCREASED FROM 12,165 IN APRIL 1977 TO 50,800 BY 1985/86.

THERE WILL BE AN INCREASED OUTPUT OF TRAINED STAFF FROM PRE-SCHOOL TO VOCATIONAL AND TERTIARY LEVELS. CONSIDERATION IS BEING GIVEN TO THE POSSIBLE ESTABLISHMENT OF FULL-TIME TRAINING COURSE FOR TEACHERS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION AND OF SPECIALISED COURSES FOR WHICH TRAINING IS AT PRESENT ONLY AVAILABLE OVERSEAS.

THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WILL PROVIDE BRAILLED TEXTBOOKS IN BOTH ENGLISH AND CHINESE AS FROM APRIL 1, NEXT YEAR AND WILL IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND COVERAGE OF THE EXISTING RESOURCE TEACHING SERVICES FOR BLIND STUDENTS.

/MEDICAL TREATMENT .....

MEDICAL TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION SERVICES

A COMPLETE NETWORK OF MEDICAL REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR THE PHYSICALLY DISABLED WITH A FULLY-EQUIPPED CENTRE AT EACH OF THE REGIONAL HOSPITALS SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED. THE CENTRES WILL BE SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED TO PROVIDE INTENSIVE IN-PATIENT REHABILITATION AND OUT-PATIENT SERVICES. TO ACHIEVE THIS, THREE ADDITIONAL REHABILITATION CENTRES WILL HAVE TO BE ESTABLISHED - THE FIRST IN WEST KOWLOON IN 1981/82, THE SECOND IN SHA TIN IN 1982/83 AND THE THIRD IN TUEN MUN IN 1985/86.

ADDITIONAL PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS MAY HAVE TO BE BUILT AND IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF BEDS PLANNED FOR EAST KOWLOON AND SHAU KEI WAN HOSPITALS. IT MIGHT BE ADVANTAGEOUS TO HAVE SMALL UNITS OF 60 TO 200 PSYCHIATRIC BEDS INCORPORATED IN MAJOR GENERAL HOSPITALS WHICH ARE BEING PLANNED.

AN ORTHOPTIC UNIT WILL BE ESTABLISHED IN THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT NEXT YEAR TO PROVIDE CHILDREN WITH TREATMENT FOR DEFECTIVE EYE-MOVEMENTS.

THE SERVICES FOR OTHER CATEGORIES OF DISABILITIES CAUSED BY CANCER, HEART, CHEST AND OTHER CONDITIONS WILL BE EXPANDED AND IMPROVED IN ACCORDANCE WITH RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEDICAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

THE RUNNING OF THESE ADDITIONAL FACILITIES WILL REQUIRE CONSIDERABLE EXPANSION IN THE TRAINING OF STAFF INCLUDING DOCTORS, NURSES, CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGISTS, PHYSIOTHERAPISTS, OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS, SPEECH THERAPISTS, PROSTHETISTS, ORTHOTISTS, AND MEDICAL SOCIAL WORKERS. NEW COURSES WILL BE ESTABLISHED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, MAKING FULL USE OF ALL LOCAL TRAINING FACILITIES INCLUDING THE TWO UNIVERSITIES AND THE POLYTECHNIC IN ORDER TO MEET THE DEMANDS OF A FAST EXPANDING REHABILITATION PROGRAMME.

SOCIAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

THE DISABLED WILL BE ASSISTED IN FINDING GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT SO THAT THEY CAN LEAD A USEFUL WORKING LIFE. TO WORK TOWARDS THIS AIM, THE GOVERNMENT WILL EXPAND ITS SERVICES TO ENABLE AS MANY DISABLED PERSONS AS POSSIBLE TO FIND EMPLOYMENT IN THE CIVIL SERVICE AND IN COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS.

TO HELP THE DISABLED TO FIND SUITABLE ACCOMMODATION, DIFFERENT TYPES OF RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES, SUCH AS TRANSIT CENTRES, HOSTELS FOR THE YOUNG DISABLED AND RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS FOR EX-MENTAL PATIENTS WILL BE PROVIDED TO CATER FOR THE NEEDS OF THE DIFFERENT GROUPS OF DISABLED PERSONS.

THE DISABLED WILL BE HELPED TO ENJOY THEIR LEISURE TIME AND SPECIAL SERVICES WILL BE PROVIDED TO HELP THEM OVERCOME ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS THEY FACE AT HOME, IN SCHOOL, AT WORK OR IN PUBLIC PLACES.

THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE COUNSELLING SERVICES TO THE DISABLED INCLUDING GUIDANCE AND REFERRAL TO APPROPRIATE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS OR ORGANISATIONS FOR ASSISTANCE IN HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT, MEDICAL CARE, SCHOOL PLACEMENT, INSTITUTIONAL CARE, TRAINING AND HOME HELP.

/FINANCE .....

FINANCE

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSALS DESCRIBED IN THE PAPER WILL INVOLVE HEAVY ADDITIONAL CAPITAL AND RECURRENT EXPENDITURE. THE BROAD ESTIMATE OF CAPITAL EXPENDITURE DURING THE DECADE, WHICH INCLUDES CONSTRUCTION OF ADDITIONAL MEDICAL REHABILITATION CENTRES, MODIFICATIONS TO SCHOOL BUILDINGS, FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT, CAPITAL SUBVENTIONS AND GRANTS, AMOUNTS TO ABOUT $126 MILLION. THE RECURRENT EXPENDITURE FOR THE SAME PERIOD AMOUNTS TO $1,637 MILLION INCREASING FROM $121 MILLION IN 1977/78 TO $232 MILLION IN 1985/86.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

A PRESS CONFERENCE ON THE WHITE PAPER ON REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED WILL BE HELD IN THE G.I.S. THEATRE, FIFTH FLOOR, BEACONSFIELD HOUSE TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AT 11 A.M.

ATTENDING THE CONFERENCE WILL BE MR. ERIC HO, SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, AND DR. HARRY FANG, CHAIRMAN OF THE REHABILITATION DEVELOPMENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE.

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO SEND REPRESENTATIVES TO COVER THE PRESS CONFERENCE.

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PUBLIC SUGGESTIONS INCORPORATED IN
WHITE PAPER ON REHABILITATION SERVICES
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THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, THE HON. ERIC HO SAID THE WHITE PAPER ON FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED HAD INCORPORATED MOST OF THE POINTS RAISED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DEBATE ON THE SUBJECT LAST FEBRUARY.

MR. HO TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY THAT ACCOUNT HAD ALSO BEEN TAKEN OF A NUMBER OF CONSTRUCTIVE COMMENTS BY THE PUBLIC AND INTERESTED ORGANISATIONS ON THE GREEN PAPER FROM WHICH THE WHITE PAPER HAD BEEN DEVELOPED.

HE SAID, +IN ADDITION TO CONSULTATIONS WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT ON THESE VARIOUS PROPOSALS, WE HAVE WORKED CLOSELY WITH THE COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICES, THE UMELCO AD HOC GROUP ON THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF REHABILITATION SERVICES IN DRAFTING OF THIS WHITE PAPER.+

ON THE PROPOSALS TO SPEED UP THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REHABILITATION PROGRAMME, MR. HO SAID, +THE DIRECTORS OF EDUCATION, SOCIAL WELFARE AND THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES AND I CAN ASSURE THE COUNCIL THAT THE IMPROVEMENTS REFLECTED IN THIS WHITE PAPER OVER THE ORIGINAL TIME TABLE IN THE GREEN PAPER ARE THE LIMITS WE CAN CONFIDENTLY HOPE TO ACHIEVE BY 1985-86.+

+MY COLLEAGUES AND I, LIKE THE UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS WHO SPOKE IN THE FEBRUARY DEBATE, WILL ALSO PREFER TO SEE FASTER PROGRESS, BUT WE ARE UNABLE TO GET ROUND THE FACT THAT THE PACE OF DEVELOPMENT HAS TO BE ADJUSTED TO HUMAN RESOURCES AND THE AVAILABILITY OF SITES AS WELL AS SPONSORS.+

HOWEVER, HE POINTED OUT THAT THE WHITE PAPER DID PROVIDE FOR SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS AND CITED THE FOLLOWING AS EXAMPLES:

* THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT WILL INTRODUCE A COMPREHENSIVE OBSERVATION SCHEME IN 1978/79 FOR CHILDREN FROM BIRTH TO THE AGE OF FIVE. FOR THOSE OVER THE AGE OF FIVE, SCREENING PROGRAMMES ORGANISED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WILL BE AVAILABLE IN SCHOOLS=

* A NEW CODE OF AID FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION WAS ISSUED LAST MONTH AND THE NUMBER OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PLACES FOR THE DISABLED WILL INCREASE FROM 12,165 IN APRIL THIS YEAR TO 50,800 BY 1985/86=

* THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT IN CONJUNCTION WITH THREE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES WILL MAKE AVAILABLE 186 PLACES IN DAY CENTRES FOR THE SEVERELY MENTALLY RETARDED BEFORE THE END OF THIS FINANCIAL YEAR BEYOND WHAT IS PROVIDED FOR IN THE PROGRAMME PLAN. IF THIS EXPERIMENT IS SUCCESSFUL IT WILL BE POSSIBLE FOR ADDITIONAL PLACES AT DAY CENTRES TO BE PROVIDED QUICKLY TO MEET THE SHORTFALL FOR PLANNED RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES FOR ALL THOSE KNOWN CASES CURRENTLY AWAITING INTENSIVE CARE= AND

/* THE SHORTFALL .....

* THE SHORTFALL IN PSYCHIATRIC FACILITIES WILL BE WHOLLY ELIMINATED BY 1985/86 THROUGH THE PROVISION OF 4,900 PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL BEDS BY A DAY CENTRE AND HALF-WAY HOUSES.

MR. HO EMPHASISED THE WHITE PAPER WAS NOT SIMPLY A CONSENSUS AS TO HOW THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD PROCEED, BUT A UNITED AND POSITIVE APPROACH TO REHABILITATING THE DISABLED WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY.

HE DESCRIBED THE PAPER AS A +NEW BEGINNING FOR MANY DISABLED IN HONG KONG+ AND NOTED THAT THE OBJECTIVES, THE PROGRAMME PLAN AND TARGETS IN IT WOULD BE UNDER CONSTANT REVIEW BY THE REHABILITATION DEVELOPMENT CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF DR. THE HON. HARRY FANG.

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CHIEF SECRETARY EXPLAINS GODBER'S DEPARTURE
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THE GOVERNMENT'S ONLY AIM TO ARRANGE FOR GODBER'S EARLY ENTRY INTO THE RESTRICTED AREA AT KAI TAK AND TO ALLOW HIM AND HIS SON TO WAIT IN AN UNUSED GOVERNMENT OFFICE UNTIL HIS DEPARTURE WAS TO MINIMIZE THE RISK OF DISTURBANCE AND INCONVENIENCE TO THE PUBLIC, THE HON. CHIEF SECRETARY, SIR DENYS ROBERTS SAID.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM DR. THE HON. S.Y. CHUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, SIR DENYS SAID THE GOVERNMENT, CORRECTLY, ANTICIPATED THAT THERE WOULD BE A GREAT DEAL OF INTEREST IN GODBER'S DEPARTURE.

+IF HE HAD ARRIVED AT KAI TAK IN THE NORMAL WAY, THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT HE WOULD HAVE BEEN SURROUNDED BY LARGE NUMBERS OF PRESSMEN AND INTERESTED SPECTATORS WITH THE OBVIOUS RISK WHICH THIS WOULD HAVE CAUSED IN A CROWDED CONCOURSE,+ HE SAID.

SIR DENYS NOTED THAT GODBER, THROUGH HIS SOLICITOR, HAD MADE IT CLEAR, BEFORE HIS RELEASE, THAT HE DID NOT WISH TO SPEAK TO THE PRESS WHEN HE LEFT PRISON.

HOWEVER, ARRANGEMENTS WERE MADE AT SIU LAM FOR THE PRESS TO TAKE PHOTOGRAPHS OF HIS RELEASE AND BARRIERS WERE PROVIDED THERE TO TRY TO FACILITATE AN ORDERLY COVERAGE OF THE EVENT.

THE CAR USED BY GODBER TO TRAVEL FROM SIU LAM TO KAI TAK WAS PROVIDED AT HIS REQUEST BY HIS SOLICITOR AND A POLICE CAR FOLLOWED TO ENSURE THAT NO INCIDENTS OCCURRED EN ROUTE.

SIR DENYS SAID: +TRAFFIC POLICE WERE ALERTED TO ENSURE THAT HIS CAR AND THOSE EXPECTED TO BE FOLLOWING IT DID NOT CAUSE TRAFFIC CONGESTION.

+THE UNRULY SCENES WHICH ATTENDED GODBER'S JOURNEY FROM SIU LAM TO KAI TAK SURELY JUSTIFIED THE PRECAUTIONS TAKEN,+ HE ADDED.

IN REPLY TO ANOTHER QUESTION FROM DR. CHUNG, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON. JOHN HOBLEY SAID THE GOVERNMENT INTENDED TO PURSUE WITH VIGOUR ITS CLAIM AGAINST GODBER, BUT IT WOULD BE GENERALLY WRONG IN PRINCIPLE FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO AVAIL ITSELF TO THE REMEDY OF IMPRISONMENT FOR NON-PAYMENT OF A JUDGMENT DEBT .

MR. HOBLEY WAS CONVINCED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE BEEN OPEN TO MORE SEVERE CRITICISM IF IT HAD IN FACT IMPRISONED GODBER FOR DEBT.

ON THE LEGAL ASPECT OF THE MATTER, HE SAID: +IMPRISONING GODBER WOULD NOT, IN MY OPINION, HAVE BROUGHT RECOVERY OF THE MONEY ANY NEARER, AND MIGHT WELL HAVE HINDERED PROCEEDINGS OUTSIDE HONG KONG FOR ITS RECOVERY.+

/TO THE BEST .....

TO THE BEST OF THE GOVERNMENT'S KNOWLEDGE, GODBER HAS NO ASSETS IN HONG KONG AND MUCH THE GREATER PART OF HIS ASSETS WAS OUTSIDE HONG KONG BEFORE JUNE 1973 WHEN THE QUESTION OF PROCEEDINGS AGAINST HIM AROSE.

MR. HOBLEY, HOWEVER, NOTED THAT ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD IMPRISONED GODBER, TWO COURSES WOULD HAVE BEEN OPEN TO HIM.

ONE WOULD HAVE BEEN TO ACCEPT A FURTHER 12 MONTHS IMPRISONMENT - THE MAXIMUM WHICH THE LAW ALLOWS. +HAD HE TAKEN THAT COURSE, THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO RECOVER THE MONEY WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN HELPED.+

+THE OTHER COURSE,+ THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAID, +WOULD HAVE BEEN FOR HIM TO GO TO THE COURT WITH A STATEMENT OF HIS ASSETS AND THEIR WHEREABOUTS AND SEEK HIS RELEASE.+

THE LAW THEN PROVIDES THAT THE JUDGMENT CREDITOR, IN THIS CASE THE GOVERNMENT, MAY ATTACH PROPERTY WITHIN HONG KONG SO DISCLOSED, IN SATISFACTION OF THE JUDGMENT.

+BUT GODBER HAS NO ASSETS IN HONG KONG SO THAT TAKES US NOWHERE,+ MR. HOBLEY SAID.

HE SAID, ALTERNATIVELY, THE CREDITOR COULD OPPOSE THE APPLICATION FOR RELEASE BUT ONLY IN NARROWLY DEFINED CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH DID NOT APPLY IN GODBER'S CASE.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAID HE DID NOT THINK THAT GODBER WOULD BE ABLE TO THWART THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS IN ENFORCING THE JUDGMENT IN THE LONG RUN.

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SLIPPAGE OF DECOMPOSED GRANITE CAUSED
EARTH SUBSIDENCE IN NATHAN ROAD
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THE EARTH SUBSIDENCE, WHICH OCCURRED LAST MONTH UNDER NATHAN ROAD NEAR ITS JUNCTION WITH ARRAN STREET, WAS CAUSED BY THE SLIPPAGE OF A COMPLETELY DECOMPOSED GRANITE SEAM EXPOSED DURING ROCK TUNNELLING OPERATIONS FOR THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY, THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, THE HON. DAVID MCDONALD, SAID TODAY.

IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION BY DR. THE HON. HENRY HU IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, HE SAID THE SEAM WAS FIRST EXPOSED IN THE TUNNEL ON SEPTEMBER 1.

AS A RESULT, MR. MCDONALD SAID, PROBES WERE CARRIED OUT TO TRY TO ASSESS THE EXTENT OF THE SEAM AND THE EXPOSED FACE WAS SAND-BAGGED AND SHORED TO SECURE IT UNTIL THE PERMANENT LINING WORKS COULD BE CARRIED OUT.

+THE FORM OF PROTECTIVE MEASURES ADOPTED WAS CONSIDERED TO GIVE ADEQUATE SECURITY BY BOTH THE CONTRACTOR AND THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION'S SUPERVISORY STAFF,+ HE ADDED.

+CONTRARY TO THE CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE INVESTIGATIONS EVENTS PROVED THAT THE EXTENT OF THE COMPLETELY DECOMPOSED GRANITE SEAM WAS GREATER THAN ESTIMATED AND IN CONSEQUENCE THE PROTECTIVE MEASURES FAILED TO GIVE ADEQUATE SUPPORT.+

MR. MCDONALD SAID THAT AFTER THE COLLAPSE THE AREA IN NATHAN ROAD WAS CORDONED OFF AND THE BUILDINGS ON THE CORNERS OF THE ROAD JUNCTION WERE EVACUATED AS A PRECAUTIONARY MEASURE.

GROUTING WAS CARRIED OUT TO PREVENT FURTHER MOVEMENT OF THE COMPLETELY DECOMPOSED GRANITE. THE TENANTS OF THE EVACUATED BUILDINGS WERE THEN ALLOWED TO RETURN TO THEIR PROPERTIES.

+AS A RESULT OF THIS EXPERIENCE THE CORPORATION HAVE ESTABLISHED REVISED METHODS OF WORKING WHICH WILL ENSURE A GREATER DEGREE OF INVESTIGATIVE PROBING AND HAVE ADOPTED MORE CAUTIOUS METHODS OF DEALING WITH COMPLETELY DECOMPOSED GRANITE SEAMS NO MATTER HOW SMALL OR INSIGNIFICANT THEY APPEAR TO BE,+ HE SAID.

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BOAT SQUATTERS URGED TO APPLY FOR HOUSING IN THE NORMAL WAY

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THE GOVERNMENT VIEWS WITH GREAT CONCERN THE UNSATISFACTORY LIVING CONDITIONS OF MANY BOAT SQUATTERS, THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON. ALAN SCOTT, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HOWEVER, AT THE SAME TIME, THE GOVERNMENT MUST ALSO HAVE REGARD TO THE HOUSING NEEDS OF OTHER FAMILIES FROM DIFFERENT CATEGORIES.

MR. SCOTT SAID: +IT WOULD, I THINK, BE MUCH RESENTED BY CITIZENS WHO ARE WAITING THEIR TURN ON THE WAITING LIST, IF BOAT SQUATTERS WERE OFFERED PUBLIC OR TEMPORARY HOUSING ON A WHOLESALE BASIS IN PREFERENCE TO OTHER CATEGORIES.+

HE WAS REPLYING TO MRS. KWAN KO SIU-WAH, WHO ASKED WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT HAD SPECIFIC PLANS TO REHOUSE BOAT SQUATTERS LIVING IN DILAPIDATED AND UNSEAWORTHY BOATS, PARTICULARLY IN YAU MA TEI TYPHOON SHELTER.

MR. SCOTT SAID THAT IN LAST FINANCIAL YEAR 54 BOAT SQUATTERS WERE REHOUSED AND 250 OTHERS PROVIDED WITH TEMPORARY HOUSING.

ALREADY THIS YEAR, 258 BOAT DWELLERS HAD MOVED INTO TEMPORARY HOUSING AREAS AND 57 OTHERS INTO TRANSIT CENTRES, AND IT WAS EXPECTED THAT ALTOGETHER 2,400 WOULD BE OFFERED ACCOMMODATION UNDER THE CLEARANCE QUOTA.

MR. SCOTT STRESSED THAT BOAT SQUATTERS HAD THE SAME OPPORTUNITIES FOR REHOUSING AS LAND SQUATTERS IN THAT THEY WERE ENTITLED TO REGISTER ON THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT'S WAITING LIST TO OBTAIN PUBLIC HOUSING.

+I AM ADVISED THAT RELATIVELY FEW BOAT SQUATTERS HAVE APPLIED OR SEEM TO HAVE THE INTENTION OF APPLYING FOR PUBLIC OR TEMPORARY HOUSING IN THIS, THE NORMAL, WAY,+ HE SAID.

+I WOULD THEREFORE URGE ALL BOAT SQUATTERS WHO WISH TO MOVE TO APPLY IN THE NORMAL WAY.+

CONCERNING THE YAU MA TEI TYPHOON SHELTER, MR. SCOTT SAID IT WAS PROPOSED TO CONSTRUCT A NEW BREAKWATER IN MID-1980 AND TO RECLAIM THE EXISTING SHELTER TOWARDS THE END OF 1982.

IN THE MEANTIME, SUITABLE MEASURES WOULD BE TAKEN BY THE MARINE DEPARTMENT TO CONTROL THE SITUATION.

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HK HOPES TO JOIN ASIA PACIFIC TELECOMMUNITY
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HONG KONG HOPES TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE ASIA PACIFIC TELECOMMUNITY, OF WHICH THE UK GOVERNMENT IS NOT A MEMBER, THE HON. CHIEF SECRETARY, SIR DENYS ROBERTS SAID TODAY IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE DIPLOMATIC PRIVILEGES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1977, SIR DENYS SAID: +ONE OF THE CONDITIONS OF THE ASIA PACIFIC TELECOMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP, IS THAT MEMBERS SHOULD ACCORD TO THE TELECOMMUNITY AND ITS OFFICERS THE SAME PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES AS ARE GRANTED TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND ITS OFFICIALS.

HE SAID, TO ENABLE HONG KONG TO FULFIL THIS CONDITION OF MEMBERSHIP IT WAS NECESSARY TO AMEND THE DIPLOMATIC PRIVILEGES ORDINANCE SO AS TO ENABLE THE GOVERNOR TO CONFER PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES IN THE CASE OF AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION OF WHICH HONG KONG, BUT NOT THE UK, WAS A MEMBER.

AT PRESENT, THE GOVERNOR COULD ONLY CONFER IMMUNITIES AND PRIVILEGES ON AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION AND ITS STAFF, IF THE UNITED KINGDOM GOVERNMENT WAS A MEMBER OF THE ORGANISATION.

THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT WOULD NOT EMPOWER THE GOVERNOR TO MAKE SUCH AN ORDER IN RELATION TO AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION OF WHICH HONG KONG WAS NOT A MEMBER, BUT THE UK WAS.

SIR DENYS ENVISAGED CASES IN THE FUTURE WHERE IT WAS DESIRABLE FOR PRIVILEGES TO BE ACCORDED TO ORGANISATIONS OF WHICH THE UK WAS A MEMBER, THOUGH HONG KONG WAS NOT. HE PROPOSED TO ISSUE AN AMENDMENT TO THIS EFFECT AT THE COMMITTEE STAGE OF THE BILL.

THE DEBATE ON THE MOTION WAS ADJOURNED.

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CMB STEPS UP EFFORTS TO TACKLE BUS FREQUENCY PROBLEM

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THE CHINA MOTOR BUS COMPANY HAS RECENTLY BEEN STEPPING UP ITS RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN FOR DRIVERS AND A WAGE INCREASE HAS ALSO BEEN GRANTED IN ITS EFFORTS TO ARREST THE DETERIORATION OF BUS FREQUENCY, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES SAID.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. LYDIA DUNN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, MR. JONES SAID THERE APPEAR TO BE TWO MAIN REASONS FOR THE DETERIORATION IN THE FREQUENCY OF BUSES ON CERTAIN ROUTES OPERATED BY THE BUS COMPANY.

THE FIRST IS A SHORTAGE OF DRIVERS IN RELATION BOTH TO THE GROWING NUMBER OF BUSES AND THE ADDITIONAL ROUTES BEING OPERATED.

THE SECOND REASON IS GROWING TRAFFIC CONGESTION ON SOME ROUTES WHICH IS SLOWING BUSES DOWN AND MAKING IT DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN SCHEDULES.

ON THE DRIVER SHORTAGE PROBLEM, MR. JONES SAID WITH THE BOOM IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY AT THE MOMENT, THERE IS INTENSE COMPETITION FOR DRIVERS OF HEAVY VEHICLES AND MANY DRIVERS DO NOT LIKE THE SHIFT WORK ASSOCIATED WITH BUS DRIVING.

+FURTHERMORE,+ HE SAID, +THE COMPANY IS VERY PROPERLY AWARE OF THE NEED TO EMPLOY REALLY COMPETENT DRIVERS ON ITS DIFFICULT HILLY ROUTES AND NOT ALL DRIVERS ARE ABLE TO MEET ITS EXACTING TESTING STANDARDS.+

ON THE TRAFFIC CONGESTION PROBLEM, MR. JONES SAID THERE IS NO QUICK AND EASY SOLUTION TO IT AND IT HAS TO BE TACKLED BY A VARIETY OF MEANS.

+IN THE SHORT TERM NEW TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SCHEMES WILL BE TRIED OUT AND, IN DUE COURSE, THE OPENING OF THE ABERDEEN TUNNEL, NEW AND IMPROVED ROADS AND THE COMPLETION OF THE MASS TRANSIT WORKS IN CENTRAL SHOULD HELP TO EASE THE POSITION.+

HE NOTED THAT DESPITE ALL THESE DIFFICULTIES, THE CMB HAS NEVERTHELESS BEEN OPERATING MORE BUSES ON MORE ROUTES AND CARRYING MORE PASSENGERS OVERALL.

ON THE QUESTION OF CMB'S FRANCHISE, MR. JONES REVEALED THAT THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT IS PREPARING FULL REPORTS ON THE PERFORMANCE OF BOTH BUS COMPANIES AS THE CURRENT FRANCHISE FOR THE TWO COMPANIES HAS BEEN IN OPERATION FOR SOME TWO YEARS AND NEEDS REVIEW.

HE SAID THESE REPORTS ARE NOW NEARING COMPLETION AND WHEN THEY ARE READY, HE WILL SEEK THE ADVICE OF THE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THEM BEFORE SUBMITTING A REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL.

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NO PERMIT GRANTED FOR PILING DURING BAN PERIODS
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THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, THE HON. DAVID MCDONALD, SAID TODAY THAT HE HAD GRANTED NO EXEMPTIONS TO PERMIT PILING WITHIN THE PROHIBITED HOURS.

REPLYING TO QUESTIONS FROM THE HON. P.G. WILLIAMS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, HE POINTED OUT THAT CONTRACTORS WORKING FOR THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION WERE AUTOMATICALLY EXEMPTED FROM THE RESTRICTIONS UNDER THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION ORDINANCE.

BUT HE ADDED: +THE CORPORATION HAS, HOWEVER, EXERCISED TIGHT CONTROL ON SUCH WORKS AND HAS ALLOWED PILING TO BE CARRIED OUT DURING THE PROHIBITED HOURS IN ONLY FOUR INSTANCES.+

MR. MCDONALD SAID THE ONLY WAY IN WHICH OTHER CONTRACTORS COULD OBTAIN EXEMPTION IN RESPECT OF PILING WORKS WAS BY MEANS OF AN ORDER MADE BY THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL.

+IN THE PERIOD SINCE THE SPECIAL RESTRICTIONS ON PILING WERE INTRODUCED IN SEPTEMBER 1972, THREE SUCH ORDERS SPECIFICALLY PERMITTING PILING DURING THE PROHIBITED HOURS HAVE BEEN MADE,+ MR. MCDONALD SAID.

+OF THESE, TWO WERE IN RESPECT OF GOVERNMENT PROJECTS AND ONE IN RESPECT OF A PRIVATE PROJECT.+

NO APPLICATIONS FOR EXEMPTION HAVE BEEN REFUSED, HE SAID.

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GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE FOR 1976/77
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THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE SAID TODAY THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTUAL TOTAL EXPENDITURE FOR 1976-77 AMOUNTED TO $6,591 MILLION -- $621 MILLION LESS THAN THE ORIGINAL ESTIMATES.

THIS WAS DISCLOSED WHEN HE MOVED THE MOTION IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON THE FINAL SCHEDULE OF SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS FOR 1976-77.

HE SAID THE SCHEDULE COVERED A TOTAL OF $42 MILLION OF WHICH $23.2 MILLION WAS TO MEET ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURE ON PERSONAL EMOLUMENTS IN TEN DEPARTMENTS.

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POWER TO REMOVE FISH FARMS FOR POLLUTION

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THE DIRECTOR OF MARINE WILL BE ABLE TO REMOVE FISH FARMS THAT CAUSE POLLUTION UNDER THE POWERS TO BE CONFERRED ON HIM IN THE SHIPPING AND PORT CONTROL BILL WHICH WILL BE PUT TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL SHORTLY.

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

HOWEVER, MR. JEAFFRESON SAID WELL MANAGED AND PROPERLY LOCATED FISH FARMS SHOULD NOT CAUSE POLLUTION.

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DISABLED GIVEN JOBS IN CIVIL SERVICE

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THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY IS TO EMPLOY THE DISABLED IN THE CIVIL SERVICE WHEREVER POSSIBLE, THE SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, THE HON. RONALD BRIDGE SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN ON THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ON EMPLOYMENT OF HANDICAPPED PERSONS IN THE CIVIL SERVICE.

+DISABLED PEOPLE APPLYING FOR GOVERNMENT JOBS ARE CONSIDERED ON EQUAL TERMS WITH OTHER APPLICANTS, AND PROVIDED THEY ARE CAPABLE OF UNDERTAKING THE DUTIES EFFICIENTLY, THEIR DISABILITY IS NOT A BAR TO THEIR EMPLOYMENT,+ MR. BRIDGE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THIS POLICY WAS RE-AFFIRMED IN THE WHITE PAPER ON +INTEGRATING THE DISABLED INTO THE COMMUNITY+ TABLED AT THE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY.

HE SAID THAT IN ADDITION THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT WAS KEPT INFORMED OF GOVERNMENT VACANCIES AND GAVE RECRUITING DEPARTMENTS PARTICULARS OF DISABLED PEOPLE WHO MIGHT BE SUITABLE.

IN REPLY TO ANOTHER QUESTION RAISED BY MR. CHEONG-LEEN, MR. BRIDGE REVEALED THAT THE NUMBER OF BLIND PEOPLE EMPLOYED IN THE CIVIL SERVICE INCREASED FROM 85 ON APRIL 1, 1972 TO 125 ON APRIL 1, 1977.

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF HANDICAPPED PEOPLE EMPLOYED IN THE CIVIL SERVICE ALSO INCREASED FROM 291 TO 402 IN THE SAME PERIOD.

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WAITING AREAS FOR PATIENTS SEEKING MEDICAL CONSULTATION
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IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE POLICY OF THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT TO PROVIDE SPECIAL WAITING AREAS WITHIN OR CLOSE TO GOVERNMENT CLINICS FOR PATIENTS SEEKING CONSULTATION PROVIDED THAT SPACE IS AVAILABLE AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF SUCH AREAS IS POSSIBLE.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES, DR. THE HON. K.L. THONG, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS AFTERNOON.

IN FACT, HE SAID, MOST OF THE BUSY GOVERNMENT CLINICS WERE ALREADY SO PROVIDED.

DR. THONG WAS REPLYING TO UNOFFICIAL MEMBER, THE HON. ROGER LOBO, WHO ASKED IF THE GOVERNMENT WOULD PROVIDE SPECIAL WAITING AREAS AT CLINICS SO THAT PATIENTS AWAITING CONSULTATION ARE NOT EXPOSED TO THE WEATHER AND POSSIBLE INTIMIDATION OR ASSAULT BY UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS.

THE DIRECTOR SAID THAT WHILE COVERED AREAS AFFORDED SUBSTANTIAL PROTECTION FROM INCLEMENT WEATHER, THE QUESTION OF PROTECTION FROM POSSIBLE INTIMIDATION OR ASSAULT BY UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS WAS BASICALLY A MATTER OF LAW AND ORDER.

IN REPLY TO OTHER QUESTIONS BY DR. THE HON. HARRY FANG ON THE SUBJECT OF DISABILITY ALLOWANCE, DR. THONG SAID THE ASSESSMENT OF THE DISABLED WAS BEING CARRIED OUT BY MEDICAL OFFICERS EXPERIENCED OR SPECIALISED IN THIS WORK.

THE PRESENT CRITERIA USED BY THE DEPARTMENT COVERED ALL DISABLED PERSONS WITH PHYSICAL OR MENTAL DISABILITIES WHICH ARE BROADLY EQUIVALENT TO A TOTAL LOSS OF EARNING CAPACITY AND THOSE DISABLED WHO ARE IN NEED OF SUBSTANTIAL HELP FROM OTHERS TO COPE WITH DAILY LIFE, HE SAID.

IN THE ASSESSMENT OF MENTALLY RETARDED PERSONS THE CLINICAL EXAMINATION AND JUDGMENT OF THE ATTENDING DOCTOR ARE ESSENTIAL IN DETERMINING THE DEGREE OF DISABILITIES, HE ADDED.

DR. THONG SAID AT PRESENT ABOUT 300 CASES WERE ASSESSED EACH MONTH BY DOCTORS IN 36 GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNMENT-ASSISTED INSTITUTIONS, WHICH MEANT AN AVERAGE OF ABOUT EIGHT CASES IN A CLINIC EACH MONTH.

+FROM OUR EXPERIENCE SO FAR THE CLINICS ARE CAPABLE OF HANDLING THIS SMALL NUMBER OF CASES,+ HE SAID.

HOWEVER, SHOULD A NEED ARISE IN FUTURE, HE SAID, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CERTAINLY CONSIDER DR. FANG'S PROPOSAL TO ENLIST THE SERVICES OF THE MEDICAL ASSOCIATIONS OR MEDICALLY QUALIFIED JUSTICES OF PEACE TO ASSIST IN SUCH ASSESSMENT.

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ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) (NO.3)
BILL 1977 INTRODUCED IN LEGCO
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A BILL WHICH SEEKS TO AMEND A SCHEDULE LISTING THE COUNTRIES, WHOSE DRIVING TESTS ARE CONSIDERED TO BE OF A STANDARD AT LEAST AS HIGH AS IN HONG KONG, BY ORDER OF THE GOVERNOR WAS INTRODUCED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) (NO.3) BILL 1977, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES SAID THE PURPOSE OF THIS BILL WAS TO HELP PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUE OF HONG KONG DRIVING LICENCES, WITHOUT A TEST, TO THE HOLDERS OF CERTAIN OVERSEAS DRIVING LICENCES.

THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT, ACTING WITHIN THE POWERS CONFERRED UNDER EXISTING LAW, HAD BEEN ISSUING HONG KONG DRIVING LICENCES TO THOSE APPLICANTS WHO CAN PROVE THAT THEY HOLD CURRENT DRIVING LICENCES ISSUED BY A LIST OF COUNTRIES WHOSE DRIVING LICENCES ARE CONSIDERED TO BE OF A STANDARD AT LEAST AS HIGH AS IN HONG KONG, MR. JONES SAID.

+THIS ACTION, HOWEVER, INVOLVES THE EXERCISE OF A CERTAIN DISCRETION ON THE COMMISSIONER'S PART IN DECIDING WHICH COUNTRIES SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE LIST,+ HE ADDED.

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CANTONESE LANGUAGE IN COURT WELCOMED

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THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON. JOHN HOBLEY, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY THAT THE GOVERNMENT WELCOMED THE USE OF CANTONESE LANGUAGE IN COURTS.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. T.S. LO ON THE GOVERNMENT'S SUPPORT TO INCREASE THE USE OF CANTONESE IN COURTS PARTICULARLY IN THE SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL, MAGISTRACIES AND DISTRICT COURTS.

PROCEEDINGS IN BOTH THE SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL AND THE LABOUR TRIBUNAL WERE CONDUCTED IN CANTONESE, EXCEPT WHERE THE CONVENIENCE OF A PARTY OR WITNESS OTHERWISE REQUIRED, MR. HOBLEY SAID.

+IN ALL OTHER COURTS, A PARTY OF PROCEEDINGS OR A WITNESS MAY SPEAK IN CANTONESE IF HE WISHES,+ HE ADDED.

MR. HOBLEY SAID THE THIRD REPORT OF THE CHINESE LANGUAGE COMMITTEE EXPLAINED SOME OF THE REASONS WHY LAWYERS APPEARING IN THE COURTS USED ENGLISH AND PROCEEDINGS CONDUCTED IN ENGLISH.

HE ADDED THAT IT WAS FOR THE SAME REASONS SECTION 5 OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ORDINANCE PROVIDES THAT PROCEEDINGS IN THE SUPREME COURT AND THE DISTRICT COUCT SHALL BE CONDUCTED IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

+MAGISTRATES, HOWEVER,+ MR. HOBLEY SAID, +HAVE A CHOICE AND ANY WHO WISH TO DO SO MAY CONDUCT PROCEEDINGS IN CANTONESE WHENEVER THEY FEEL THAT IT IS PRACTICABLE AND HELPFUL.+

HE SAID THAT CANTONESE -SPEAKING MAGISTRATES HAD IN RECENT YEARS BEEN CONDUCTING MANY SIMPLER CASES IN CANTONESE.

MR. HOBLEY POINTED OUT THAT THERE WERE GENERALLY ACCEPTED LIMITS TO THE USE OF CANTONESE IN ANY COURT AND SUCH INCREASE IN ITS USE AS IS POSSIBLE WOULD COME IN THE MAGISTRATES COURTS.

+THE REAL DIFFICULTY IS THAT THERE ARE NOT SUFFICIENT CANTONESE-SPEAKING MAGISTRATES,+ HE SAID.

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LEGCO HEARS SECOND READING OF MAGISTRATES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1977
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THE SOLICITOR GENERAL TODAY MOVED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THE SECOND READING OF THE MAGISTRATES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1977, CONTAINING, +TWO UNRELATED AMENDMENTS OF A PURELY TECHNICAL NATURE.+

THE FIRST, THE HON. GARTH THORNTON EXPLAINED, CONCERNS THE ADMISSABILITY OF TRANSLATIONS OF DOCUMENTS IN COMMITTAL PROCEEDINGS. +CLAUSE 2 AMENDS SECTION 81A SO THAT A STATEMENT WRITTEN IN A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH WILL BE ADMISSABLE IN EVIDENCE IN COMMITTAL PROCEEDINGS IF IT IS ACCOMPANIED BY AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION CERTIFIED BY A PERSON APPOINTED BY THE CHIEF JUSTICE AS A TRANSLATOR,+ HE SAID.

THE SECOND AMENDMENT APPLIES TO THOSE CASES IN WHICH THE RETURN TO HONG KONG OF AN OFFENDER IS SOUGHT UNDER THE FUGITIVE OFFENDERS LEGISLATION.

+DIFFICULTIES HAD ARISEN+ MR. THORNTON SAID, +BECAUSE WITNESSES IN HONG KONG HAD BEEN RELUCTANT TO SWEAR AFFIDAVITS UPON WHICH AN APPLICATION FOR RETURN MIGHT BE FOUNDED. AT PRESENT SECTION 21(1) OF THE MAGISTRATES ORDINANCE DOES NOT EXTEND TO CASES INVOLVING THE RETURN OF FUGITIVE CRIMINALS.+

THE BILL SEEKS TO OVERCOME THE PROBLEM BY INSERTING A NEW SECTION 104A INTO THE ORDINANCE SO THAT A PERSON MAY BE REQUIRED TO APPEAR AND GIVE EVIDENCE IN PROCEEDINGS FOR THE RETURN OF A PERSON ACCUSED OR CONVICTED OF AN OFFENCE.

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MORE STUDY ROOMS IN HOUSING ESTATES
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THERE ARE PERMANENT STUDY ROOM FACILITIES WITH A TOTAL OF 7,956 PLACES IN 43 PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON. SIR DENYS ROBERTS SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

FURTHERMORE, 200 ADDITIONAL PLACES, IN THREE ESTATES, WOULD BE PROVIDED SHORTLY, SIR DENYS SAID IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. WONG LAM.

+FURTHER EXPANSION IS UNDER CONSIDERATION IN THE LIGHT OF THE TEMPORARY SCHEME OPERATED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT EARLIER THIS YEAR,+ HE ADDED.

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SPECIAL SCHOOL FOR MALADJUSTED CHILDREN
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A SPECIAL PRIMARY SCHOOL FOR MALADJUSTED AND SOCIALLY DEPRIVED CHILDREN IS BEING BUILT IN PAK TIN, SHEK KIP MEI.

THIS WAS DISCLOSED BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, THE HON. KENNETH TOPLEY IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY WHEN REPLYING TO QUESTIONS RAISED BY REV. THE HON. JOYCE BENNETT CONCERNING THE USE OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN PAK TIN.

MR. TOPLEY SAID THERE WERE THREE PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN PAK TIN, ALL OF THEM UNDER-ENROLLED. THERE IS ONE UNDER CONSTRUCTION AND IS EARMARKED, UNDER THE REHABILITATION PROGRAMME, AS A SPECIAL SCHOOL FOR MALADJUSTED AND SOCIALLY DEPRIVED CHILDREN.

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STREET SLEEPERS ENJOY EQUAL PRIVILEGE AS MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC
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STREET SLEEPERS AS MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC ARE PROVIDED WITH PUBLIC HOUSING AND OTHER SOCIAL SERVICES, INCLUDING CASH ASSISTANCE, COUNSELLING, PLACEMENT, AND ASSISTANCE IN SEEKING EMPLOYMENT.

THIS WAS STATED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY BY THE HON. ERIC HO, SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM UNOFFICIAL, THE HON. LEUNG TAT-SHING.

+STREET-SLEEPERS IN URGENT NEED OF HOUSING QUALIFY FOR ACCOMMODATION IN TRANSIT CENTRES AND TEMPORARY HOUSING AREAS WHICH ARE PROVIDED FOR THE GENUINELY HOMELESS. IN ADDITION, A NUMBER OF VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS OPERATE STREE-SLEEPERS HOMES AND SHELTERS,+ MR. HO SAID.

HE ADDED THAT EVERY STREET-SLEEPER REFERRED TO THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT IS VISITED BY ITS SOCIAL WORKERS WHO INVARIABLY MAKE KNOWN TO HIM THE FULL RANGE OF SERVICES AVAILABLE AND ASSIST HIM IN OBTAINING THESE SERVICES WHERE HELP IS DESIRED.

+I HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT EXISTING FACILITIES ARE INADEQUATE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF STREET-SLEEPERS,+ MR. HO EMPHASISED.

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ROAD SAFETY ASSOCIATION MAY GET MORE SUBVENTION

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THE HON. DEREK JONES, SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY THAT CONSIDERATION IS BEING GIVEN TO INCREASING THE SUBVENTION PAID TO THE ROAD SAFETY ASSOCIATION IN THE NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR.

+IF THIS IS DONE, IT WILL HELP THE ASSOCIATION TO PAY FOR UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT FOR NEW ROAD SAFETY PATROLS IN SCHOOLS IN AREAS WHERE PARENTS ARE LESS WELL OFF,+ MR. JONES SAID IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY UNOFFICIAL MEMBER THE HON. ROGER LOBO.

MR. LOBO HAS ASKED IF THE GOVERNMENT WOULD PROVIDE FUNDS FOR THE PURCHASE OF UNIFORMS FOR PATROL VOLUNTEERS SO AS TO ENABLE MORE SCHOOLS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE VERY WORTHWHILE SCHOOL ROAD SAFETY SCHEME IN VIEW OF ITS SUCCESS.

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MARINE DEPARTMENT CAUTIONS SHIPS DURING CANOE RACES

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THE MARINE DEPARTMENT TODAY DREW THE ATTENTION OF SHIP MASTERS, PERSONS IN CHARGE AND OWNERS OF ALL CRAFT THAT THEY SHOULD PROCEED WITH CAUTION ON SUNDAY (OCTOBER 16) WHILE THREE ROUND HONG KONG ISLAND CANOE EVENTS ARE IN PROGRESS.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT SAID ORGANISERS OF THESE EVENTS HAVE ALSO BEEN INSTRUCTED TO ENSURE THAT PARTICIPANTS WILL GIVE SHIPPING A WIDE BERTH IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TRAFFIC SEPARATION SCHEME WHICH CAME INTO FORCE ON JANUARY 1, 1976.

THE FIRST EVENT WILL START AT QUEEN'S PIER AT 9 A.M. AND THE PARTICIPATING CRAFT WILL PROCEED EASTWARD THROUGH LYE YUE MUN PASS AND THEN AROUND HONG KONG ISLAND IN A CLOCKWISE DIRECTION. IT WILL FINISH AT QUEEN'S PIER AT ABOUT 4 P.M.

THE SECOND EVENT WILL START AT 9.30 A.M. OFF KELLETT ISLAND AND THE CRAFT WILL PROCEED EASTWARD ALONG THE SAME ROUTE AS IN THE FIRST EVENT. IT WILL FINISH AT THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT PIER AT 5 P.M.

THE THIRD WILL START AT 1 P.M. FROM REPULSE BAY AND THE BOATS WILL PROCEED ROUND THE ISLAND IN A CLOCKWISE DIRECTION. IT WILL ALSO FINISH AT THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT PIER AT 5 P.M.

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VISITS TO KINDERGARTENS

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A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, MR. PHILIP C.P. LEE, HAS SEEN FOR HIMSELF HOW CHILDREN ARE TAUGHT IN SOME KINDERGARTENS.

MR. LEE SPENT TWO MORNINGS-- YESTERDAY AND TODAY -- VISITING SIX PRIVATE KINDERGARTENS ON HONG KONG ISLAND.

THE ENROLMENT AT THESE KINDERGARTENS RANGES FROM 200 TO 600.

HE SAW CHILDREN USING SOME OF THE EQUIPMENT FOR GAMES AND GROUP ACTIVITIES.

MR. LEE WAS IMPRESSED BY THE WAY THE PUPILS WERE ENJOYING THEIR LESSONS BY LEARNING THROUGH DOING.

HE WAS ACCOMPANIED ON THE VISITS BY THE PRINCIPAL CURRICULUM PLANNING OFFICER (PRIMARY), MISS LILIAN NG, AND THE SENIOR INSPECTOR (KINDERGARTEN), MISS FRANCES HON, WHO BRIEFED HIM ON KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT.

THE VISITS WERE ARRANGED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

AS MR. LEE HAS EXPRESSED A WISH TO VISIT SOME KINDERGARTENS IN KOWLOON AND THE NEW TERRITORIES, ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE MADE FOR HIM TO DO SO IN NOVEMBER.

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