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MONITORING SYSTEM ADEQUATE, CHIEF SECRETARY SAYS

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THE GOVERNMENT IS SATISFIED THAT ITS SYSTEM OF MONITORING MAJOR PUBLIC WORKS IS ADEQUATE, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PHILIP HADDON-CAVE TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM DR THE HON HO KAM-FAI, SIR PHILIP GAVE THE ASSURANCE THAT THE SYSTEM IS REVIEWED FROM TIME TO TIME TO SEE IF IT CAN BE IMPROVED.

+BUT,+ HE SAID, +NO MONITORING SYSTEM CAN, IN ITSELF, NECESSARILY ENSURE THAT WORKS PROJECTS WILL ALWAYS BE COMPLETED, AND SATISFACTORILY, ON TIME.+

ON LARGE AND TECHNICALLY-COMPLEX PROJECTS, PARTICULARLY CIVIL ENGINEERING CONTRACTS, UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES CAN AND DO ARISE WHICH CAUSE DELAYS, THE COST OF WHICH IS BORNE BY THE CONTRACTOR OR THE CLIENT DEPARTMENT DEPENDING ON THE CONDITIONS OF THE CONTRACT.

+OF COURSE, THE MONITORING SYSTEM DOES GIVE EARLY WARNING THAT DELAYS MAY OCCUR, ENABLING CORRECTIVE ACTION TO BE PUT IN HAND BUT, AS I HAVE JUST SAID, IT IS NOT ALWAYS POSSIBLE TO AVOID DELAYS,+ HE ADDED.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION ON LEGAL AID FROM THE HON PETER C WONG, SIR PHILIP SAID THE GOVERNMENT IS ALREADY CONSIDERING PROPOSALS WHICH, IF APPROVED, WOULD MEAN THAT LEGAL AID WOULD CONTINUE TO BE AVAILABLE TO ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS IN TENANCY CASES UNDER PART II OF THE LANDLORD AND TENANT ORDINANCE WHEN THE JURISDICTION TO HEAR THEM IS TRANSFERRED FROM THE DISTRICT COURTS TO THE LANDS TRIBUNAL.

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HELP FOR STREET SLEEPERS
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THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT KEEPS A CENTRAL REGISTER OF ALL STREET SLEEPERS AND DISTRIBUTES BLANKETS TO THEM DURING COLD SPELLS.

IN ADDITION, THE DEPARTMENT KEEPS OPEN ITS COMMUNITY CENTRES AS OVERNIGHT SHELTERS FOR THEM, THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT, THE HON. S.E. ALLEYNE STATED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. ANDREW SO.

MR ALLEYNE SAID THAT HELP IN ACCOMMODATION, FINANCIAL AID, EMPLOYMENT AND COUNSELLING WAS GIVEN TO THOSE WILLING TO ACCEPT IT.

HOWEVER, THE MENTALLY DERANGED, OR THOSE WHO APPEAR TO BE SO, WERE DIFFICULT TO HELP, MAINLY BECAUSE OF PROBLEMS OF COMMUNICATION.

+THEY ARE UNDOUBTEDLY AN UNWELCOME SIGHT ON OUR STREETS, BUT THEY GENERALLY KEEP TO THEMSELVES AND SO LONG AS THEY DO NOT DISTURB THE PEACE OR CAUSE OBSTRUCTIONS, THEY ARE NOT ASKED TO MOVE ON,+ HE SAID.

MR ALLEYNE SAID STREET SLEEPERS PROBABLY NEEDED HOUSING MOST, PARTICULARLY IN CENTRAL AND CONVENIENT LOCATIONS BUT THAT THE PROBLEM WAS THAT MOST OF THE PUBLIC HOUSING THAT IS BECOMING AVAILABLE IS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

+WE GIVE PRIORITY TO MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE OLD, INFIRM AND DISABLED, THE AIM BEING TO ENSURE THAT THESE VULNERABLE GROUPS ARE OFFERED GENUINE ALTERNATIVES TO STREET SLEEPING AS SOON AS POSSIBLE,+ HE SAID.

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WATER CHARGES NOT AFFECTED BY DESALTER, FS SAYS
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THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON JOHN BREMRIDGE, CONFIRMED TODAY THAT WATER CHARGES WOULD CONTINUE TO BE UNAFFECTED BY THE OPERATION OF THE DESALTER.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON ANDREW SO, MR BREMRIDGE SAID: +NO INCREASE IN WATER CHARGES HAS YET BEEN FORMULATED, MUCH LESS PROPOSED. IF, AS IS LIKELY, THIS SOON BECOMES NECESSARY I CONFIRM THAT THE WATER TARIFF CHARGES WILL CONTINUE TO REMAIN UNAFFECTED BY THE OPERATION OF THE DESALTER. THE LATTER IS A USEFUL STRATEGIC AND EMERGENCY STANDBY. IT IS NOT REGARDED AS A COMPONENT OF NORMAL WATER SUPPLY OPERATIONS.+

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ACCIDENT LIFT HAD SAFETY DEVICES

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THE LIFT INVOLVED IN A RECENT ACCIDENT IN A WONG CHUK HANG INDUSTRIAL BUILDING WAS FITTED WITH SAFETY DEVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE BUILDING (LIFTS) REGULATIONS OF THE BUILDING ORDINANCE, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, MR N.K. CHAN, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR CHAN, REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON ALEX WU, SAID THAT THE DEVICES INCLUDED AN OVERLOAD DEVICE, AN EMERGENCY LIGHT IN THE LIFT, SAFETY GEAR OPERATED BY A GOVERNOR SYSTEM FOR USE IN CASE OF OVERLOAD, A BELL ALARM SIGNAL, AN EMERGENCY EXIT HATCH DOOR, AN EMERGENCY STOP PUSH BUTTON, AND SPRING BUFFERS TO ABSORB SHOCK.

MR CHAN SAID THAT THE LAST ANNUAL TEST REQUIRED UNDER THE LIFTS AND ESCALATORS (SAFETY) ORDINANCE HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT BY THE REGISTERED LIFT ENGINEER ON DECEMBER 19, 1980. A FULL RATED LOAD TEST, REQUIRED ONCE IN NOT LESS THAN FIVE YEARS, HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT IN DECEMBER 1978.

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STANDPIPE WATER FOR VILLAGES

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AT PRESENT, 348 VILLAGES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES HAVE STANDPIPE WATER SUPPLY, WHILE SEVEN STANDPIPE APPLICATIONS ARE BEING PROCESSED BY THE WATER SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, MR N.K. CHAN, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON CHEUNG YAN-LUNG.

MR CHAN SAID THAT 505 NEW TERRITORIES VILLAGES HAD METERED SUPPLY AND A TOTAL OF 2 869 APPLICATIONS FROM 150 VILLAGES WERE BEING PROCESSED.

+ABOUT 2 000 OF THESE FALL WITHIN SUPPLY ZONES WHERE IT IS READILY FEASIBLE TO PROVIDE A CONNECTION. IN SUCH CASES IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO COMPLETE PROCESSING OF THE APPLICATIONS AND HAVE THE NECESSARY WORKS CARRIED OUT ON SITE IN TWO TO THREE MONTHS,+ MR CHAN SAID.

METERED CONNECTIONS FOR THE REMAINDER DEPENDED ON ADDITIONAL INSTALLATIONS REQUIRED TO EXTEND THE SUPPLY SYSTEM.

+IN THIS REGARD, EACH PROPOSED ADDITIONAL SUPPLY AREA IS CONSIDERED ON ITS MERITS IN DETERMINING PRIORITY FOR ALLOCATION OF STAFF, FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NECESSARY WORKS,+ MR CHAN SAID.

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JOBS FOR THE DISABLED

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THERE WERE 878 DISABLED PERSONS EMPLOYED BY THE GOVERNMENT ON APRIL 1 THIS YEAR COMPARED WITH 683 PERSONS A YEAR EARLIER, AN INCREASE OF 195 PERSONS OR 28.2 PER CENT, THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, THE HON E.P. HO, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON K.C. CHAN, MR HO SAID THAT SIMILAR INFORMATION WAS NOT AVAILABLE FOR THE SUBVENTED ORGANISATIONS AS IT WOULD NOT BE FEASIBLE TO MOUNT A SURVEY TO OBTAIN SUCH INFORMATION FROM OVER 1 400 SUBVENTED AGENCIES OR UNITS IN THE EDUCATION, SOCIAL WELFARE AND MEDICAL FIELDS ALONE.

MR HO SAID, +THE GOVERNMENT WISHES TO ENCOURAGE ALL EMPLOYERS, BIG AND SMALL AND WHETHER CONTRACTORS TO THE GOVERNMENT OR NOT, TO EMPLOY MORE DISABLED PERSONS.+

AS REGARDS FOSTERING THE EMPLOYMENT OF THE DISABLED, MR HO SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT AIMS TO PROVIDE SUCH COMPREHENSIVE REHABILITATION SERVICES TO ENABLE DISABLED PERSONS TO DEVELOP THEIR PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITIES TO THE FULLEST.

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SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS APPROVED

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PASSED A MOTION APPROVING SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS AMOUNTING TO $894 MILLION FOR THE SECOND QUARTER OF THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR.

MOVING THE MOTION, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON JOHN BREMRIDGE, SAID THAT THE MAJOR ITEMS INCLUDE $473 MILLION FOR EXPENDITURE ON PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS INCLUDING PROVISION FOR 26 PROJECTS UPGRADED TO OR INCLUDED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN CATEGORY A OF THE PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME.

OTHER ITEMS INCLUDE $130 MILLION FOR PAYMENTS TO OPERATORS ARISING FROM THE STUDENT TRAVEL SCHEME, $100 MILLION FOR TAXES AND DUTIES PAYABLE AS A RESULT OF THE FORMATION OF THE HONG KONG SUBSIDIARY OF CABLE AND WIRELESS LIMITED, $54 MILLION FOR REPAYMENT OF THE OUTSTANDING LOAN FOR THE DESALTING PLANT UNDER THE LOANS (ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK) ORDINANCE, AND $17 MILLION FOR PAYMENTS OF HOME PURCHASE ALLOWANCE FOR CIVIL SERVANTS.

MR BREMRIDGE SAID THE SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISION RESULTED IN A NET INCREASE OF $100 MILLION IN THE EXPENDITURE APPROVED FOR THE YEAR, THE REMAINDER BEING OFFSET UNDER OTHER HEADS OF EXPENDITURE AND BY THE FREEZING OF FUNDS UNDER THE TWO ADDITIONAL COMMITMENTS VOTES.

+THE FINANCE COMMITTEE HAS APPROVED ALL THE ITEMS IN THE SCHEDULE,+ HE SAID, ADDING THAT THE PURPOSE OF THIS MOTION IS SIMPLY TO SEEK THE COVERING AUTHORITY OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

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MTR LOANS GUARANTEED

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) APPROVED A MOTION BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY PROVIDING FOR THREE GOVERNMENT GUARANTEES TO COVER REPAYMENT OF LOANS INCURRED BY THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE MTR ISLAND LINE.

IN MOVING THE MOTION, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON JOHN BREMRIDGE, TOLD THE COUNCIL THAT THE GUARANTEES COVER REPAYMENT OF THREE LOANS TOTALLING $1 358 MILLION AND SUCH AMOUNT AS MAY BECOME PAYABLE IN RESPECT OF INTEREST AND OTHER CHARGES.

THIS BRINGS TO $7 184 MILLION THE GOVERNMENT'S TOTAL GUARANTEE COMMITMENT IN RESPECT OF OUTSTANDING LOANS AVAILABLE TO THE MTRC.

+THIS CONTINGENT LIABILITY IS PROVIDED FOR WITHIN OUR RESERVES,+ MR BREMRIDGE SAID.

SECTION 12 OF THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION ORDINANCE REQUIRES THE AUTHORITY OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL FOR THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT, TO GRANT GUARANTEES IN RESPECT OF THE REPAYMENT OF LOANS AND OTHER INDEBTEDNESS INCURRED BY THE MTRC.

THE SUMS BORROWED UNDER THE THREE GUARANTEES WILL BE USED TO FINANCE THE ISLAND LINE CONTRACTS COVERING ROLLING STOCK, CONSTRUCTION WORKS FOR TUNNELS AND STATIONS AT ADMIRALTY, CAUSEWAY BAY, TIN HAU AND FORTRESS HILL, AND SITE FORMATION WORKS AT THE CHAI WAN DEPOT.

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AMENDMENTS TO LEGAL AID RULES

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TWO AMENDMENTS TO THE LEGAL AID IN CRIMINAL CASES RULES WERE PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

ONE AMENDMENT INCREASES THE MAXIMUM AMOUNTS PAYABLE BY THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AID TO LEGAL PRACTITIONERS FOR WORK IN CRIMINAL CASES, AS THE EXISTING PRESCRIBED FEES WERE UNREALISTICALLY LOW COMPARED WITH THE MARKET RATE.

THE AMENDMENT WOULD ALLEVIATE THE GREAT DIFFICULTY EXPERIENCED BY THE DIRECTOR IN ENGAGING PRIVATE LEGAL PRACTITIONERS OF THE RIGHT CALIBRE TO DEFEND CRIMINAL CASES.

THE OTHER AMENDMENT PROVIDES FOR A CLEARER METHOD OF NOTIFYING PEOPLE WHO APPLIED FOR LEGAL AID BUT WERE REFUSED SUCH AID.

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SIGN LANGUAGE
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BOTH COMMERCIAL TELEVISION STATIONS WERE UNABLE FOR FINANCIAL AND MANPOWER REASONS TO PROVIDE SIGN LANGUAGE AND CAPTIONS TO SELECTED PROGRAMMES FOR THE DEAF AT THIS TIME, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON D.C. BRAY, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM DR THE HON HARRY FANG, MR BRAY SAID THAT THE PROPOSAL WAS PUT BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR TELEVISION AND ENTERTAINMENT LICENSING TO THE COMMERCIAL TELEVISION STATIONS LATE LAST YEAR. BUT THE STATIONS WERE UNABLE FOR THE TIME BEING TO PROVIDE SUCH FACILITIES FOR A MINORITY SECTION OF THE AUDIENCE BECAUSE OF THE DEMAND ON FINANCIAL AND MANPOWER RESOURCES, HE SAID.

HOWEVER A WEEKLY NEWS REVIEW PROGRAMME PRODUCED BY RTHK FROM JUNE LAST YEAR, WAS PARTICULARLY WELL-SUITED TO ADAPTATION FOR THE DEAF.

+WHILE RTHK DOES PROVIDE AS PART OF ITS SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY A RANGE OF PROGRAMME FOR MINORITY AUDIENCES, CONSTRAINTS INCLUDING TIME, MANPOWER AND OTHER RESOURCES DO NOT READILY PERMIT THE EXPANSION OF THIS SERVICE AT PRESENT,+ MR BRAY SAID.

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THROUGH TRAINS FROM TSUEN WAN TO TSIM SHA TSUI AND CENTRAL
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THERE WILL BE A THROUGH TRAIN SERVICE FROM TSUEN WAN TO TSIM SHA TSUI AND CENTRAL WHEN THE TSUEN WAN EXTENSION IS OPENED, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR DEREK JONES, ANNOUNCED WEDNESDAY.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM MR CHARLES YEUNG AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR JONES SAID +TRAINS FROM KWUN TONG WILL ENTER THE NATHAN ROAD CORRIDOR ON A SEPARATE PARALLEL LINE AND TERMINATE AT WATERLOO STATION.+

HE SAID THIS ARRANGEMENT IS DESIGNED TO MOVE THE GREATEST NUMBER OF TRAINS THROUGH THE JUNCTION AT MONG KOK AND THAT IT WAS THE BEST OF SOME 20 ALTERNATIVE SCHEMES.

+IT HAS THE MERIT OF PROVIDING THROUGH TRAINS FROM THE TSUEN WAN BRANCH, WHICH IS EXPECTED TO BE MORE HEAVILY UTILISED THAN THE KWUN TONG BRANCH.+

HE FURTHER EXPLAINED: +IF BOTH BRANCHES WERE TO PROVIDE THROUGH TRAINS DOWN THE MAIN LINE, THE FREQUENCY OF TRAINS ON EACH BRANCH WOULD NEED TO BE CUT VIRTUALLY IN HALF AND THIS WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTABLE.+

/MR JONES .....

MR JONES ADDED THAT +PASSENGER INTERCHANGE FACILITIES BETWEEN THE TWO LINES WILL BE PROVIDED AT PRINCE EDWARD, ARGYLE AND WATERLOO STATIONS AND THE TRACK LAYOUT AND PLATFORM CONFIGURATION AT THESE STATIONS HAVE BEEN WORKED OUT SO AS TO MINIMISE INCONVENIENCE TO PASSENGERS.+

+AT PRINCE EDWARD STATION THERE WILL BE EASY CROSS-PLATFORM INTERCHANGE FOR PASSENGERS TRAVELLING BETWEEN KWUN TONG AND TSUEN WAN AND VICE VERSA. SIMILAR CROSS-PLATFORM INTERCHANGE WILL BE AVAILABLE AT ARGYLE STATION FOR THOSE COMING FROM KWUN TONG AND TRAVELLING TO STATIONS SOUTH OF WATERLOO OR THE OTHER WAY ROUND.

ALTERNATELY, PASSENGERS WILL BE ABLE TO INTERCHANGE BETWEEN THE TWO LINES AT ANY OF THE THREE STATIONS BY MOVING TO DIFFERENT PLATFORM LEVELS,+ MR JONES EXPLAINED.

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NEW ELECTRIC TRAINS WILL CUT JOURNEY TIME BY HALF

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THE AVERAGE TRAIN JOURNEY TIME FROM SHEUNG SHUI IN THE NEW TERRITORIES TO HUNG HOM IN KOWLOON WILL BE CUT BY NEARLY HALF WHEN IMPROVEMENTS TO THE KOWLOON CANTON RAILWAY ARE COMPLETED, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON DEREK JONES, REVEALED TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR JONES SAID THE AVERAGE JOURNEY TIME OF THE NEW ELECTRIC TRAINS BETWEEN THE TWO PLACES SHOULD BE 36 MINUTES COMPARED WITH 65 MINUTES FOR THE EXISTING DIESEL TRAINS.

HE WAS ANSWERING A QUESTION FROM THE HON CHARLES YEUNG, WHO ASKED FOR DETAILS ON THE PROGRESS OF DEVELOPMENT ON THE RAILWAY.

MR JONES ALSO SAID THAT IT WAS NOW EXPECTED THAT ELECTRIFIED AND DOUBLE-TRACKED SERVICES BETWEEN KOWLOON AND SHA TIN, INCLUDING THE NEW STATION AT KOWLOON TONG TO CONNECT WITH THE MTR, WILL BEGIN IN MAY 1982, OR UNDER FIVE MONTHS' TIME.

THE ELECTRIC TRAIN SERVICES SHOULD BE EXTENDED TO THE NEW TAI PO MARKET STATION BY FEBRUARY 1983 AND TO THE FINAL SECTION THROUGH TO LO WU IN THE SUMMER OF 1983.

WHEN THE FULL ELECTRIFIED SERVICE IS IN OPERATION THERE WILL BE 16 TRAINS AN HOUR IN EACH DIRECTION BETWEEN KOWLOON AND SHA TIN DURING PEAK PERIODS, AND EIGHT OF THESE WOULD CONTINUE THROUGH TO SHEUNG SHUI OR LO WU AND VICE VERSA.

DURING OFF-PEAK PERIODS THERE WOULD BE NINE TRAINS PER HOUR IN EACH DIRECTION BETWEEN KOWLOON AND SHA TIN, OF WHICH FOUR IN EACH DIRECTION WOULD CONTINUE TO, OR COME FROM, SHEUNG SHUI OR LO WU, HE CONCLUDED.

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BENEFIT SCHEME IDEA LACKS WORKERS' SUPPORT

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A PROPOSED SEMI-VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTORY SICKNESS, INJURY AND DEATH BENEFIT SCHEME ESSENTIALLY DESIGNED FOR YOUNG EMPLOYEES WOULD NOT BE SUCCESSFUL AS IT WOULD TEND TO ATTRACT THE OLDER AND LESS HEALTHY MEMBERS OF THE WORKFORCE, THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, THE HON E.P.HO. SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON ANDREW SO, MR HO SAID THAT AN OPINION SURVEY OF EMPLOYEES ALSO INDICATED THAT ONLY FEW PEOPLE HAD BOUGHT LIFE INSURANCE, MEDICAL INSURANCE AND SICKNESS INSURANCE, CASTING CONSIDERABLE DOUBT ON THE ACTUAL SUPPORT ANY VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTORY SCHEME WOULD RECEIVE.

THE SURVEY SHOWED THAT ABOUT HALF OF THE EMPLOYEES INTERVIEWED WERE NOT PREPARED TO PAY MORE THAN TWO PER CENT OF THEIR SALARY TO A CONTRIBUTORY SCHEME.

+IN THE LABOUR ADVISORY BOARD DISCUSSION OF THE PROPOSAL,+ MR HO SAID, +THE EMPLOYEES REPRESENTATIVES FELT THAT THE SCHEME WAS UNATTRACTIVE BECAUSE THE AMOUNT OF BENEFIT WAS SMALL.+

IN ADDITION, ACTUARIAL ADVICE ALSO INDICATED THAT A VOLUNTARY SCHEME WOULD ADD CONSIDERABLY TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLEXITIES OF ANY CONTRIBUTORY SOCIAL INSURANCE PLAN.

HE SAID, +THE VOLUNTARY ELEMENT WOULD ALSO MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO ESTIMATE WITH ANY ACCURACY INCOME FROM CONTRIBUTIONS AND HENCE TO SET BENEFITS AT THE RIGHT LEVEL FROM THE OUTSET.+

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT THEREFORE DECIDED TO DEVELOP ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS TO COVER THOSE RISKS THROUGH AN AMENDMENT OF THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE WITHOUT INVOLVING ANY CONTRIBUTION FROM THE EMPLOYEE.

+WHERE THE DEATH GRANT TO BE INCORPORATED IN THESE PROPOSALS IS NOT PAYABLE BY THE EMPLOYER AND EQUIVALENT GRANT WOULD BE PAYABLE UNDER AN AUGMENTED SPECIAL NEEDS ALLOWANCE SCHEME ADMINISTERED BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT,+ HE SAID.

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LAW ON PUBLIC GAME MACHINE CENTRES

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THE NEW LAW ON LICENSING OF PUBLIC GAME MACHINE CENTRES WAS READ A SECOND TIME IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN MOVING THE MISCELLANEOUS LICENCES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1981, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON D.C. BRAY, SAID HE BILL IS INTENDED TO BLOCK A LOOPHOLE IN THE LAW AND TO REGULATE CENTRES WHERE MACHINE GAMES COULD BE PROVIDED.

MR BRAY SAID: +SMALL THOUGH THE LOOPHOLE WAS, IT WILL NOT COME AS A SURPRISE TO HONOURABLE MEMBERS THAT HONG KONG ENTREPRENEURS DARTED THROUGH IT. THEY MUST HAVE KNOWN WE SHOULD BE AFTER THEM.

+WHILE WE CANNOT BEGRUDGE THE LEGAL PROFITS THEY MAY HAVE REAPED, NO ONE SHOULD SHED TEARS WHEN WE CATCH UP AND CLOSE DOWN THESE DINGY UNLICENSED CENTRES, WITH THEIR TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE ATMOSPHERE.

+THEY ARE OVERCROWDED, DARK, BADLY VENTILATED, AND A NUISANCE TO THE NEIGHBOURS. NO AGE LIMIT IS ENFORCED.

+QUITE RIGHTLY THESE UNLICENSED CENTRES HAVE GIVEN RISE TO MUCH PUBLIC CONCERN AND WE ARE NOW ACTING.+

HE SAID THAT ONCE THE BILL WAS PASSED, IMMEDIATE POLICE ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN AGAINST UNLICENSED CENTRES AND ANYONE CONVICTED OF AN OFFENCE RELATING TO RUNNING AN UNLICENSED CENTRE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO GET A LICENCE FOR A LEGITIMATE CENTRE FOR AT LEAST FIVE YEARS.

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FERRY ORDINANCES
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THE GOVERNMENT IS PREPARING A NEW DRAFT FERRY SERVICES BILL TO REPLACE THE EXISTING FERRIES ORDINANCE AND THE NEW BILL SHOULD BE SUBMITTED TO THE COUNCIL WITHIN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON DEREK JONES SAID AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MR JONES WAS SPEAKING WHILE MOVING THE HONG KONG AND YAUMATI FERRY COMPANY (SERVICES) ORDINANCE, WHICH PROVIDES FOR THE EXTENSION OF THE EXISTING CONCESSIONS WHICH HAD ALSO BEEN AGREED BY THE COMPANY.

AMONG OTHER THINGS THE BILL WILL SEEK TO PROVIDE FRANCHISES TO BE GRANTED TO MAJOR FERRY OPERATORS, INCLUDING THE HONG KONG AND YAUMATI FERRY COMPANY AND FOR LICENCES TO BE ISSUED TO MINOR OPERATORS, HE SAID.

THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS WHICH WOULD COVER EVERY ASPECT OF THE COMPANY'S FERRY OPERATIONS, WERE BOTH DETAILED AND COMPLICATED AND NEGOTIATIONS HAD TAKEN LONGER THEN ANTICIPATED, HE SAID.

+THEY HAVE, IN PARTICULAR, BEEN PROLONGED BY THE NEED TO GIVE THOROUGH CONSIDERATION TO ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW FERRY PIERS, AND POSSIBLE ASSOCIATED COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS.

+IT IS, HOWEVER, EXPECTED THAT THE NEW LEGISLATION CAN BE ENACTED BY JUNE 30, 1982 AND THIS MOTION THEREFORE SEEKS TO EXTEND THE EXISTING PROVISIONS FOR A FURTHER SIX MONTHS,+ HE SAID.

MR JONES ALSO MOVED THE 'STAR' FERRY COMPANY (SERVICES) ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE EXTENSION OF EXISTING CONCESSIONS BY AMENDING THE SCHEDULE TO THE ORDINANCE.

THE AMENDMENTS ALSO HAD THE CONSENT OF THE COMPANY.

THE PROPOSED NEW FERRY SERVICES BILL WOULD ALSO REPLACE THIS ORDINANCE AND WOULD PROVIDE FOR A NEW FRANCHISE FOR THE 'STAR' FERRY COMPANY.

THE INTENTION OF THE MOTION WAS TO EXTEND THE EXISTING CONCESSION TO THE COMPANY FOR SIX MONTHS TO JUNE 1982, HE SAID.

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VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL BILL
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THE GOVERNMENT'S PLANS TO CREATE A STATUTORY VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL AS WELL AS A NEW DEPARTMENT TO SERVE AS ITS EXECUTIVE ARM TAKE A MAJOR STEP FORWARD WITH THE PUBLICATION OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION FOR INTRODUCTION INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

THE PROPOSALS ARE CONTAINED IN THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL BILL, WHICH WILL APPEAR IN THE GOVERNMENT GAZETTE TOMORROW.

A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THE COUNCIL WAS BEING ESTABLISHED TO PROMOTE AND COORDINATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE TO MEET THE INCREASING NEEDS OF HONG KONG. IT WILL ADVISE THE GOVERNOR ON THE MEASURES REQUIRED TO ENSURE THAT A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM IS DEVELOPED.

+THIS IS IN KEEPING WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S DETERMINATION TO STRENGTHEN THE INDUSTRIAL BASE OF HONG KONG THROUGH THE UPGRADING OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND INDUSTRIAL TRAINING,+ THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

IF THE BILL IS ENACTED, THE COUNCIL WILL TAKE OVER THE OPERATION OF EXISTING TECHNICAL INSTITUTES FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND WILL ESTABLISH NEW TECHNICAL INSTITUTES AND INDUSTRIAL TRAINING CENTRES.

IT WILL INSTITUTE, DEVELOP AND OPERATE TRAINING SCHEMES FOR OPERATIVES, CRAFTSMEN, TECHNICIANS AND TECHNOLOGISTS AND IN SO DOING, WILL DRAW UPON THE BROAD BASE OF RESOURCES AND EXPERTISE AVAILABLE IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL WILL CONSIST OF A MAXIMUM OF 18 UNOFFICIALS INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE INDUSTRIAL AND EDUCATIONAL FIELDS AND FOUR OFFICIALS, TO BE APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR.

ONCE THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL IS ESTABLISHED, IT WILL SUPERSEDE AND TAKE OVER THE ADVISORY FUNCTIONS CURRENTLY PERFORMED BY THE HONG KONG TRAINING COUNCIL, APPOINTMENTS TO WHICH WILL THEN LAPSE.

THE HONG KONG TRAINING COUNCIL OPERATES THROUGH A COMPLEX OF TRAINING BOARDS AND COMMITTEES WITH SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES EITHER FOR PARTICULAR INDUSTRIES OR FOR TOPICS RELATING TO SEVERAL INDUSTRIES. IT IS THOUGHT THAT THIS STRUCTURE SHOULD BE PRESERVED UNDER THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL.

/THE ACTIVITIES .....

THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COUNCIL WILL BE FUNDED FROM GENERAL REVENUE. TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE PROPOSALS OF THE HONG KONG TRAINING COUNCIL WHICH HAVE ALREADY BEEN APPROVED BY THE GOVERNMENT, IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THE COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE $75 MILLION AND $139 MILLION FOR RECURRENT AND CAPITAL SUBVENTIONS RESPECTIVELY IN THE NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR.

THE DECISIONS OF THE COUNCIL WILL BE IMPLEMENTED BY A NEW DEPARTMENT OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND INDUSTRIAL TRAINING.

THIS DEPARTMENT WILL BE FORMED BY MERGING THE TECHNICAL EDUCATION DIVISION OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WITH THE INDUSTRIAL TRAINING BRANCH OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT, ALTHOUGH IT IS INTENDED THAT THE TECHNICAL TEACHERS' TRAINING COLLEGE WILL REMAIN WITH THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

THE DIRECTOR OF THE NEW DEPARTMENT WILL IN ADDITION TO BEING THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE COUNCIL, ALSO HAVE OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES RELATING TO THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING OF THE DISABLED AND TO APPRENTICESHIPS, PROVIDED THAT A FURTHER BILL IS ENACTED TO AMEND THE APPRENTICESHIP ORDINANCE.

IF THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL BILL BECOMES LAW, THE COUNCIL WILL BE ESTABLISHED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTERWARDS AND THE NEW DEPARTMENT WILL BE CREATED ON APRIL 1, 1982.

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FOUR BILLS PASSED

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FOUR BILLS WERE PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THEY ARE THE STAMP DUTY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1981, THE SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION (1980-81) BILL 1981, THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL 1981 AND THE LAW REVISION (REPEALS) BILL 1981.

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TRADE CHIEF TELLS OF MFA TALKS

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THE COMMISSIONER OF TRADE, MR LAWRENCE MILLS, AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE TEXTILE TASK FORCE RETURNED TO HONG KONG TODAY (WEDNESDAY 23).

AT A PRESS CONFERENCE AT KAI TAK HE SPOKE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS CONDUCTED IN GENEVA ON THE FUTURE OF THE MFA:

+EARLY YESTERDAY AFTERNOON, THE TEXTILES COMMITTEE OF THE GATT ADOPTED A PROTOCOL EXTENDING THE MULTI-FIBRE ARRANGEMENT FOR A PERIOD OF 4 YEARS AND 7 MONTHS (THAT IS, FROM JANUARY 1, 1982 TO JULY 31, 1986).

+WE LEFT HONG KONG ON NOVEMBER 13, AND FOR THE PAST FIVE WEEKS WE HAVE BEEN ENGAGED IN INTENSIVE NEGOTIATIONS ON THE FUTURE OF THE MFA.

+WE SET OUT IN THE HOPE THAT WE COULD SECURE SOME IMPROVEMENTS IN THE MFA ALONG THE LINES DRAWN UP BY THE EXPORTING DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN NEW DELHI IN EARLY NOVEMBER. WE FOUND THAT AS THE NEGOTIATIONS PROGRESSED WE WERE INCREASINGLY HAVING TO FIGHT A REARGUARD ACTION TO CONTAIN THE SITUATION AND TO PRESERVE WHAT FEW BENEFITS REMAIN IN THE MFA FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN THE FACE OF STRONG DEMANDS, SOME OF THEM EXTREME, FROM THE IMPORTING COUNTRIES.

+IN THIS RESPECT THE UNITED STATES WAS SEEKING AUTHORITY TO GIVE LOWER GROWTH TO SUPPLIERS SUCH AS HONG KONG AND KOREA AND TO REDUCE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SWING AND ELIMINATE CARRYOVER AND CARRYFORWARD.

+THE EEC'S DEMANDS WERE WORSE STILL.

+THE COMMUNITY WANTED AUTHORITY TO CUTBACK HONG KONG AND KOREA'S QUOTAS IN THOSE CATEGORIES WHERE WE ARE MOST COMPETITIVE. THEY ALSO WANTED AUTHORITY TO GIVE LOWER GROWTH, TO ELIMINATE SWING, CARRYOVER AND CARRYFORWARD, TO OBLIGE US TO USE A GIVEN AMOUNT OF EEC FABRICS IN OUR GARMENT EXPORTS IF WE WISHED TO FULLY UTILISE OUR QUOTAS AND TO INTRODUCE AN ANTI-SURGE MECHANISM WHICH WOULD PREVENT FULL UTILISATION OF QUOTAS WHERE THERE HAD BEEN SHORTFALLS IN A PREVIOUS YEAR.

+IN THE FINAL RESULT, INEVITABLY, SOME CONCESSIONS HAD TO BE MADE TO SECURE A NEW MFA. BUT THE CONCESSIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE CONTAIN SAFEGUARDS WHICH SHOULD OFFER SOME PROTECTION IN BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE EXPORTING COUNTRIES.

+FOR EXAMPLE, WE HAVE MANAGED TO BUILD IN TWO VERY IMPORTANT CONCEPTS - FIRST, THAT ANY CONCESSIONS HAVE TO BE ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH PARTIES, AND, SECONDLY, THAT THE IMPORTING COUNTRY DOES NOT HAVE THE RIGHT TO UNILATERAL ACTION IN THE LAST RESORT. THESE POINTS ARE PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT IN THE APPLICATION OF THE ANTI-SURGE MECHANISM AND IN DISCUSSIONS ON THE FLEXIBILITY PROVISIONS TO BE INCORPORATED IN BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS.

/+ON CUTBACKS .....

+ON CUTBACKS ON HONG KONG'S QUOTAS, WE HAVE REFUSED TO ACCEPT THAT ANY UNILATERAL AUTHORITY BE VESTED IN THE EEC ON THIS. WE HAVE AGREED TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE EEC'S STATED POSITION ON THIS IN OUR FUTURE AGREEMENT, BUT ANY ARRANGEMENTS WILL HAVE TO BE MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE.

+ALL IN ALL, I WOULD SAY THAT THE NEW PROTOCOL EXTENDING THE MFA IS NOT AS GOOD AS WE WOULD LIKE BUT NOT AS BAD AS, AT ONE TIME, WE EXPECTED. THE NEW PROTOCOL BUILDS IN ADDITIONAL DISCIPLINE FOR THE INVOCATION OF RESTRAINTS AND PRESERVES THE ORIGINAL TEXT OF THE MFA. THERE ARE NO MODIFICATIONS TO THE MFA AND WE HAVE, AT LAST, GOT RID OF THE WELL-INTENTIONED BUT HEAVILY ABUSED SO-CALLED 'REASONABLE DEPARTURES' CLAUSE.

+BUT WE MUST REMEMBER THAT MFA 3 IS JUST THE BEGINNING. WE NOW HAVE TO TRANSLATE ITS PROVISIONS INTO THE PRACTICALITIES OF NEW BILATERAL AGREEMENTS WITH OUR TRADING PARTNERS IN THE COURSE OF NEXT YEAR. THIS WILL BE THE REAL TEST OF ANY SUCCESS WE HAVE ACHIEVED IN THE MULTILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS.

+A FINAL WORD ABOUT DEVELOPING EXPORTING COUNTRY CO-ORDINATION AND CO-OPERATION. THE DOUBTERS WHO BELIEVED THAT LDC UNITY WAS A PIPE-DREAM HAVE BEEN SURPRISED - BUT NOT HALF AS SURPRISED AS THE IMPORTING COUNTRIES WHO BASED THEIR STRATEGY ON THE BELIEF THAT OUR UNITY WOULD FALL TO PIECES AT THE LAST MOMENT. THIS WAS PATENTLY NOT THE CASE.

+THROUGHOUT, WE MET EVERY DAY TO DISCUSS TOGETHER OUR SPECIAL INTERESTS, CONCERNS, PLANS AND STRATEGY, OPENLY AND FRANKLY.

+THERE WAS GIVE AND TAKE ON ALL SIDES AND THE RESULTANT STRENGTH THAT WE ACHIEVED THROUGH REMAINING UNITED WAS A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN RESISTING THE MORE EXTREME DEMANDS OF THE IMPORTING COUNTRIES AND SECURING A BALANCED PROTOCOL OF EXTENSION TO THE MFA.+

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TRAFFIC CHANGES

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A SECTION OF MORRISON STREET BETWEEN DES VOEUX ROAD CENTRAL AND WING LOK STREET WILL BE CLOSED TO TRAFFIC FOR ABOUT THREE DAYS FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY (DECEMBER 25) TO ALLOW FOR TELEPHONE CABLE LAYING WORKS.

AT THE SAME TIME, A WESTBOUND SECTION OF ABERDEEN MAIN ROAD WILL BE DESIGNATED AS A PUBLIC LIGHT BUS CLEARWAY TO IMPROVE TRAFFIC CIRCULATION.

THE CLEARWAY WILL EXTEND 25 METRES WEST OF AP LEI CHAU BRIDGE ROAD TO A POINT ABOUT 110 METRES EAST OF ABERDEEN OLD MAIN STREET.

PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO STOP FOR PASSENGERS BETWEEN 7 AM AND 12 MIDNIGHT DAILY WITHIN THE RESTRICTED ZONE.

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PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES EXTENDED FOR HOLIDAYS
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PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES WILL BE EXTENDED DURING THE CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR HOLIDAYS, A SPOKESMAN FOR THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY)..

THESE INCLUDE:

CMB

THE ALL NIGHT CROSS-HARBOUR ROUTES NO. 121 AND 122 ILL OPERATE AT MORE FREQUENT INTERVALS.

IN ADDITION, SEVEN OTHER MAJOR ROUTES NO. 2, 4, 8, 10, 23, 38 AND 72 WILL RUN ADDITIONAL SERVICES.

ON CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S EVE, THE LAST DEPARTURES OF ROUTE NO. 2, FROM SHAU KEI WAN AND CLEVERLY STREET WILL BE AT 12.50 AM AND 1.30 AM RESPECTIVELY= NO. 4 FROM WAH FU AND CENTRAL WILL BE AT 12.30 AM AND 1 AM= NO. 8 FROM CHAI WAN AND WAN CHAI FERRY AT 12 MIDNIGHT AND 12.45 AM= NO. 10 FROM NORTH POINT FERRY AND KENNEDY TOWN AT 1 AM AND 2 AM= NO. 23 FROM NORTH POINT FERRY AND POKFIELD ROAD AT 12.30 AM AND 1.15 AM= NO. 38 FROM NORTH POINT AND CHI FU FA YUEN AT 12 MIDNIGHT AND 1 AM= AND NO. 72 FROM ABERDEEN AND CAUSEWAY BAY AT 12.50 AM AND 1.30 AM.

A SPECIAL BUS, NO. 8M, WILL ALSO BE INTRODUCED BETWEEN ADMIRALTY MTR STATION (EAST) AND CHAI WAN (SAN HA STREET) FROM 12.05 AM TO 2.35 AM AT 10-MINUTE INTERVALS. THE SINGLE JOURNEY FARE WILL BE $1.20.

MTR

ON CHRISTMAS EVE, THE DOWN-TRACK SERVICES FROM KWUN TONG STATION WILL BE EXTENDED UNTIL 3.03 AM WHILE THE UP-TRACK SERVICES FROM CHATER STATION WILL BE EXTENDED UNTIL 3.17 AM TO KWUN TONG STATION AND 3.27 AM TO CHOI HUNG STATION.

ON NEW YEAR'S EVE, THE DOWN-TRACK SERVICES FROM KWUN TONG STATION WILL BE EXTENDED UNTIL 2.03 AM WHILE THE UP-TRACK SERVICES FROM CHATER STATION WILL BE EXTENDED UNTIL 2.25 AM TO KWUN TONG STATION AND 2.35 AM TO CHOI HUNG STATION.

PEAK TRAM

PEAK TRAM SERVICES WILL BE EXTENDED UNTIL 1.30 AM ON CHRISTMAS EVE AND 2.30 AM ON NEW YEAR'S EVE.

TRAM

TRAM SERVICES WILL BE EXTENDED FOR ABOUT ONE HOUR.

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ANTI-NARCOTICS EXHIBITION ATTRACTS LARGE CROWDS

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THOUSANDS OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY STUDENTS AND THEIR PARENTS WERE ATTRACTED TO AN ANTI-NARCOTICS EXHIBITION HELD IN SAU MAU PING CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL.

THE EXHIBITION, WHICH WAS OPENED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) FROM 10.30 AM TO 3.30 PM, WAS JOINTLY ORGANISED BY THE ACTION COMMITTEE AGAINST NARCOTICS AND THE STUDENT GUIDANCE SECTION OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

THE 20-PANEL EXHIBITION GRAPHICALLY ILLUSTRATES THE DRUG PROBLEM IN HONG KONG, HOW IT AFFECTS SOCIETY AND WHAT THE GOVERNMENT IS DOING, UNDER THE ADVICE OF THE ACTION COMMITTEE AGAINST NARCOTICS, TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM.

A SPOKESMAN FOR ACAN SAID THE EXHIBITION WAS AIMED AT PRESENTING THE FACTS ABOUT THE DRUG ABUSE PROBLEM IN HONG KONG AND WAS PARTICULARLY MEANT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

OFFICIATING AT THE OPENING CEREMONY WERE MR EDWARD YAU, ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR SECURITY= MRS T. WEI, SENIOR EDUCATION OFFICER= AND MR FONG TSZ, PRINCIPAL OF SAU MAU PING CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL (PM).

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URBAN TAXI TENDER RESULTS

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT 1 197 TENDERS SEEKING 1 616 URBAN TAXI LICENCES HAD BEEN RECEIVED WHEN THE OFFER CLOSED ON DECEMBER 4.

THE HIGHEST TENDER WAS $180 100 AND THE LOWEST ACCEPTABLE BID WAS $169 000.

DETAILS OF SUCCESSFUL TENDERERS AND THE AMOUNTS OFFERED WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE GOVERNMENT GAZETTE TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

A TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY THAT THE AVERAGE PREMIUM IN THE LATEST TENDER WAS $171 709.25, COMPARED WITH AN AVERAGE PREMIUM OF $182 143.55 IN THE PREVIOUS TENDER IN SEPTEMBER 1981, SHOWING A DECREASE OF ALMOST SIX PER CENT.

LETTERS WOULD BE SENT TODAY TO SUCCESSFUL TENDERERS, HE SAID.

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WARNING ABOUT FIRE DANGER

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LEGAL PROCEEDINGS ARE BEING CONSIDERED AGAINST THREE YOUNG WOMEN CAUGHT BARBECUEING IN THE TAI LAM COUNTRY PARK AREA, AFTER THE ANNOUNCEMENT LAST SUNDAY (DECEMBER 20) OF A BAN ON THE USE OF FIRES THERE.

THE BAN ALSO APPLIES TO THE TAI PO KAU NATURE RESERVE AREA AND THE SHING MUN FOREST PLANTATIONS.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE COUNTRY PARKS AUTHORITY ANNOUNCED TODAY THAT THE RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF FIRE WILL BE IN FORCE DURING THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS AND WILL REMAIN SO UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

ALL FIRES ARE PROHIBITED IN THESE COUNTRY PARK AREAS. THE SPOKESMAN WARNED THAT THE PENALTY FOR BREAKING THE LAW IN A COUNTRY PARK COULD AMOUNT TO A FINE OF $5 000, AND IN THE COUNTRYSIDE COULD BE $2 000.

THE BAN IS NECESSARY BECAUSE OF THE PREVAILING DRY WEATHER CONDITIONS, HE SAID.

THE TAI LAM COUNTRY PARK AND THE TAI PO KAU NATURE RESERVE AREA ARE TWO OF THE MOST IMPORTANT WOODLANDS AND ARE VERY SUSCEPTIBLE TO FIRES, HE SAID.

VISITORS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE ARE ADVISED TO TAKE SANDWICHES OR PRE-COOKED FOOD WITH THEM AND TO TAKE EXTRA PRECAUTIONS TO PREVENT FIRES.

MEANWHILE, A SPOKESMAN FOR THE FIRE PREVENTION CAMPAIGN PUBLICITY WORKING GROUP ALSO URGED THAT EXTREME CARE BE TAKEN IN THE USE OF FIRE AT ALL TIMES.

+CARELESSNESS DOES NOT PAY,+ THE SPOKESMAN STRESSED.

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CHILDREN'S BOOK EXHIBITION

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AN EXHIBITION ON CHILDREN'S BOOKS IS NOW BEING HELD AT THE KWAI CHUNG PUBLIC LIBRARY UNTIL JANUARY 4, 1982, ORGANISED BY THE CULTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT'S NEW TERRITORIES PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN CO-OPERATION WITH THE BRITISH COUNCIL.

IT CONSISTS OF ABOUT 360 VOLUMES OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS IN ENGLISH, COVERING A WIDE RANGE OF SUBJECTS IN TWO MAIN SECTIONS, FICTION AND NON-FICTION, EACH SECTION DIVIDED INTO AGE GROUPS.

THERE IS ALSO A SECTION ON PICTURE BOOKS AND A SPECIAL COLLECTION OF BOOKS ON SPORTS AND PASTIMES.

CATALOGUES OF THE COLLECTION ARE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST AT THE KWAI CHUNG PUBLIC LIBRARY DURING THE EXHIBITION.

ADMISSION IS FREE.

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CHILDREN'S PLAY FOR CHRISTMAS

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THE NEW TERRITORIES PRESENTATIONS OFFICE OF THE CULTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT WILL BRING CHRISTMAS GREETINGS TO CHILDREN IN THE NEW TERRITORIES BY STAGING FRANK BAUM'S +THE WIZARD OF OZ+ IN CANTONESE TWICE ON CHRISTMAS DAY AT THE TSUEN WAN TOWN HALL AUDITORIUM, AT 3 PM AND 7.30 PM.

THE PLAY WILL BE PERFORMED BY MEMBERS OF THE LOVELY CHILDREN'S CHOIR OF THE BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB'S ASSOCIATION AND THE BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB'S ASSOCIATION CHILDREN'S THEATRE.

TICKETS AT $3, $5 AND $7 ARE NOW AVAILABLE AT THE TSUEN WAN TOWN HALL BOX OFFICE AND THE NEW TERRITORIES MOBILE LIBRARY.

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FIREMEN IN PASSING OUT PARADE

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COMRADESHIP IS BASED ON MUTUAL TRUST AND RESPECT, THE ACTING CHIEF FIRE OFFICER (HEADQUARTERS), MR ROY WHEATLEY SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT A PASSING OUT PARADE AT THE FIRE SERVICES TRAINING SCHOOL IN PAT HEUNG, MR WHEATLEY TOLD 43 NEWLY-GRADUATED FIREMEN THAT THEY WOULD APPRECIATE SUCH COMRADESHIP DEVELOPED IN THEIR TRAINING, IN THE DAYS AHEAD.

HE REMINDED THEM THAT THEY WOULD ALWAYS BE IN THE PUBLIC EYE WHILE AT WORK, AND WOULD NOT ALWAYS RECEIVE THE APPRECIATION THEY EARNED AND DESERVED.

+BUT YOU WILL ALWAYS HAVE THE PERSONAL SATISFACTION OF KNOWING YOU HAVE BEEN ABLE, IN WHATEVER OR HOWEVER SMALL A WAY, OF HELPING THE CITIZENS OF HONG KONG TO PARTICIPATE IN A SAFER LIFE,+ MR WHEATLEY SAID.

+YOU HAVE CHOSEN A PROFESSION WHOSE HISTORY CAN BE TRACED BACK TO THE ROMANS AND YET MOVES FORWARD WITH THE SPACE AGE, EACH ERA LOOKING FOR MEN LIKE YOU WHO SEEK A JOB WORTH DOING, AND WORTH DOING WELL,+ HE SAID.

MR WHEATLEY WELCOMED THE RECRUITS AND WISHED THEM A SATISFYING AND WORTHWHILE CAREER.

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ROOF-TOP FUN FOR TSUEN WAN CHILDREN

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THE ROOF OF A TWO-STOREY MARKET BUILDING IN TSUEN WAN WAS TURNED INTO A SPORTS AND FAIR GROUND FOR 500 LOCAL CHILDREN TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE 240-SQUARE-METRE ROOF GARDEN IS LOCATED ON THE CHUNG ON STREET MARKET IN CENTRAL TSUEN WAN AND HAS PLAYING EQUIPMENT, BENCHES AND A FLOWER BED.

BOTH THE MARKET AND THE ROOF GARDEN WERE OPENED IN AUGUST.

TODAY'S FUN, WHICH STARTED AT 10 AM, WAS TO ENCOURAGE YOUNGSTERS IN THE DISTRICT TO USE THE ROOF GARDEN. THEY WERE INVITED THROUGH YOUTH ORGANISATIONS IN THE DISTRICT.

THE EVENT WAS JOINTLY ORGANISED BY TSUEN WAN DISTRICT BOARD, THE RECREATION AND CULTURE AND THE NEW TERRITORIES SERVICES DEPARTMENTS, AND TSUEN WAN DISTRICT OFFICE.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE RECREATION AND CULTURE DEPARTMENT SAID SIMILAR ACTIVITIES WOULD BE HELD MORE REGULARLY IN THE FUTURE SO THAT THE ROOF GARDEN, WITH ITS EQUIPMENT AND GOOD LOCATION, COULD BE FULLY UTILISED.

PRESENT WERE TSUEN WAN TOWN OFFICER, MISS ANJU MAKHIJA= UNOFFICIAL DISTRICT BOARD MEMBER, MR TSOI YUK-WAH= TSUEN WAN URBAN SERVICES OFFICER, MR LI TIN-MING= AND TSUEN WAN RECREATION AND SPORTS OFFICER, MR CHOW SIU-LUN.

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