



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 1977

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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 1977

- 1 -

LEGCO WELCOMES DECISION TO EXTEND MTR TO TSUEN WAN  
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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL HAS PASSED A MOTION WELCOMING THE DECISION TO EXTEND THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY SYSTEM TO TSUEN WAN.

FIVE UNOFFICIALS SPOKE DURING THE RESUMED DEBATE TODAY. DR. THE HON. S.Y. CHUNG, THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN, DR. THE HON. HARRY FANG AND THE HON. FRANCIS TIEN SPOKE IN FAVOUR, WHILE THE HON. T.S. LO VOTED AGAINST IT.

OPPOSING THE MOTION, MR. LO REFUTED THE ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXTENSION MADE BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY IN THE COUNCIL TWO WEEKS AGO.

FIRSTLY, AS REGARDS THE LACK OF KERB SPACE, MR. LO SUGGESTED THAT THE PROBLEM COULD BE OVERCOME BY THE RESUMPTION OF LAND ALONG BUS ROUTES AND REQUIRING ITS REDEVELOPERS TO CREATE SUFFICIENT SPACE FOR BUS BAYS.

SECONDLY, HE COULD NOT ACCEPT THE ARGUMENT THAT THE EXTENSION HAS TO BE BUILT BECAUSE IT IS CHEAPER TO DO SO NOW THAN LATER.

THIRDLY, HE FOUND IT HARD TO AGREE THAT MOST PEOPLE WOULD PREFER TO USE THE MTR RATHER THAN A BUS UNLESS THE RAILWAY IS BOTH CHEAPER AND MORE COMFORTABLE.

MR. LO CITED THE CASE OF LONDON AND TOKYO TO PROVE HIS POINT THAT A MASS TRANSIT SYSTEM MAY NOT BE THE BEST MEANS TO SOLVE TRAFFIC CONGESTION. HE FELT THAT AN EVEN BETTER SYSTEM OF ROADS AND FLYOVERS WAS THE ANSWER. IN THIS CONNECTION, HE SAID THAT IT WAS A PITY THAT THE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE HAD NOT BEEN CONSULTED ON THE PROPOSED EXTENSION.

ESTIMATING THAT THE DIFFERENCE IN FARES BETWEEN THE MTR AND BUSES ON THE KWUN TONG TO TSUEN WAN ROUTE WOULD COME TO \$9.30 A DAY OR ONE-AND-A-HALF MONTHS' PAY OF AN AVERAGE WORKER IN 1986, HE DOUBTED THE VIABILITY OF THE MTR UNLESS OTHER FORMS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT ARE RESHAPED SO AS TO INDUCE GOVERNMENT'S CAPTIVE CUSTOMERS IN TSUEN WAN, KWAI CHUNG, TSING YI AND TUEN MUN TO PAY WHATEVER FARE THE MTRC WILL HAVE TO CHARGE TO MAKE THE EXTENSION VIABLE.

+INDEED, INSTEAD OF PLANNING A TRANSPORT SYSTEM TO SERVE THE POPULATION GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE TO PLAN HOW TO FORCE THE PEOPLE TO PAY FOR ITS EXTRAVAGANT VENTURE+, HE SAID.

UNCERTAINTIES OVER INTEREST RATES AND HONG KONG'S OWN GROWTH RATE MADE THE SCHEME EVEN LESS ATTRACTIVE, MR. LO ADDED.

HE REITERATED THE WARNING MADE WHEN HE LAST DEBATED THE ISSUE THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS LAUNCHING ON A HUGE GAMBLE THAT HONG KONG COULD NOT AFFORD TO LOSE. HE SAID THAT TO INCREASE THE STAKES BY BUILDING THE EXTENSION WOULD NOT INCREASE OUR CHANCES OF WINNING BUT MERELY THE EXTENT OF OUR POTENTIAL LOSS AND SUFFERING.

/HE CONCLUDED .....

HE CONCLUDED BY SUGGESTING THAT THOSE OF HIS COLLEAGUES WHO SUPPORTED THE MOTION MIGHT CONSIDER IT WISE TO ASK THE GOVERNMENT TO WITHDRAW IT UNTIL THE GOVERNMENT HAD EXPLAINED HOW IT INTENDED TO INCREASE ITS RESERVES TO COVER THE CONTINGENT LIABILITIES INVOLVED IN GUARANTEEING THE MTR'S ADDITIONAL BORROWINGS.

DR. THE HON. S.Y. CHUNG SUPPORTED THE MOTION WITH CAUTION, COMMENTING ON THREE ASPECTS OF THE TSUEN WAN EXTENSION - ITS ECONOMIC VIABILITY, FINANCING AND GOVERNMENT GUARANTEES, AND TIMING.

+AS A PROJECT, THE TSUEN WAN EXTENSION SEEMS TO BE ECONOMICALLY VIABLE,+ HE SAID.

DR. CHUNG CALCULATED THAT THE NET PROFIT OF THE TSUEN WAN EXTENSION FOR THE FIRST TEN YEARS AFTER DEPRECIATION WOULD BE \$8,178 MILLION, AND AFTER PROFITS TAX \$6,746 MILLION.

WITH THE TOTAL FIXED ASSETS FOR THE MTR AMOUNTING TO \$4,255 MILLION, THE AVERAGE RETURN ON FIXED ASSETS OVER THE FIRST TEN YEARS WOULD BE ABOUT 16 PER CENT PER ANNUM WHICH WAS QUITE ATTRACTIVE.

+IF THE FARE INCOME WERE REDUCED BY 25 PER CENT, AS A RESULT OF EITHER LESS PASSENGERS OR A FARE REDUCTION OR A COMBINATION OF THESE TWO FACTORS, THE AVERAGE RETURN ON INVESTMENT WOULD BE REDUCED FROM 16 TO 10 PER CENT PER ANNUM -- A RETURN WHICH IS STILL QUITE ATTRACTIVE,+ HE SAID.

BUT AS A LAYMAN HE WOULD NOT DARE TO SPECULATE ON WHETHER THE SPEED, REGULARITY, COMFORT AND CONVENIENCE OF THE MTR WOULD COMPENSATE FOR THE HIGHER FARES AND ATTRACT THE BULK OF COMMUTERS. +ONLY TIME WILL TELL WHICH SIDE IS CORRECT,+ HE SAID.

HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT FOR THE FIRST TEN YEARS, THE ESTIMATED TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURE OF \$1,772 MILLION REPRESENTED ONLY 15 PER CENT OF THE FORECAST TOTAL FARE INCOME OF \$11,993 MILLION, INDICATING THAT THE MTR WAS A VERY CAPITAL-INTENSIVE OPERATION.

+IN THE INFLATIONARY ERA OF TODAY, CAPITAL-INTENSIVE VENTURES HAVE A BETTER CHANCE OF SUCCESS THAN OPERATING-COST-INTENSIVE ONES,+ HE SAID, AND THIS WAS IN THE MTR'S FAVOUR.

AS TO THE FINANCING OF THE MTR, DR. CHUNG SAID ITS TOTAL OUTSTANDING LOAN FROM 1981-85 WOULD PEAK BETWEEN \$9,500 TO \$10,500 MILLION WHILE THE POSSIBILITY OF INTEREST RATES RISING IN THE FUTURE COULD NOT BE RULED OUT.

+WITH SUCH EXTREMELY HIGHLY GEARED LOAN FINANCING (90 PER CENT LOAN AND 10 PER CENT EQUITY), ANY MODERATE UPWARD MOVEMENT IN INTEREST RATES WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY AND ADVERSELY AFFECT THE ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF THE WHOLE MTR PROJECT.+

/HE CITED .....

HE CITED THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE HONG KONG TELEPHONE COMPANY IN 1974, AND ASKED WHO WOULD RESCUE THE GOVERNMENT FROM BANKRUPTCY SHOULD IT FIND ITSELF IN A SIMILAR SITUATION AS THE COMPANY.

+THIS IS MY GRAVEST CONCERN AND CAUSE OF APPREHENSION WHICH I BELIEVE, IS SHARED BY MANY OF MY UNOFFICIAL COLLEAGUES,+ HE SAID.

REFERRING TO TWO OF THE FIVE REASONS GIVEN BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY FOR PROCEEDING WITH THE TSUEN WAN EXTENSION NOW DR. CHUNG SAID IF THE REASONS WERE ACCEPTED, +THERE WOULD BE PERPETUAL CONSTRUCTION OF THE MTR SYSTEM AND ONLY GOD KNOWS WHEN AND WHERE IT WOULD END.+

+IN THIS REGARD,+ HE ADDED, +I AM VOICING THE VIEW OF A NUMBER OF UNOFFICIALS WHO WISH TO PUT ON RECORD THAT THESE TWO FACTORS (COMPETITIVE BIDDINGS AND BUILD-UP OF EXPERTISE) SHOULD NOT BE USED AS REASONS FOR PROCEEDING WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TSUEN WAN EXTENSION.+

THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN WELCOMED THE MTR EXTENSION TO TSUEN WAN BUT THOUGHT THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S REJECTION OF THE CORPORATION'S PROPOSAL TO INJECT AN ADDITIONAL \$500 MILLION EQUITY IN THE SYSTEM MIGHT WELL BE A SHORT-SIGHTED POLICY.

+THAT IS PARTICULARLY DETRIMENTAL TO THE COMMUNITY INTEREST IF THE CORPORATION IS FORCED TO CHARGE INITIAL FARES WHICH ARE BEYOND WHAT THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC CAN AFFORD,+ HE SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE CORPORATION'S CASH FLOW PROJECTION SHOWED A SURPLUS OF \$469 MILLION BY 1990, AND AN ACCUMULATED SURPLUS OF \$2,155 MILLION WITH ALL LOANS FULLY PAID UP BY 1992.

+IN OTHER WORDS, FOR A TOTAL EQUITY OF \$1,381, CONSISTING OF \$800 MILLION IN CASH AND THE REST IN LAND AND DELAYED RATES, GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE CORPORATION WILL BE OWNING BY 1992 A DEBT-FREE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY SYSTEM PLUS A SURPLUS OF \$2,155 MILLION,+ HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THIS DID NOT INCLUDE AN ESTIMATED \$800 MILLION WHICH MIGHT PROBABLY BE SAVED THROUGH REFINING THE COSTING PROCESS, PLUS AN ADDITIONAL \$600 MILLION IN PROFITS TAX BETWEEN 1990 AND 1992, BESIDES THE EXTRA PROFITS OF THE CORPORATION ARISING FROM ITS PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT OPERATIONS.

HE PREPARED A TABLE OF PROJECTED MTR FARES BY 1980 AND 1982, BASED ON THE CORPORATION'S ASSUMED RATE OF 7 PER CENT INFLATION A YEAR, WHICH SHOWED FARES RANGING FROM \$1.40 TO \$3.50 AND \$1.60 TO \$4 RESPECTIVELY.

/HE SAID .....

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONSIDER SERIOUSLY FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF TRAVELLING COSTS AND THE EFFECT ON LIVING STANDARDS, WHETHER THESE FARES WOULD BE COMPATIBLE WITH BUS AND OTHER PUBLIC TRANSPORT FARES, WHETHER THE LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO WOULD DAILY USE THE SYSTEM WOULD BE ABLE TO AFFORD THEM AND TO WHAT EXTENT THE FARE STRUCTURE WOULD ESCALATE PRODUCTION AND WAGE COSTS THUS ADVERSELY AFFECTING HONG KONG'S EXPORT-ORIENTED ECONOMY.

REFERRING TO THE PLANNED STUDIES BY THE GOVERNMENT DURING THE NEXT TWO YEARS OF THE FULL IMPLICATIONS OF THE MTR ON THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEM, HE URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO KEEP IN MIND THAT THE MTR, APART FROM PROVIDING AN EFFICIENT SERVICE, SHOULD CHARGE FARES THE PUBLIC COULD REASONABLY BEAR, AND THAT THE FARES OF THE MTR SHOULD BE LOW ENOUGH SO THAT IT IS UTILISED TO CAPACITY WITH MINIMUM DISCOMFORT TO THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC.

HE ALSO NOTED THAT THE COUNCIL WOULD HAVE TO MONITOR CAREFULLY WHETHER OR NOT IT WAS IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST TO ALLOW THE CORPORATION TO RETAIN ITS SPECIAL STATUS OF NOT REQUIRING ITS FARE STRUCTURE TO BE APPROVED BY THE COUNCIL.

THE HON. FRANCIS TIEN STRONGLY SUPPORTED THE MOTION AND RECALLED THAT HE HAD ASKED A QUESTION IN THE COUNCIL LAST DECEMBER TO HAVE AN EARLY DECISION ON THE PROPOSED EXTENSION.

THE EXTENSION, WHEN COMPLETED, WOULD NOT ONLY DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH OVER-CROWDING ON EXISTING TRANSPORT MODES AND AVOID CONGESTION ALONG THE WEST KOWLOON AND TSUEN WAN CORRIDORS, BUT ALSO ENABLE THE URBAN AREA OF KOWLOON TO BE EXTENDED TO INCLUDE TSUEN WAN AND ITS ENVIRONS, HE SAID.

MR. TIEN THOUGHT IT WOULD BE ILLOGICAL NOT TO EXTEND. +THE SYSTEM WOULD BE INCOMPLETE AND, SOONER OR LATER, SUCH AN EXTENSION WILL HAVE TO BE BUILT AND THIS WILL CERTAINLY COST MUCH MORE AT A LATER DATE.+

HE ADDED THAT ALTHOUGH MANY SCHEMES INVOLVING FLYOVERS, DOUBLE-DECKED HIGHWAYS AND SIMILAR STRUCTURES TO ALLEVIATE CONGESTION HAD BEEN CONSIDERED AND PLANNED, +WE MUST REMEMBER TO LOOK AHEAD TO THE NEXT DECADE WHEN THE ACTUAL CONGESTION IS SUCH, THAT THE PRACTICAL MEASURES MUST BE TAKEN NOW TO PLAN PUBLIC TRANSPORT FOR LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE WITHOUT ADDING TO EXISTING CONGESTION.+

IN THE MTR, HE CONTINUED, +HONG KONG WILL BE GETTING A SYSTEM WHICH EMPLOYS NOT ONLY THE MOST UP-TO-DATE TECHNIQUES BUT MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, A SYSTEM WHOSE RELIABILITY AND SAFETY FEATURES ARE THOSE WHICH ARE PROVEN BEYOND DOUBT.+

THIS +VITAL CONSIDERATION OF SAFETY+ SHOULD BE ADDED TO THE EXPECTED SPEED, REGULARITY, COMFORT AND CONVENIENCE OF THE MTR SYSTEM. +IT IS MY BELIEF THAT THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC WILL APPRECIATE THESE FEATURES OF THE SYSTEM AND BE PREPARED TO TRAVEL ON IT,+ HE SAID.

DR. THE HON. HARRY FANG ALSO SUPPORTED THE MOTION AND REITERATED HIS EARLIER PLEA FOR ACCESS LIFTS TO BE INSTALLED FOR THE DISABLED +SO THAT, LIKE ANY OTHER MEMBER OF THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC, THEY TOO CAN MAKE USE OF THE SPEEDIER AND MORE RELIABLE MODE OF TRANSPORT WHICH THE EXTENSION OF THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY TO TSUEN WAN WILL PROVIDE.+

DR. FANG POINTED OUT THAT MANY HANDICAPPED PEOPLE, +WILLING AND ABLE TO WORK+, WERE PREVENTED FROM ACCEPTING JOBS THROUGH LACK OF A SUITABLE MEANS OF TRANSPORT.

+TSUEN WAN IS AN IMPORTANT MANUFACTURING TOWN, HENCE PROVISION FOR THE HANDICAPPED ON THE KOWLOON-TSUEN WAN SECTION OF THE MTR WOULD OPEN UP GREATER POSSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYMENT FOR THE DISABLED,+ HE EXPLAINED.

ACCESS LIFTS WOULD ONLY BE REQUIRED AT THE BEGINNING AND END OF THE SECTOR, HE SAID, AND SINCE THE TERMINAL AT KWUN TONG WAS TO BE ABOVE GROUND, THE PROVISION OF LIFTS AT PRINCE EDWARD STATION SHOULD MEAN THAT THE DISABLED COULD ALSO USE THE KWUN TONG SECTOR AND INCREASE THEIR EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THAT HEAVILY INDUSTRIALISED AREA.

HE WAS SURE SINKING ONE OR EVEN TWO LIFTS AT PRINCE EDWARD STATION AND IF NECESSARY AT THE TERMINAL AT TSUEN WAN WEST FOR USE BY THE DISABLED WAS NOT BEYOND THE COMPETENCE OF THE MANY MTR EXPERTS NOW IN HONG KONG AND SHOULD NOT BE BEYOND OUR FINANCIAL RESOURCES.

IF THE MTRC WAS UNABLE TO ACCEPT THE FINANCIAL COMMITMENT INVOLVED, HE SUGGESTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT INCREASE ITS EQUITY IN THE MTR TO MEET THE COST WHICH, IN RELATION TO THE TOTAL OUTLAY, WOULD BE NEGLIGIBLE.

HE FURTHER HOPED THAT TO ENABLE THE DISABLED TO GET TO THE MTR STATIONS, FEEDER BUSES, MODIFIED FOR USE BY THE DISABLED WOULD ALSO BE BROUGHT INTO OPERATION AS PART OF THE LONG-TERM PLAN TO PROVIDE MORE ADEQUATE AND SUITABLE TRANSPORT FACILITIES FOR THEM.

CHIEF SECRETARY GIVES DETAIL EXPLANATION  
OF MTR EXTENSION TO TSUEN WAN

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THE ACTING CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE DEFENDED THE DECISION TO EXTEND THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY SYSTEM TO TSUEN WAN DURING THE RESUMED DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HE ANSWERED THE POINTS RAISED BY THE SEVEN UNOFFICIALS WHO SPOKE DURING THE DEBATE WHICH BEGAN TWO WEEKS AGO, UNDER EIGHT SEPARATE HEADINGS:

CASE FOR AN MTR

ON THE NEED FOR A MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY, MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID OTHER OPTIONS SUCH AS A SURFACE MASS TRANSIT SYSTEM, DOUBLE DECKING THE MAIN ROADS IN THE URBAN AREA, BUILDING MORE AND WIDER ROADS, WOULD EITHER NOT BE SUFFICIENT TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM OF CONGESTION, OR WOULD BE MORE COSTLY, OR BOTH.

+FURTHERMORE, MOST OF THESE OPTIONS WOULD NEED TO BE PAID FOR FROM GENERAL REVENUE, WHEREAS THE GREATER PART OF THE COST OF THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY WILL BE MET FROM LOANS WHICH WILL BE REPAYED FROM REVENUE,+ HE SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE MORE SEVERE ROAD CONGESTION IN LONDON ANY TOKYO DESPITE THEIR EXTENSIVE MASS TRANSIT SYSTEMS WAS CAUSED BY THEIR MUCH HIGHER RATIO OF REGISTERED PRIVATE CARS TO THE POPULATION AND LOW PROPORTION OF PASSENGERS CARRIED BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT.

MTR AS AN INVESTMENT

THE ACTING CHIEF SECRETARY DENIED THAT THE MTR WAS A HUGE GAMBLE, POINTING OUT THAT A DECISION TO PROCEED WITH THE PROJECT WAS TAKEN AFTER YEARS OF STUDY BY TRANSPORT AND ENGINEERING EXPERTS AND FINANCIAL ANALYSTS.

HE POINTED TO THE CONFIDENCE IN THE MTR SHOWN BY INTERNATIONAL BANKERS WHO HAD BACKED THE INITIAL SYSTEM BY PROVIDING ALL THE MEDIUM AND LONG TERM FINANCE AND MORE RECENTLY WERE WILLING TO FINANCE THE TSUEN WAN EXTENSION ON MORE FAVOURABLE TERMS, PREPARING AT THE SAME TIME TO DISPENSE WITH A GOVERNMENT GUARANTEE IN RESPECT OF THAT PORTION NOT COVERED BY EXPORT CREDIT GUARANTEE ARRANGEMENTS.

IF THE MTR WAS EVER A GAMBLE, THE ODDS HAD SHORTENED AND WOULD FURTHER SHORTEN WITH THE TSUEN WAN EXTENSION, MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID. HE EXPLAINED THAT THE EXTENSION WOULD INCREASE THE RATE OF RETURN FOR THE COMBINED SYSTEM FROM 13-1/2 PER CENT TO 15 PER CENT, SO THAT THE CORPORATION WOULD BE IN A POSITION TO REPAY ALL LOANS 10 YEARS AFTER THE OPENING OF THE EXTENSION COMPARED WITH 12 YEARS FOR THE INITIAL SYSTEM ALONE.

## FUTURE OF BUS AND PLB SERVICES

MR. HADDON-CAVE STRESSED THAT THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NO INTENTION ON THE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT TO DEPRIVE THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC OF SUCH SERVICES WHERE THE DEMAND EXISTED.

+THE INTENTION (OF 'RESHAPING' BUS AND PLB SERVICES) IS THAT A RANGE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES, DIFFERING IN COMFORT, CONVENIENCE, SPEED AND COST WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC.

+BUS, PLB AND FERRY SERVICES ARE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE TO OPERATE IN MTR CORRIDORS, AFTER THE MTR OPENS, AS THERE WILL STILL BE A MAJOR ROLE TO BE PLAYED BY SURFACE PUBLIC TRANSPORT MODES,+ HE SAID.

HE EXPLAINED THAT THE PRECISE DETAILS OF THIS +RESHAPING+ HAD YET TO BE DETERMINED, BUT IN GENERAL TERMS, IT MEANT THE PROVISION OF NEW FEEDER SERVICES TO LINK MTR STATIONS TO AREAS AWAY FROM THE STATIONS AND ALSO FOR CHANGES IN EXISTING ROUTE IN MTR CORRIDORS AS THE RAILWAY AFFECTED SURFACE TRAVELLING PATTERNS IN THESE CORRIDORS.

IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO TELL AT THIS STAGE PRECISELY, HOW +RESHAPING+ WOULD AFFECT THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC, MR. HADDON-CAVE CONTINUED. HE POINTED OUT HOWEVER, THAT LOWER PATRONAGE OF SURFACE PUBLIC TRANSPORT IMPLIED LOWER REVENUES AND FARES HIGHER THAN AT PRESENT AND THE COMFORT AND CONVENIENCE OF A MODERN TRANSPORT SYSTEM HAD TO BE PAID FOR.

+THE ALTERNATIVE IS A VERY RAPID DETERIORATION IN TRAVEL CONDITIONS WITH ALL THAT THAT WOULD INVOLVE FOR THE QUALITY OF LIFE AND ECONOMIC EFFICIENCY,+ HE SAID.

HE ALSO REFERRED TO FORECAST FIGURES OF PATRONAGE OF THE VARIOUS TRANSPORT SERVICES WHICH +CERTAINLY DO NOT INDICATE THAT THE MTR WILL HAVE ANY SORT OF MONOPOLY.+

## PUBLIC TRANSPORT FARES AND VIABILITY OF MTR

MR. HADDON-CAVE EMPHASISED THAT THERE HAD NEVER BEEN ANY INTENTION OF REVISING SURFACE PUBLIC TRANSPORT FARES, ROUTES AND SERVICES SOLELY TO MAKE THE MTR VIABLE. AS IN THE PAST, REVISION WOULD ONLY BE MADE +WHEN THE INTERESTS OF THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC AS A WHOLE ARE THUS BEST SERVED,+ HE SAID.

HE DISCLOSED THAT GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS HAD RECENTLY STARTED EXAMINING THE FULL IMPLICATIONS OF THE LIKELY IMPACT OF THE INITIAL SYSTEM ON TRAVEL PATTERNS. THE STUDY WOULD BE COMPLETED AT THE END OF NEXT YEAR AND WOULD BE FOLLOWED BY CONSULTATIONS WITH THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT OPERATORS, AFTER WHICH THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL WOULD BE CONSULTED.

TURNING TO DOUBTS RAISED ABOUT THE ABILITY OF THE PUBLIC TO AFFORD A FARE STRUCTURE OF \$1.40 TO \$3.50 IN 1980 AND \$1.60 TO \$4 IN 1982, MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID COMPARISON OF THESE FARES WITH WAGES AS WE KNEW THEM TODAY IGNORED TWO POINTS.

FIRSTLY, HE SAID, WAGES WERE THEMSELVES A PRICE FOR LABOUR SERVICES AND WOULD TEND TO INFLATE AT THE SAME RATE AS THE GENERAL PRICE LEVEL. SECONDLY AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, HE ADDED, WAGES WOULD BENEFIT FROM INCREASES IN PRODUCTIVITY AND THE TREND RATE OF INCREASE IN OUTPUT PER HEAD WAS BETWEEN 3 AND 4 PER CENT PER ANNUM.

+BY 1980 WE CAN EXPECT REAL WAGES TO HAVE INCREASED BY AT LEAST 16 PER CENT WHEN COMPARED WITH THEIR 1975 LEVELS.+

AS TO WHETHER THE FARE STRUCTURE WOULD AFFECT INDUSTRIAL COSTS, MR. HADDON-CAVE POINTED OUT THAT WITH OR WITHOUT THE MTR THE RELATIVE COST OF TRANSPORT WAS GOING TO RISE BECAUSE IT WOULD BECOME INCREASINGLY EXPENSIVE TO MOVE A GROWING POPULATION IN A LIMITED SPACE.

HE ALSO ASSURED THAT OUR FISCAL RESERVES WOULD BE ADEQUATE TO SECURE OUR CONTINGENT LIABILITIES OVER THE NEXT DECADE.

#### TRENDS IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT FARES

DEFENDING THE ASSUMPTION BY THE MTR CORPORATION THAT FARES WOULD INCREASE IN LINE WITH A 7 PER CENT ANNUAL INFLATION, MR. HADDON-CAVE POINTED OUT THAT BETWEEN 1946 AND 1970 THERE WAS VERY LITTLE CHANGE IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT FARES, BUT BETWEEN 1970 AND 1976 CMB FARES INCREASED BY ABOUT 150 PER CENT, KMB BY 110 PER CENT, TRAMWAYS BY 100 PER CENT, THE HONG KONG AND YAUMATI FERRY BY OVER 160 PER CENT AND THE STAR FERRY BY 33 PER CENT, REPRESENTING AVERAGE ANNUAL RATES OF INCREASE OF 16.7 PER CENT, 13.3 PER CENT, 12.2 PER CENT, 17.8 PER CENT AND 4.9 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY.

IT WAS REASONABLE FOR THE CORPORATION FROM A COMMERCIAL POINT OF VIEW TO ASSUME A RATE OF 7 PER CENT, HE SAID, AND THE 7 PER CENT INCREASE WOULD BE AN AVERAGE OVER THE PERIOD AND NOT IN EACH AND EVERY YEAR, SO THE MTRC WOULD NOT +FORCE THE PACE+ FOR OTHER PUBLIC TRANSPORT FARES.

HE POINTED OUT THAT BUSES WERE MORE LABOUR INTENSIVE AND WAGES COULD BE EXPECTED TO RISE FASTER THAN THE GENERAL PRICE LEVEL WHILE THE PUBLIC WAS PROBABLY GOING TO DEMAND A MORE COMFORTABLE BUS JOURNEY, WHICH WOULD TEND TO INCREASE BUS FARES QUITE INDEPENDENTLY OF THE MTR.

#### DEMAND FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT

ON THE EXPECTED PROPORTION OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT PASSENGERS TO BE CARRIED BY THE MTR, MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID THE RAILWAY'S POTENTIAL PASSENGERS IN 1986 OF 1.8 MILLION OUT OF A TOTAL OF 7.5 MILLION PASSENGERS ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT EACH DAY, REPRESENTING A RATIO OF 1 TO 4 ONLY, WAS NOT 'RATHER OPTIMISTIC'.

HE SAID BY THE STRATEGIC SITING OF THE 26 STATIONS ON THE EXTENDED SYSTEM, ALMOST 40 PER CENT OF HONG KONG'S POPULATION AND ALMOST 50 PER CENT OF THE PLACES OF EMPLOYMENT WERE JUDGED TO BE WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE OF A STATION.

+A HEARTENING CONFIRMATION OF THE PASSENGER PREDICTIONS,+ HE ADDED, +IS THE CONFIDENCE WHICH HAS BEEN SHOWN AND CONTINUES TO BE SHOWN, BY INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE COMMERCIAL VIABILITY OF THE RAILWAY.+

#### MTR AND THE DISABLED

AS TO THE POSSIBILITY OF PROVIDING ACCESS LIFTS IN SOME OF THE MTR STATIONS, THE ACTING CHIEF SECRETARY REPEATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD CONCLUDED THAT IT WOULD BE NEITHER IN THE INTERESTS OF THE HANDICAPPED NOR PRACTICABLE BECAUSE OF THE LARGE NUMBERS EXPECTED TO TRAVEL ON THE MTR, TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES AND COST.

HOWEVER, HE SAID ANTICIPATED IMPROVEMENTS IN COMFORT ON SURFACE PUBLIC TRANSPORT, AS A RESULT OF THE MTR, WOULD MAKE TRAVEL FOR THE DISABLED MUCH MORE PRACTICABLE.

FURTHERMORE, HE ADDED, AN EXPERIMENTAL MINIBUS SERVICE FOR THE DISABLED WAS BEING STUDIED IN KWUN TONG AND, IF RESULTS WERE ENCOURAGING, THIS WOULD FORM A MUCH BETTER MEANS OF PROVIDING TRANSPORT FOR THEM.

MR. HADDON-CAVE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT, ALONG WITH THE COMMITTEE ON ACCESS OF THE HONG KONG COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE, WAS INVESTIGATING THE TRAVELLING PROBLEMS OF THE DISABLED IN A BROADER CONTEXT.

#### FINANCING STRATEGY

MR. HADDON-CAVE EXPLAINED THAT THE MTR CORPORATION'S APPROACH IN FINANCING THE MODIFIED INITIAL SYSTEM HAD BEEN TO ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE FACILITIES WERE AVAILABLE WHEN CONTRACTS WERE LET. +IMMEDIATE STEPS WERE THEN TAKEN TO SECURE AS MUCH DEBT AS POSSIBLE FOR LONG PERIODS, PREFERABLY AT FIXED RATES OF INTEREST,+ HE SAID.

TO THIS END, HE EXPLAINED, THE CORPORATION OBTAINED AS MUCH EXPORT CREDIT FINANCE AS POSSIBLE SINCE SUCH FINANCE, AS WELL AS BEING LONG-TERM, WAS GENERALLY AT ADVANTAGEOUS FIXED RATES OF INTEREST. OUT OF A TOTAL OF SOME \$2,000 MILLION EQUIVALENT OF EXPORT CREDIT FINANCE SECURED, SOME \$1,714 MILLION OR 86 PER CENT WAS AVAILABLE AT FIXED RATES.

OF THE BORROWED FUNDS SO FAR DRAWN DOWN BY THE CORPORATION, HE ADDED, 93 PER CENT WAS AT FIXED RATES AND 7 PER CENT AT FLOATING RATES.

HE EXPLAINED THAT THE GOVERNMENT, AFTER CAREFUL CONSIDERATION, DID NOT INJECT FURTHER CASH EQUITY INTO THE CAPITAL STRUCTURE OF THE CORPORATION BECAUSE IT WOULD MAKE LITTLE DIFFERENCE TO THE GEARING.

+AND AS THE CORPORATION IS A WHOLLY OWNED SUBSIDIARY, AS IT WERE, OF THE GOVERNMENT, A HIGH LOAN/EQUITY GEARING HAS LITTLE RELEVANCE TO THE CORPORATION'S ABILITY TO BORROW ON INTERNATIONAL CAPITAL MARKETS,+ HE SAID.

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DORWARD REITERATES HONG KONG'S NEGOTIATING POSITION  
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THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, MR. BILL DORWARD, SAID TODAY THAT HONG KONG WAS PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE A REASONABLE TEXTILE AGREEMENT WITH THE EEC WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK AND THE TERMS OF THE GATT MULTI-FIBRE ARRANGEMENT.

MR. DORWARD, WHO WAS ANSWERING A QUESTION BY THE HON. FRANCIS TIEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, STRESSED THAT HONG KONG HAD NOT MOVED FROM ITS BASIC POSITION.

MR. TIEN HAD ASKED THE GOVERNMENT TO MAKE A STATEMENT ON THE FORTHCOMING TEXTILE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE EEC HAVING REGARD TO THE VISIT TO HONG KONG OF THE COMMUNITY'S CHIEF TEXTILE NEGOTIATOR, MR. TRAN VAN THINH.

MR. DORWARD EXPLAINED THAT MR. TRAN'S VISIT WAS NOT FOR THE PURPOSE OF NEGOTIATION, BUT RATHER FOR DISCUSSION OF A POSSIBLE BASIS FOR NEGOTIATION LATER THIS YEAR. +FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW, THIS WAS A USEFUL EXERCISE. WE BELIEVE MR. TRAN ALSO FOUND IT SO,+ HE SAID.

MR. DORWARD POINTED OUT THAT MR. TRAN HAD SAID PUBLICLY YESTERDAY THAT HE FOUND HONG KONG'S REACTION TO HIS TENTATIVE PROPOSALS TO BE TOUGH= BUT THAT HE (TRAN) ALSO EXPRESSED OPTIMISM THAT THERE HAD EMERGED THE POSSIBILITY OF A NEGOTIATED AGREEMENT.

MR. DORWARD ADDED: +WE ARE ENCOURAGED BY MR. TRAN'S OPTIMISM IN THE FACE OF A VERY EXPLICIT STATEMENT OF OUR POSITION AND ARE NOW READY TO OPEN NEGOTIATIONS IN BRUSSELS, PROBABLY IN EARLY OCTOBER.

+GIVEN THAT THIS IS NOW A MATTER FOR SERIOUS NEGOTIATION, I DO NOT FEEL I CAN REASONABLY BE MORE EXPLICIT IN RESPECT OF THE POSTURE WE SHALL BE ADOPTING= OTHER THAN TO SAY WE SHALL NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE FACT THAT DAMAGE TO THE HONG KONG TEXTILE INDUSTRY WOULD BE, IN SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TERMS, A RELATIVELY MUCH MORE SERIOUS MATTER THAN THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIMILAR PROBLEMS FACED BY THE TEXTILE INDUSTRIES OF THE EEC,+ MR. DORWARD SAID.

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LEGCO URGED TO PLUG  
THIRD PARTY INSURANCE LOOPHOLES

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UNOFFICIAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR, THE HON. OSWALD CHEUNG, PROPOSED TO SEAL THE LOOPHOLES IN THE MOTOR VEHICLES INSURANCE (THIRD PARTY RISKS) ORDINANCE WHICH ALLOW INSURANCE COMPANIES TO WRIGGLE OUT OF LIABILITY IN HONG KONG.

MOVING AN ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON THIRD PARTY INSURANCE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, MR. CHEUNG POINTED OUT THERE IS NO MOTOR INSURERS BUREAU IN HONG KONG, AND OUR LEGISLATION IS THEREFORE +GLARINGLY DEFECTIVE,+ AS IT IS BASED ON THE +BULLET RIDDLED ACTS OF 1930 AND 1934.+

HE TABLED A NUMBER OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE ORDINANCE, SUGGESTING THAT:

- \* ALL OWNERS OF MOTOR VEHICLES SHOULD BE OBLIGED TO INSURE THEMSELVES AGAINST THE CLAIMS OF THIRD PARTIES WHENEVER IT IS ESTABLISHED THAT THE VEHICLE WAS DRIVEN NEGLIGENTLY AND WHEN DRIVEN WITH THE OWNER'S CONSENT, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED= AND
- \* INSURERS BE FORBIDDEN FROM RELYING ON A BREACH OF CONDITION, MISREPRESENTATION OR NON-DISCLOSURE AS AGAINST A THIRD PARTY ONCE THE THIRD PARTY HAS BEEN INJURED.

AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO HIS PROPOSALS, MR. CHEUNG SAID IT MIGHT BE RIGHT TO INTRODUCE OR ASK THE INSURANCE COMPANY IN HONG KONG TO INTRODUCE A MOTOR INSURANCE BUREAU.

MR. CHEUNG POINTED OUT THAT ONLY RECENTLY HE BECAME AWARE OF THE MANY SHIFTS AND DEVICES WHICH HAVE BEEN EMPLOYED BY INSURERS TO AVOID LIABILITY, IN CASES WHEN NEGLIGENCE HAS BEEN CLEARLY ESTABLISHED AGAINST THE DRIVER AND THE PARTY INSURED.

+INSURERS WOULD HEDGE THE POLICIES WITH SO MANY WARRANTIES AND CONDITIONS THAT THEY WERE ABLE TO ESCAPE LIABILITY, FOR EXAMPLE, IF AT THE TIME OF THE ACCIDENT, THE CAR WAS BEING DRIVEN BY A JEW, A BOOKMAKER OR AN ACTOR,+ HE SAID.

+SOMEWHERE IN THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS, THROUGH COMPROMISES AND AMENDMENTS, THE ROAD TRAFFIC ACT OF 1930 BECAME LARGELY USELESS, AND THE INTENTION OF THE LEGISLATURE WAS LARGELY FRUSTRATED.

+PERSONS INJURED OR THEIR DEPENDANTS WERE UNABLE TO RECOVER AGAINST THE INSURANCE COMPANIES, AND WERE LEFT WITH EMPTY JUDGMENTS AGAINST INDIGENT DRIVERS AND OWNERS AGAINST WHOM NEGLIGENCE HAD BEEN CLEARLY ESTABLISHED,+ HE SAID.

MR. CHEUNG SAID IT WAS A MISTAKE TO ALLOW THE MOTORIST SUCH FREEDOM OF CHOICE AS TO WHAT RISKS HE SHOULD INSURE AGAINST, AND TO ALLOW INSURERS TO AVOID LIABILITY AFTER INJURY TO A THIRD PARTY HAS OCCURRED.

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+A MAN WHO IS KILLED OR INJURED OUGHT TO HAVE A RIGHT TO COMPENSATION IF A MOTOR CAR IS DRIVEN NEGLIGENTLY AND WHEN DRIVEN BY THE OWNER OR WITH HIS CONSENT. THE THIRD PARTY IS NOT INTERESTED IN THE TERMS ARRANGED BETWEEN CAR OWNER AND INSURER,+ HE STRESSED.

MR. CHEUNG ALSO SAID HE WOULD SUPPORT, AS A SOCIAL WELFARE MEASURE, THAT COMPENSATION BE PAID TO THE THIRD PARTIES INJURED WHOLLY THROUGH THEIR OWN FAULT AND THROUGH NO FAULT OF THE DRIVER, IF IT WAS THOUGHT DESIRABLE.

ON THE QUESTION OF HIT AND RUN DRIVER, HE SUGGESTED THAT PERHAPS ACCIDENT VICTIMS COULD BE BROUGHT UNDER THE CRIMINAL INJURIES COMPENSATION SCHEME.

BUT WHEN A VEHICLE IS DRIVEN WITHOUT ANY INSURANCE POLICY AT ALL, THE OWNER OUGHT TO BE VERY SEVERELY DEALT WITH UNDER THE CRIMINAL LAW, HE URGED.

IN REPLY, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. G. BARNES, SAID GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN EXAMINING THE POSSIBILITY OF INTRODUCING MORE COMPREHENSIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR ENSURING THAT PERSONS WHO OUGHT TO BE PROTECTED BY THIRD PARTY INSURANCE ARE NOT LEFT WITHOUT COMPENSATION AND WILL CONSIDER WHETHER MR. CHEUNG'S PROPOSALS SHOULD BE PART OF THEM.

BUT MR. BARNES SAID THAT AFTER CONSULTING THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL, HE WAS AS YET UNCERTAIN WHETHER MR. CHEUNG'S SOLUTION WAS THE RIGHT ONE.

+AS MR. CHEUNG HAS CONCEDED, THE LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS WHICH HE SUGGESTS WOULD STILL LEAVE CERTAIN OBVIOUS CASES UNRESOLVED.+

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HOUSING AUTHORITY WILL BUILD MORE FLATTED FACTORIES  
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THE HOUSING AUTHORITY HAS DECIDED TO CONTINUE BUILDING FLATTED FACTORY BLOCKS TO RELOCATE SMALL WORKSHOPS DISPLACED BY GOVERNMENT CLEARANCES, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON. DONALD LIAO SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THE SECRETARY SAID SITES IN VARIOUS DISTRICTS HAD BEEN EARMARKED AND A BUILDING PROGRAMME DRAWN UP. THE FIRST NEW FACTORY BLOCK AT KOWLOON BAY, TO BE COMPLETED IN EARLY 1979, WOULD HAVE AN IMPROVED DESIGN PREPARED BY THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT INCORPORATING LIFTS, HIGHER LOADINGS AND AMPLE PARKING FACILITIES.

MR. LIAO POINTED OUT THAT THE NEW BLOCK WOULD CONTAIN ABOUT 600 UNITS OF 25 SQUARE METRES EACH AND HAVE A TOTAL FLOOR AREA OF OVER 26,000 SQUARE METRES INCLUDING CIRCULATION AREAS, IN HIS REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. S.L. CHEN WHO WANTED TO KNOW WHAT WAS BEING DONE TO OVERCOME THE EXTREME SHORTAGE OF ACCOMMODATION FOR THOSE OPERATORS WHO OPTED FOR FLATTED FACTORY SPACE RATHER THAN FOR AN EX-GRATIA ALLOWANCE.

HE SAID THE AUTHORITY'S CURRENT STOCK OF FACTORY SPACE STOOD AT 500 UNITS OR A TOTAL OF 11,900 SQUARE METRES (128,000 SQ. FT.).

+EVERY EFFORT WILL BE MADE TO USE THIS STOCK ECONOMICALLY AND TO POSTPONE CLEARANCE WHICH WOULD NOT UPSET DEVELOPMENT PLANS, UNTIL THE FIRST OF THE NEW KOWLOON BAY FACTORY BLOCKS IS COMPLETED.

+NEVERTHELESS, IT IS LIKELY THAT SOME OPERATORS MAY HAVE TO ACCEPT CASH COMPENSATION IN 1978,+ HE SAID.

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NT TAXIS REPORT IN OCTOBER

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A HALF-YEARLY PROGRESS REPORT ON THE OPERATION OF THE NEW TERRITORIES TAXIS WILL BE READY IN ABOUT OCTOBER.

THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. G. BARNES SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS FROM DR. THE HON. S.Y. CHUNG.

+THE REPORT WILL INCLUDE A REVIEW ON THE OPERATIONAL BOUNDARIES OF THE SERVICE,+ MR. BARNES ADDED.

MR. BARNES POINTED OUT THE SCHEME HAD SUCCESSFULLY REPLACED THE ILLEGAL PAK PAIS AND PROVIDED A LEGAL TAXI SERVICE IN RURAL AREAS WHERE URBAN TAXIS DID NOT NORMALLY OPERATE.

ON THE QUESTION OF EXTENDING THE OPERATIONAL BOUNDARIES OF THE SERVICE, MR. BARNES SAID THE PRESENT BOUNDARIES WERE DRAWN UP TO EXCLUDE SHA TIN AND TSUEN WAN SINCE THE NEW TOWNS WERE REASONABLY WELL COVERED BY URBAN TAXI SERVICES.

+MOREOVER, THE TRADE IN THESE AREAS COULD WELL DRAW AWAY NUMBERS OF NEW TERRITORIES TAXIS, OPERATING WITH LOWER FARES AND LICENSED FEES, FROM THE RURAL AREAS WHICH THEY ARE INTENDED TO SERVE,+ MR. BARNES ADDED.

THESE IMPORTANT FACTORS TEND TO INDICATE THAT THE +NEED+ TO EXTEND THE OPERATIONAL BOUNDARIES MAY WELL BE OVER-SHADOWED BY OTHER CONSIDERATIONS, HE NOTED.

THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL, WHEN CREATING THE NEW TERRITORIES TAXIS, ORDERED THAT A REPORT ON THEIR PROGRESS SHOULD BE MADE SIX MONTHS AFTER THE SCHEME CAME INTO FULL OPERATION.

APPLICATIONS FOR THE 750 NEW TERRITORIES TAXI LICENCES WERE BALLOTTED IN THREE BATCHES BETWEEN LAST SEPTEMBER AND JANUARY THIS YEAR. THE MAJORITY OF THE NEW TAXIS WERE INSPECTED AND LICENSED BY APRIL 1977.

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HONG KONG/LONDON PASSENGER FLIGHT DELAYS  
TAKEN UP WITH UK AUTHORITY

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MORE THAN A THIRD OF BRITISH AIRWAYS' SCHEDULED PASSENGER FLIGHTS TO AND FROM LONDON ARRIVED OR DEPARTED MORE THAN AN HOUR LATE IN THE FIRST SEVEN MONTHS OF THIS YEAR, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. DAVID JEAFFRESON, REVEALED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. OSWALD CHEUNG.

TO ANOTHER QUESTION BY MR. CHEUNG, MR. JEAFFRESON SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT SATISFIED WITH THE PUNCTUALITY OF SUCH SCHEDULED FLIGHTS AND HAD REPEATEDLY TAKEN IT UP WITH THE TOP MANAGEMENT OF BRITISH AIRWAYS, BUT NO SUSTAINED IMPROVEMENT HAD RESULTED.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN PURSUING THE MATTER WITH THE CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY, THE BODY IN LONDON RESPONSIBLE FOR MONITORING THE STANDARDS OF SERVICE OF U.K. REGISTERED AIRLINES.

ELABORATING ON THE STATISTICS ON THE DELAYS, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY POINTED OUT THAT BRITISH AIRWAYS CARRIED 95 PER CENT OF THE PASSENGERS ON THE SAME-PLANE SERVICE BETWEEN HONG KONG AND LONDON.

ALTHOUGH THE DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION KEPT A RECORD OF THE ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES OF ALL FLIGHTS USING KAI TAK AIRPORT, HE SAID, IT WAS KEPT ON THE BASIS OF INDIVIDUAL MOVEMENTS AND NOT ON THE BASIS OF PARTICULAR AIRLINES OR PARTICULAR ROUTES.

HOWEVER SEPARATE RECORDS WERE KEPT OF THE PERFORMANCE OF BRITISH AIRWAYS SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THIS YEAR BECAUSE OF THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE UNSATISFACTORY NATURE OF THE SERVICES CONCERNED, HE SAID.

HE EXPLAINED THAT AIRPORT AUTHORITIES AND AIRLINES ADOPTED A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT DEFINITIONS AS TO WHAT CONSTITUTED A DELAYED FLIGHT AND FOR THE PURPOSES OF HIS OWN STUDY, THE DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION HAD CHOSEN TO REGARD ONLY FLIGHTS THAT ARRIVED OR DEPARTED MORE THAN AN HOUR LATER THAN THEIR SCHEDULED TIMES AS BEING DELAYED.

ON THE BASIS OF THIS DEFINITION, MR. JEAFFRESON NOTED, THE PERCENTAGE OF BRITISH AIRWAYS' SCHEDULED PASSENGER FLIGHTS DELAYED DURING THE FIRST SEVEN MONTHS THIS YEAR WAS 34.7 PER CENT, THE AVERAGE DELAY HAD BEEN 4 HOURS AND 45 MINUTES, AND A FURTHER TEN FLIGHTS WERE CANCELLED.

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NEARLY 800 ACCIDENTS IN SIX MONTHS INVOLVE PUBLIC BUSES  
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THERE WERE 784 TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS INVOLVING PUBLIC BUSES IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS THIS YEAR OF WHICH 38 INVOLVED DEATHS AND 257 SERIOUS INJURIES.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. G. BARNES IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. LYDIA DUNN AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MR. BARNES SAID, +IN PURELY ARITHMETICAL TERMS ACCIDENTS HAVE INCREASED BY 55 PER CENT SINCE 1973, AND THIS INCREASE MUST OF COURSE BE A CAUSE FOR CONCERN.+

+BUT BUS MILEAGE HAS ALSO INCREASED DURING THIS PERIOD BY ALMOST EXACTLY THE SAME PERCENTAGE AND THE RELATIVE PERCENTAGES OF TOTAL ACCIDENTS SHOW FAR WORSE INCREASES IN OTHER FORMS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT.

+I DOUBT, THEREFORE, WHETHER THERE IS CAUSE FOR PARTICULAR CONCERN ABOUT OMNIBUS ACCIDENTS AS SUCH,+ SAID MR. BARNES.

ON THE CAUSES OF OMNIBUS ACCIDENTS, HE SAID THE PATTERN OF ACCIDENTS INVOLVING BUSES IS NOT SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT FROM THE GENERAL PATTERN OF TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS NOR IS THERE ANY OBVIOUS SINGLE FACTOR TO WHICH ANY SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF THESE CASES COULD BE ATTRIBUTED.

+CAUSES OF ALL TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS ARE DETERMINED AND RECORDED BY THE POLICE, BUT TO ATTRIBUTE CAUSES FOR ANY PARTICULAR CLASS OF VEHICLE WILL TAKE SOME TIME.+

HE ADDED THAT AN ANALYSIS OF THE 784 ACCIDENTS IS NOW BEING CARRIED OUT.

IN REPLY TO ANOTHER QUESTION FROM MISS DUNN, MR. BARNES SAID INFORMATION ON THE NUMBER OF TIMES KMB AND CMB BUSES WHICH HAVE BROKEN DOWN SO FAR THIS YEAR, IS NOT YET IN HAND AS IT IS PART OF COMPENDIOUS MAINTENANCE RECORDS KEPT AT THE INDIVIDUAL BUS DEPOTS AND THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT YET HAD TIME TO EXTRACT THE RECORDS OF THE FAULTS WHICH CAUSED BREAK-DOWNS ON THE ROADS FROM THOSE IDENTIFIED IN THE DEPOTS OR TERMINI.

MR. BARNES SAID HE IS PREPARED TO ANSWER MISS DUNN'S QUESTION WHEN THE ANALYSIS ON THIS HAS BEEN COMPLETED.

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MONITORING TELEVISION STANDARDS

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THERE HAVE BEEN FOUR INSTANCES IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS WHERE PREVIEWING OF TELEVISION PROGRAMMES WAS FELT NECESSARY AND TWO OF THESE CONCERNED VIOLENT SCENES.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON. F.K. LI, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION RAISED BY THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN.

THE TELEVISION ORDINANCE REQUIRES A LICENSEE TO CONFORM WITH THE STANDARDS ESTABLISHED BY A CODE OF PRACTICE GOVERNING PROGRAMME STANDARDS. THIS CODE INCLUDES PROVISION AGAINST EXCESSIVE VIOLENCE, MR. LI POINTED OUT.

WHERE IT APPEARS THAT A LICENSEE HAS MISINTERPRETED OR HAS NOT FOLLOWED THE PROVISIONS IN THE CODE, THEN THE TELEVISION AUTHORITY TAKES THE NECESSARY STEPS TO PREVIEW FURTHER MATERIAL IN THE SAME SERIES, HE EXPLAINED.

WITH THE INCREASE IN THE AMOUNT OF LOCALLY-PRODUCED PROGRAMMES MATERIAL OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS AND THE INCREASING SOPHISTICATION AND COMPLEXITY OF THIS MATERIAL, THERE IS AN INCREASING NEED FOR MORE GUIDANCE FROM THE TELEVISION AUTHORITY TO THE TELEVISION COMPANIES RELATING TO PROGRAMME STANDARDS.

+THE COMMISSIONER FOR TELEVISION AND ENTERTAINMENT LICENSING HAS RECENTLY REVIEWED HIS STAFF RESOURCES AND HAS COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT HIS ESTABLISHMENT OF SIX TELEVISION STANDARDS CONTROL OFFICERS NEEDS TO BE STRENGTHENED AND HE IS PREPARING A SUBMISSION TO GOVERNMENT ACCORDINGLY,+ HE REVEALED.

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CLINICS WITHOUT REGISTERED DOCTORS  
MAY OPERATE FOR THREE MORE YEARS  
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CERTAIN CLINICS THAT PROVIDE USEFUL COMMUNITY SERVICE MAY BE ABLE TO OPERATE WITHOUT A REGISTERED DOCTOR FOR ANOTHER THREE YEARS.

THIS FOLLOWS THE PASSING OF A RESOLUTION TODAY IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO EXTEND UP TO THE END OF 1980 THE POWERS OF THE DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES TO EXEMPT CERTAIN CLINICS FROM THE REQUIREMENT TO BE UNDER THE CHARGE OF A REGISTERED DOCTOR.

THE DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICE, DR. THE HON. K.L. THONG, TOLD THE COUNCIL THAT THIS POWER CONFERRED ON THE DIRECTOR, AS REGISTRAR OF CLINICS, WOULD CEASE ON DECEMBER 31 THIS YEAR UNLESS EXTENDED.

HE SAID THAT THE POSITION OF THESE CLINICS HAD BEEN REVIEWED AND WAS NOT FOUND TO BE CHANGED SUBSTANTIALLY.

+THESE CLINICS ARE PROVIDING A USEFUL SERVICE TO MANY AT REASONABLY LOW COST AND THEIR CLOSURE WILL NOT BE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST,+ HE ADDED.

THERE ARE AT PRESENT 321 EXEMPTED CLINICS EMPLOYING 289 UNREGISTERED DOCTORS COMPARED WITH 337 EXEMPTED CLINICS EMPLOYING 300 UNREGISTERED DOCTORS IN 1974 WHEN THE RESOLUTION WAS FIRST PASSED.

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## TWO INDUSTRY TRAINING CENTRES TO BE OPENED SOON

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THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CLOTHING INDUSTRY AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY TRAINING CENTRES IS THE TANGIBLE RESULT OF YEARS OF JOINT EFFORTS OF THE TWO INDUSTRIES AND THE GOVERNMENT -- IN PARTICULAR THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT, THE HON. FRANCIS TIEN TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

+THESE TRAINING CENTRES ARE A MILE-STONE IN THE HISTORY OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT IN HONG KONG,+ HE SAID, TABLING THE FIRST ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY AND CLOTHING INDUSTRY TRAINING AUTHORITIES.

THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY TRAINING CENTRE AT KOWLOON BAY HAS ALREADY BEEN BUILT WITH INITIAL FACILITIES TO TRAIN ABOUT 660 FULL-TIME TRAINEES EACH YEAR IN THE MAJOR CONSTRUCTION TRADES, MR. TIEN, WHO IS ALSO CHAIRMAN OF THE HONG KONG TRAINING COUNCIL, SAID. IT WILL BE OFFICIALLY OPENED NEXT WEEK.

+THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY HAS FOR MANY YEARS BEEN EXPERIENCING AN ACUTE SHORTAGE OF CRAFTSMEN, RESULTING NOT ONLY IN INCREASING INEFFICIENCY WITH THE INDUSTRY BUT ALSO IN A RAPID INCREASE IN CONSTRUCTION COST.

+UNLIKE THE SKILLED WORKERS IN OTHER INDUSTRIES, MOST SKILLED WORKERS IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY ARE EMPLOYED ON A CASUAL SHORT TERM BASIS AND ALMOST ALL WORK IS CARRIED OUT UNDER SPECIAL CONTRACT BY LOOSELY KNIT TEMPORARY GROUPS OF WORKS.

+UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, THE PROVISION OF CRAFT APPRENTICE TRAINING BASED WHOLLY ON ON-THE-JOB TRAINING IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY HAS ALWAYS GIVEN RISE TO INSURMOUNTABLE PROBLEMS,+ HE POINTED OUT.

THE CLOTHING INDUSTRY TRAINING CENTRE AT KWAI CHUNG, WHICH WILL INITIALLY BE ABLE TO TRAIN ABOUT 3,600 OPERATIVES EACH YEAR, WOULD BE OFFICIALLY OPENED IN OCTOBER, MR. TIEN SAID.

THE CLOTHING INDUSTRY IS ONE OF HONG KONG'S LARGEST MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY BOTH IN TERMS OF THE TOTAL VALUE OF EXPORT AND THE NUMBER OF WORKERS EMPLOYED. IT EMPLOYS 180,000 WORKERS WHO TURNED OUT \$14,000 MILLION CLOTHING ITEMS IN 1976 OR ABOUT 45 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL VALUE OF HONG KONG'S EXPORTS.

+BUT FOR SOME YEARS ITS DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN HINDERED BY A SHORTAGE OF WORKERS AT THE OPERATIVE LEVEL,+ MR. TIEN SAID.

+MANY MANUFACTURERS HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO PROVIDE PROPER TRAINING, WHICH IS MAINLY ON THE JOB, FOR THE LARGE NUMBER OF OPERATIVES REQUIRED BECAUSE OF THE GENERAL SHORTAGE OF SPACE AND THE CONSEQUENTIAL DISRUPTION TO ACTUAL PRODUCTION.+

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EXPORT CREDIT INSURANCE LIABILITY INCREASED

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY ENDORSED A PROPOSAL TO INCREASE THE MAXIMUM CONTINGENT LIABILITY OF THE EXPORT CREDIT INSURANCE CORPORATION FROM HK\$1,750 MILLION TO HK\$2,000 MILLION.

ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. DAVID JEAFFRESON, IN MOVING A MOTION, TOLD THE COUNCIL THAT THE CORPORATION'S ADVISORY BOARD HAD UNANIMOUSLY ADVISED THAT THE MAXIMUM CONTINGENT LIABILITY BE INCREASED TO HK\$2,000 MILLION AS THE EXISTING STATUTORY LIMIT OF \$1,750 MILLION MIGHT BE REACHED BY THE END OF THIS YEAR.

+FAILURE TO RAISE THE LIMIT WOULD RESULT IN THE CORPORATION HAVING TO TURN AWAY FURTHER BUSINESS,+ HE SAID.

MR. JEAFFRESON EXPLAINED THAT THIS MAXIMUM LIABILITY WAS A THEORETICAL AMOUNT AND NEVER LIKELY TO BE AT RISK AT ANY ONE TIME.

+THE CORPORATION ESTIMATES THE ACTUAL FIGURE AT RISK AT ANY ONE TIME AT HK\$450 MILLION TO HK\$500 MILLION,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID THAT SINCE THE COUNCIL HAD AGREED TO AN INCREASE FROM HK\$1,250 MILLION TO HK\$1,750 MILLION THREE YEARS AGO, THE CORPORATION'S LIABILITY UNDER CONTRACTS OF INSURANCE HAD RISEN BY MORE THAN HK\$300 MILLION, AND AT THE END OF LAST MONTH STOOD AT NEARLY HK\$1,500 MILLION.

+THE CORPORATION NOW SERVICES ABOUT 900 POLICIES AND PROTECTS EXPORTS ON CREDIT TERMS TO VIRTUALLY ALL HONG KONG MARKETS. AT ANY ONE TIME ALMOST \$500 MILLION OF HONG KONG'S EXPORTS ARE COVERED BY THE CORPORATION'S POLICIES,+ HE SAID.

+INCREASES IN THE CONTINGENT LIABILITIES THE CORPORATION IS ASSUMING, ARE BROUGHT ABOUT BY BOTH THE CORPORATION ISSUING NEW POLICIES AND BY INCREASES IN THE VALUE OF INSURABLE BUSINESS CARRIED OUT BY EXISTING POLICY HOLDERS,+ THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY ADDED.

AT PRESENT THE CONTINGENT LIABILITIES OF THE CORPORATION ARE INCREASING AT A RATE OF ABOUT HK\$45 MILLION EACH QUARTER.

IN THE LAST FINANCIAL YEAR THE CORPORATION PAID OUT A TOTAL OF HK\$6.9 MILLION IN RESPECT OF CLAIMS DURING THE YEAR. AND THERE WERE ALTOGETHER 45 CLAIMS, MOST OF WHICH DERIVED FROM COMMERCIAL RATHER THAN POLITICAL REASONS.

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SECOND OUTDOOR RECREATION CENTRE READY IN 1979

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A SECOND GOVERNMENT OUTDOOR RECREATION CENTRE IS WELL INTO THE PLANNING STAGES AT TSO KUNG TAM PARK IN TSUEN WAN AND SHOULD BE READY FOR USE IN 1979, THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, MR. COLVYN HAYE, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS AFTERNOON.

IN A REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. LEUNG TAT-SHING, MR. HAYE SAID THIS SECOND CENTRE WOULD PROVIDE SPORTS AND RECREATION FACILITIES SIMILAR TO THOSE AT THE VERY POPULAR SAI KUNG OUTDOOR RECREATION CENTRE.

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COUNTRYSIDE PATHS SIGNPOSTED

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THE DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES HAS ALREADY INITIATED A SYSTEM FOR INDICATING POPULAR WALKS IN THE COUNTRY PARKS BY MEANS OF COLOURED POSTS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, THE HON. WILLIAM BELL, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY REV. THE HON. JOYCE BENNETT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MR. BELL SAID THAT THE SYSTEM HAD BEEN SUCCESSFULLY INTRODUCED AT TAI PO KAU, ABERDEEN AND SHING MUN, AND WOULD BE INTRODUCED IN FUTURE COUNTRY PARKS AS THESE WERE DESIGNATED.

HE ADDED THAT SOME PATHS WERE ALREADY SIGNPOSTED AND A SYSTEM RELATED TO THE COUNTRYSIDE MAPS WAS UNDER CONSIDERATION TO INDICATE REMAINING PATHS WHICH WERE NOT WITHIN THE COUNTRY PARKS.

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LOCAL STAFF TRAINED FOR SENIOR POSTS IN DESALTER  
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STEPS ARE BEING TAKEN TO TRAIN THOSE LOCAL OFFICERS WITH POTENTIAL TO FILL THE MORE SENIOR POSTS IN THE LOK ON PAI DESALTER ON THE COMPLETION OF THE CONTRACTS OF EXPATRIATE STAFF, THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, THE HON. WILLIAM BELL, SAID TODAY.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. LI FOOK-WO IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MR. LI HAD ASKED WHEN WOULD THE GOVERNMENT BE ABLE TO RECRUIT SUFFICIENT LOCAL ENGINEERS TO OPERATE THE LOK ON PAI DESALTER FULLY WITHOUT FURTHER RECOURSE TO THE EMPLOYMENT OF OVERSEAS CONTRACT STAFF.

MR. BELL SAID THAT THE APPROVED ESTABLISHMENT FOR THE OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE DESALTER INCLUDED 26 POSTS FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS WITH GOOD WORKING EXPERIENCE, PREFERABLY IN DESALTING PLANT OR ALTERNATIVELY IN STEAM POWER PLANT OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE.

HE SAID THAT BECAUSE OF THE SPECIALIST NATURE OF THE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, NOT UNEXPECTEDLY, THE FIRST LOCAL RESPONSE WAS VERY LIMITED.

+CONSEQUENTLY IN ORDER TO MEET THE MINIMUM STAFF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COMMISSIONING AND SUBSEQUENT OPERATION OF THE PLANT, OVERSEAS RECRUITMENT WAS INITIATED,+ MR. BELL SAID.

+AS A RESULT, 10 EXPATRIATE ENGINEERS WERE APPOINTED IN 1973/74. THIS NUMBER WAS SUBSEQUENTLY INCREASED TO 15 IN 1975/76, AND WITH WASTAGE, THE NUMBER NOW STANDS AT 13. THIS NUMBER REPRESENTS SOME FOUR PER CENT OF THE TOTAL APPROVED ESTABLISHMENT OF 325.+

OF THE REMAINING 13 POSTS, MR. BELL SAID, 10 HAD NOW BEEN FILLED BY LOCAL OFFICERS, AND THERE WERE THREE VACANCIES AT A SENIOR LEVEL.

THESE VACANCIES WERE CURRENTLY BEING ADVERTISED LOCALLY, BUT IN CASE NO SUITABLE LOCAL CANDIDATES WERE AVAILABLE, AND BECAUSE OF THE PRESSING NEED TO FILL THE POSTS, AN OVERSEAS INDENT HAD ALSO BEEN PLACED.

+WITH REGARD TO THE FUTURE PROGRESSION OF LOCAL OFFICERS, STEPS ARE BEING TAKEN TO TRAIN THOSE WITH POTENTIAL TO FILL THE MORE SENIOR POSTS ON THE COMPLETION OF THE CONTRACTS OF EXPATRIATE STAFF,+ HE SAID.

MR. BELL POINTED OUT THAT THE CONTRACTS OF 10 EXPATRIATES WOULD EXPIRE BETWEEN 1978 AND 1981 AND IT WAS HOPED THAT MOST, IF NOT ALL, OF THESE POSTS COULD BE FILLED PROGRESSIVELY BY PROMOTION OF LOCAL OFFICERS BY 1981.

THE REMAINING THREE EXPATRIATE OFFICERS ARE ON PERMANENT AND PENSIONABLE TERMS.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 1977

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SEPARATE RAINFALL REPORTS NOT POSSIBLE

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THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. G. BARNES SAID IT WOULD NOT AT PRESENT BE POSSIBLE TO PROVIDE SEPARATE DAILY AVERAGE RAINFALL REPORTS FOR HONG KONG ISLAND, KOWLOON AND THE RESERVOIR CATCHMENT AREAS BECAUSE THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH MONITORING STATIONS TO PRODUCE SEPARATE MEANINGFUL AVERAGE RAINFALL FIGURES IN BROADER AREAS.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM DR. THE HON. S.Y. CHUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MR. BARNES SAID THE DAILY RAINFALL MEASUREMENTS USED IN WEATHER REPORTS ARE TAKEN AT THE ROYAL OBSERVATORY ITSELF.

+THESE ARE SUPPLEMENTED, WHERE NECESSARY, BY REPORTS FROM A LIMITED NUMBER OF OTHER STATIONS, AND WHERE THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE AMOUNTS REPORTED, REFERENCE TO THIS IS OCCASIONALLY INCLUDED IN WEATHER BULLETINS.+

MR. BARNES ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THERE IS A SYSTEM OF REPORTING FROM OVER 100 RAINFALL STATIONS AROUND HONG KONG MANNED BY VOLUNTEERS WHO MAIL THE RESULTS OF THEIR OBSERVATIONS TO THE ROYAL OBSERVATORY MONTHLY.

+THIS DATA IS CHECKED AND ANALYSED BY THE ROYAL OBSERVATORY, AND A CHART SHOWING THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF RAINFALL IS PUBLISHED IN THE OBSERVATORY'S MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY. THE SUMMARY IS AVAILABLE ON SUBSCRIPTION, AND IS SUPPLIED TO THE PRESS,+ ADDED MR. BARNES.

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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 1977

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SERVICES PROVIDED TO CHAI WAN TEMPORARY HOUSING AREA  
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THE NEW CHAI WAN II EXTENSION TEMPORARY HOUSING AREA, COMPLETED EXACTLY A YEAR AGO AND BUILT ON A RECLAIMED SITE WITH PART-BUILT STRUCTURES, HAS ELECTRICITY, WATER SUPPLY AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON. DONALD LIAO SAID TODAY.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY DR. THE HON. HENRY HU IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON IMPROVEMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE AREA.

+ALTHOUGH THERE IS AN ADEQUATE DRAINAGE SYSTEM THERE HAS BEEN SOME SILTING AND BLOCKAGE RECENTLY.

+THE DRAINAGE CHANNELS HAVE BEEN CLEARED OUT ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS OVER THE LAST FEW MONTHS AND WILL BE REGULARLY CHECKED IN FUTURE. SOME MINOR IMPROVEMENTS TO THE DRAINAGE CHANNELS HAVE ALSO BEEN DECIDED UPON AND WILL BE CARRIED OUT TO REDUCE THE LIKELIHOOD OF FUTURE BLOCKAGES,+ HE SAID.

THE SECRETARY SAID THERE WAS ADEQUATE ACCESS OVER THE RECLAMATION FOR FIRE APPLIANCES, AMBULANCES AND OTHER ESSENTIAL VEHICLES, AND ALTHOUGH THERE WAS NO PROPER ROAD AS YET, VEHICLES HAD NO DIFFICULTY IN REACHING THE TEMPORARY HOUSING AREA.

HE NOTED THAT THERE WERE 162 LIGHTS FIXED TO THE OUTSIDE OF THE BUILDINGS FOR THE COMMON PASSAGE WAYS, BESIDES 12 MERCURY VAPOUR STREET LAMPS WITHIN THE AREA, WHICH TOGETHER PROVIDED GOOD LIGHTING.

THERE WAS ALSO A 24-HOUR SECURITY SERVICE WITHIN THE AREA IN ADDITION TO NORMAL POLICE COVERAGE, HE ADDED.

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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 1977

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INDIVIDUAL MAINS SUPPLY SOON TO BE CONNECTED TO YUEN LING VILLAGE  
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STAFF OF THE WATER SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT ARE NOW PROCESSING SOME 2,000 APPLICATIONS FROM RESIDENTS IN YUEN LING VILLAGE AT DIAMOND HILL FOR INDIVIDUAL METERED SUPPLIES, THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, THE HON. WILLIAM BELL, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HE WAS REPLYING TO THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN WHO HAD ASKED ABOUT THE PRESENT POSITION REGARDING THE SUPPLY OF MAINS WATER FOR DOMESTIC USERS IN THE VILLAGE.

MR. BELL SAID THAT FOLLOWING INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE DEMAND FOR INDIVIDUAL METERED SUPPLIES, THE DEPARTMENT HAD EARLIER THIS MONTH RECEIVED SOME 2,000 APPLICATIONS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE YUEN LING KAIFONG ASSOCIATION, WHO HAD BEEN APPROACHED TO ASSIST IN THE MATTER.

+THESE APPLICATIONS ARE NOW BEING SPECIALLY PROCESSED BY THE WATER SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT STAFF AND DEMAND NOTES FOR METER DEPOSIT AND CONNECTION FEES WILL BE ISSUED OVER THE NEXT FEW WEEKS,+ HE SAID.

+MATERIALS FOR THE WORK HAVE BEEN DRAWN AND INDIVIDUAL CONNECTIONS WILL BE PROVIDED FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF THE USUAL FORMALITIES.+

MR. BELL SAID THAT IN ORDER TO SPEED UP THE CONNECTION OF INDIVIDUAL SERVICE, IT WAS INTENDED TO POST A HOUSE SERVICE INSPECTOR AT THE KAIFONG HEADQUARTERS TO ASSIST RESIDENTS AND LICENSED PLUMBERS IN COMPLETING THESE FORMALITIES WHILE THE SUB-MAINS WERE BEING LAID.

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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 1977

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RTHK TO INCREASE LEGCO COVERAGE

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THE DIRECTOR OF BROADCASTING IS AWARE OF THE NEED TO GIVE CREDIT TO THE LARGE PART PLAYED BY UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN ITS PROCEEDINGS AND WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO INCREASE THIS COVERAGE, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON. F.K. LI, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

+LAST YEAR, RADIO TELEVISION HONG KONG DID CARRY A PROGRAMME WHICH INCLUDED INTERVIEWS WITH BOTH OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS. THOUGH THIS DID NOT TURN OUT AS WELL AS WE HAD HOPED, I SHALL ASK HIM TO CONSIDER ITS RE-INTRODUCTION OR PERHAPS PRODUCE A COMPLETELY NEW PROGRAMME ALONG SIMILAR LINES,+ HE SAID, ANSWERING A QUESTION FROM THE HON. ROGER LOBO.

A PREVIEW OF QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWER IN THE COUNCIL TOGETHER, WHEN TIME PERMITS, WITH THE NAMES OF THE MEMBERS ASKING THESE QUESTIONS IS INCLUDED IN THE NEWS BULLETINS BROADCAST ON THE DAY BEFORE AND ON THE MORNING OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETINGS, MR. LI REVEALED.

THE ACTUAL MEETING IS BROADCAST LIVE WITHOUT INTERRUPTION, HE ADDED, AND A ROUND-UP OF THE PROCEEDINGS IN THE COUNCIL IS INCLUDED IN THE NEWS BULLETINS TRANSMITTED IN THE LATE AFTERNOON, IN THE EVENING AND ON THE FOLLOWING MORNING.

ALL THESE BROADCASTS ARE CARRIED ON BOTH THE CHINESE AND ENGLISH CHANNELS OF RTHK, HE SAID.

+IN SO FAR AS THE ROUND-UP OF THE PROCEEDINGS IS CONCERNED, I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT WE HAVE NOT ACHIEVED THE POSITION WHEREBY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS ARE ALWAYS ASSOCIATED WITH THE QUESTIONS THEY HAVE ASKED ALTHOUGH THIS IS OFTEN DONE, AS I HAVE MENTIONED, IN RESPECT OF THE PRE-LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL NEWS BULLETINS AND ALWAYS IN THE LIVE BROADCAST.

+THE PROBLEM OF A ROUND-UP IS THAT THE NEWS EDITOR HAS TO WALK A TIGHT ROPE BETWEEN THE APPROPRIATE LENGTH OF EACH INDIVIDUAL ITEM TO BE INCLUDED IN THE NEWS BULLETINS AND THE NEED TO AVOID REPETITIVE INTRODUCTION TO THOSE ITEMS WHICH COVER MEMBERS' QUESTIONS,+ HE EXPLAINED.

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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 1977

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THIRD PARTY INSURANCE FOR PLEASURE CRAFT  
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A BILL WILL BE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN THE NEXT SESSION TO REQUIRE ALL PLEASURE CRAFT OWNERS TO INSURE AGAINST THIRD PARTY RISKS, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. DAVID JEAFFRESON, REVEALED TODAY.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. PETER C. WONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MR. JEAFFRESON SAID THAT PROVISION IS BEING INCLUDED IN THE MERCHANT SHIPPING (AMENDMENT) BILL FOLLOWING THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE ON BOATING AND YACHTING AND THE MARINE ASSOCIATION OF HONG KONG.

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CULTURAL SERVICES DIVISION MAY BE SET UP IN THE NEW  
TERRITORIES  
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A RECOMMENDATION TO ESTABLISH A SEPARATE CULTURAL SERVICES DIVISION WITHIN THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT'S NEW TERRITORIES REGION IS BEING EXAMINED BY THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT, THE SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, THE HON. DAVID AKERS-JONES SAID TODAY.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. LEUNG TAT-SHING, MR. AKERS-JONES SAID THE SEPARATE DIVISION, RECOMMENDED BY THE USD DIRECTOR, IF APPROVED BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE, WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PLANS AND POLICY FOR THE PROVISION OF CULTURAL FACILITIES SUCH AS LIBRARIES, AUDITORIA, AND EXHIBITION HALLS, TO THE SAME EXTENT AS THAT PROVIDED IN THE URBAN AREA.

+ IF ALL GOES WELL, THE NEW STAFF FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES CULTURAL SERVICES DIVISION WILL BE IN POST BY THE END OF THIS YEAR, + HE ADDED.

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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 1977

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NAVIGATION BEACONS STUDY

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THE MARINE DEPARTMENT, THROUGH ITS STANDING COMMITTEE ON NAVIGATIONAL AIDS, HAD ALREADY BEEN INVESTIGATING THE NEED FOR NAVIGATION BEACONS AT FAT TONG MUN AND SOR SEE MUN FOR THE PAST FEW WEEKS, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON. DAVID T.K. WONG SAID TODAY.

A CONCLUSION IS LIKELY TO BE REACHED WITHIN TWO WEEKS, HE ADDED IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. T.S. LO.

+AS FOR FAN TSANG MUN, NO STUDY HAS AS YET BEEN INITIATED BUT BECAUSE OF MR. LO'S QUESTION ONE WILL BE UNDERTAKEN BY THE STANDING COMMITTEE,+ HE SAID.

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AMENDMENT TO COMPANY PARTNERSHIPS LAW

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A BILL WHICH WILL LIFT THE PROHIBITION FOR PARTNERSHIPS OF SOLICITORS, PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS, MEMBERS OF A RECOGNISED STOCK EXCHANGE AND MEMBERS OF SUCH OTHER BODIES AS MAY BE PRESCRIBED BY THE GOVERNOR, IS EXPECTED TO BE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL EARLY NEXT YEAR.

THIS WAS REVEALED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON. DAVID T.K. WONG, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. JOHN BREMRIDGE.

MR. WONG ADDED THAT THE AMENDMENT OF SECTION 345 OF THE COMPANIES ORDINANCE, WHICH PROHIBITS PARTNERSHIPS WITH MORE THAN 20 MEMBERS OTHER THAN FOR THE BUSINESS OF BANKING, IS ONE OF THE MANY RECOMMENDATIONS MADE IN THE SECOND REPORT OF THE COMPANIES LAW REVISION COMMITTEE.

+SOME OF THOSE RECOMMENDATIONS HAVE ALREADY BEEN PASSED INTO LAW,+ HE SAID AND +WORK ON AN OMNIBUS BILL TO IMPLEMENT MOST OF THE REST OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS IS IN PROGRESS.+

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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 1977

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GOVERNOR CONGRATULATES LEGCO  
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THE GOVERNOR, SIR MURRAY MACLEHOSE, TODAY CONGRATULATED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL NOT ONLY FOR ITS +UNUSUALLY LONG,+ BUT ALSO +UNUSUALLY PRODUCTIVE AND LIVELY+ SESSION.

HE MADE THIS CLOSING REMARK AT THE END OF THE COUNCIL MEETING WHICH HAS BEEN ADJOURNED FOR THE ANNUAL HOLIDAYS UNTIL OCTOBER 5.

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HKCE EXAM RESULTS AVAILABLE TOMORROW  
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THE PERCENTAGE OF AWARDS OF GRADE E OR ABOVE FOR THOSE CANDIDATES SITTING THE MAJOR SUBJECTS IN THE HONG KONG CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION EXAMINATION 1977 WAS 62.48 COMPARED WITH 61.61 PER CENT IN 1976, THE SECRETARY OF THE HONG KONG CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION BOARD ANNOUNCED TODAY.

THIS YEAR 86,520 CANDIDATES ENTERED FOR THE EXAMINATION COMPARED WITH LAST YEAR'S TOTAL OF 70,440, REPRESENTING AN INCREASE OF 22.83 PER CENT. ALTOGETHER 34 SUBJECTS WERE EXAMINED.

THE RESULTS OF THE EXAMINATION WILL BE ISSUED TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

INDIVIDUAL RESULTS NOTICES FOR SCHOOL CANDIDATES ARE AVAILABLE AT THE OFFICE OF EXAMINATIONS DIVISION, EDUCATION DEPARTMENT FOR COLLECTION BY SCHOOLS TOMORROW MORNING.

RESULTS NOTICES FOR PRIVATE CANDIDATES HAVE BEEN POSTED AND SHOULD REACH CANDIDATES TOMORROW. HOWEVER, IF THEY DO NOT RECEIVE THEIR RESULTS BY AUGUST 13, THEY MAY MAKE ENQUIRIES AT THE EXAMINATIONS DIVISION, CANTON ROAD GOVERNMENT OFFICES, 393 CANTON ROAD, 11TH FLOOR, KOWLOON, TEL. NO. 3-688708 OR 3-688602.

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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 1977

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WATER SUPPLY FROM CHINA FURTHER EXTENDED

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AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED BETWEEN THE P.W.D.'S WATER SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT AND THE BUREAU OF WATER SUPPLY AND CONSERVANCY IN KWANGTUNG PROVINCE FOR THE SUPPLY OF A FURTHER 1,200 MILLION GALLONS OF WATER DURING THE LAST TWO WEEKS OF AUGUST.

ANNOUNCING THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY), A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID: +WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THIS ADDITIONAL SUPPLY WHICH WILL HELP AUGMENT OUR WATER STORAGE.+

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MRS. F.K. LI TO VISIT CENTRE FOR MENTALLY RETARDED

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MRS. EDITH LI, WIFE OF THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, WILL VISIT PO LEUNG KUK'S KO CHIU ROAD CENTRE FOR MENTALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN ON FRIDAY (AUGUST 12) MORNING TO INSPECT ITS REHABILITATION SERVICES.

MRS. LI WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY MR. CHEUNG ENG-KUAN, CHAIRMAN OF PO LEUNG KUK, MRS. KITTY SZETO SIU, VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE KUK, MR. LEUNG CHIN-MAN, CITY DISTRICT OFFICER (KWUN TONG) AND OTHER KUK OFFICIALS.

THE CENTRE, WHICH HAS A HOSTEL, A SHELTERED WORKSHOP, A CANTEEN AND RECREATION ROOM, IS THE LARGEST IN HONG KONG FOR THE MENTALLY RETARDED AND IS THE ONLY ONE PROVIDING THEM WITH MULTIPLE SERVICES.

DURING HER TOUR, MRS. LI WILL ALSO SEE PART OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME IN PROGRESS.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO SEND A REPORTER/PHOTOGRAPHER TO COVER THE VISIT OF MRS. LI TO THE KO CHIU ROAD CENTRE FOR MENTALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN AT 11.30 A.M. ON FRIDAY (AUGUST 12).

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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 1977

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PUBLIC LIGHT BUS RESTRICTED ZONE - TIN CHIU STREET  
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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT HAS ANNOUNCED THAT FROM 10 A.M. ON FRIDAY (AUGUST 12), THE EXISTING PUBLIC LIGHT BUS RESTRICTED ZONE APPLYING TO THE SECTION OF TIN CHIU STREET BETWEEN KING'S ROAD AND JAVA ROAD BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 7 A.M. AND MID-NIGHT WILL BE EXTENDED NORTHWARDS TO A POINT 42.7 METRES (140 FT.) TO THE NORTH OF JAVA ROAD.

APPROPRIATE TRAFFIC SIGNS WILL BE SET UP TO INDICATE THE RESTRICTED ZONE.

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