



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1975

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MOTION TO REVISE STAR FERRY FARES ADOPTED

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A MOTION TO REVISE THE FARES OF THE +STAR+ FERRY AND TO WAIVE THE COMPANY'S ROYALTY PAYMENTS FOR THE THREE YEARS 1974-76 WAS PASSED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS AFTERNOON.

FIRST CLASS FARES WILL BE INCREASED TO 30 CENTS FOR ADULTS AND 20 CENTS FOR CHILDREN UNDER 16, WHILE SECOND CLASS FARES WILL BE 15 CENTS FOR BOTH ADULTS AND CHILDREN FROM NEXT MONTH.

SECOND CLASS FARES WILL BE FURTHER INCREASED TO 20 CENTS FROM JANUARY 1, 1977.

FROM NEXT MONTH, MONTHLY TICKETS WILL BE \$12 FOR ADULTS AND \$6 FOR CHILDREN. ACCOMPANIED CHILDREN UNDER THREE WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO PAY ANY FARES.

SPEAKING ON THE MOTION, DR. THE HON. S.Y. CHUNG SAID THE FIRST CLASS FARE WAS 20 CENTS IN 1946 AND REMAINED SO UNTIL 1966 WHEN IT WAS RAISED BY FIVE CENTS, WHILE THE SECOND CLASS FARE HAS REMAINED UNCHANGED FOR NEARLY 30 YEARS.

+IT IS A RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT THAT THE MANAGEMENT OF ANY PUBLIC UTILITY WOULD BE PROUD OF,+ HE SAID.

DR. CHUNG MADE A FEW OBSERVATIONS HOWEVER ON THE SPEECH MADE BY THE SECRETARY FOR ENVIRONMENT WHEN PROPOSING THE MOTION TO REVISE THE SCHEDULE UNDER THE +STAR+ FERRY COMPANY (SERVICES) ORDINANCE.

MR. ROBSON HAD SAID THAT THE ESTIMATED PROFITS OF THE COMPANY FOR THE FIVE YEARS 1974-78 WERE \$800,000 PER ANNUM, COMPARED WITH AN AVERAGE OF \$1.4 MILLION FOR THE PREVIOUS FIVE YEARS 1969-73.

DR. CHUNG SAID THAT IN ASSESSING PROFITABILITY, PROFITS MUST BE RELATED WITH SHAREHOLDERS INVESTMENT, AND ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT KNOW THE EMPLOYED CAPITAL AND SHAREHOLDERS FUNDS FOR THE COMPANY, HE KNEW THAT THE AVERAGE NET FIXED ASSETS FOR THE FIVE YEARS 1974-78 AMOUNTED TO \$2.69 MILLION.

+THIS WOULD GIVE A NET RETURN ON AVERAGE NET FIXED ASSETS OF ALMOST 30 PER CENT PER ANNUM, WHICH IS VERY HIGH INDEED BY ANY STANDARDS,+ HE SAID.

HE ALSO DIFFERED FROM MR. ROBSON'S VIEW THAT IT WAS INAPPROPRIATE TO BASE THE ASSESSMENT OF RETURN ON A PERCENTAGE OF THE FERRY COMPANY'S FAST DIMINISHING FIXED ASSETS, SO AS TO JUSTIFY THE MANAGERIAL EFFORT.

/+THESE ARE

+THESE ARE TWO DIFFERENT ISSUES,+ DR. CHUNG SAID. +RETURN ON SHARE-HOLDERS INVESTMENT IS IN THE FORM OF PROFIT MADE FOR THE SHARE-HOLDERS WHEREAS THE RETURN ON MANAGERIAL EFFORT IS IN THE FORM OF JOB SECURITY, SALARIES AND FRINGE BENEFITS PAID OR AWARDED TO THE MANAGERIAL STAFF.+

WHEN ALL THE FIXED ASSETS OF THE COMPANY HAD BEEN WRITTEN DOWN AND THE SHAREHOLDERS' INVESTMENT REPAID, THEY COULD HARDLY CLAIM THAT THEY STILL OWNED THE COMPANY, HE SAID.

+IT WOULD THEREFORE BE INAPPROPRIATE AND ILLOGICAL FOR THE GOVERNMENT AND THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC TO ALLOW THE SO-CALLED SHAREHOLDERS, WHO IN FACT HAVE NO INVESTMENT IN THE COMPANY, TO PERPETUATE THEIR RIGHT FOR MAKING PROFITS YEAR AFTER YEAR FROM THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC,+ HE STRESSED.

HE HOPED THE GOVERNMENT WOULD SETTLE THIS MATTER OF PRINCIPLE FAIRLY AND JUSTLY BEFORE CONSIDERING FURTHER FARE INCREASES.

THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN ABSTAINED FROM VOTING ON THE MOTION.

WHILE HE HAD NO OBJECTION TO THE WAIVING OF ROYALTY FOR THE THREE YEARS, HE DID NOT AGREE THAT THE FARE INCREASES SHOULD BE INTRODUCED FROM NEXT MONTH.

+INSTEAD I WOULD PREFER THAT SUCH INCREASES BE INTRODUCED AS OF JULY 1, 1976, AT WHICH TIME THE WORLD ECONOMY AND THE HONG KONG ECONOMY COULD BE REGARDED WITH A BRIGHTER AND CLEARER DEGREE OF HOPE AND ANTICIPATION,+ HE SAID.

HE ASKED IF IT WAS MORE APPROPRIATE, WHILE ALL SECTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY HAD TIGHTENED THEIR BELTS TO SURVIVE THE PRESENT DIFFICULT TIMES, THAT THE PUBLIC UTILITIES ALSO ACT SIMILARLY AND BE CONTENT WITH SMALLER RETURNS AND POSTPONE ANY INCREASE TO BETTER TIMES.

MR. CHEONG-LEEN QUOTED A RECENT NEWS REPORT WHICH SAID THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE HAD PREDICTED THAT FOREIGN TRADE IN MOST WEST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES WOULD DECLINE MORE STRONGLY THAN ECONOMISTS ANTICIPATED ONLY A SHORT TIME AGO.

HE GRANTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS COMMITTED TO ENSURING A FAIR RETURN TO THE PUBLIC UTILITIES AND HAD THE RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT THEY CONTINUE TO OPERATE EFFICIENTLY.

HE ASKED HOWEVER WHICH WAS MORE PRESSING : THE INTEREST OF THE MAJORITY WHO WERE CONCERNED WITH RISING COSTS WITHOUT RISING INCOME, OR THE IMMEDIATE CLAIMS FOR FAIR RETURNS TO THE UTILITIES WHICH HAD A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN KEEPING LIVING COSTS STABLE.

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MR. CHEONG-LEEN SAID THE +STAR+ FERRY WAS ONE OF THE MOST EFFICIENT IN THE WORLD AND HE DID NOT BELIEVE THE GOVERNMENT COULD DO A BETTER JOB THAN THE PRESENT MANAGEMENT.

+HOWEVER, I QUESTION WHETHER GOVERNMENT HAS CHOSEN THE RIGHT TIME TO INTRODUCE THE FARE INCREASES AS SET OUT,+ HE SAID.

IN HIS REPLY TO DR. THE HON. S.Y. CHUNG, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. JAMES ROBSON, SAID HE UNDERSTOOD AND SHARED THE CONCERN FOR FAIRNESS TO THE PUBLIC IN SETTLING THE LEVEL OF PROFITS TO BE PERMITTED TO THE +STAR+ FERRY COMPANY.

HE THOUGHT HOWEVER THAT IT WOULD BE UNREASONABLE NOT TO ALLOW PROFITS BOTH TO REWARD MANAGERIAL EFFORT AND RISK-TAKING AND TO ALLOW SHAREHOLDERS A FAIR RETURN.

HE SAID DR. CHUNG'S COMMENTS WOULD BE BORNE VERY MUCH IN MIND DURING FUTURE DISCUSSIONS WITH THE COMPANY REGARDING ITS PROFITABILITY.

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GOVERNMENT DIRECTORS FOR TRAMWAY COMPANY

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DR. THE HON. S.Y. CHUNG SUGGESTED TODAY THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD APPOINT ONE OR TWO OFFICIALS TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE TRAMWAY COMPANY, AS IN THE CASE OF THE TWO BUS COMPANIES.

HE WAS SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE TRAMWAY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1975, WHICH SOUGHT TO ABOLISH ROYALTY PAYABLE BY THE COMPANY, RAISE TRAM FARES FROM 20 CENTS TO 30 CENTS FROM NEXT MONTH, AND SET UP THE +PROFIT EQUALIZATION FUND.+

HE SAID THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE COMPANY WERE NO LONGER AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC SINCE IT BECAME A SUBSIDIARY OF HONG KONG AND KOWLOON WHARF AND GODOWN COMPANY LIMITED, WHILE THE COMPANY WOULD BE VIRTUALLY GUARANTEED A PROFIT AFTER TAX OF 15 PER CENT ON NET FIXED ASSETS WITH THE +PROFIT EQUALIZATION FUND+.

+IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD REGULARLY AND FREQUENTLY MONITOR BOTH THE COMPANY'S OPERATING EFFICIENCY AND FINANCIAL POSITION,+ HE SAID.

DR. CHUNG SAID THE PROFIT EQUALIZATION FUND, WHICH TAKES UP PROFITS IN EXCESS OF 15 PER CENT OF THE COMPANY'S AVERAGE NET FIXED ASSETS FOR A PARTICULAR YEAR, WAS FIRST PROPOSED BY HIM, TOGETHER WITH THE ABOLITION OF ROYALTY, DURING THE DEBATE ON THE LAST TRAM FARE INCREASE IN 1972. HE WAS PLEASED THE GOVERNMENT HAD ACTED ON HIS ADVICE.

THE OPERATION OF THE FUND, TOGETHER WITH THE ABOLITION OF ROYALTY, COULD SIGNIFICANTLY PROLONG THE INTERVAL BETWEEN FARE INCREASES. HE SAID ANOTHER INCREASE WOULD PROBABLY HAVE BEEN NECESSARY EARLY IN 1978 BUT IT WAS LIKELY THAT THIS COULD BE DELAYED TO MID-1980.

DR. CHUNG SAID THAT MORE THAN TWO-THIRDS OF THE TOTAL FIXED ASSETS OF THE TRAMWAY COMPANY, ON WHICH THE PROFITABILITY OF THE COMPANY WAS ASSESSED, WERE IN HOLDINGS OF LAND AT THE RUSSELL STREET DEPOT.

IF THE PRECEDENT OF REVALUATION OF FIXED ASSETS WAS TO BE ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT, DR. CHUNG SAID, THE COMPANY COULD LIKELY REVALUE ITS LAND HOLDINGS IN THE LIGHT OF RISING LAND PRICES SINCE 1965, WHEN THE LAST REVALUATION WAS MADE.

+WHEN THIS HAPPENS, THE NET FIXED ASSETS OF THE COMPANY COULD BE DOUBLED OVERNIGHT AND CONSEQUENTLY THERE COULD BE ANOTHER SUBMISSION FROM THE COMPANY FOR FURTHER FARE INCREASES IN ORDER TO BRING ITS RETURN OR PROFIT ON NET FIXED ASSETS TO THE PERMITTED LEVEL OF 15 PER CENT,+ HE SAID.

/DR. CHUNG SAID

DR. CHUNG SAID HE RECOGNISED HOWEVER THAT THERE WAS NO EASY SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM. HE HOPED THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE ABLE TO PROVIDE INEXPENSIVE LAND UNDER RESTRICTIVE USE AT THE EXTREME EAST END OF THE TRAMWAY FOR A DEPOT, SHOULD THE COMPANY ULTIMATELY DEVELOP OR SELL ITS PRESENT VALUABLE PIECE OF LAND.

ALSO SPEAKING ON THE BILL, THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN SUGGESTED THAT THE INCREASE FROM 20 TO 30 CENTS BE INTRODUCED ON JULY 1, 1976 INSTEAD OF ON DECEMBER 1, 1975 +FOR THE BROADER REASONS IN REGARD TO THE STATE OF OUR ECONOMY AND THE PUBLIC CONCERN OVER STABLE LIVING COSTS.+

MR. CHEONG-LEEN WAS PREPARED TO ACCEPT THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSAL TO WAIVE ALL ROYALTIES FOR 1974 AND 1975. +THIS WOULD BRING THE COMPANY'S RATE OF RETURN FOR EACH OF THESE YEARS TO 13.2 PER CENT AND 10.73 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY, ASSUMING THERE IS NO INCREASE ON DECEMBER 1, 1975,+ HE SAID.

MR. CHEONG-LEEN SAID THAT THE COMPANY'S RATE OF RETURN FOR 1976 WOULD BE 32.1 PER CENT IF THE INCREASE WAS TO BE INTRODUCED ON DECEMBER 1, 1975 AND HE BELIEVED THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO GREAT HARDSHIP IF THE PROPOSED FARE INCREASE WERE TO BE DELAYED UNTIL 1976.

HE ABSTAINED FROM VOTING ON THIS BILL.

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GREATER PROTECTION FOR JOB HUNTERS

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A RECENT COURT CASE REVEALED A LOOPHOLE IN THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE WHICH ORIGINALLY AIMED TO STOP EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES FROM CHARGING JOB SEEKERS EXPENSES OVER AND ABOVE FEES AND COMMISSION ALLOWED BY THE REGULATIONS, MR. IAN PRICE, COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, SAID IN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MR. PRICE WAS MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE EMPLOYMENT (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1975.

HE SAID THAT THE NEW AMENDMENT MERELY CLARIFIED THE LAW AND IN NO WAY AFFECTED THE RIGHT OF AN EMPLOYMENT AGENCY RECOUPING EXPENSES FROM POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS.

THE REGULATIONS STATE THAT A JOB-SEEKER NEEDS ONLY PAY AN EMPLOYMENT AGENCY A MAXIMUM OF \$3 AS A FEE WITH ANOTHER \$3 PAYABLE ON RE-REGISTRATION. IN ADDITION A JOB-SEEKER MAY BE ASKED TO PAY UP TO A MAXIMUM COMMISSION OF 10 PER CENT OF THE FIRST MONTH'S WAGES TO AN AGENCY AFTER SECURING EMPLOYMENT.

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LEGAL BACKING FOR MOVE TOWARDS METRICATION
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A DRAFT BILL HAS BEEN PREPARED TO GIVE LEGISLATIVE EFFECT TO THE METRIC SYSTEM AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF NON-METRIC UNITS IN EXISTING LEGISLATION.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE HON. DAVID MCDONALD, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. JAMES WU WHO ENQUIRED ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF METRICATION.

THE BILL WAS EXPECTED TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE COUNCIL AS SOON AS A NUMBER OF ISSUES HAD BEEN RESOLVED, MR. MCDONALD SAID.

REFERRING TO THE INTRODUCTION OF METRICATION INTO PUBLIC WORKS, MR. MCDONALD SAID: +AS FROM JUNE 1, 1974, ALL NEW DESIGN PROJECTS IN THE ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING DISCIPLINES HAVE BEEN PRODUCED IN METRIC TERMS AND THE CALLING OF TENDERS HAS PROGRESSIVELY MOVED IN FAVOUR OF METRIC CONTRACTS RATHER THAN IMPERIAL CONTRACTS.

+THE PREPARATION OF MAPS IN METRIC SCALES HAS BEEN INTRODUCED AND THE SALE OF CROWN LAND EXCLUSIVELY IN METRIC TERMS WILL BE CONDUCTED AS FROM JUNE 1976.+

THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE, HE NOTED, WAS ABOUT TO ISSUE PRACTICE NOTES AND A SCHEDULE OF METRIC EQUIVALENTS WHICH WOULD ENABLE AUTHORISED PERSONS TO SEEK APPROVAL OF PLANS AND DOCUMENTS PREPARED ON THE PRESCRIBED METRIC SYSTEM.

+AUTHORISED PERSONS WILL AS FROM JANUARY 1, 1976 HAVE THE OPTION OF MAKING SUBMISSIONS FOR APPROVAL IN EITHER IMPERIAL OR METRIC TERMS, AND IT IS INTENDED THAT AS FROM JANUARY 1977, SUBMISSIONS IN METRIC TERMS WILL BE MANDATORY SUBJECT, OF COURSE, TO THE PASSAGE OF APPROPRIATE LEGISLATION,+ MR. MCDONALD SAID.

A WORKING PARTY WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SECTOR IS NOW ENGAGED IN TRANSLATORY WORKS RELATING TO GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS, AND A VERY BASIC ENGLISH/CHINESE GLOSSARY OF SI TERMINOLOGY TOGETHER WITH THE CHINESE VERSION OF METRIC INSTRUCTIONS HAS BEEN MADE AVAILABLE FOR SALE.

TURNING TO EDUCATION, MR. MCDONALD SAID THAT SECONDARY SCHOOLS ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS HAD BEEN CONDUCTED IN METRIC TERMS SINCE 1974, AND COURSES IN SI TERMINOLOGY WERE NOW BEING RUN AT THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC.

+THE ROYAL OBSERVATORY ALSO HAS COMPLETELY METRICATED ITS WORK AND OTHER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS ARE WORKING TOWARDS THIS END,+ HE ADDED.

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ANTIQUITIES ORDINANCE TO COME INTO FORCE IN JANUARY
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THE ANTIQUITIES AND MONUMENTS ORDINANCE WILL BE BROUGHT INTO OPERATION ON JANUARY 1 NEXT YEAR AND REGULATIONS PRESCRIBING THE FORM OF LICENCE FOR EXCAVATING AND SEARCHING FOR ANTIQUITIES WOULD HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED TO THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL BEFORE THEN.

THE HON. DENIS BRAY, SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS AND INFORMATION, WHO WAS REPLYING TO THE HON. ROGER LOBO IN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS AFTERNOON, SAID THAT A QUESTION ON THE ENACTMENT DATE OF THE ORDINANCE HAD ALSO BEEN ASKED PREVIOUSLY IN THE COUNCIL.

HE HAD SAID THEN THAT ITS ENACTMENT WAS HELD UP BECAUSE NO SUITABLY QUALIFIED FULL-TIME EXECUTIVE SECRETARY COULD BE RECRUITED.

ALTHOUGH IT WAS HOPED TO APPOINT A SERVING OFFICER, IT WAS SUBSEQUENTLY DECIDED THAT HIS SERVICES WERE URGENTLY REQUIRED ELSEWHERE.

+WE STILL DO NOT HAVE THE STAFF NECESSARY TO UNDERTAKE ANY STUDY OF THE BUILDINGS AND PLACES WHICH MIGHT BE DECLARED AS MONUMENTS,+ MR. BRAY SAID, +NOR DO I EXPECT THAT SUCH STAFF WILL BE PROVIDED SOON.+

+BUT THE ORDINANCE GOES FURTHER THAN PROVIDING FOR THE PRESERVATION OF MONUMENTS AND IT IS WORTH BRINGING IT INTO FORCE TO PRESERVE TO THE GOVERNMENT THE OWNERSHIP OF RELICS WHICH MAY BE DISCOVERED, AND TO PROHIBIT THE EXCAVATION OF ANTIQUITIES EXCEPT IN ACCORDANCE WITH A LICENCE,+ HE SAID.

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NO BACKLOG OF LEGAL AID APPLICATIONS

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THE PROCESSING TIME FOR AN APPLICATION FOR LEGAL AID IN CIVIL CASES DEPENDS ON THE URGENCY AND TYPE OF PROCEEDINGS AND FOR CRIMINAL CASES, THE TIME, NORMALLY BETWEEN TWO TO SIX WEEKS, DEPENDS ON WHETHER THE APPLICATION IS FOR THE PURPOSES OF A TRIAL OR AN APPEAL AND ON THE COURT OF TRIAL.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON. JOHN HOBLEY, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. MISS KO SIU WAH IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, SAID THAT WHERE THERE WAS URGENCY, AS IN THE CASE OF APPLICATIONS FROM WORKERS SEEKING TO PRESENT BANKRUPTCY OR WINDING-UP PETITIONS AGAINST THEIR EMPLOYERS, THE APPLICATIONS MUST BE, AND WERE DEALT WITH VERY SPEEDILY.

+LIKewise, AN APPLICATION FOR LEGAL AID TO CONTINUE A PENDING CIVIL ACTION OR TO DEFEND CIVIL PROCEEDINGS MUST BE, AND IS, DEALT WITH ON AN URGENT BASIS, AND A DECISION IS TAKEN WITHIN A MONTH OR SO,+ HE SAID.

IN NON-URGENT CASES, THE PROCESSING PERIOD VARIED CONSIDERABLY, AND AS THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AID MUST SATISFY HIMSELF THAT AN APPLICANT, HAD A REASONABLE CASE, INQUIRIES INEVITABLY TOOK TIME IN SOME CASES, HE SAID.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAID THAT THERE WAS NO BACKLOG OF APPLICATIONS WAITING FOR PROCESSING AT THE MOMENT.

AT THE END OF LAST MONTH, 5,745 APPLICATIONS FOR AID IN CIVIL CASES WERE BEING PROCESSED AND 102 APPLICATIONS FOR AID IN CRIMINAL CASES WERE UNDER CONSIDERATION.

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NEW SYSTEM OF PARKING CHARGES TO BE INTRODUCED

A NEW SCALE OF PARKING CHARGES GRADED ACCORDING TO THE POPULARITY OF INDIVIDUAL GOVERNMENT MULTI-STOREY CAR PARKS IS EXPECTED TO BE PUBLISHED SOON.

THIS WAS DISCLOSED TODAY BY THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. JAMES ROBSON, WHEN REPLYING TO QUESTIONS BY THE HON. ALEX WU IN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON THE REVENUE AND OCCUPANCY OF THE CAR PARKS.

+IT IS HOPED THAT THESE NEW CHARGES WILL RESULT IN BETTER PATRONAGE OF THE CAR PARKS WITHOUT ANY LOSS IN TOTAL REVENUE,+ HE SAID.

MR. ROBSON SAID THE FALL IN REVENUE RECEIPTS FOLLOWING THE INCREASE IN CHARGES HAD BEEN MARGINAL. RECEIPTS AMOUNTED TO \$1.150 MILLION IN SEPTEMBER THIS YEAR, AFTER THE INCREASE, COMPARED WITH \$1.157 MILLION IN THE SAME MONTH LAST YEAR BEFORE THE INCREASE.

BETWEEN 8 A.M. AND 7 P.M., THERE WAS A REDUCTION OF 54 PER CENT IN THE OCCUPANCY RATE IN THE THREE MONTHS FOLLOWING THE INCREASE, AND THE CAR PARKS WERE AT ABOUT CAPACITY USAGE BEFORE THE INCREASE.

MR. ROBSON SAID IT WOULD BE TRUE TO SAY THAT ON AVERAGE, THEY WERE NOW ABOUT HALF FULL BETWEEN THESE HOURS.

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NO DECISION ON CONTROL OVER MARTIAL ARTS SCHOOLS

THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT YET DECIDED WHETHER THERE SHOULD BE ANY LEGISLATION TO CONTROL MARTIAL ARTS SCHOOLS.

THIS WAS DISCLOSED BY THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON. LEWIS DAVIES, IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. JAMES WU IN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MR. DAVIES ADDED HOWEVER THAT IT WAS THE INTENTION THAT THE MATTER BE CONSIDERED BY THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL SHORTLY.

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BILLS PASSED

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FIVE BILLS COMPLETED THEIR PASSAGE THROUGH LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY AND BECAME LAW.

THEY WERE THE PENSIONS (INCREASE) BILL 1975, THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) (NO. 6) BILL 1975, THE PEAK TRAMWAY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1975, THE TRAMWAY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1975 AND THE SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL BILL 1975.

EIGHT NEW BILLS WERE INTRODUCED INTO THE COUNCIL: THE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) (NO. 4) BILL 1975, THE POST OFFICE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1975, THE RATING (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1975, THE SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION (1974-75) BILL 1975, THE ARBITRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1975, THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) (AMENDMENT) (NO. 4) BILL 1975, THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG (AMENDMENT) BILL 1975 AND THE EMPLOYMENT (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1975.

THE SENIOR UNOFFICIAL MEMBER, DR. S.Y. CHUNG, ALSO INTRODUCED THE HONG KONG INSTITUTION OF ENGINEERS BILL 1975 FOR FIRST READING.

DEBATE ON THE SECOND READING OF THESE NINE BILLS WAS ADJOURNED.

THE MOTION TO AMEND THE SCHEDULE TO THE +STAR+ FERRY COMPANY (SERVICES) ORDINANCE TO REVISE THE FEES STRUCTURE WAS PASSED AT TODAY'S SESSION.

THE 1974-75 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL AND THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO THE HONG KONG TELEPHONE COMPANY LIMITED 1975 WERE ALSO LAID BEFORE THE COUNCIL.

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DETOXIFICATION CLINIC MAY BE SET UP NEXT YEAR

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THE DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES, DR. GERALD CHOA, SAID TODAY STEPS WOULD BE TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT PLANS FOR A DETOXIFICATION PROGRAMME -- A METHOD PROVEN SUCCESSFUL IN THE UNITED STATES IN THE TREATMENT OF DRUG ADDICTS.

HE SAID IT WAS NOT YET POSSIBLE TO SAY WHEN THE FIRST DETOXIFICATION CLINIC WOULD COME INTO OPERATION, BUT HE WAS HOPEFUL THAT IT SHOULD COME ABOUT EARLY NEXT YEAR.

DR. CHOA SAID HE WAS ENCOURAGED BY WHAT HE HAD SEEN DURING HIS RECENT MONTH-LONG TOUR OF DRUG ADDICTION TREATMENT CENTRES IN VARIOUS AMERICAN CITIES.

+I SEE NO REASON WHY THE DETOXIFICATION PROGRAMME, WHICH HAS BEEN SUCCESSFULLY TRIED OUT IN THE UNITED STATES, CANNOT BE APPLIED IN HONG KONG,+ HE SAID.

THE DIRECTOR EMPHASISED THAT DETOXIFICATION WAS NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR OTHER TREATMENT PROGRAMMES.

+RATHER, IT IS BUT ANOTHER DIFFERENT TYPE OF TREATMENT PROGRAMME THAT SHOULD BE RUN CONCURRENTLY WITH OTHERS IN DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM OF DRUG ADDICTION,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID HE HAD ALWAYS BELIEVED IN MULTIPLE APPROACHES TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM OF DRUG ADDICTION, AND HE WAS WILLING TO TRY ALL REASONABLE METHODS, BEARING IN MIND NOT TO SQUANDER THE TAXPAYERS' MONEY.

DR. CHOA HAS JUST RETURNED FROM THE UNITED STATES WHERE HE ATTENDED A MULTI-REGIONAL DRUG ABUSE REDUCTION SEMINAR AT THE INVITATION OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT. REPRESENTATIVES OF 18 COUNTRIES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD TOOK PART IN THE SEMINAR, THE OBJECT OF WHICH WAS TO PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THOSE COUNTRIES WITH DRUG ADDICTION PROBLEMS TO SEE HOW SUCH PROBLEMS WERE BEING TACKLED IN THE UNITED STATES. THE SEMINAR ALSO PROVIDED A FORUM FOR THE NARCOTICS FIGHTERS TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON DRUG ADDICTION TREATMENT METHODS.

DR. CHOA SAID THE SEMINAR WAS MOST INFORMATIVE AS EACH PARTICIPANT HAD TO PRESENT AN INFORMATION PAPER ABOUT THE DRUG ADDICTION SITUATION IN THEIR OWN COUNTRIES AND HOW THEIR GOVERNMENTS WERE TACKLING THE PROBLEM.

+HONG KONG HAS NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF AS FAR AS EFFORTS TO COMBAT THE PROBLEM ARE CONCERNED,+ HE SAID.

/THE DIRECTOR

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THE DIRECTOR MADE IT CLEAR THAT IF AND WHEN THE PROPOSED DETOXIFICATION PROGRAMME WAS SET UP, IT WOULD NOT REPLACE THE EXISTING METHADONE MAINTENANCE SCHEME.

+THE DETOXIFICATION PROGRAMME WILL BE SUPPLEMENTARY TO THE METHADONE MAINTENANCE SCHEME,+ HE SAID.

DETOXIFICATION TREATMENT INVOLVES THE USE OF METHADONE FOR THE DETOXIFICATION OF ADDICTS OVER THE COURSE OF A FEW WEEKS. THE OBJECT IS TO ELIMINATE THE ADDICT'S CURRENT DEPENDENCE ON DRUGS THROUGH THE ADMINISTRATION OF GRADUALLY DECREASING DOSES OF METHADONE.

THE METHADONE MAINTENANCE SCHEME, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS RUN ON A LONGER TERM BASIS. THE SCHEME CALLS FOR THE DISPENSING OF A CONSTANT DOSE OF METHADONE DAILY WITHOUT HOSPITALISATION TO AN ADDICT AND FOR AN INDETERMINABLE PERIOD.

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INTEREST GROUPS FOR KWUN TONG RESIDENTS

A WIDE RANGE OF YOUTH AND GROUP ACTIVITIES ARE BEING HELD AT THE KWUN TONG COMMUNITY CENTRE TO DEVELOP LEADERSHIP POTENTIALS, INTEREST PURSUITS AND SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY AMONG THE RESIDENTS.

THESE INTEREST GROUPS, ORGANISED BY THE GROUP WORK UNIT OF THE KWUN TONG COMMUNITY CENTRE, SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT, INCLUDE JUDO, GUITAR, MAKE-UP, MANDARIN, WESTERN FOLK DANCE, SOCIAL DANCE, ELEMENTARY TAILORING, CROCHET, PHOTO, WOODWORK, CHINESE BOXING, CANTONESE OPERA, CANTONESE SINGING, AND CHINESE MUSICAL INSTRUMENT TRAINING.

THOSE WHO WISH TO JOIN SHOULD BRING TWO PHOTOS AND THEIR IDENTITY CARD TO THE KWUN TONG COMMUNITY CENTRE AT 17 TSUI PING ROAD FOR REGISTRATION.

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