



TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1974.

DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

LOCAL ADOPTIONS REACH RECORD HIGH

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THE NUMBER OF ADOPTIONS CARRIED OUT IN HONG KONG LAST YEAR WAS THE HIGHEST FOR A DECADE.

FROM 121 ADOPTIONS IN THE FINANCIAL YEAR 1964-65, THE FIGURES SOARED TO 213 IN 1968-69 AND TO 364 IN 1973-74, A THREE-FOLD INCREASE.

IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF THIS YEAR, MORE THAN 180 CHILDREN HAD THEIR ADOPTIONS FINALISED. AND IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE NUMBER OF ADOPTIONS THIS YEAR WILL AGAIN SET A NEW RECORD.

WHILE THE NUMBER OF LOCAL ADOPTIONS IS RISING, THE NUMBER OF OVERSEAS ADOPTIONS HAS DROPPED TO ITS LOWEST IN 10 YEARS. FROM 138 IN 1964-65, THE NUMBER FELL TO 47 IN 1968-69 AND TO NINE LAST YEAR.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE ADOPTION UNIT OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT DESCRIBED THE UPWARD TREND IN THE NUMBER OF LOCAL ADOPTIONS AS AN ENCOURAGING SIGN.

THERE ARE 20 CHILDREN AVAILABLE FOR ADOPTION, BUT THE NUMBER OF APPLICANTS ON THE WAITING LIST EXCEEDS 50.

THE SPOKESMAN ATTRIBUTED THE INCREASE TO THE GREATER ACCEPTABILITY BY THE CHINESE POPULATION OF THE CONCEPT OF ADOPTION. THIS, ON THE OTHER HAND, REDUCED THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN AVAILABLE FOR OVERSEAS ADOPTION.

OTHER REASONS FOR THE INCREASE INCLUDE:

- * GREATER POPULARITY OF THE SERVICE IN LOCAL ADOPTION=
- * INCREASE IN DIVORCE AND RE-MARRIAGE LEADS TO THE NEED IN LEGALISING THE STATUS OF THE STEP-CHILDREN IN THE FAMILY=
- * ABROGATION OF CHINESE CUSTOMARY ADOPTION IN 1973 LEAVES NO OTHER ALTERNATIVES THAN ADOPTION BY COURT ORDER=
- * ADOPTION BY COURT ORDER IS CONSIDERED THE ONLY MEANS FOR VERIFICATION OF RELATIONSHIP/STATUS OF THE ADOPTERS AND THE ADOPTED=
- * THE PRESENT NEED OF CHILDREN TO REGISTER IN SCHOOL WITH THEIR BIRTH CERTIFICATES REQUIRES THE ADOPTERS TO LEGALISE THE ADOPTION WHICH WAS FORMERLY NEGLECTED BY MANY= AND
- * THE INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN AVAILABLE LOCALLY FOR ADOPTION.

THE SPOKESMAN ADDED THAT THE INCREASE WAS ALSO PARTLY DUE TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF CERTAIN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS FOR LEGAL PROOF OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ADOPTERS AND THE ADOPTED.

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CITING THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT AS AN EXAMPLE, SHE SAID AN ADOPTED CHILD COULD NOT BE ADDED INTO THE TENANCY UNLESS A LEGAL PAPER COULD VERIFY THE ADOPTED CHILD'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE HEAD OF THE HOUSEHOLD.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID: +ANOTHER EXAMPLE IS THE RECENT REQUIREMENT OF CHILDREN TO OBTAIN THE NEW JUVENILE IDENTITY CARDS. THIS CALLS FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE ADOPTERS TO LEGALISE THE ADOPTION BY LOCAL COURT ORDER BEFORE THE CHILDREN CAN CLAIM THEIR IDENTITY CARDS.+

WHATEVER THE REASON, THE GROWING NUMBER OF ADOPTIONS HAS CREATED A STAFF PROBLEM FOR THE ADOPTION UNIT.

AT PRESENT, THERE ARE SEVEN ASSISTANT SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICERS IN THE UNIT UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF AN EXPERIENCED OFFICER. EACH OF THESE OFFICERS WAS HANDLING 70 CASES AT THE END OF AUGUST, DOUBLE THE ESTIMATED WORK LOAD. FOR THIS REASON, THE SPOKESMAN SAID, IT NOW TOOK TWICE AS LONG TO COMPLETE A CASE -- ABOUT A YEAR INSTEAD OF THE USUAL SIX MONTHS. HOWEVER, IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE PERIOD MAY BE SHORTENED.

THE DUTIES OF THESE OFFICERS, BETTER KNOWN AS ADOPTION WORKERS, ARE TO ASSIST APPLICANTS TO UNDERSTAND THE LAW AND THE PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED. THEY ALSO VISIT AND INTERVIEW APPLICANTS TO MAKE SURE THAT THE EXECUTION OF AN ADOPTION ORDER IS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CHILD.

SOMETIMES, IN THE COURSE OF THEIR DUTIES, THE ADOPTION WORKERS HAVE TO TRAVEL TO REMOTE PARTS OF HONG KONG TO SEE FOR THEMSELVES FAMILY RELATIONSHIP AND INTER-ACTION BETWEEN FAMILY MEMBERS IN THE NORMAL HOME SETTING.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THE CHILD TO BE ADOPTED MUST BE IN THE CONTINUOUS CARE AND CUSTODY OF THE APPLICANTS FOR SIX MONTHS BEFORE AN ADOPTION ORDER COULD BE MADE. AFTER THAT, THE CHILD ENJOYS THE SAME LEGAL STATUS AS THE APPLICANT'S NATURAL CHILDREN.

INTENDING APPLICANTS MUST BE LEGALLY MARRIED, AGED 25 OR OVER AND BE IN GOOD HEALTH. RELATIVES OF THE CHILD INTENDING TO ADOPT IT MUST BE OVER 21. HOWEVER, THERE IS NO AGE LIMIT IN RESPECT OF APPLICANTS INTENDING TO ADOPT THEIR OWN CHILD NOT BORN OF THE PRESENT MARRIAGE. A FEE OF \$100 IS CHARGED FOR EACH APPLICATION.

SUMMING UP THE WORK OF AN ADOPTION WORKER, THE SPOKESMAN SAID: +IT IS TEDIOUS SOMETIMES, BUT IT IS MOST INTERESTING AND MEANINGFUL.+

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OVERSEAS TRAINING FOR NEW ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS
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FIFTEEN YOUNG ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS RECRUITED BY THE GOVERNMENT LAST YEAR ARE TO SPEND THE NEXT NINE MONTHS AT OXFORD UNIVERSITY IN BRITAIN UNDERTAKING A COURSE ESPECIALLY DESIGNED TO FURTHER THEIR TRAINING.

THE OFFICERS, WHO ARE ALL IN THEIR TWENTIES, WILL BE LEAVING HONG KONG THIS EVENING (OCTOBER 1).

THE COURSE WILL COVER SUCH SUBJECTS AS GOVERNMENT, ECONOMICS, INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION. IT WILL INCLUDE VISITS BOTH WITHIN BRITAIN AND ON THE CONTINENT WHICH WILL CONCENTRATE ON DEVELOPING THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF TRADE AND INDUSTRIAL AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY THAT IT WAS THE FIRST TIME SUCH A LARGE NUMBER OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS HAVE BEEN SENT TO A COURSE ESPECIALLY DESIGNED TO PROVIDE THE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT TO +EQUIP THEM FOR THE IMPORTANT ADMINISTRATIVE POSTS WHICH THEY ARE LIKELY TO OCCUPY IN THE FUTURE.+

HE ADDED THAT THE SCHEME WAS AN EXTENSION OF THE ONE THAT HAD BEEN OPERATING FOR MANY YEARS WHEREBY LOCAL OFFICERS FROM MANY GRADES HAVE BEEN SENT ON OVERSEAS COURSES AND ATTACHMENTS TO VARIOUS ORGANISATIONS.

THE SPOKESMAN EXPLAINED THAT THE OBJECT OF THE COURSE AT OXFORD WENT MUCH FURTHER THAN SIMPLY PROVIDING ACADEMIC TRAINING FOR THE YOUNG ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS.

+THE OPPORTUNITY TO LIVE IN A DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENT SHOULD BROADEN THE OFFICER'S OUTLOOK AND INTERESTS, PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONAL AND INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT, AND ENABLE HIM TO GAIN A BETTER APPRECIATION OF HONG KONG IN ITS ECONOMIC AND INTERNATIONAL SETTING.+

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