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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES

DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Friday, June 16, 1972

TELEVISION IN THE SEVENTIES

Television Authority Speaks On Future Of Television In Hong Kong

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Hong Kong television viewers can expect even better programmes and a wider choice of channels within the next two or three years.

Mr. Nigel Watt, the Television Authority, made this forecast when he addressed the luncheon meeting of the Rotary Club of Kowloon, North, in the Hong Kong Hotel today (Friday).

Speaking on "Television in the Seventies," he said families in the future would have a choice of five television channels reaching into their homes by wireless transmission -- three Chinese and two English programmes.

Mr. Watt said a working party comprising the Television Advisory Board and other Government officers last year completed a thorough review of broadcasting policy to determine whether there was room for further expansion and whether in fact more expansion was desirable.

Three stations with five channels between them was considered a maximum in the field of entertainment television at this stage. Also it was not thought from the financial point of view that any further television channels beyond this number could be supported at the present time.

Mr. Watt recalled that a survey of the available frequencies revealed it was just possible to establish in theory a maximum of six channels of television in one language or the other.

"It was felt that one new licence, to cover one additional programme service in Chinese and one in English was essential," Mr. Watt said. "The reason behind this decision was that it was considered necessary to have competition for wireless television in both languages if high programme standards were to be maintained."

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It was believed, he added, that two channels of English programmes, which cater to smaller audiences, was the maximum competition which Hong Kong could support commercially now or in the future, if the licensees were to maintain their economic viability.

The Chinese language programmes, because of the larger audiences, could however support more competition and the committee calculated that by 1975 a third single channel offering Chinese programmes only would be economically viable within the context of the available revenues from commercial advertising.

Mr. Watt said: "Hong Kong is enjoying a fast rising standard of living and more and more people are buying television sets. As television continues to expand, manufacturers and promoters must of necessity increase their advertising budgets if they are not to lose customers to competitors who do use television as a medium for promoting their products or services."

Restriction On Advertising Time

Speaking of the restriction on advertising time on wireless television, Mr. Watt said it had been accepted that when two or more wireless stations are on the air the present restriction of seven minutes in the hour would be increased to ten minutes, but without increasing the overall ten per cent standard. This would provide more advertising time at peak viewing hours and should help the effective distribution of advertising revenues between the three stations.

He said it was Government's policy that as television was primarily a medium of entertainment it was preferable to allow commercial interests to provide this entertainment under the close supervision and control of a Television Authority rather than to commit public funds for the establishment of a Government television station but to use the money in social services and housing.

It was recognised that television, as a means of public information, was of the utmost importance. Hong Kong was unique in that while it did not have a non-commercial or government television station it had laid down statutory requirements on television stations to provide air time for public service broadcasts.

/At present....

At present TVB is required to provide Government with up to one hour of transmission time per day up to a maximum of seven hours per week. In addition, it is also required to provide four hours for the broadcasting of schools television. These requirements would apply to each licensee in the future except that public service programmes may be varied up to one and a half hours per day within the seven-hour weekly maximum which is unchanged. Spread between three stations this will give a total of 15 hours of television per day for schools and public service broadcasts.

Mr. Watt then went on to explain the work and functions of the Television Authority. Television stations, he said, must comply with the statutory requirements of the Television Ordinance and the three Codes of Practice covering programme, advertising and technical standards.

He said television exerted a very powerful influence on the community, and in Hong Kong as a medium for entertainment, information and education it reached a great number of persons of all ages in the privacy of their homes. Great care therefore must be exercised in the selection of programmes by the television stations and to assist them certain rules had been laid down as broad guidelines.

Comprehensive Rules

"There are fairly comprehensive rules about violence, especially as it relates to children and young people. Conflict is a major element in drama but violence for its own sake is not permitted simply because it attracts or secures the attention of certain types of audiences. There are also rules relating to religious rites, marriage, drug addiction -- to mention only a few."

Mr. Watt said there were strict rules relating to medical advertisements and to advertisements directed towards children or in which children appear. All advertisements intended for television, he pointed out, were subject to censorship by the Panel of Film Censors.

What will the coming changes mean for the Hong Kong viewer? Firstly, with a marked increase in the choice of programmes freely available it was almost certain that the number of viewers would increase, particularly with the cost of television sets getting cheaper. Secondly, colour television which was a dream only a few years ago, is now a reality and with prices falling still further more colour television will be within the reach of many more people.

/Mr. Watt....

Mr. Watt said: "With controlled competition such as envisaged by the new policy I think we can only see an improvement in the programmes offered as stations vie with each other to capture the maximum audience. So the Hong Kong viewer is going to have not only more programmes but possibly even better ones to choose from in the years ahead."

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Note to Editors: Copies of the full text of Mr. Watt's speech are distributed separately in the G.I.S. press boxes this evening.

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MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS FOR 250 AGED

Three Organisations Sponsor Wong Tai Sin Project

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Two hundred and fifty elderly folk, all over 60 and one 98, will take part in a health competition in Our Lady of Maryknoll Hospital on June 17 and 24, between 1.30 and 5 p.m.

The competition is in the form of medical examinations of the contestants to test their blood pressure, heart, lungs, teeth, ears, eyes, nose, and general physical strength.

Health certificates will be issued after the examinations for those who "qualify," supplemented with follow-up check-ups.

The competition is being sponsored by the Social Welfare Department's Wong Tai Sin Community Centre, with the support and co-operation of the Tsz Wan Shan Kaifong Association and Our Lady of Maryknoll Hospital.

It forms part of the Wong Tai Sin District Committee on Welfare Services' programme for the aged. Volunteers attending the examinations to help out will come from the Wong Tai Sin Community Centre's Old People Service Team.

Mr. Choi Jun, President of the Committee on Welfare Services for the Aged, has donated $1,500 towards expenses.

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Note to Editors: You are invited to have the examinations covered.

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ANTI-LITTER AMENDMENT BILL

Provision For Stringent New Regulations

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An amending bill giving authority for stringent new anti-litter regulations to be made in readiness for the "Keep Hong Kong Clean" Campaign will be introduced into the Legislative Council shortly.

The Public Health and Urban Services (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill, 1972, published in today's Government Gazette for general information, proposes to amend the principal ordinance.

This would enable regulations to be made for the control of litter, the cleansing of premises and other places, and the prevention of nuisances or danger to health or person arising from refuse or other matter anywhere in Hong Kong.

It also provides for control over the employment of children in the removal or disposal of refuse.

Subject to the bill being passed into law, the Urban Council will be empowered to strengthen its anti-litter by-laws, and similar regulations for the New Territories will be made.

The bill seeks to amend the principal ordinance to empower the authorities to serve a notice requiring the removal of refuse and cleaning of the area in which refuse is found.

This notice may be served on the owner of the refuse, the person responsible for putting it there or the occupier of the place where it is found.

/If the .....

If the person on whom the notice is served fails to comply with it, he would be guilty of an offence, and the authorities may remove the refuse and dispose of it.

A maximum fine of $1,000 is prescribed and a fine of $50 for each day the offence continues.

The recipient of the notice may also be ordered by the court to pay the expenses incurred by the authorities in removing and destroying or disposing of the refuse, or cleaning the area where it was found.

Cleansing Operations

Another amendment to the principal ordinance would permit a written notice to be attached to any article obstructing cleansing operations, requiring its removal in not less than 24 hours.

If this notice is not complied with, or if the obstruction recurs within the period specified in the notice, the article can be carried away by the authorities and detained without further notice.

A further amendment to the principal ordinance would empower an authorised public officer to require any person alleged to have committed an offence against the anti-litter regulations to give his correct name and address and produce evidence of these particulars. The public officer would have the power to arrest any person failing to do so.

The authorities would also be empowered, if they think fit, to publish in any newspaper the details of any conviction for an offence against the regulations.

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RESUMPTION OF PROPERTIES FOR URBAN RENEWAL PILOT SCHEME

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The ninth batch of resumption notices on land required for the implementation of the Urban Renewal Pilot Scheme on Hong Kong Island were served today. The notices affected seven tenanted pre-war buildings at Nos. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 Fat Hing Street.

A detailed plan of the lots affected by the resumption notices is on display at the Western District Office at 205A Des Voeux Road West, the Crown Lands & Survey Office, 17th floor, Murray Building, and at the Western District Kai Fong Association premises at Possession Point.

A Compensation Board will be appointed under Section 6 of the Crown Lands Resumption Ordinance to determine the amount of compensation to be paid for all interests in the land resumed.

As was the case when properties were previously gazetted for resumption for Urban Renewal, the domestic occupants of the buildings will be offered some form of public housing according to suitability and availability when they are required to move.

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POKFULAM ROAD TO BE WIDENED

To Ease Traffic Flow To Wah Fu Estate And Aberdeen

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Plans on improving Pokfulam Road, which carries increasing traffic due to the rapid development of the Aberdeen area and Wah Fu Estate, are being realised.

Certain sections of the road have been widened and it is intended to continue the improvement in stages.

The next stage is aimed at improving traffic on the section of the road between its junction with Mount Davis Road and Queen Mary Hospital.

The widened Pokfulam Road will provide a four-lane carriageway with footways on both sides.

The proposed works will involve alterations to the alignment, width and levels of the existing Pokfulam Road, and an announcement in the Government Gazette giving notice of an order to be made under the Streets (Alteration) Ordinance for this project is made today.

The closing date for objections will be July 16, 1972 and any claims for compensation should be made by August 16, 1972.

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NURSES REGISTRATION ORDINANCE

Amending Bill Takes Account Of New Situation

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A Bill amending the Nurses Registration Ordinance so as to remove the word "Assistant" from the term "Enrolled Assistant Nurse" was published in the Gazette today for public information.

The Bill also seeks to legalise the decision reached by the Government recently to extend until December 31, 1972, the time limit during which nurses who have already completed a course of training acceptable to the Nursing Board, and who have been engaged in bona fide duties, may be enrolled without an examination.

It will be recalled that a Working Party set up in 1965 had recommended that a new grade of nurse be introduced. At the time the Nurses Registration Ordinance was enacted in 1970, provision was made for the enrolment of this type of nurse by June 1, 1972, without an examination.

As the latter date neared a few weeks ago, it became apparent from complaints received from these nurses that they had been under certain misapprehensions, and so, to give time for these to be dispelled, it was considered desirable to extend the time limit.

Commenting on the amendments, Mr. J. Flinn, Secretary to the Nursing Board, said the extension of seven months for registration without an examination meant the Government "recognised the need to give these nurses more time."

/But .....

But this meant having to introduce an amendment to the principal ordinance, and accordingly the opportunity was taken also to revise the term "Enrolled Assistant Nurse" so as to drop the word "Assistant" -- which had also occasioned some misunderstanding.

"These changes make a considerable difference to the situation, because they go a long way to meet the objections that have been raised," Mr. Flinn said.

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GOVERNOR EXPRESSES SYMPATHY

For Families Of Those Killed In Air Crashes

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The Governor, Sir Murray MacLehose, in a message from Government House today said that he was greatly distressed to learn of the two air disasters which took place on June 14 and 15 and of the suffering they have caused in Hong Kong.

His deepest sympathy and that of Lady MacLehose went out to the families of those who had been bereaved as a result of these tragic accidents.

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COX'S ROAD TO BE RECONSTRUCTED

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Work is to begin in August this year on the reconstruction of 950 feet of carriageway in Cox's Road, Tsim Sha Tsui.

The carriageway will be rebuilt in eight-inch reinforced concrete slab. Concrete footpath will also be provided on each side.

In addition, opportunity will be taken to enlarge the existing stormwater drain and sewer.

While work is in progress, traffic in Cox's Road will be routed from two-way to one-way northbound.

Work is expected to take about four months to complete.

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTS FOR APRIL, 1972

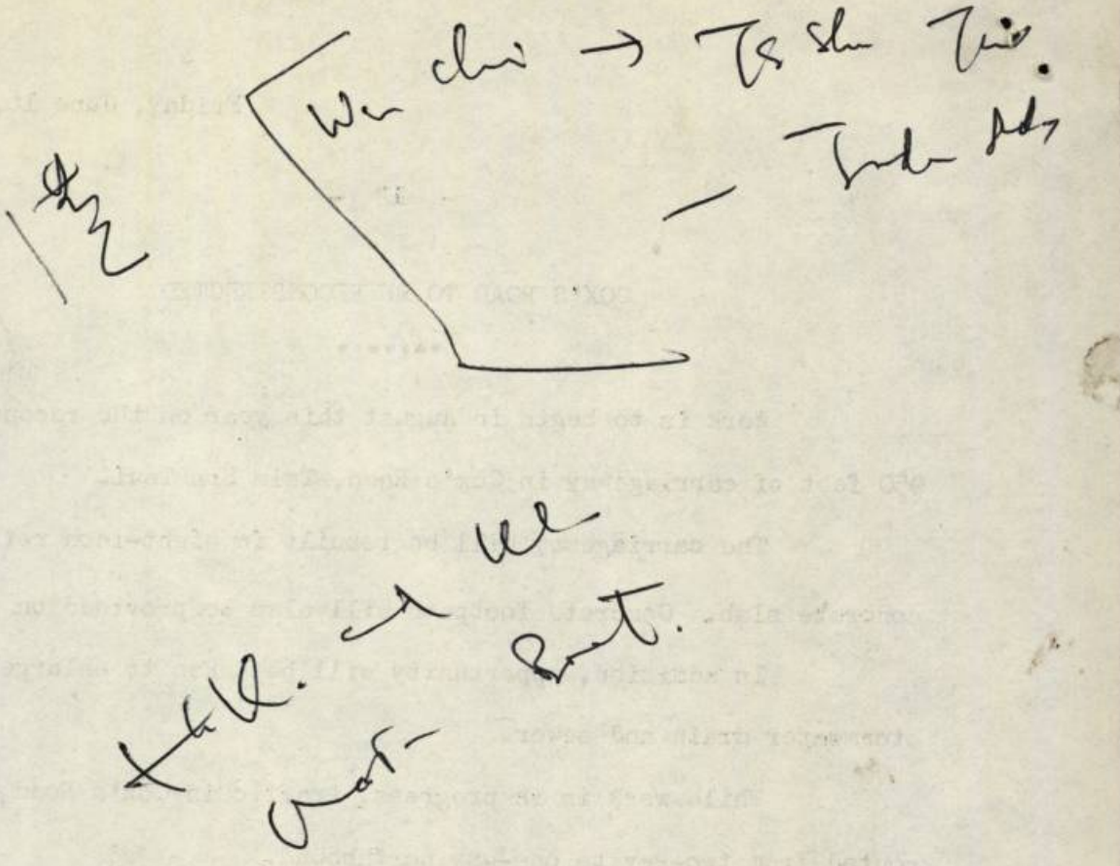
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The Hong Kong Government accounts for the month of April 1972 show a surplus of $11.86 million, compared with a surplus of $45.69 million in April last year.

Total revenue for the month at $261.18 million was $23.95 million more than in April 1971. Expenditure amounted to $249.32 million, an increase of $57.78 million over the same month last year.

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Release Time: 6.45 p.m.



4000035 P.R. 33

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT

INFORMATION SERVICES

DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

SUPPLEMENT

Friday, June 16, 1972

TELEVISION IN THE SEVENTIES

Full Text Of Speech By Mr. Watt, Television Authority

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The following is the full text of the speech on "Television in the Seventies" by Mr. N.J.V. Watt, Television Authority, to the Rotary Club of Kowloon, North, in the Hong Kong Hotel today (Friday):

Gentlemen,

Before the end of this decade, indeed within the next two or three years, you and your families will have a choice of five television channels coming into your homes by wireless transmission. There will be three Chinese and two English programmes instead of the present one Chinese and one English wireless television channel.

What has brought about this change?

Why five channels? Why not four or six or even ten?

What is this going to mean for Hong Kong viewers?

These are some of the questions that I will attempt to answer in the time available to me.

Although I have entitled my talk "Television in the Seventies" I think it is necessary to sketch in for you some of the history of the development of television in Hong Kong. As far back as 1955 Rediffusion had been experimenting with wired television and in 1957 was granted an exclusive franchise for the diffusion of television by wire. Interest had also been shown at this time by Rediffusion and others in the establishment of wireless television but it was considered by many at that time that it was not technically possible due to the topographical features of the Colony.

However by 1963 interest was again shown in the operation of wireless television services and there had been in the meantime technological advances which made such a proposition more feasible.

/It was also....

It was also considered that competition for Rediffusion -- at that time the sole television operator -- was desirable and in 1965 one licence for a wireless television station was offered by public tender. Such was the interest in this new station that eight tenders were received and in 1967 the licence was awarded to Television Broadcasts Ltd. who commenced broadcasting on a limited scale from the main transmitter at Temple Hill in November of that year.

Television Broadcasts' licence granted them a monopoly of wireless television for a period of five years and in that time there had been a tremendous increase in the interest shown in television both by the viewing public and by advertisers.

Since 1967 TVB has activated nine subsidiary transmitters thereby enabling its programmes to be received in most of the more populous areas. One year after TVB started broadcasting, it was estimated that there were a total of 107,000 sets capable of receiving wireless television. By the end of 1971 this figure had risen to over 500,000 and latest estimates put the figure at close on 600,000 of which it is thought that over 13,000 are capable of receiving colour transmissions. This means that approximately 95.7 per cent of the population over 12 years of age are able to view wireless television in their homes.

Medium For Advertising

At the same time television, as a medium for advertising, had been growing more effective as evidenced by the rise in the cost of advertising on wireless television. When broadcasting commenced in 1967 the cost of 30 seconds of advertising at prime time on the Jade Channel was $360. The current rate for the same 30 second time slot is $1,990.

So you can see that, in step with television growing in popularity as a means of entertainment, it has at the same time become a widely accepted medium for commercial advertising which is fortunate since without such support the station could not remain viable. The exclusive part of TVB's licence, as I said, expires in November this year. Rediffusion's 15-year wired T.V. franchise is also due to expire in April of next year. A thorough review of broadcasting policy in general was therefore necessary to determine whether there was room for further expansion and whether in fact more expansion was desirable.

/It seemed....

It seemed likely from the outset that wireless television, because of its ability to reach a greater proportion of the population by broadcast means than was possible by subscription television, would eventually outstrip its wired competitor in terms of numbers of viewers. The only question was how long this growth would take. In fact it has happened very quickly indeed. Now the sole wireless T.V. operator, introduced initially as competitor to wired television, is in need of competition itself from other wireless television licensees.

In December 1970 a working party comprising the Television Advisory Board and other Government officers was set up to consider these and other related problems. It completed its report nine months later having held over 40 meetings covering all aspects of television and sound broadcasting and including some sessions at which the views of the existing licensees were heard.

Number Of Channels

There arose the question of how many channels were desirable. Obviously the number of channels is limited by technical factors such as the limited number of frequencies available for allocation and the fact that each service requires one main transmitter with ten or more subsidiary transmitters operating on different frequencies to enable the service to reach all parts of the Colony. A survey of the available frequencies revealed that it was just possible to establish in theory a maximum of six channels of television in one language or the other. How were these service frequencies to be used? Firstly, it was felt that one new licence, to cover one additional programme service in Chinese and one in English was essential. The reason behind this decision was that it was considered necessary to have competition for wireless television in both languages if high programme standards were to be maintained. The English language programmes cater to smaller audiences than the Chinese programmes and it was considered that two channels of English programmes was the maximum competition which Hong Kong could support commercially now or in the future -- if the licensees were to maintain their economic viability. The Chinese language programmes, because of the larger audiences, could however support more competition and the committee calculated that by 1975 a third single channel offering Chinese programmes only would be economically viable within the context of the available revenues from commercial advertising. Hong Kong is enjoying a fast rising standard

/of living....

of living and more and more people are buying television sets. As television continues to expand, manufacturers and promoters must of necessity increase their advertising budgets if they are not to lose customers to competitors who do use television as a medium for promoting their products or services. At present advertising time on wireless television is restricted to seven minutes per hour subject to an overall maximum of ten per cent of the total transmission time. Rediffusion's wired service, on the other hand, is not controlled so rigidly by the terms of its licence as is HK-TVB and the station may insert any amount of advertising material in any one hour provided it does not exceed the ten per cent overall maximum. In practice Rediffusion has often broadcast over ten minutes of advertising per hour and on occasions has had as much as 16 or 17 minutes in the hour, without complaint from the public. It has been accepted therefore that when there are two or more wireless television stations on the air the present restriction of seven minutes in the hour will be increased to ten minutes (without increasing the overall ten per cent standard). This will provide more advertising time at peak viewing hours and should help the effective distribution of advertising revenues between the three stations.

Special Services

Additionally, Government has stated that the applicants for this third licence may if they wish offer special services such as subscription television (although the tender will not be conditional on this). These special services will be considered concurrently with other tenders received.

A service which in part provides subscription television free of advertising would not be operating in full competition for total advertising with the two other licensees since the station would not be wholly dependent on commercial advertising for its revenue. It could however provide a welcome medium for home studies, vocational training or other desirable programmes for minority audiences.

It is not considered from the financial point of view that any further television channels can be supported at the present time.

In 1965 Government's policy was that as television is primarily a medium of entertainment it was preferable to allow commercial interests to provide this entertainment under the close supervision and control of a Television Authority rather than to commit public funds in the order of $20 million per year (funds which could be used to greater advantage in other fields of social services and housing) for the establishment of a Government television station.

/However.....

However, it is recognised that television, as a means of public information, is of the utmost importance. Hong Kong is therefore unique in that while it does not have a non-commercial or Government television station it does lay down statutory requirements on the television stations to provide air time for public service broadcasts.

At present TVB is required to provide Government with up to one hour of transmission time per day (seven hours per week) for public service programmes produced by Government's Programme Unit, Radio Hong Kong Television, and in addition it also is required to provide four hours for the broadcasting of schools television. The recommendations of the working party which have been accepted were that these requirements will apply to each licensee in the future except that public service programmes may be extended up to one and a half hours per day within these limits. This will allow Government a total of approximately 15 hours of television per day on three stations, somewhat more transmission time than one might normally expect from a Government television station.

Technical Developments

The sixth channel has therefore been reserved to meet possible future technical developments and Hong Kong's future needs, not necessarily in the field of television. In any event three stations with five channels between them is considered the maximum in the field of entertainment television at this stage and in the foreseeable future.

It could be argued that the third channel will have some commercial advantage over the other two in that it will not have to support the costs of an English service with an inevitably poor commercial return. The apparent advantage, will, I think, to a very large extent be outweighed by the fact that the single service station will still be required to provide to Government the same amount of air time for educational and public service programmes (five hours per day on its only channel) which the other operators will, in many cases, be able to screen on their less productive English channels.

I referred earlier to the close supervision and control of the Television Authority. It might be useful here to give you some idea of what this control entails. As Television Authority I am responsible for the administration of the Television Ordinance and for compliance by licensees with the terms of the Ordinance, the

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subsidiary legislation and the three Codes of Practice. To assist me I have a Television Advisory Board, of which I am the Chairman, comprising two public officers and two, soon to be three, members of the public. The Television Advisory Board is responsible for advising me in the exercise of my functions, submitting proposals and recommendations to the Governor in Council with regard to technical, programme and advertising standards and also with respect to the renewal or revocation of licences. In addition the Board conducts inquiries into any matters referred to it by the Governor in Council, or by myself, and publishes reports on the progress of television.

Television Secretariat

In addition to the Television Advisory Board I have within the Information Services Department a small Television Secretariat comprising a secretary and a team of monitors. The monitors are responsible for viewing all programmes, in particular those programmes which are transmitted live, with a view to ensuring that they comply with the statutory requirements of the Ordinance and the Codes of Practice. Daily reports from the monitors are circulated to members of the Television Advisory Board and any infringements are brought to the attention of the company. All filmed material to be shown on television is subject to censorship by the Panel of Film Censors.

I don't know whether any of you here are familiar with the Codes of Practice published by me under the Television Ordinance. There are in fact three codes, the first covering programme standards, the second dealing with advertising standards and the last technical standards. The technical standards do not, I think, concern the man in the street but the other two codes do. Wherever television has been established it has exerted a very powerful influence on the community. In Hong Kong as a medium for entertainment, information and education it reaches a great number of persons of all ages in the privacy of their homes. Great care must therefore be exercised in the selection of programmes by the television stations and to assist them we have laid down certain rules as broad guidelines.

There are fairly comprehensive rules about violence, especially as it relates to children and young people. Conflict is a major element in drama but violence for its own sake is not permitted simply because it attracts or secures the attention of certain types of audiences. There are also rules relating to religious rites, marriage, drug addiction -- to mention only a few.

/The advertising...

The advertising codes contain strict rules relating to medical advertisements and to advertisements directed towards children or in which children appear. Other rules cover advertisements for fire arms, debentures, banks, and money lenders, etc. All advertisements intended for television are also subject to censorship by the Panel of Film Censors. However, during the period November, 1968 to December, 1970 only 29 advertisements, out of a total of 1,805 viewed, were not approved for television.

And now I come to my last point -- what is it going to mean for Hong Kong viewers. Firstly, with a marked increase in the choice of programmes freely available it is almost certain that the number of viewers will increase. Television sets which in 1967 were a large capital outlay for any household are getting cheaper every year and now one can purchase a compact portable set for under $400. Secondly, colour television which was a dream only a few years ago, is now a reality and one can buy a colour set now for about $1,600. These prices will fall still further bringing colour television within the reach of many more viewers. Lastly, with controlled competition such as envisaged by this new policy I think we can only see an improvement in the programmes offered as stations vie with each other to capture the maximum audience. So the Hong Kong viewer is going to have not only more programmes but possibly even better ones to choose from in the years ahead.

Thank you.

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Release Time: 1 p.m.