



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 5, 1977

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4-1/2 PER CENT REDUCTION OF GENERAL RATE PROPOSED

THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSES TO REDUCE THE GENERAL RATE INVOLVING URBAN AREAS FROM THE PRESENT 12 PER CENT OF RATEABLE VALUES TO 7-1/2 PER CENT.

ANNOUNCING THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, SAID THE PROPOSED REDUCTION, WHICH WOULD AFFECT HONG KONG ISLAND, KOWLOON AND NEW KOWLOON, WAS SUBJECT TO THE COUNCIL MAKING THE APPROPRIATE RESOLUTION UNDER SECTION 18 OF THE RATING ORDINANCE.

+I HAVE NOT YET DECIDED WHAT THE GENERAL RATE SHOULD BE FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, WHERE THERE IS NO URBAN COUNCIL RATE IN ADDITION TO THE GENERAL RATE, FOR THE COUNCIL DOES NOT OPERATE THERE,+ HE SAID.

+THE PRESENT GENERAL RATE IN THE NEW TERRITORIES VARIES AS BETWEEN RATING AREAS AND NEWLY RATED AREAS ARE BROUGHT INTO ASSESSMENT ON A PHASED BASIS.+

BUT, GENERALLY SPEAKING, HE ADDED, NEW TERRITORIES RATEPAYERS COULD EXPECT AN ADJUSTMENT COMPARABLE TO THAT PROPOSED FOR RATEPAYERS IN THE URBAN RATING AREAS.

MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID HE DECIDED TO MAKE THE STATEMENT ON THE GENERAL RATE BEFORE BUDGET DAY BECAUSE OF EVIDENT PUBLIC CONCERN ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS FOR RATEPAYERS OF THE SUBSTANTIALLY HIGHER RATEABLE VALUES, RANGING FROM 54 PER CENT FOR FACTORIES TO 158 PER CENT FOR LARGE HOUSES, ESTABLISHED AS A RESULT OF THE RECENT REVALUATION OF PREMISES.

HE ESTIMATED THAT THE YIELD FROM THE GENERAL RATE, WHEN APPLIED TO THE NEW RATEABLE VALUES, WOULD BE AROUND \$770 MILLION IN 1977/78, OR 25 PER CENT UP ON THE ESTIMATED YIELD FROM THE PRESENT GENERAL RATE APPLIED TO PRESENT RATEABLE VALUES.

+IN ADDITION, BETWEEN NOW AND BUDGET DAY, I SHALL BE CONSIDERING THE POSITION OF CERTAIN CLASSES OF RATEPAYERS WHO MAY BE PARTICULARLY AFFECTED BY THE REVALUATION OF THEIR PREMISES,+ HE SAID.

+I AM CONCERNED, FOR EXAMPLE, ABOUT THE POSITION OF OCCUPIERS OF PRE-WAR RENT CONTROLLED PREMISES. THE RATEABLE VALUES OF THEIR PREMISES HAVE BEEN THIS TIME, QUITE CORRECTLY, ASSESSED WITHOUT REGARD TO THE FACT THAT RENTS ARE CONTROLLED.

+THERE MAY BE, THEREFORE, A CASE FOR TEMPORARILY SUPPRESSING THE FULL EFFECT ON OCCUPIERS OF THE REVALUATION OF THESE PREMISES.+

MR. HADDON-CAVE EMPHASISED THAT HIS STATEMENT +IS SOLELY CONCERNED TO DESCRIBE THE PROPOSALS THE GOVERNMENT HAS IN MIND AND TO DO NO MORE THAN THAT.+

+A DEFINITIVE JUSTIFICATION IN TERMS OF FISCAL AND BUDGETARY POLICY AND EQUITABLE TREATMENT OF RATEPAYERS MUST AWAIT THE 1977 BUDGET SPEECH,+ HE ADDED.

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ESTABLISHMENT OF HOME OWNERSHIP FUND

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY APPROVED A MOTION TO ESTABLISH A REVOLVING FUND TO FINANCE THE CONSTRUCTION OF FLATS FOR SALE UNDER THE HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME.

MOVING THE MOTION FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE HOME OWNERSHIP FUND, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, SAID THE INTENTION WAS TO CREDIT THE FUND WITH SUCH APPROPRIATIONS FROM GENERAL REVENUE AS THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MIGHT APPROVE FROM TIME TO TIME.

HE RECALLED THAT IN NOVEMBER LAST THE GOVERNMENT DECIDED THAT THE FIRST PHASE OF AN INITIAL BUILDING PROGRAMME, DESIGNED TO PRODUCE ABOUT 6,000 FLATS FOR SALE, SHOULD BE BUILT BY THE HOUSING AUTHORITY ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT.

+WHEN THE HOUSING AUTHORITY HAS COMPLETED AND COSTED THEIR PROPOSALS FOR THE INITIAL 6,000 FLATS I SHALL INVITE FINANCE COMMITTEE TO CREATE A NEW EXPENDITURE SUBHEAD AND APPROPRIATE THE NECESSARY FUNDS EITHER THIS YEAR OR NEXT,+ HE SAID.

MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID THAT IF AND WHEN MADE BY THE COUNCIL, THE RESOLUTION WOULD AUTHORISE HIM TO EXPEND MONIES FROM THE FUND TO MEET THE FULL COST OF PROVIDING FLATS FOR SALE. HE ENVISAGED THAT EXPENDITURE WOULD COVER SUCH ITEMS AS LAND AND CONSTRUCTION COSTS, AS WELL AS REIMBURSEMENTS TO THE HOUSING AUTHORITY FOR SALARIES, ON-COSTS AND OTHER EXPENSES PROPERLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION AND SALE OF FLATS.

+THE FULL PROCEEDS FROM THE SALE OF FLATS WILL BE CREDITED TO THE FUND AS INCOME,+ HE SAID. +SUITABLE ARRANGEMENTS FOR ASSISTING WOULD-BE PURCHASERS TO ACQUIRE THEM ARE STILL BEING WORKED OUT, BUT I HOPE TO BE ABLE TO MAKE A DEFINITIVE STATEMENT AS TO THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION IN THE BUDGET SPEECH.+

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY EXPECTED THAT THE INCOME ACCRUING TO THE FUND WOULD EXCEED TOTAL TRANSFERS INTO THE FUND FROM GENERAL REVENUE, AS THE SELLING PRICE OF THE FLATS WOULD INCLUDE AN ELEMENT OF INTEREST ON DRAWINGS ON THE FUND.

+AS THESE EXCESSES, IF THEY ARISE, WILL BE SURPLUS TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE FUND THERE IS A PROVISION IN THE RESOLUTION ENABLING ME TO TRANSFER THEM FROM THE FUND INTO GENERAL REVENUE,+ HE ADDED.

SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE MOTION, THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN HOPED EVERYTHING POSSIBLE WOULD BE DONE TO ENSURE THAT THE FLATS WOULD BE COMPETITIVELY COSTED -- TO AT LEAST NOT HIGHER THAN IF DONE BY PRIVATE ENTERPRISE -- AND OFFERED AT A SUITABLE PRICE TOGETHER WITH AN ATTRACTIVE LONG-TERM REPAYMENT PLAN.

/SINCE SUCH

SINCE SUCH HOUSING UNITS WOULD BE OFFERED ON A NON-PROFIT BASIS, HE SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT TO HAVE A VERY CAREFUL DEFINITION OF THE CATEGORIES OF PERSONS ELIGIBLE TO BENEFIT FROM THE HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME.

+THE FIRST PRIORITY WILL HAVE TO GO TO THOSE FAMILIES LIVING IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES WHOSE INCOMES OVER THE YEARS HAVE RISEN TO SUCH AN EXTENT THAT THEY CAN WITHOUT ANY DIFFICULTY AFFORD COMING UNDER THE HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME,+ HE SAID.

+IN ADOPTING THIS FIRST PRIORITY, GOVERNMENT WILL BE TAKING STEPS TO REDUCE THE FINANCIAL SUBSIDY IN PUBLIC HOUSING TO THOSE FAMILIES WHO NO LONGER NEED IT, AND AT THE SAME TIME RELEASE MORE PUBLIC HOUSING ACCOMMODATION TO THOSE FAMILIES THAT ARE ACTUALLY IN NEED,+ HE ADDED.

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NO CHANGE IN TIME DECISION

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THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSES TO INTRODUCE LEGISLATION WHICH WILL HAVE THE EFFECT OF MAINTAINING HONG KONG STANDARD TIME (GMT + 8) THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER OF 1977, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON. DENIS BRAY, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN, HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD THEN TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT THE MATTER TO SEE WHAT PERMANENT ARRANGEMENTS SHOULD BE MADE.

+THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL IS SHORTLY TO BE CONSULTED ON THE LEGISLATION AND IF IT IS AGREED THEN THERE WILL BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO DEBATE THE ISSUE IN THIS COUNCIL,+ HE ADDED.

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CALL FOR MORE FLATTED FACTORY SPACE IN NEW TOWNS
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THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN TODAY CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO ACCELERATE ITS PLANS TO PROVIDE MORE FLATTED FACTORY AND WORKSHOP SPACE IN THE NEW TOWNS FOR THE SMALLER OPERATORS.

SPEAKING DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, HE SAID SUCH ACCOMMODATION COULD ONLY BE REALISTICALLY PROVIDED THROUGH THE JOINT EFFORTS OF GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE ENTERPRISE.

THIS, HE SAID, COULD BE DONE BY THE PROVISION OF MORE GOVERNMENT-BUILT FLATTED FACTORY SPACE FOR THE SMALLER FACTORIES WHICH ARE GENERALLY UNDER 1,500 SQUARE FEET IN SIZE, AND BY OFFERING FOR SALE TO PRIVATE DEVELOPERS MORE INDUSTRIAL SITES RESTRICTED TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF FACTORY UNITS VARYING BETWEEN 1,000 TO 3,000 SQUARE FEET EACH.

MR. CHEONG-LEEN ALSO THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE TIMELY TO REVIEW THE NEED TO SET UP A SEPERATE UNIT WITHIN GOVERNMENT, AUGMENTED BY UNOFFICIAL PARTICIPATION, TO CONCENTRATE ON INVESTIGATING AND ANALYSING THE NEEDS AND PROBLEMS OF SMALL-SCALE INDUSTRIES IN HONG KONG, WHETHER THEY BE FINANCIAL, TECHNICAL, MANAGEMENT, OR OTHERWISE, AND TO STUDY IN WHAT MANNER IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR GOVERNMENT TO HELP THEM BECOME MORE VIABLE AND SELF-RELIANT INDUSTRIAL UNITS.

HE POINTED OUT THAT OF HONG KONG'S 20,000 INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS, LESS THAN 1,000 FACTORIES EMPLOYED HALF OF THE TOTAL WORK FORCE OF 700,000, THE OTHER HALF BEING EMPLOYED BY THE REMAINING 19,000 FACTORIES.

+WHAT IS WORTH NOTING IS THAT 16,500 FACTORIES EACH EMPLOY LESS THAN 50 WORKERS,+ HE SAID.

+IT HAS BEEN ESTIMATED THAT ABOUT 69 PER CENT OF ALL FACTORIES IN HONG KONG ARE SITUATED IN NON-INDUSTRIAL PREMISES,+ HE ADDED.

WITH GOVERNMENT'S RECENTLY ANNOUNCED PROGRAMME OF ACTION AGAINST INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS IN NON-INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS, HE SAID PLANS SHOULD BE MADE TO ACCOMMODATE WORKSHOPS AND SMALL FACTORIES WHICH ARE EITHER CLEARED FROM SQUATTER AREAS OR FROM DOMESTIC BLOCKS.

MR. CHEONG-LEEN POINTED OUT THAT MUCH HARDSHIP WAS ENCOUNTERED ESPECIALLY WHEN SMALL FACTORY OPERATORS WERE CLEARED FROM DOMESTIC PREMISES.

+WHILE THEY ARE LEGALLY ENTITLED TO COMPENSATION, THEY ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR FACTORY RE-PROVISIONING IN A GOVERNMENT FLATTED FACTORY BUILDING AND IT IS VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR THEM TO FIND ACCOMMODATION IN A PRIVATELY OWNED FACTORY WHERE THE MINIMUM UNIT IS AT LEAST 5,000 SQUARE FEET,+ HE SAID.

/+RATHER J....

+RATHER THAN HAVING A MEAGRE EX-GRATIA COMPENSATION, THEY WOULD MUCH RATHER BE GIVEN THE SAME RIGHT AS SQUATTER FACTORIES OF LESS THAN 3,000 SQUARE FEET, WHICH MAY OPT FOR ACCOMMODATION IN GOVERNMENT FLATTED FACTORY BUILDINGS,+ HE ADDED.

ANOTHER AREA WHERE GOVERNMENT POLICY WAS INADEQUATE BOTH FOR FACTORIES IN DOMESTIC BLOCKS AS WELL AS IN SQUATTER AREAS, HE CONTINUED, WAS THE +NON-ELIGIBLE+ TRADES OR INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS OF A DANGEROUS OR OBNOXIOUS NATURE.

+SURELY THE GOVERNMENT OUGHT TO HAVE A LONG TERM PLAN TO COPE WITH THE NEED FOR FACTORY SPACE FOR SUCH CATEGORIES OF INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS,+ MR. CHEONG-LEEN SAID.

SPEAKING DURING THE SAME DEBATE, THE HON. JAMES WU URGED THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT TO TAKE IMMEDIATE STEPS TO PROVIDE FLATTED FACTORIES IN AREAS OF 500 TO 1,000 SQUARE FEET, NOT NORMALLY AVAILABLE FROM PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT, AT REASONABLE RENT AND WITHOUT LOSS OR SUBSIDY.

THIS, HE SAID, WOULD SEEM TO BE A LOGICAL SOLUTION TOWARDS GOVERNMENT'S PROCLAIMED PHASED PROGRAMME IN ALLEVIATING THE PROBLEMS OF FACTORIES IN NON-INDUSTRIAL PREMISES.

ACCORDING TO A GOVERNMENT PAPER PUBLISHED IN 1974, HE SAID IT WAS ESTIMATED THERE WERE AT THAT TIME ABOUT 22,000 SMALL FACTORIES LOCATED IN DOMESTIC BUILDINGS, EMPLOYING A LABOUR FORCE OF OVER 100,000.

MR. WU REITERATED THAT SMALL INDUSTRIES, IN THE FORM OF SPECIALIST WORKSHOPS SUCH AS FOR TOOL-AND-DIES AND FOR SOME SUB-CONTRACT COMPONENT OR ASSEMBLY WORK, WERE ALSO COMMON IN INDUSTRIALLY ADVANCED COUNTRIES AND HAD A DEFINITE ROLE TO PLAY IN HONG KONG'S INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, +ALTHOUGH IT WOULD BE WRONG TO SUGGEST THAT WE SHOULD PROMOTE A PROLIFERATION OF SMALL INEFFICIENT SET-UPS IN DOMESTIC PREMISES+.

GIVEN HIGH LAND PRICES AND THE ENTERPRISING AND INDUSTRIOUS SPIRIT THAT IS HONG KONG, HE FELT THAT A COMPLETE ELIMINATION OF FACTORIES IN NON-INDUSTRIAL PREMISES MIGHT NOT BE IN SIGHT IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

+WE THEREFORE MIGHT HAVE TO TOLERATE FOR SOME TIME EXISTING INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS IN NON-INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS IF SUCH ARE NEITHER POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS NOR OBNOXIOUS, PENDING A FULL ASSESSMENT AND ACTIVE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM, AS THE UMELCO AD HOC GROUP ADVISED,+ HE SAID.

WINDING UP THE DEBATE, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES, SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S THINKING ON THE PROBLEM HAD SO FAR BEEN CONCENTRATING ON DEVISING WAYS AND MEANS OF ENCOURAGING PRIVATE DEVELOPERS TO BUILD SMALLER FACTORY UNITS BY PROVIDING SITES ON SPECIAL CONDITIONS.

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+THE FIRST STEP IN THIS DIRECTION WAS TAKEN AT SHA TIN, WITH THE SALE OF AN INDUSTRIAL LOT ON TERMS WHICH INCLUDED THE REQUIREMENT THAT INDIVIDUAL FACTORY UNITS NOT EXCEEDING 5,000 SQUARE FEET SHOULD BE PROVIDED IN THE BUILDING,+ HE SAID. +MORE RECENTLY, PLANS HAVE BEEN DRAWN UP FOR THE SALE OF A FURTHER INDUSTRIAL LOT AT TUEN MUN, WITH THE BUYER BEING REQUIRED TO BUILD FACTORY UNITS OF 2,500-3,000 SQUARE FEET.+

+DEPENDING ON THE SUCCESS OF THIS LATEST SALE, FURTHER LOTS WILL BE EARMARKED FOR DISPOSAL IN THIS WAY, POSSIBLY SPECIFYING EVEN SMALLER UNIT AREAS SO AS BETTER TO CATER FOR SMALL FACTORY OPERATORS,+ MR. JONES ADDED.

HOWEVER, HE STRESSED THAT SUCH SALES WOULD NEED TO BE CAREFULLY MONITORED, ESPECIALLY IN AREAS WHERE THERE IS A GOOD DEMAND FOR INDUSTRIAL LAND ON A NORMAL BASIS.

MR. JONES SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD PREFER TO SEE PRIVATE PROPERTY DEVELOPERS MOVING IN TO MEET THE NEED FOR SMALLER FACTORY UNITS ON A COMMERCIAL BASIS.

UNITS OF SOME 1,400 SQUARE FEET HAD RECENTLY BEEN OFFERED FOR SALE IN KWAI CHUNG AT A PRICE OF AROUND \$200,000, AND THIS, HE HOPED, MIGHT WELL BE A POINTER TO A GROWING PRIVATE SECTOR AWARENESS OF A DEMAND FOR SMALL FACTORY UNITS.

MR. JONES POINTED OUT THERE COULD BE NO QUESTION OF MOVING SO MANY THOUSAND SMALL FACTORIES OPERATING IN NON-INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS WHOLESALE FROM THEIR PRESENT LOCATIONS, EVEN IF ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION WHICH WAS THOUGHT TO BE SATISFACTORY WAS AVAILABLE ELSEWHERE.

THIS WAS WHY THE GOVERNMENT HAD DECIDED TO APPROACH THE ISSUE IN A PRAGMATIC WAY, HE SAID.

STAGE I OF THE PROGRAMME, HE SAID, WAS FIRSTLY TO REMOVE DANGEROUS AND OBNOXIOUS INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS FROM NON-INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS= SECONDLY, TO PREVENT ANY INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITY IN NEW NON-INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS AND= THIRDLY, TO CLEAR INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS FROM PURELY RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS.

AS FOR THE MAJORITY OF EXISTING INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS IN NON-INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS, MR. JONES SAID, THE POLICY WAS TO DEFER ACTION UNTIL SOME ACCEPTABLE WAY CAN BE FOUND TO REPROVISION THEM SATISFACTORILY.

HE ADDED THAT THE PART WHICH GOVERNMENT AGENCIES MIGHT PLAY IN RELOCATING INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS IN NON-INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS WAS ALSO BEING EXAMINED.

/MR. JONES

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MR. JONES SAID, HOWEVER, +WHATEVER WE DO, WHETHER THROUGH SPECIAL RESTRICTED SALES OF LAND TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR OR IN ACTIONS THROUGH GOVERNMENTAL OR QUASI-GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES, I FEEL THAT WE MUST TREAD WARILY AND TEST THE GROUND AS WE GO.+

TURNING TO MR. CHEONG-LEEN'S SUGGESTION THAT A SPECIAL UNIT MIGHT BE SET UP TO STUDY THE NEEDS OF SMALL INDUSTRIES, HE SAID THE COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY DEPARTMENT, WITH THE HELP OF THE TRADE AND INDUSTRY ADVISORY BOARD, HAD BEEN STUDYING THE PROBLEMS OF HONG KONG INDUSTRY, INCLUDING SMALL INDUSTRY, FOR A GREAT MANY YEARS.

+FURTHERMORE, THE HONG KONG PRODUCTIVITY CENTRE HAS IN THE COURSE OF ITS WORK BEEN PAYING SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE NEEDS OF SMALL INDUSTRY, AND SO HAVE THE VARIOUS INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATIONS,+ HE SAID, +AND THE BANKS ARE VERY WELL AWARE OF THE CREDIT-WORTHINESS OF DIFFERENT OPERATORS.+

+SO A GREAT DEAL IS KNOWN ALREADY ABOUT THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF SMALL INDUSTRY AND I AM SURE THAT ASSISTANCE CAN BE OBTAINED FROM ALL THESE ORGANISATIONS BY THOSE WILLING TO SEEK IT,+ HE ADDED.

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GENERAL RATE - ONE OF H.K.'S INDIRECT TAXES

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THE GENERAL RATE NOW PAYABLE AT 12 PER CENT OF RATEABLE VALUES IS NOT INTENDED TO MEET THE COSTS OF POLICE, STREET LIGHTING, WATER SUPPLY AND FIRE SERVICES, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

REPLYING TO QUESTIONS FROM DR. THE HON. S.Y. CHUNG, HE SAID THE GENERAL RATE WITH TEMPORARY REDUCTIONS FOR NEWLY RATED AREAS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES WAS JUST ONE OF HONG KONG'S INDIRECT TAXES.

+THE REVENUE IT YIELDS IS NOT USED TO FINANCE ANY SPECIFIC HEADS OF GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE,+ MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID.

IN REPLY TO ANOTHER QUESTION BY DR. CHUNG ON THE URBAN COUNCIL RATE, NOW PAYABLE AT SIX PER CENT OF RATEABLE VALUES, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, SIR DENYS ROBERTS SAID: +THE URBAN COUNCIL RATE MAY BE USED FOR EXPENDITURE ON ANY OF THE FUNCTIONS OF THE COUNCIL, AUTHORISED BY THE URBAN COUNCIL ORDINANCE.+

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DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL OF LANTAU UNDER STUDY

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THE GOVERNMENT IS CURRENTLY CARRYING OUT A STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL OF LANTAU ISLAND ON THE TWO ASSUMPTIONS THAT A BRIDGE WOULD, OR WOULD NOT, BE BUILT, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN, HE SAID: +FROM A PLANNING POINT OF VIEW, THE ISLAND CAN BE DIVIDED BETWEEN THE NORTHERN PART, WHICH HAS SOME POTENTIAL FOR MEDIUM AND HEAVY INDUSTRY AND GENERAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE SOUTH COAST WHICH, EVEN NOW, IS ONE OF HONG KONG'S MOST IMPORTANT RECREATIONAL AREAS.+

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RECREATIONAL AREA WAS GRADUALLY PROCEEDING AT THE PRESENT TIME, AND IT COULD CONTINUE WITHOUT A LAND CONNECTION BEING PROVIDED.

HOWEVER, HE CONTINUED, ANY SUBSTANTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE NORTHERN PART WOULD PROBABLY REQUIRE THE CONSTRUCTION OF A BRIDGE.

+THE PROBLEMS POSED BY A BRIDGE MAINLY RELATE TO TRAFFIC AND, IN PARTICULAR, TO THE SEVERE CONSTRAINTS IMPOSED BY ROAD CAPACITY ALONG THE WEST KOWLOON CORRIDOR,+ HE SAID.

+TESTS ARE NOW BEING CONDUCTED ON THE COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORT STUDY COMPUTER MODEL- AND THESE WILL LARGELY DETERMINE THE PRACTICABILITY, FROM A TRAFFIC AND COMMUNICATIONS POINT OF VIEW, OF SUBSTANTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE NORTHERN PART OF LANTAU, LINKED BY A BRIDGE TO THE MAINLAND.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S PRESENT THINKING WAS THAT, PROVIDED A BRIDGE WOULD NOT CREATE INTOLERABLE TRAFFIC CONDITIONS IN WEST KOWLOON, THIS FACILITY MIGHT LEND ITSELF TO PRIVATE CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION AT SOME FUTURE DATE.

ON THE OTHER HAND, MR. JONES ADDED, IF THE BRIDGE HAD TO BE BUILT WITH PUBLIC FUNDS, IT WOULD NOT RATE A HIGH PRIORITY IN RELATION TO OTHER TRANSPORT PROJECTS NOW BEING UNDERTAKEN OR PLANNED.

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BETTER SICKNESS ALLOWANCE RATE FOR EMPLOYEES
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THE EMPLOYMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1977, WHICH SEEKS TO INCREASE THE RATE OF SICKNESS ALLOWANCE FROM HALF TO TWO-THIRDS OF AN EMPLOYEE'S PAY, WAS PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THE BILL ALSO PROVIDES FOR AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF SICKNESS DAYS WHICH MAY BE ACCUMULATED FROM 24 OVER TWO YEARS TO 36 OVER THREE YEARS. IN ADDITION, IT SEEKS TO REDUCE THE PERIOD OF CONTINUOUS SERVICE BY WORKERS TO QUALIFY FOR PAID SICKNESS DAYS FROM THREE MONTHS TO ONE MONTH.

FOUR UNOFFICIALS, WHO SPOKE IN SUPPORT OF THE BILL, WERE THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN, THE HON. LEUNG TAT-SHING, THE HON. WONG LAM AND THE HON. JAMES WU.

MR. CHEONG-LEEN SAID EMPLOYERS WOULD HAVE TO SHARE WITH GOVERNMENT THE RESPONSIBILITY AND COST OF KEEPING THEIR EMPLOYEES IN GOOD HEALTH, WHICH IN THE LONG TERM WOULD ENHANCE THE STABILITY AND PRODUCTIVITY OF THE COMPANY.

HE SAID THIS WAS NECESSARY TO PRESERVE, AT ALL COST, HONG KONG'S FOREMOST ATTRACTION AS AN AREA FOR INVESTMENT BECAUSE OF ITS LOW RATE OF TAXATION.

MR. CHEONG-LEEN SAID THE PROVISION TO INCREASE THE SICKNESS ALLOWANCE FROM HALF TO TWO-THIRDS OF AN EMPLOYEE'S WAGE CONFORMED WITH INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONVENTION NO. 130, AND REPRESENTED AN INTERNATIONAL STANDARD WHICH HONG KONG WAS ABLE TO MAINTAIN AND SHOULD ADOPT.

+SOME MAY ARGUE THAT THE PROVISIONS IN THIS BILL ARE NOT ENOUGH AND THAT MORE IS REQUIRED,+ HE SAID.

+PERHAPS THAT IS THE CASE, BUT IT WOULD BE EVEN MORE PRUDENT FOR GOVERNMENT TO PROCEED IN MEASURED PACE RATHER THAN IN HAPHAZARD FASHION.

+HONG KONG IS FACING STIFFER COMPETITION ON ITS MANUFACTURED EXPORTS AND WE MUST HAVE A BALANCED POLICY ON SOCIAL PROGRESS AND ECONOMIC GROWTH, OTHERWISE WE WILL SURELY AND IN NO TIME LOSE OUR COMPETITIVE EDGE.+

MR. LEUNG SAID THE INCREASE IN THE AMOUNT OF SICKNESS ALLOWANCE FROM HALF PAY TO TWO-THIRDS PAY WOULD BRING THE RATE INTO LINE WITH THAT FOR TEMPORARY INCAPACITY UNDER THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ORDINANCE.

ADDITIONALLY, HE CONTINUED, THIS WOULD CONFORM WITH THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONVENTION NO. 130.

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+ALTHOUGH THIS CONVENTION WAS NOT RATIFIED BY THE UNITED KINGDOM FOR TECHNICAL REASONS RELATING TO NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE IT IS HIGHLY DESIRABLE FOR HONG KONG TO AIM AT INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AS FAR AS POSSIBLE,+ HE EMPHASISED.

HE POINTED OUT THAT WHILST WORKERS COULD NOT EXPECT TO ENJOY MORE GENEROUS TERMS THAN THEIR COUNTERPARTS IN THIS ASIAN REGION THEY DESERVE SOME BETTER TREATMENT THAN WAS HITHERTO PROVIDED.

MR. WONG SAID THE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF HONG KONG +DO NOT ALLOW ANY KIND OF ACTION THAT WOULD DO HARM TO OUR ECONOMIC PROSPERITY, BE IT BY EMPLOYERS OR EMPLOYEES.+

HE STRESSED THAT BOTH EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES SHOULD REALISE THAT ONLY THE SPIRIT OF MUTUAL HELP AND COOPERATION COULD MAINTAIN HONG KONG'S INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY, TO THE BENEFITS OF BOTH PARTIES.

ALTHOUGH HE CONSIDERED THE AMENDING BILL +A MOST APPROPRIATE ONE+, MR. WONG POINTED OUT THAT +IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HONG KONG TODAY, EMPLOYEES' BENEFITS IN MANY RESPECTS STILL LEAVE MUCH ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT.+

WHILE STRESSING THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR HONG KONG TO OVERCOME EVERY DEFECT OVERNIGHT, HE SUGGESTED THAT BEFORE IMPLEMENTING ANY MEASURE TO GIVE MORE PROTECTION AND BENEFITS TO EMPLOYEES THE MOVE SHOULD BE ANALYSED WITH THE UTMOST OBJECTIVITY TO SEE WHETHER IT WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT HONG KONG'S ECONOMIC PROSPERITY.

OTHER PRINCIPLES SUGGESTED BY MR. WONG FOR CONSIDERATION ARE:

- * TAKE HEED OF THE CRITICISM MADE AGAINST HONG KONG BY ITS MAIN CUSTOMERS.
- * THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONVENTIONS SHOULD NOT BE FOLLOWED SLAVISHLY AND,
- * ANY MEASURE THAT GIVES MORE PROTECTION AND BENEFIT TO EMPLOYEES SHOULD EXTEND ITS SCOPE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE TO ENCOMPASS ALL KINDS OF EMPLOYEES.

MR. WU SAID: +IN OUR INDUSTRIAL COMMUNITY, HUMANE AND PATERNAL CONSIDERATIONS RANK HIGH PARTICULARLY AT TIMES OF DISTRESS AND DIFFICULTY.+

+THE MUTUAL RESPECT, THE CLOSE WORKING DIALOGUE AND UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN MANAGEMENT AND LABOUR IN OUR MANY FACTORIES,+ HE ADDED, +ARE THE BASIC REASONS OF THE HARMONY AND CO-OPERATION THAT EXIST BETWEEN THE EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES WHO COME TO EACH OTHER'S HELP IN TIME OF NEED= THE RECESSION IN 1974/75 AND THE BOOM IN THE 1976 PROVE THE POINT.+

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+WE CAN THEREFORE CLAIM THAT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MANAGEMENT AND LABOUR IN HONG KONG IS, IN THE BROADEST TERMS, OF A VERY HIGH ORDER INDEED AND PROBABLY AMONG THE BEST IN THE WORLD.

+THE GOVERNMENT IS PERFECTLY WILLING TO CONCEDE THIS POSITION WHEN ADVERTISING HONG KONG'S ATTRACTIONS TO FOREIGN INVESTORS AND BUSINESS PEOPLE ABROAD. THE SAME CONCESSION SHOULD BE MADE WHEN DEALING WITH LABOUR AND OTHER SOCIAL LEGISLATION.+

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CANING - A USEFUL PUNISHMENT
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THE LIST OF OFFENCES PUNISHABLE ON CONVICTION BY CANING IS ALREADY QUITE EXTENSIVE AND INCLUDES ROBBERY, POSSESSION OF WEAPONS, RAPE AND CERTAIN OTHER OFFENCES AGAINST FEMALES, THEFT AND WOUNDING.

THIS WAS STATED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL THE HON. JOHN HOBLEY IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS FROM THE HON. WONG LAM.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE ATTITUDES OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THE CHIEF JUSTICE TOWARD CANING AS A PUNISHMENT FOR YOUNG CRIMINALS WAS THAT IT WAS A USEFUL PUNISHMENT.

+IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO SAY WHETHER THE CANING OF OFFENDERS HAS A GENERAL DETERRENT EFFECT ON OTHERS, AND THE DETERRENT EFFECT OF CANING IN THE CASE OF A PARTICULAR OFFENDER WHO IS SO PUNISHED CLEARLY DEPENDS ON HIS PERSONALITY,+ HE SAID.

IN THE CASE OF AN OFFENDER WHO WAS UNDER 16 YEARS OF AGE, MR. HOBLEY CONTINUED, A COURT MIGHT ORDER CANING ON CONVICTION FOR ANY OF THE OFFENCES SPECIFIED IN THE SCHEDULE TO THE CORPORAL PUNISHMENT ORDINANCE -- EITHER AS THE ONLY PUNISHMENT OR IN ADDITION TO SOME OTHER PUNISHMENT.

HE INDICATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD NO PLANS TO INCREASE THE ALREADY QUITE EXTENSIVE LIST OF OFFENCES FOR WHICH IT MAY BE EITHER THE ONLY OR AN ADDITIONAL PUNISHMENT.

IN ANSWER TO ANOTHER QUESTION FROM MR. WONG, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAID THAT CANING HAD BEEN ORDERED 98 TIMES DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS ON YOUNG OFFENDERS AGED 16 AND BELOW.

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MEASURES TO REDUCE FIRE HAZARD IN SQUATTER AREAS
AND INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS

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THE CURRENT PROGRAMME FOR THE INSTALLATION OF ELECTRICITY IN SQUATTER AREAS WILL REDUCE THE MAIN FIRE HAZARD WHICH STEMS FROM UNSATISFACTORY ELECTRICITY SUPPLY AND DISTRIBUTION.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON. LEWIS DAVIES IN REPLY TO A QUESTION RAISED BY THE HON. MISS LYDIA DUNN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HE SAID THAT APART FROM FIRE SAFETY EDUCATION CAMPAIGNS CARRIED OUT IN THE SQUATTER AREAS BY THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE HYDRANTS WERE PROVIDED FROM WATER MAINS AND PUBLIC ROAD GAVE ACCESS TO FIRE SERVICE APPLIANCES.

+ULTIMATELY, BUT IN THE LONG TERM, THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY OF REDUCING FIRE HAZARD IS BY CLEARANCE OF SQUATTER AREAS AND THE GOVERNMENT'S HOUSING PROGRAMMES ARE DESIGNED TO ACHIEVE THIS,+ HE EXPLAINED.

REGARDING MEASURES AIMED AT REDUCING FIRE HAZARD IN INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY SAID THE PRIMARY CONTROL WAS BY THE APPROVAL OF THE BUILDING PLAN.

+ONCE THIS HAS BEEN GIVEN THERE IS A SYSTEM OF SURPRISE INSPECTIONS TO SEE THAT THE PLAN IS ADHERED TO AND THAT THE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS ARE MET, ESPECIALLY IN REGARD TO THE STORAGE OF RAW MATERIALS AND FINISHED GOODS IN COMMON AREAS, INCLUDING STAIRCASES,+ HE SAID.

HE NOTED THAT ABOUT 4,000 FACTORIES WERE INSPECTED MONTHLY, AND SEVERAL HUNDRED FIRE HAZARD ABATEMENT NOTICES AND PROSECUTIONS WERE INITIATED EACH MONTH AS A RESULT.

HE ADDED: +THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT KEEPS THE LAW UNDER REVIEW IN ORDER TO IMPROVE CONTROL POWERS OVER FIRE HAZARDS GENERALLY AND TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF DEVELOPMENTS AS THEY OCCUR.+

IN REPLY TO ANOTHER QUESTION, MR. DAVIES SAID THAT THE FIRE AT MA SIN PAI VILLAGE, TSUEN WAN, ON DECEMBER 5, LAST YEAR IN WHICH ONE PERSON DIED, WAS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN CAUSED BY CHILDREN PLAYING WITH MATCHES.

THE SECRETARY ALSO DISCLOSED THE RESULTS OF INVESTIGATIONS INTO THREE OTHER RECENT FIRES WHICH KILLED SEVEN PERSONS.

HE SAID THE FIRE AT BLOCK 17, CHAI WAN ESTATE, ON DECEMBER 15, IN WHICH ONE PERSON DIED, WAS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN CAUSED BY THE OVERTURNING OF A LIGHTED NON-PRESSURE TYPE KEROSENE COOKING STOVE.

REGARDING THE BLAZE AT 128 WAI YIP STREET IN KWUN TONG ON DECEMBER 3, HE SAID INVESTIGATIONS WERE CONTINUING. HE HOPED THAT THE CAUSE OF THE FIRE, IN WHICH FOUR PEOPLE DIED, WOULD BE ASCERTAINED ONCE THE RESULTS OF TESTS, NOW BEING CONDUCTED BY THE GOVERNMENT CHEMIST, WERE AVAILABLE.

AS FOR THE TWO FIRES IN SHAM SHUI PO, IN EACH OF WHICH ONE PERSON DIED, MR. DAVIES SAID THAT NO EVIDENCE SURVIVED THE FIRE TO ENABLE THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT TO IDENTIFY THE CAUSES.

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MORE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND BETTER PAID JOBS NEEDED

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THE DIRECTOR OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, MR. DAVID JORDAN, SAID TODAY THAT IF HONG KONG WAS TO MAINTAIN THE SOCIAL STABILITY AND THE SOCIAL PROGRESS THAT IT HAD ENJOYED IN RECENT YEARS, IT MUST CONTINUE TO PROVIDE MORE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND BETTER PAID JOBS AT HIGHER LEVELS OF SKILL.

HE ADDED: +THIS MEANS THAT WE MUST HAVE NEW INDUSTRIES, NEW TECHNOLOGY, NEW PRODUCTS, NEW MARKETS BECAUSE THEY HAVE TO EARN US THE MONEY TO PAY FOR EVERYTHING ELSE. WE ARE NOT ON A TREADMILL BUT WE ARE ON A SORT OF ESCALATOR, FOR WHICH WE MUST PROVIDE THE POWER.+

MR. JORDAN WAS SPEAKING AT A PRESENTATION CEREMONY IN THE CHINESE MANUFACTURERS' ASSOCIATION WHERE THE D C AND I'S AWARD TO THE BEST NEW PRODUCT OF THE YEAR WAS PRESENTED TO RADOFIN ELECTRONICS' FOR THEIR T.V. GAME.

MR. JORDAN CONTINUED: +WE CAN NEVER AFFORD TO FORGET THAT EVERYTHING ELSE THAT WE ARE DOING IN HONG KONG AND HOPE TO DO IN THE FUTURE DEPENDS ON THE VALUE WE ADD TO WHAT WE BRING INTO HONG KONG TO TRANSFORM INTO GOODS AND SERVICES WE CAN SELL OUTSIDE HONG KONG. WE MUST CONTINUE TO IMPROVE THE RATIO OF THAT ADDED VALUE TO THE ORIGINAL COST.+

HE POINTED OUT THAT HONG KONG HAD DONE VERY WELL BY PRODUCING IMPROVED PRODUCTS IN ITS WELL-ESTABLISHED INDUSTRIES -- GARMENTS AND TOYS -- WHICH MADE UP OVER HALF OF HONG KONG'S EXPORTS IN 1976.

BUT, HE ADDED, IT WAS ALSO A FACT THAT THE GROWTH OF THE TEXTILES AND GARMENTS INDUSTRY IS FAR MORE RESTRICTED IN REGARD TO ACCESS TO ITS OVERSEAS MARKETS THAN ANY OTHER INDUSTRY.

+THEREFORE NOT ONLY NEW PRODUCTS, BUT ALSO NEW INDUSTRIES, WILL BE NEEDED IN THE YEARS AHEAD TO PROVIDE JOBS FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE ENTERING THE LABOUR MARKET EACH YEAR,+ MR. JORDAN SAID.

HE ADDED: +THESE YOUNG PEOPLE ARE GOING TO BE BETTER TRAINED AND MORE HIGHLY QUALIFIED THAN THEY USED TO BE. AND THIS PROCESS IS ACCELERATING. THIS YEAR HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR OPENED OUR NEW POLYTECHNIC WHICH NOW DWARFS THE OLD TECHNICAL COLLEGE BESIDE IT.

+I REMEMBER WHEN IT WAS THE NEW TECHNICAL COLLEGE AND THAT THE INITIATIVE FOR ITS CONSTRUCTION CAME FROM THE CMA, WHEN IN 1955 IT OFFERED THE GOVERNMENT \$1 MILLION TOWARDS THE BUILDING COST.

+YOUR ASSOCIATION'S ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF HIGHER TECHNICAL SKILLS HAS CONTINUED OVER THE YEARS AND STILL CONTINUES.

+IT IS HOWEVER EQUALLY IMPORTANT THAT THE ASSOCIATION SHOULD DO ALL IT CAN TO ENSURE THAT INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS APPRECIATE THAT THEY WILL BENEFIT FROM EMPLOYING MORE SKILLED WORKERS= AND FROM PROVIDING THE RIGHT TYPE OF PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE, ESPECIALLY FOR OUR YOUNG APPRENTICES, TO COMPLEMENT THE THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE THEY WILL BE RECEIVING IN OUR TECHNICAL INSTITUTES.+

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MEASURES TAKEN TO ENSURE SATISFACTORY STANDARDS
IN PRIVATE NIGHT SCHOOLS
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EVERYTHING POSSIBLE IS BEING DONE TO ENSURE SATISFACTORY STANDARDS IN THE 388 REGISTERED PRIVATE NIGHT SCHOOLS WHICH PROVIDE VARIOUS FORMS AND LEVELS OF EDUCATION FOR 96,700 STUDENTS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, THE HON. KENNETH TOPLEY, IN REPLY TO A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE HON. ALEX WU IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS AFTERNOON.

+I AM AWARE THAT STANDARDS IN REGISTERED NIGHT SCHOOLS VARY CONSIDERABLY AND I DO NOT CLAIM THAT ALL THESE SCHOOLS ARE MAINTAINING HIGH STANDARDS,+ HE SAID.

+THE PRINCIPAL CONSTRAINTS ON IMPROVEMENT OF STANDARDS ARE THE SCALES OF FEES WHICH CAN BE CHARGED IN RELATION TO THE RUNNING COSTS,+ HE SAID. +WITHIN THESE CONSTRAINTS AND WITH THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO ME I AM DOING WHAT IS POSSIBLE TO ENSURE SATISFACTORY STANDARDS.+

MR. TOPLEY SAID THAT THE ADVISORY INSPECTORATE OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WAS GOING TO ORGANISE A SEMINAR FOR THOSE ENGAGED IN EVENING SCHOOL WORK TO IDENTIFY THEIR PROBLEMS AND TO GIVE ADVICE.

HE WAS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED WITH THE PROVISION OF POST-FORM 3 SECONDARY EDUCATION OF A GOOD STANDARD FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WHO, FOR ANY REASON, WERE UNABLE TO PROCEED BEYOND FORM 3.

THE DIRECTOR ADDED: +THE WORKING PARTY ON HIGHER EDUCATION IS LOOKING INTO THIS QUESTION OF EVENING SCHOOLS, INCLUDING GOVERNMENT'S OWN EFFORTS IN THIS AREA, WITH PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION AT FORMS 4 AND 5 LEVELS.+

ON THE FORM OF CONTROL THE GOVERNMENT EXERCISES OVER NIGHT SCHOOLS, MR. TOPLEY SAID THAT BEFORE AN EVENING SCHOOL STARTED FUNCTIONING, THE OPERATOR MUST OBTAIN CERTIFICATES FROM THE PUBLIC WORKS AND FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENTS TO SUPPORT HIS APPLICATION FOR PROVISIONAL REGISTRATION OF THE SCHOOL.

+THE MANAGERS, FEE SCALES, TEACHERS, SYLLABUSES AND TEXTBOOKS MUST BE APPROVED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT BEFORE THE SCHOOL IS FORMALLY REGISTERED UNDER THE EDUCATION ORDINANCE,+ HE SAID.

AREA OFFICERS, MR. TOPLEY SAID, MADE PERIODIC VISITS TO THE SCHOOL TO ENSURE THAT THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE EDUCATION ORDINANCE WERE MET, TO SEE HOW THE SCHOOL WAS CONDUCTED AND TO ADVISE THE OPERATOR AND TEACHERS ON IMPROVEMENTS.

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PRESENT CONTROL ON SPITTING ADEQUATE

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MORE THAN 12,000 CONVICTIONS WERE RECORDED FOR SPITTING IN PUBLIC PLACES SINCE THE START OF THE KEEP HONG KONG CLEAN CAMPAIGN IN 1972, THE CHIEF SECRETARY THE HON. SIR DENYS ROBERTS TOLD LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS AFTERNOON.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. LEUNG TAT-SHING, HE SAID THAT FROM NOVEMBER 1972 TO THE END OF LAST OCTOBER THERE WERE 990 CONVICTIONS FOR THIS OFFENCE UNDER THE SUMMARY OFFENCES ORDINANCE, AND UP TO THE END OF LAST NOVEMBER THERE WERE 11,176 CONVICTIONS FOR THE SAME OFFENCE UNDER THE PUBLIC CLEANSING AND PREVENTION OF NUISANCES BY-LAWS.

IN REPLY TO ANOTHER QUESTION, SIR DENYS SAID THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDERED THE PRESENT CONTROL ON SPITTING ADEQUATE.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE MAXIMUM PENALTY UNDER THE ORDINANCE WAS A FINE OF \$500 OR IMPRISONMENT FOR THREE MONTHS AND UNDER THE BY-LAWS WAS \$1,000 ON FIRST CONVICTION AND \$2,000 FOR A SECOND AND SUBSEQUENT CONVICTION.

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BILLS PASSED

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TWO BILLS PASSED THEIR COMMITTEE STAGE AND THIRD READING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THEY WERE THE EMPLOYMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1977 AND THE EVIDENCE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1977.

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LUNAR NEW YEAR STAMPS ON SALE TOMORROW

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TWO STAMPS TO COMMEMORATE THE YEAR OF THE SNAKE WILL BE PLACED ON SALE AT ALL POST OFFICES TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

THE STAMPS ARE DESIGNED BY A LOCAL GRAPHIC DESIGNER AND COME IN TWO DENOMINATIONS, 20 CENTS AND \$1.30.

ANY PERSON WHO HAS ORDERED SERVICED FIRST DAY COVERS ADDRESSED TO A LOCAL DESTINATION MAY COLLECT THEM ON FRIDAY (JANUARY 7) FROM THE OFFICE WHERE THE ORDER WAS PLACED.

A SERVICE WILL BE PROVIDED TOMORROW AT ALL POST OFFICES WHEREBY FIRST DAY COVERS WILL BE ACCEPTED OVER THE COUNTER, IMPRESSED WITH THE NORMAL POST OFFICE DATE STAMP AND HANDED BACK TO THE PERSON PRESENTING THEM. NO TIME TYPE WILL APPEAR IN THE POST MARK.

THE SPECIAL CONDITIONS FOR THIS SERVICE ARE:-

- (A) ONLY ARTICLES BEARING AN INDICATION THAT THEY ARE +FIRST DAY COVERS+ WILL BE SO TREATED=
- (B) THE ARTICLES MUST BE ADDRESSED TO A LOCAL ADDRESS=
- (C) THE ARTICLES MUST NOT BEAR ANY OTHER CANCELLATION=
- (D) NO REGISTERED ITEMS WILL BE PROCESSED BY THIS METHOD.

SPECIAL POSTING BOXES WILL ALSO BE AVAILABLE AT THE GENERAL POST OFFICE, KOWLOON CENTRAL POST OFFICE AND TSIM SHA TSUI POST OFFICE TOMORROW FOR THOSE WHO WISH TO HAVE FIRST DAY COVERS CAREFULLY HAND-POSTMARKED BEFORE DESPATCH TO THE ADDRESS ON THE COVERS.

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WORKING HOURS OF HAD AND CDO'S

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THE HOME AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED TODAY THAT WITH EFFECT FROM THIS SATURDAY (JANUARY 8), THE WORKING HOURS OF THE DEPARTMENT, INCLUDING THE HEADQUARTERS, CITY DISTRICT COMMISSIONER'S OFFICES, CITY DISTRICT OFFICES AND SUB-OFFICES WILL BE AS FOLLOWS: -

MONDAYS TO FRIDAYS : 9 A.M. TO 1 P.M.
2 P.M. TO 5.30 P.M.

SATURDAYS : 9 A.M. TO 12 NOON

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TEMPORARY TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS IN NORTH POINT

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SPECIAL TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE INTRODUCED FROM 10 A.M. ON FRIDAY (JANUARY 7) TO ALLOW BUS ACCESS INTO THE NORTH POINT BUS DEPOT DURING THE RECONSTRUCTION OF KAM HONG STREET.

THE TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS, WHICH WILL BE IMPLEMENTED FOR A PERIOD OF ABOUT THREE WEEKS, ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- * THE SECTION OF TIN CHIU STREET BETWEEN KING'S ROAD AND TSAT TSE MUI ROAD WILL BE RE-ROUTED TWO-WAY= AND
- * THE SOUTHBOUND SECTION OF TIN CHIU STREET FROM KING'S ROAD TO TSAT TSE MUI ROAD WILL BE MADE A +BUS ONLY+ LANE AND ALL MOTOR VEHICLES, EXCEPT FRANCHISED BUSES, WILL BE PROHIBITED FROM ENTERING THE BUS LANE.

APPROPRIATE TRAFFIC SIGNS WILL BE PUT UP TO GUIDE MOTORISTS.

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WATER CUT

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WATER SUPPLY TO A NUMBER OF PREMISES IN POKFULAM ON HONG KONG ISLAND AND MONG KOK IN KOWLOON WILL BE TURNED OFF FOR FIVE HOURS FROM 1 A.M. ON FRIDAY (JANUARY 7) TO ENABLE THE WATERWORKS OFFICE TO CARRY OUT NIGHT LEAKAGE TESTS.

IN POKFULAM, THE AFFECTED PREMISES ARE BOUNDED BY VICTORIA ROAD FROM CADOGAN STREET TO MOUNT DAVIS ROAD JUNCTION, FORBES STREET, KWUN LUNG STREET LOWER, CADOGAN STREET, KAI WAI MAN ROAD AND POLICE QUARTERS, EAST TERRACE, SOUTH TERRACE, WEST TERRACE, NORTH TERRACE AND CENTRE TERRACE AND HOUSE NO. 12P TO 12T SMITHFIELD ROAD.

IN MONG KOK, THE AFFECTED PREMISES ARE BOUNDED BY NATHAN ROAD, DUNDAS STREET, WATERLOO ROAD, YIM PO FONG STREET AND SOY STREET, INCLUDING SAI YEUNG CHOI STREET, TUNG CHOI STREET, FA YUEN STREET, YIN CHONG STREET AND KWONG WAH STREET.

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