



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1982

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PUBLIC TO BE KEPT POSTED ON TALKS 'WHERE POSSIBLE'

STATEMENTS ON DEVELOPMENTS REGARDING THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG WILL BE RELEASED +WHEN THERE IS SOMETHING WHICH CAN BE SAID ABOUT THE CONTENT OF THE TALKS, OR ABOUT HONG KONG PARTICIPATION IN THEM+.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, GAVE THIS ASSURANCE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY WHEN WINDING UP THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY ADDRESS.

+IF THE TIMING PERMITS, THESE STATEMENTS WILL TAKE THE FORM OF PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS IN THIS CHAMBER,+ HE SAID, ADDING THAT HE AGREED WITH THE HON BILL BROWN THAT THE COUNCIL WAS THE CORRECT AND PROPER PLACE FOR DEVELOPMENTS ABOUT THE FUTURE TO BE MADE KNOWN PUBLICLY.

SIR PHILIP WAS GRATEFUL FOR THE RESTRAINT SHOWN BY MEMBERS IN RECOGNISING THAT THE TALKS MUST REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL. THEY HAD, HE SAID, SPOKEN WITH A STRONG SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY, REALISING THAT IT WAS A SENSITIVE SUBJECT.

+AS MEMBERS BRING TO THIS COUNCIL A PROFOUND KNOWLEDGE OF THE CONCERNS AND ASPIRATIONS OF THIS COMMUNITY, I CAN ASSURE THEM THAT THEIR ADVICE WILL NOT GO UNHEEDED,+ HE SAID.

SIR PHILIP ALSO ASSURED MEMBERS THAT IT WOULD BE THE CONSTANT ENDEAVOUR OF HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE INTERESTS AND WISHES OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG.

+MEANWHILE, NOTHING IS TO BE GAINED BY AN UNMERITED CRISIS IN CONFIDENCE, PARTICULARLY IF THE CAUSATIVE FACTORS ARE SPECULATIVE EXPRESSIONS OF PERSONAL VIEWS.+

PEOPLE SHOULD NOT BELIEVE ALL THEY READ AND HEAR, HE WARNED. THE ALMOST DAILY HEARSAY STORIES IN THE PRESS ABOUT WHAT THE POSITION OF ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER MIGHT BE SOMETIMES HAD MUCH CIRCUMSTANTIAL DETAIL.

+SUCH STORIES HAVE AN UNSETTLING EFFECT EVEN THOUGH ON OCCASIONS THEY HAVE NO BASIS IN FACT,+ HE SAID. RUMOUR SO OFTEN FEEDS ON ITSELF, HE ADDED, AND WE MUST NOT ALLOW THAT CONTAGION TO SPREAD.

IT WAS WORTH BEARING IN MIND THE HON CHAN KAM-CHUEN'S ADVICE THAT 'THE ONLY TRUE INFORMATION WILL BE THE OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS MADE FROM TIME TO TIME ARISING FROM THE OFFICIAL SINO-BRITISH TALKS ON OUR FUTURE'.

SIR PHILIP BELIEVED THAT THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG WOULD LOOK AT THE SITUATION AS IT UNFOLDS IN ITS PROPER CONTEXT.

NO-ONE, HE SAID, SHOULD UNDERESTIMATE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DECLARED COMMON OBJECTIVE OF MAINTAINING THE STABILITY AND PROSPERITY OF HONG KONG AS STATED IN THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AFTER PRIME MINISTER THATCHER'S MEETING WITH CHAIRMAN DENG XIAOPING.

/HE REITERATED

HE REITERATED THAT STEADY NERVES WOULD BE REQUIRED OF ALL OF US OVER THE COMING MONTHS, AND WE MUST ALL WORK TOGETHER IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF MUTUAL TRUST.

+THE GOVERNMENT WILL PLAY ITS PART IN DEVELOPING SUCH AN ATMOSPHERE THROUGH THE CONSULTATIVE SYSTEM AND, PARTICULARLY, BY WORKING IN CLOSE CONCERT WITH UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS,+ HE SAID.

SIR PHILIP STRESSED THAT THIS GOVERNMENT CARES FOR THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG FROM WHEREVER, AND WHENEVER, THEY HAVE COME HERE, AND ADDED +IT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S FIRM INTENTION THAT HONG KONG SHALL REMAIN, AS A FREE SOCIETY, A DESIRABLE, REWARDING, AND CHALLENGING PLACE TO LIVE AND WORK IN.+

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NEW HK TRADE POST IN U.S.

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THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PHILIP HADDON-CAVE TODAY (THURSDAY) ANNOUNCED PLANS TO RE-TITLE THREE SECRETARY POSTS AND TO CREATE A POST OF HONG KONG TRADE COMMISSIONER IN THE UNITED STATES.

THE CHANGES ARE AIMED AT ACHIEVING MORE APPROPRIATE GROUPINGS OF POLICY PROGRAMMES AND A BETTER BALANCE OF RESPONSIBILITIES BETWEEN POLICY BRANCHES IN THE SECRETARIAT.

IN HIS SPEECH CONCLUDING THE DEBATES IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, SIR PHILIP SAID THE PRESENT SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND SECRETARY FOR CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION, WILL BE RE-TITLED SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER AND SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION.

SIR PHILIP SAID THE SCHEDULE OF RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NEW SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE WILL BECOME MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES (INCLUDING PUBLIC HEALTH), SOCIAL WELFARE (INCLUDING CHILD WELFARE) AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS (BOTH PROTECTION AND HYGIENE).

THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR REHABILITATION AND LABOUR MATTERS FROM THE PRESENT SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES WILL BE TAKEN OVER BY THE NEW SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER WHOSE RESPONSIBILITIES WILL BE BROADENED TO COVER ALL LEVELS AND TYPES OF EDUCATION.

COMMENTING ON REMARKS MADE BY DR THE HON HARRY FANG THAT THOUGHT SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE CREATION OF A SECRETARY FOR HEALTH, SIR PHILIP SAID THERE COULD BE NO DOUBT ABOUT THE RANGE AND COMPLEXITY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH THE HEALTH AND MEDICAL SERVICES.

/+BUT, AS

+BUT, AS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE, I AM NOT IN FAVOUR OF CREATING A NEW SECRETARY TO DEAL WITH POLICY MATTERS FOR A SINGLE PROGRAMME AREA WHICH IS ALSO HANDLED BY A HEAD OF DEPARTMENT OF EQUAL SENIORITY, AS THIS TENDS TO LEAD TO A DUPLICATION OF EFFORT AND CONFUSION OVER RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES,+ HE SAID.

+NOR WOULD I CONSIDER IT ESSENTIAL FOR A PROFESSIONALLY QUALIFIED OFFICER TO FILL SUCH A POST, EVEN IF IT WAS CREATED ALTHOUGH, CONSISTENT WITH THE POLICY OF OPENING UP ALL DIRECTORATE LEVEL POSTS TO MEMBERS OF DEPARTMENTAL CADRES AS WELL AS THE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE, THERE WOULD BE NO REASON WHY IT SHOULD NOT BE.+

SIR PHILIP SAID HE ACCEPTED THAT THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES DID DESERVE MORE ATTENTION AT THE HIGHEST POLICY LEVEL- AND THIS WOULD BE DONE BY REMOVING RESPONSIBILITY FOR REHABILITATION AND LABOUR MATTERS FROM THE PRESENT SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND RETITLING HIS POST.

AT THE SAME TIME, HE SAID, RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND HYGIENE, SUBJECTS CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH THE HEALTH OF THE COMMUNITY, WOULD BE TRANSFERRED TO THE NEW SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE FROM THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS.

SIR PHILIP SAID THIS WOULD ALSO ENABLE THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS TO DEVOTE MORE ATTENTION TO SOME OF HIS OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES, PARTICULARLY THOSE RELATING TO INFORMATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS AND THE MONITORING OF PUBLIC OPINION.

+HE WILL ALSO BE ABLE TO PAY MORE ATTENTION TO IDENTIFYING PEOPLE OF THE RIGHT CALIBRE AND EXPERIENCE TO MAN OUR EVER DEVELOPING NETWORK OF ADVISORY BOARDS AND COMMITTEES,+ HE ADDED.

ON THE RE-TITLING OF SECRETARY FOR CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION TO SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, SIR PHILIP SAID THIS WAS CONSISTENT WITH THE RECENT STANDARDISATION OF THE TITLES OF DISTRICT STAFF THROUGH THE URBAN AREAS AND THE NEW TERRITORIES AND THE SCHEDULE OF RESPONSIBILITIES WOULD REMAIN UNCHANGED.

+HIS CONSTANT PRE-OCCUPATION WILL, OF COURSE, BE THE NURTURING OF THE DISTRICT BOARD SYSTEM AND HE, TOGETHER WITH THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, WILL BE CONCERNED WITH RESOLVING ANY IMMEDIATE INTERFACE PROBLEMS WHICH MAY ARISE BETWEEN DISTRICT BOARDS AND THE VARIOUS SUBJECT-ORIENTED ADVISORY BOARDS AND COMMITTEES, OR BETWEEN THE URBAN COUNCIL AND THE DISTRICT BOARDS.

+IN THE LONGER TERM, HE WILL EVENTUALLY BE CONCERNED WITH ANY MODIFICATION TO THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION SCHEME WHICH MAY BE INDICATED BY EXPERIENCE AND LONGER TERMS INTERFACE PROBLEMS.+

ON THE CREATION OF THE POST OF HONG KONG TRADE COMMISSIONER IN THE UNITED STATES, SIR PHILIP SAID THERE WAS NOW AN OBVIOUS CASE FOR HAVING A MULTI-PURPOSE PRESENCE IN THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE AS WELL AS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

ACCORDINGLY, HE SAID, IT HAD BEEN DECIDED TO EXPAND AND UPGRADE THE LEVEL OF OUR REPRESENTATION IN THE UNITED STATES BY OPENING A NEW OFFICE IN NEW YORK. THE OFFICER IN CHARGE WOULD BE KNOWN AS THE HONG KONG TRADE COMMISSIONER IN THE UNITED STATES.

+HIS RESPONSIBILITIES WILL INCLUDE KEEPING UNDER REVIEW COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES, WHICH MAY AFFECT HONG KONG'S INTERESTS, IN CONCERT WITH THE COUNSELLOR (HONG KONG COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS) IN WASHINGTON,+ SIR PHILIP SAID.

THE TRADE COMMISSIONER WILL ALSO CONTROL AND COORDINATE THE VARIOUS ACTIVITIES THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT UNDERTAKES DIRECTLY IN THE UNITED STATES; MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH THE OFFICES OF THE TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL AND THE HONG KONG TOURIST ASSOCIATION IN THE UNITED STATES; DISSEMINATE INFORMATION ABOUT HONG KONG AND ESTABLISH PERSONAL CONTACTS WITH INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATION WITH A VIEW TO IMPROVING HONG KONG'S IMAGE THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES.

+THE OFFICER SELECTED TO FILL THIS POST IS MR W. DORWARD WHO WILL TAKE UP THIS APPOINTMENT IN APRIL NEXT YEAR,+ HE SAID.

SIR PHILIP SAID THE EXPANSION OF THE PRESENT ROLE OF OUR BRUSSELS OFFICE, WHICH IS ALREADY HEADED BY AN OFFICER WITH THE DIPLOMATIC RANK OF MINISTER, WOULD FOLLOW LATER ON.

+THE REORGANISATION OF THE SECRETARIAT WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND A WORKING GROUP UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE DIRECTOR, COUNCILS AND ADMINISTRATION BRANCH, IS NOW WORKING OUT ALL THE DETAILED ARRANGEMENTS RELATING TO SCHEDULES OF BUSINESS, STAFFING, ACCOMMODATION AND OFFICIAL MEMBERSHIP OF ADVISORY AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEES, SUBJECT TO ONE OVER-RIDING PROVISIO THAT THERE IS TO BE NO NET INCREASE IN STAFF AS A RESULT OF THESE CHANGES.+

HE SAID OTHER CHANGES WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BECOME NECESSARY FAIRLY SOON. FOR INSTANCE, HE ADDED, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO CREATE A SMALL UNIT WITHIN THE SECRETARIAT, PROBABLY ATTACHED TO THE COUNCILS AND ADMINISTRATION BRANCH AND RESPONSIBLE TO THE CHIEF SECRETARY, TO COORDINATE THE USE OF GOVERNMENT'S SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL RESOURCES (EXCLUDING THOSE IN THE ENGINEERING AND MEDICAL FIELDS), IN A MORE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE MANNER.

SIR PHILIP ALSO REFERRED TO THE RECENT CREATION OF A NEW POST OF SECRETARY (GENERAL DUTIES), FILLED BY MR LEWIS DAVIES, TO PROVIDE SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE CHIEF SECRETARY IN DEALING WITH ADDITIONAL WORK ARISING FROM THE TALKS ON THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG.

+ASSOCIATED WITH THE RE-ORGANISATION OF POLICY BRANCH SCHEDULES WHICH I HAVE DESCRIBED, BUT ALSO NECESSARY IN ITS OWN RIGHT, A SHORT AND MEDIUM-TERM POSTINGS PLOT HAS BEEN DEVELOPED ON THE BASIS OF THE GENERAL PRINCIPLE THAT THERE IS AN OPTIMUM PERIOD FOR SERVICE IN ANY POST, PARTICULARLY A SENIOR ONE; AND REGARD HAS BEEN HAD TO THE OPEN DIRECTORATE CONCEPT AND THE IMPORTANCE OF MAKING THE 'ADMINISTRATIVISATION' OF THE DIRECTORATE STAFF OF THE FORMER TRADE, INDUSTRY AND CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT A REALITY BY CROSS-POSTINGS,+ HE SAID.

ALL THOSE POSTINGS WOULD BE ANNOUNCED IN A SERIES OF PRESS STATEMENTS AND INTERNAL CIRCULARS, IN DUE COURSE, THE CHIEF SECRETARY ADDED.

EFFORT TO IMPROVE LEGCO PROCEDURES

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THERE MAY BE SCOPE FOR MORE EFFECTIVE USE TO BE MADE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S EXISTING STANDING ORDERS WITHOUT THE NEED FOR ANY MAJOR AMENDMENTS, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, SAID AT THE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY.

AS AN EXAMPLE, SIR PHILIP CITED THE PROVISIONS DEALING WITH ADJOURNMENT DEBATES AND SELECT COMMITTEES WHICH, HE SAID, COULD BE INVOKED TO GREATER EFFECT.

HE WAS SPEAKING ON THE FINDINGS OF A WORKING PARTY SET UP TO REVIEW THE STANDING ORDERS, CONVENTIONS AND PRACTICES OF THE COUNCIL IN ORDER TO IMPROVE PROCEDURES AND TO REFLECT MORE CLEARLY THE CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS TO THE MAKING OF NEW LEGISLATION.

SIR PHILIP SAID THAT UPON COMPLETION OF THE WORKING PARTY'S REVIEW, WHICH IS EXPECTED WITHIN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS, HE WOULD DISCUSS ITS RECOMMENDATIONS WITH THE HON R.H. LOBO TO DECIDE WHAT FURTHER ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN ON THEM.

+TO ALLAY ANY MISCONCEPTION, I SHOULD MAKE IT QUITE CLEAR THAT THE SCOPE OF THIS REVIEW WAS NEVER INTENDED TO GO BEYOND THE PROCEDURES FOLLOWED BY THIS COUNCIL IN ITS MEETINGS.

+IT CERTAINLY WAS NOT INTENDED TO COVER THE CONSTITUTION OF, OR APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO, THIS COUNCIL, WHICH ARE MATTERS PRESCRIBED IN THE ROYAL INSTRUCTIONS; AND IT IS NOT PROPOSED TO RECOMMEND ANY CHANGES TO THEM AT THE PRESENT TIME,+ HE EXPLAINED.

ON THE SUGGESTION THAT THE OLD SUPREME COURT BUILDING BE CONVERTED TO A COUNCIL CHAMBER AND THE UMELCO OFFICE, SIR PHILIP SAID THAT WHILE HE WAS PERSONALLY ATTRACTED TO THE IDEA, HE COULD NOT OFFER +MORE THAN A CAUTIOUS RESPONSE+ UNTIL OTHER FACTORS HAD BEEN EVALUATED AND THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CONSULTED.

HE REPORTED THAT THE REVIEW OF FUNCTIONAL ADVISORY BOARDS AND COMMITTEES WOULD BE COMPLETED WITHIN THE NEXT THREE MONTHS.

+ALL HEADS OF SECRETARIAT BRANCHES AND HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS HAVE BEEN ASKED TO GIVE THE MOST CAREFUL CONSIDERATION TO BOTH THE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND THE MEMBERSHIP OF THESE 300 AND MORE BOARDS AND COMMITTEES, WITH A VIEW TO ENSURING THAT THEY REFLECT CURRENT CONDITIONS IN HONG KONG AND ARE SO COMPOSED AS TO BE ABLE TO PROVIDE SOUND AND RELEVANT ADVICE TO THE GOVERNMENT,+ HE SAID.

MEDICAL SERVICES FEEL IMPACT OF POPULATION PRESSURE

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THE RELENTLESS POPULATION PRESSURE HAS HAD A PARTICULARLY CRUCIAL IMPACT ON THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES WHICH ARE EXTREMELY SUSCEPTIBLE TO ANY IMMEDIATE AND MASSIVE DEMAND, THE DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES, DR THE HON K.L. THONG SAID TODAY AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

+THIS IS BECAUSE THERE ARE NO MEANS TEST OR CRITERIA GOVERNING THE UTILISATION OF THE SERVICES WHICH ARE AVAILABLE PRACTICALLY FREE OF CHARGE FOR ANYONE,+ HE ADDED.

DR THONG ATTRIBUTED THE MASSIVE DEMAND ON MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES TO THE DRAMATIC CHANGE IN POPULATION GROWTH OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS.

HE SAID THAT FROM THE 1970'S TO 1978 POPULATION GROWTH WAS ABOUT 70 000 YEARLY, LARGELY THROUGH BIRTHS. BUT FROM 1979 TO THE END OF 1981, THE ARRIVAL OF THE VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE AND OTHER IMMIGRATION INCREASED THE POPULATION BY 600 000, MORE THAN TWO-THIRDS BY IMMIGRATION.

THE GOVERNMENT TOOK TIMELY AND EFFECTIVE MEASURES WHICH NOT ONLY ABSORBED THE SHOCK OF SUDDEN AND OVERWHELMING DEMANDS, AND EVEN IMPROVED THE STANDARD OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH CARE DESPITE THE ADVERSE DEMOGRAPHIC EVENTS, HE SAID.

+WE IN THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT ARE BY NO MEANS COMPLACENT AND ARE WELL AWARE OF THE DAUNTING CHALLENGES AHEAD IN OUR ATTEMPTS TO IMPLEMENT OUR AMBITIOUS PLANS,+ DR THONG SAID.

+THE ILL-INFORMED AND PREJUDICED WILL NO DOUBT CONTINUE TO HARP ON THE INEVITABLE PROBLEMS, REAL OR IMAGINARY, WITH OUT BEING ABLE TO OFFER ANY CONSTRUCTIVE OR HELPFUL SOLUTIONS.+

+HOWEVER, WE ON OUR PART, WITHIN ALL AVAILABLE RESOURCES, WILL CONTINUE TO STRIVE OUR UTMOST IN BRINGING ABOUT THOSE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES WHICH WE ALL DESIRE,+ HE SAID.

DR THONG SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES ARE UNDER CONSTANT REVIEW EACH YEAR, AND THE FORECAST FOR DEMAND FOR SERVICES ARE UPDATED PROMPTLY AND EFFECTIVELY IN THE LIGHT OF CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES, SUCH AS NEW POPULATION GROWTH, CHANGING PATTERN OF DISEASES, OCCUPANCY AND UTILISATION RATES OF HOSPITAL BEDS AND FACILITIES.

IN THE PAST NINE YEARS, FOUR MAJOR HOSPITALS AND TEN MAJOR HOSPITAL EXTENSION PROJECTS WERE COMPLETED, PROVIDING AN ADDITIONAL 5 200 BEDS OR AN INCREASE OF OVER 30 PER CENT TO THE BED PROVISION IN 1973.

/DURING THE

DURING THE SAME PERIOD, NO LESS THAN TEN CLINICS AND POLYCLINICS WERE COMPLETED. THIS, TOGETHER WITH THE REPROVISIONING OF THREE CLINICS, INCREASED THE NUMBER OF CONSULTING ROOMS BY 77, REPRESENTING AN INCREASE OF MORE THAN 30 PER CENT.

A LARGE NUMBER OF FACILITIES AND SERVICES WERE ESTABLISHED AND EXPANDED TO PROVIDE A BALANCED DEVELOPMENT OF BOTH CURATIVE AND PREVENTIVE HEALTH FACILITIES. THESE INCLUDE HEALTH EDUCATION, FAMILY HEALTH SERVICES, INCORPORATING MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH SERVICES AND FAMILY PLANNING, OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SERVICES, COMMUNITY NURSING, SCHOOL DENTAL SERVICES AND CHILD ASSESSMENT.

THE OVERALL ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT IN THE PAST DECADE HAS INCREASED FROM 13 475 TO 20 534 OR 52 PER CENT MORE OVER THE ESTABLISHMENT FIGURE IN 1973, TO PROVIDE APPROPRIATE STAFFING COMPLEMENTS TO MATCH DEVELOPMENTS.

DURING THIS PERIOD, THE ESTABLISHMENT STRENGTH OF DOCTORS INCREASED BY 59 PER CENT FROM 826 TO 1 310, NURSES BY 67 PER CENT FROM 4 968 TO 8 294, PARA-MEDICALS BY 61 PER CENT FROM 896 TO 1 440, AND OTHER STAFF BY 40 PER CENT FROM 6 785 TO 9 490.

+THAT WE ARE PROCEEDING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION IS BORNE OUT BY THE FACT THAT OUR HEALTH INDICES ARE COMPARABLE TO SOME OF THE BEST IN THE WORLD AS MENTIONED BY YOUR EXCELLENCY IN YOUR ADDRESS TO THIS COUNCIL,+ DR THONG SAID.

IN REPLY TO A SUGGESTION BY THE HON PETER WONG THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD REVIEW THE PRIORITIES OF VARIOUS PROGRAMMES IN THE LIGHT OF CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES, DR THONG SAID THIS IS PRECISELY THE PRACTICE OF THE MEDICAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE WHICH REVIEWS PROJECTS AND THEIR PRIORITIES ANNUALLY.

DR THONG SAID THERE WAS CONSTANT AND SEVERE COMPETITION FOR RESOURCES AMONG PROJECTS IN THE MEDICAL PLAN.

IN REPLY TO A SUGGESTION BY DR HENRIETTA IP THAT MORE SHOULD BE DONE TO IMPROVE OBSTETRICAL AND NEONATAL SERVICES SO THAT MORBIDITY DURING THE PERINATAL PERIOD COULD BE REDUCED, DR THONG SAID THE PERINATAL MORTALITY RATE IN HONG KONG FOR LAST YEAR WAS 10.7 PER 1 000 TOTAL BIRTHS, WHICH IS AMONG THE LOWEST IN THE WORLD.

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ON THE QUESTION OF WHY THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT PROVIDED A CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL, DR THONG REFERRED TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 1979 REVIEW OF THE MEDICAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, WHICH STATED THAT +THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIALIST HOSPITALS IS NOT ADVISABLE BECAUSE THEY TEND TO BE ISOLATED FROM THE GENERAL BODY OF MEDICINE AND LACK THE SUPPORT OF OTHER DISCIPLINES, AND THEY ALSO GIVE RISE TO UNEVEN DISTRIBUTION OF FACILITIES AND EXPERTISE, RESTRICT FLEXIBILITY IN USE AND OFTEN LEAD TO UNDER-UTILISATION IN SOME AREAS.+

HE SAID IN THE CONTEXT OF HONG KONG, IT WAS ONLY LOGICAL TO AIM FOR THE PROVISION OF GOOD AND UP-TO-DATE PAEDIATRIC FACILITIES ATTACHED TO GENERAL HOSPITALS, RATHER THAN TO PROVIDE FOR SPECIALIST HOSPITALS ON THEIR OWN IN ANY SPECIFIC LOCATIONS.

+OUR PRESENT PLANS INCLUDE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MODERN AND WELL-EQUIPPED PAEDIATRIC FACILITIES SUCH AS MOTHER-CHILD ROOMS FOR THE BENEFIT OF SICK CHILDREN WITHIN THE EXTENSION AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN THE GENERAL HOSPITALS,+ HE ADDED.

DR THONG ALSO OUTLINED THE LATEST SITUATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCHOOL MEDICAL SERVICE SCHEME.

THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE PUPILS UNDER THE SCHEME STOOD AT 805 497 AT THE END OF MARCH 1982. THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PUPILS TAKING PART IN THE SCHEME IN THE PAST FINANCIAL YEAR WAS 244 864 REPRESENTING A PARTICIPATION RATE OF 30.4 PER CENT. THIS INDICATED AN INCREASE OF 18 PER CENT OVER THE FIGURES IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR. THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPATING DOCTORS IN THE SCHEME WAS 232, COMPARED WITH 211 -- AN INCREASE OF TEN PER CENT OVER THE PREVIOUS YEAR. DR THONG SAID THE SCHOOL MEDICAL SERVICE BOARD ENVISAGES THAT ONE IN THREE ELIGIBLE PUPILS WILL BE PARTICIPATING IN THE SCHEME BY EARLY NEXT YEAR.

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NEED FOR LONG TERM SCHOOL POLICIES STRESSED

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HONG KONG MUST HAVE CONSISTENT LONG-TERM STRATEGIES AND PRAGMATIC SHORTER-TERM IMPLEMENTATION PLANS IN ITS EFFORTS TO SHAPE AND DEVELOP THE SCHOOL SYSTEM TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE CHILDREN AND THE COMMUNITY, THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, THE HON COLVYN HAYE, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS (THURSDAY) AFTERNOON.

MR HAYE SAID HE WAS GLAD THAT EDUCATION WAS ONE OF THE MAJOR TOPICS IN THE COUNCIL AS WELL OVER A MILLION CHILDREN WERE IN SCHOOL.

HE THANKED THE REV JOYCE BENNETT, MRS SELINA CHOW, DR HENRIETTA IP AND MR STEPHEN CHEONG FOR THEIR COMMENTS ON THE EDUCATION SERVICE, WHICH HE SAID WAS STILL GROWING RAPIDLY IN QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE TERMS.

+IT IS ONLY RIGHT THAT WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO EVALUATE AND DEBATE OUR EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION TO HELP ENSURE THAT THE SCHOOL SYSTEM WILL BE PROPERLY SHAPED AND DEVELOPED TO MEET THE NEEDS BOTH OF OUR CHILDREN AND OF OUR COMMUNITY,+ MR HAYE SAID.

TURNING TO MISS BENNETT'S COMMENTS ON THE STANDARDS OF PRIVATE INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS WITH BOUGHT PLACES AND THE NEED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THEM, THE DIRECTOR SAID THAT THIS WAS A MATTER TO WHICH THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT HAD ALWAYS ATTACHED GREAT IMPORTANCE.

MR HAYE LISTED IN DETAIL EXAMPLES OF THE DAY-TO-DAY HELP OFFERED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO THESE SCHOOLS, INCLUDING PROFESSIONAL SERVICES OF THE ADVISORY INSPECTORATE, IN-SERVICE TRAINING AND REFRESHER COURSES FOR TEACHERS, FULL ACCESSIBILITY TO THE VARIOUS TEACHING CENTRES, AND EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION, AMONG OTHERS.

THIS YEAR, AS PART OF THE +LANGUAGE PACKAGE+, PRIVATE INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS WITH BOUGHT PLACES WERE ALSO SUPPLIED WITH A WIRE-FREE INDUCTION LOOP SYSTEM TO ASSIST THEM IN THE TEACHING OF LANGUAGES AND OTHER SUBJECTS.

HE SAID HE APPRECIATED THAT THE KEY TO IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS MUST BE ADEQUATE SALARIES FOR THE TEACHERS AND SAID THIS WAS PARTICULARLY REFLECTED IN THE APPROVED INCREASES OF SCHOOL FEES ANNUALLY.

+WE ENSURE THAT IMPROVEMENTS IN PRIVATE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL TEACHERS' SALARIES MATCH INFLATION AND THE PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN THE SALARIES OF TEACHERS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR. IN ADDITION, WE PROVIDE A MARGIN WHICH IS SYMPATHETICALLY FLEXIBLE TO GIVE TEACHERS IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS MORE, SO THAT THEY WILL REMAIN TO SERVE IN THE SCHOOLS IN WHICH THEY ARE EMPLOYED, AND WE DO OUR UTMOST TO ENABLE SCHOOLS TO EMPLOY ADDITIONAL TEACHERS,+ MR HAYE SAID.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPROVING INDIRECT GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO PRIVATE INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS THROUGH THE FUNDING OF BOUGHT PLACES HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED AND WELCOMED BY THE VARIOUS PRIVATE SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS, WHOSE REPRESENTATIVES MEET THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION EVERY THREE MONTHS.

THESE ASSOCIATIONS HAVE ALSO BEEN ADVISED OF THE CONTROL MEASURES WHICH THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WILL TAKE TO ENSURE THAT THE TEACHERS WILL INDEED RECEIVE THE SALARY INCREASES INTENDED FOR THEM.

MR HAYE SAID THAT THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF INDIVIDUAL PRIVATE SCHOOLS WERE SO DIFFERENT THAT IT WAS NEITHER FEASIBLE NOR DESIRABLE TO REQUIRE ALL OF THEM TO CONFORM TO A SINGLE ELABORATE FORMULA FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

HE POINTED OUT THAT FOLLOWING AN INVITATION TO PRIVATE INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS TO JOIN THE PUBLIC AIDED SECTOR AFTER THE 1978 WHITE PAPER, ONLY ONE PRIVATE SCHOOL WAS PREPARED TO BECOME NON-PROFIT MAKING AND FULLY AIDED.

ON THE LONG-TERM INTENTIONS AND PLANS REGARDING BOUGHT PLACES IN PRIVATE INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS, HE SAID THAT WITH THE COMPLETION OF THE LAST 39 SCHOOLS OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS IN THE APPROVED SECONDARY SCHOOL BUILDING PROGRAMME OF 130 IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO PHASE OUT THE BOUGHT PLACES IN THE LESS SATISFACTORY PRIVATE INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS.

+CONSIDERATION IS NOW BEING GIVEN TO AN EXTENSION OF THE BUILDING PROGRAMME WHICH WILL ENABLE US TO MAKE FURTHER HEADWAY IN THIS DIRECTION,+ MR HAYE SAID.

TURNING TO COMMENTS ON THE JUNIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION ASSESSMENT SYSTEM BY MRS SELINA CHOW, HE SAID HE WAS PLEASED TO REPORT THAT THE ALLEGED ADVERSE EFFECTS OF THE SYSTEM WERE MUCH LESS MARKED IN THE RECENTLY COMPLETED SECOND CYCLE AS TEACHERS, STUDENTS AND PARENTS BECAME MORE FAMILIAR WITH THE PROCEDURES.

THIS YEAR SOME 65 PER CENT OF THOSE ELIGIBLE QUALIFIED FOR PUBLIC SECTOR PLACES IN FORM IV AND 80 PER CENT OF THESE WERE IN THEIR OWN SCHOOLS.

HE SAID THAT GIVEN THE PREFERENCE OF MOST STUDENTS AND PARENTS FOR ACADEMIC SENIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION, THE JSEA WAS NECESSARY AND WAS STILL THE FAIREST MEANS OF SELECTING STUDENTS FOR FORM IV-V EDUCATION.

APPEALING TO PARENTS NOT TO COMMUNICATE THEIR FEARS TO THEIR CHILDREN, HE SAID, +THEY ARE LESS CONCERNED BY THE JSEA THAN YOU ARE.+

ON PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION, MR HAYE ACKNOWLEDGED IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO MAKE AN EARLY START IN THIS AREA BECAUSE OF THE PRIORITY WHICH HAD TO BE GIVEN TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION.

/BUT HE

BUT HE ADDED THAT THE WHITE PAPER ON PRIMARY EDUCATION AND PRE-PRIMARY SERVICES OF JULY, 1981 WAS A CLEAR COMMITMENT TO THE FUTURE.

+IF THE DEVELOPMENTS OF SOME OF THE WHITE PAPER APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN DELAYED, THIS IS NOT BECAUSE THERE IS LACK OF A SENSE OF URGENCY, BUT BECAUSE WE DO NOT INTEND TO SACRIFICE QUALITY FOR INITIAL SPEED.

+THE LEAD TIME REQUIRED FOR THE VARIOUS IMPROVEMENTS, AND THE NEED FOR PHASING, DO NOT ADMIT INSTANT RESULTS, BUT THE BETTER SERVICES PLANNED SHOULD MATERIALISE FROM THE MID-1980'S, + HE SAID.

THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, HE ADDED, HAD STARTED A USEFUL DIALOGUE WITH SIX UNOFFICIAL BODIES WITH AN INTEREST IN KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION.

THESE TALKS WILL BE EXTENDED TO INCLUDE OTHER INTERESTED BODIES AND INDIVIDUALS AND IT IS INTENDED THAT REGULAR CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS WILL BE HELD IN FUTURE.

PROPOSALS WILL BE PROCESSED BY AN INTERDEPARTMENTAL STANDING COMMITTEE WHICH COORDINATES THE WORK OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT IN SUPERVISING AND SERVICING PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION AND CARE, HE SAID.

RESPONDING TO MR CHEONG'S COMMENTS ON THE PRIMARY ONE ADMISSION SYSTEM, MR HAYE ASKED IF HE WANTED TO IMPOSE, OR REIMPOSE, PRESSURE AND ANXIETY ON FIVE YEAR-OLDS AND FOUR YEAR-OLDS IN KINDERGARTEN, BEARING IN MIND THE CONCERN EXPRESSED BY MRS CHOW OF THE JSEA ON THE 15 YEAR-OLDS AND DR IP'S WARNING THAT CHILDREN MUST NOT BE TREATED LIKE MINIATURE ADULTS LEST THEY GROW UP TO BE OVERSIZED CHILDREN.

IN THE PAST THE POSSIBLE OPTIONS OPEN TO PRIMARY SCHOOLS WERE EITHER TO HOLD AN ENTRANCE EXAMINATION, OR A LOTTERY, OR CHOOSE CHILDREN FROM ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD, OR CHOOSE CHILDREN WHO HAVE SOME CONNECTIONS WITH THE SCHOOL.

+IF WE AGREE THAT ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS ARE UNDESIRABLE AND LOTTERIES ARE UNACCEPTABLE, THE TWO REMAINING OPTIONS ARE THE ONLY ONES WHICH ARE FEASIBLE. THEY WERE IN FACT THE METHODS ADOPTED BY SOME SCHOOLS UP TO THE PRESENT.

+THE PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE PRIMARY ONE ADMISSION SYSTEM, WHICH IS BASED ON THESE TWO METHODS, ARE THEREFORE NOT ENTIRELY NEW.

+I CANNOT CLAIM THAT THE SYSTEM IS PERFECT, BUT I CAN SAY THAT IT HAS BEEN FINALISED ONLY AFTER MOST CAREFUL CONSULTATION WITH ALL MAJOR SCHOOL COUNCILS, NONE OF WHOM DISAGREED WITH THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES OF THE NEW SYSTEM ALTHOUGH A NUMBER OF VERY HELPFUL COMMENTS WAS RECEIVED ON POINTS OF DETAIL.

+EVEN NOW, COMMENTS ON DETAILS CONTINUE TO BE MADE BY THE PUBLIC. THESE ARE GIVEN CAREFUL CONSIDERATION BY MY DEPARTMENT AND WILL BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN SUBSEQUENT REVIEWS OF THE SYSTEM,+ MR HAYE SAID.

ON MR CHEONG'S POINT CONCERNING THE FREEDOM OF PARENTS TO CHOOSE, MR HAYE SAID, +WHILE THE NEW SYSTEM MAY APPEAR TO HAVE REDUCED THE FREEDOM OF PARENTS TO CHOOSE, IT DOES NOT NECESSARILY FOLLOW THAT IF THE PREVIOUS ARRANGEMENTS WERE REINTRODUCED, PARENTS WOULD HAVE A BETTER CHANCE OF SUCCESS IN GAINING ADMISSION TO THE SCHOOL OF THEIR CHOICE BECAUSE OF THE COMPETITION OF OTHER PARENTS WHO WOULD ALSO BE FREE TO APPLY.

+AND WE WOULD BE BACK TO THE SITUATION WHERE FIVE YEAR-OLDS WERE FORCED TO QUEUE UP IN FRONT OF ONE PRIMARY SCHOOL AFTER ANOTHER TO SIT INIQUITOUS ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS, SOME OF THEM OF THREE HOURS DURATION. I AM GLAD THAT PARENTS HAVE BEEN DEPRIVED OF THE FREEDOM TO IMPOSE THIS ON THEIR CHILDREN.+

ON ANOTHER PROPOSAL BY MR CHEONG THAT POPULAR PRIMARY SCHOOLS BE ALLOWED TO GO PRIVATE, MR HAYE SAID THAT TECHNICALLY, ANY AIDED SCHOOL COULD GO PRIVATE SO LONG AS IT COMPLIED WITH THE CONDITIONS IN THE CODE OF AID FOR WITHDRAWING FROM THE SUBSIDY SCHEME.

BUT, MR HAYE SAID THAT SINCE THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE PRIMARY ONE ADMISSION SYSTEM HE HAD NOT HAD A SINGLE APPLICATION FROM AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOLS TO GO PRIVATE AND HAD RATHER UNEXPECTEDLY RECEIVED AS MANY AS 16 APPLICATIONS FROM PRIVATE NON-PROFIT-MAKING PRIMARY SCHOOLS TO TURN FULLY AIDED.

+IS MR CHEONG SERIOUSLY SUGGESTING THAT WE SHOULD DELIBERATELY AIM AT CREATING A TWO-TIER EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM CONSISTING OF SOME SCHOOLS FOR THE WEALTHY AND OTHER SCHOOLS FOR THE REST?+ MR HAYE ASKED.

SCHOOLS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR WERE NOT, AND WOULD PROBABLY NEVER BE, HOMOGENEOUS, HE STATED.

+YET I THINK AS A MATTER OF POLICY WE MUST AIM TO NARROW RATHER THAN WIDEN GAPS, AND WE MUST AIM TO LEVEL UPWARDS AND NOT DOWNWARDS,+ HE ADDED.

ON BISESSIONALISM IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS REFERRED TO BY DR IP, MR HAYE SAID IT WOULD BE UNREALISTIC TO PLAN FOR A COMPLETE REVERSION TO WHOLE-DAY SCHOOLING AT THIS STAGE THOUGH 21 SCHOOLS CONVERTED TO WHOLE-DAY OPERATION IN SEPTEMBER, 1982.

HOWEVER, MR HAYE SAID THAT THE 1981 WHITE PAPER ON PRIMARY EDUCATION AND PRE-PRIMARY SERVICES HAD CLEARLY STATED OUR INTENTION TO ENCOURAGE WHOLE-DAY OPERATION IN THOSE SCHOOLS WHERE THIS WAS CONSIDERED FEASIBLE AND PRACTICABLE.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1982

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IMPORTANCE OF UPGC STRESSED
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THE UNIVERSITY AND POLYTECHNIC GRANTS COMMITTEE PROVIDES THE ORGANISATIONAL MEANS TO ACHIEVE TWO DISPARATE ENDS, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION, THE HON K.W.J. TOPLEY, SAID AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY.

THE TWO ENDS ARE THE COMMUNITY'S DESIRE FOR GOOD TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS WITH ADEQUATE FREEDOM TO GET ON WITH THEIR WORK, AND THE GOVERNMENT'S STRONG DISAPPROVAL OF WASTE OR MISAPPLICATION OF MONEY, MR TOPLEY SAID.

HE EXPLAINED THAT AS INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION ARE EXTREMELY COMPLEX, THE GOVERNMENT MUST RELY CONSIDERABLY ON THE UPGC FOR ADVICE ABOUT THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM AND APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN IT.

THIS COMMITTEE, WHICH PROVIDES EXPERT AND IMPARTIAL ADVICE, IS WITHOUT EXECUTIVE POWERS, AND CONSISTS OF DISTINGUISHED LOCAL MEMBERS WITH KNOWLEDGE OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND OF OVERSEAS ACADEMIC MEMBERS FROM BRITAIN, AUSTRALIA AND CANADA, HE SAID.

+THE COMMITTEE GIVES INTENSIVE STUDY TO UNIVERSITY AND POLYTECHNIC FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS AND REVIEWS THE NEED FOR DEVELOPMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION AS NECESSARY,+ MR TOPLEY ADDED.

HE SAID THAT CRITICISMS THAT THE COMMITTEE WAS +BULKING TOO LARGE+ IN THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS AND WAS BEING TOO HEAVILY WEIGHTED WITH OVERSEAS MEMBERS WERE +WIDE OF THE MARK+.

+THE UPGC DOES LOOK CAREFULLY AT WHAT THE INSTITUTIONS PROPOSE BUT DOES NOT INVOLVE ITSELF IN THE INSTITUTIONS' OWN GOVERNANCE.

+THE UPGC ASSESSES BLOCK GRANTS BUT DOES NOT APPROVE OR EVEN SEE DETAILED FINAL BUDGETS, MUCH LESS INTERFERE IN TEACHING,+ MR TOPLEY POINTED OUT.

THE OVERSEAS MEMBERS BRING GREAT EXPERTISE TO HONG KONG AND PROVIDE NECESSARY KNOWLEDGE AND IMPARTIALITY, HE SAID.

WHILE CONCEDING THERE IS NO WAY OF +PROVING BEYOND DOUBT+ WHAT UNIVERSITIES AND POLYTECHNICS NEED, MR TOPLEY SAID IT IS +INFORMED AND EXPERIENCED JUDGEMENT+ WHICH THE UPGC PROVIDES.

IN EXPRESSING GRATITUDE TO DR THE HON HENRY HU'S REMARKS ABOUT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SECOND POLYTECHNIC, MR TOPLEY SAID A SITE OF 12.2 HECTARES ON TAT CHEE AVENUE HAS BEEN APPROVED FOR IT. THE SITE IS VERY WELL PLACED, CLOSE BY A MAJOR TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE, AND CONVENIENT FOR STUDENTS FROM ALL PARTS OF THE TERRITORY.

MR TOPLEY SAID ALSO: +WE ARE BRINGING OUR MINDS TO THE REQUIREMENT FOR, AND THE APPROPRIATE CHARACTERISTICS OF, A THIRD TERTIARY INSTITUTION AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL AND AN OPEN UNIVERSITY.+

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POW PENSIONS ISSUE REVIEWED

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A REVIEW OF THE ISSUE ON PRISONERS OF WAR PENSIONS ORDERED BY THE GOVERNOR WAS COMPLETED LAST MONTH BY A SENIOR OFFICER WITHOUT PREVIOUS INVOLVEMENT IN THE MATTER, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, SAID AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

SIR PHILIP SAID THAT THE OFFICER CAME TO SIX CONCLUSIONS IN HIS REVIEW:

- * PENSIONS PAYABLE TO THOSE WHO WERE POWS IN HONG KONG DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR OR THEIR DEPENDENTS IN RESPECT OF DISABILITY OR DEATH HAVE BEEN PAID AT THE SAME RATES AND ON THE SAME CONDITIONS AS APPLICABLE TO MEMBERS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM'S REGULAR FORCES.
- * MEDICAL TREATMENT AVAILABLE TO POWS LIVING HERE COMPARES FAVOURABLY WITH THAT IN THE UK.
- * GRANTS PAID BY THE WAR MEMORIAL AND FAR EASTERN RELIEF FUNDS TO BENEFICIARIES ARE MUCH HIGHER THAN THOSE AVAILABLE THROUGH THE LOCAL PUBLIC ASSISTANCE SCHEME, AND ARE FAIR AND REASONABLE IN RELATION TO AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD INCOMES IN HONG KONG.
- * MEDICAL CONSIDERATIONS CONTAINED IN THE RICHARDSON REPORT ON FORMER CANADIAN POWS OF THE JAPANESE HAVE BEEN FULLY TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.
- * BY USING MOST OF THE MONEY REALISED BY THE SALE OF JAPANESE ASSETS FOR COMMUNITY PROJECTS, RATHER THAN BY DISTRIBUTING IT EQUALLY AMONG POWS, THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT INTEND ANY SLIGHT ON THE POWS' SERVICES. THE GOVERNMENT SIMPLY RECOGNISED THAT IN HONG KONG, THE POWS' SUFFERING COULD NOT BE FAIRLY DISTINGUISHED FROM THAT OF THE REST OF THE COMMUNITY.
- * THERE IS NO CASE FOR HONG KONG TO CHANGE ITS POLICY OF PAYING PENSIONS ONLY TO THOSE ASSESSED AS DISABLED DURING SERVICE OR TO THE WIDOWS AND ORPHANS OF THOSE KILLED. THE BASIS FOR THIS CONCLUSION WAS THAT IT WOULD BE INVIDIOUS TO MAKE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN HONG KONG'S POWS AND THE CIVILIAN POPULATION WHICH ALSO SUFFERED GRIEVOUSLY AS HONG KONG, UNLIKE CANADA, WAS OCCUPIED BY THE ENEMY DURING THE WAR.

ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT CONSIDERED THAT THERE IS ANY CASE FOR PENSIONS TO BE PAID TO ALL POWS AS OF RIGHT, THE GOVERNMENT AND THE COMMUNITY HAVE ALWAYS RECOGNISED A SPECIAL DEBT TO THOSE WHO SERVED HONG KONG LOYALLY DURING THE WAR, SIR PHILIP SAID.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS FULL CONFIDENCE, HE SAID, THAT THE HONG KONG WAR MEMORIAL FUND COMMITTEE WILL CONTINUE TO BE GENEROUS IN THEIR DETERMINATION OF GRANTS AND ALLOWANCES PAYABLE TO POWS AND OTHER ELIGIBLE BENEFICIARIES.

ON OCTOBER 1 THIS YEAR, THE FUND WAS JUST UNDER \$19 MILLION, AND WITH ITS ANNUAL INCOME OF ABOUT \$2 MILLION AND ANNUAL OUTLAY OF \$3.6 MILLION, IT WILL BE SOME YEARS BEFORE THE FUND WILL NEED TO CALL ON THE GOVERNMENT'S GUARANTEE, SIR PHILIP REPORTED.

HE DISCLOSED THAT APART FROM THE MAIN CONCLUSIONS OF THE REVIEW, SOME POINTS OF DETAIL ALSO EMERGED WHICH THE GOVERNMENT WILL BRING TO THE ATTENTION OF THE WAR MEMORIAL FUND COMMITTEE FOR THEIR FURTHER CONSIDERATION.

NOTING THAT NO FORMAL APPEALS PROCEDURE EXISTED UNDER THE VOLUNTEER AND NAVAL VOLUNTEER PENSIONS ORDINANCE, HE SAID, +YOUR EXCELLENCY HAS DECIDED THAT YOU WILL CONSIDER PETITIONS IN INDIVIDUAL CASES, AND YOU WILL SEEK THE ADVICE OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL WHERE APPROPRIATE.+

SIR PHILIP EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE REVIEW WOULD SATISFY THOSE CONCERNED THAT +ALL THAT CAN BE REASONABLY DONE FOR OUR POWS IS ACTUALLY BEING DONE.+

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PUBLIC ASSISTANCE SCHEME
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THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE SCHEME WILL REMAIN THE CENTRAL PILLAR OF HONG KONG'S SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM, PROVIDING A SAFETY NET FOR PEOPLE IN NEED, THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, THE HON ERIC HO SAID AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (THURSDAY), DURING THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY ADDRESS.

+THIS IS THE ONE ITEM OF PUBLIC EXPENDITURE WHICH CANNOT, AND WILL NOT BE ARTIFICIALLY RESTRAINED BECAUSE OF ANY FINANCIAL STRINGENCY,+ MR HO STRESSED.

HE SAID THAT IF THERE WAS HIGHER UNEMPLOYMENT AS A RESULT OF A FURTHER ECONOMIC DOWNTURN, THE GOVERNMENT WAS FULLY COMMITTED TO MEETING ALL PUBLIC ASSISTANCE OUTLAYS WHICH MIGHT THEN RESULT.

MR HO STATED THAT IN THE PRESENT ECONOMIC CLIMATE, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO KEEP UNDER REGULAR REVIEW THE LEVELS OF PAYMENT DUE UNDER THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND SPECIAL NEEDS ALLOWANCES SCHEMES SO AS TO KEEP PACE WITH THE MOVEMENT OF PRICES.

HE REPORTED THAT AN AMENDMENT BILL TO PROVIDE FOR BETTER SICKNESS BENEFITS AND GRANTS TO COVER DEATHS OF EMPLOYEES WOULD BE INTRODUCED FOR THE COUNCIL'S CONSIDERATION SHORTLY.

THE EXISTING PROVISION WHEREBY AN EMPLOYEE IS ELIGIBLE FOR SEVERANCE PAYMENT IF HIS EMPLOYER MOVES HIS PLACE OF BUSINESS WILL REQUIRE CAREFUL REVIEW, MR HO SAID.

THIS IS BECAUSE THE DEVELOPMENT OF HONG KONG'S TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE IS INTENDED TO FACILITATE A FREE FLOW BETWEEN HONG KONG ISLAND, KOWLOON AND THE NEW TERRITORIES, HE EXPLAINED.

ON PRE-SCHOOL TRAINING PLACES FOR THE PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN, MR HO SAID THE CAPACITY WOULD BE INCREASED BY 120 PLACES A YEAR.

PLANS ARE ALSO IN HAND TO INCREASE THE PROVISION OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING PLACES FOR MODERATELY MENTALLY HANDICAPPED SCHOOL LEAVERS BY MORE THAN 100 PER CENT IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS FROM 676 TO 1 431 BY 1987-88, HE DISCLOSED.

PROVISION OF BOTH SHELTERED WORKSHOPS AND WORK ACTIVITY CENTRES IS ALSO BEING INCREASED, BY 300 PLACES EACH, HE ADDED.

MR HO REPORTED THAT ACTION WAS BEING TAKEN TO SEPARATE, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, GIRLS AND BOYS IN NEED OF CARE AND PROTECTION FROM REMAND AND PROBATION CASES.

THE SEPARATION, HE EXPLAINED, WAS TO +ALLEVIATE THE RISK OF CONTAMINATION BETWEEN THE OFFENDER AND THE NON-OFFENDER AND TO FACILITATE DEFINING THE GOALS OF TREATMENT, THE TIME SPAN, THE DEGREE OF SECURITY AND THE STYLE OF PROGRAMME.+

HE POINTED OUT THERE WAS A PARTICULAR PROBLEM ON THE TREATMENT OF GIRLS ON CARE AND PROTECTION ORDERS AS MANY OF THEM HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN +GIRLIE+ ESTABLISHMENTS.

+PRIORITY IS THEREFORE BEING GIVEN TO ESTABLISHING A PURPOSE-BUILT HOME IN A SECURE SETTING, WITH GRADATIONS OF SECURITY WITHIN THE HOME ITSELF,+ HE SAID.

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SHELTERED HOUSING FOR ELDERLY

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THE GOVERNMENT'S PLAN TO PURCHASE FLATS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO PROVIDE SHELTERED HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY WILL MAKE A SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO REDUCING THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE NOW ON WAITING LISTS FOR HOSTEL ACCOMMODATION IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES, THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, THE HON SELWYN ALLEYNE, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (THURSDAY).

UNDER THE PROPOSED SCHEME, SOME 700 ADDITIONAL PLACES WILL BE PROVIDED FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE WHO, FOR WHATEVER REASON, ARE NOT ABLE TO LIVE WITH THEIR FAMILIES.

MR ALLEYNE NOTED THAT SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS IN HONG KONG OFTEN MADE IT DIFFICULT FOR OLD PEOPLE, WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF A FAMILY, TO AFFORD DECENT SELF-CONTAINED ACCOMMODATION.

+MANY OF THESE OLD PEOPLE ARE STILL IN GOOD HEALTH AND, WITH A MINIMUM OF SUPPORT, ARE ABLE TO TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES AND IT IS FOR THIS GROUP, IN PARTICULAR, THAT THE PROVISION OF SHELTERED HOUSING IS APPROPRIATE AS OPPOSED TO MORE INSTITUTIONAL FORMS OF RESIDENTIAL CARE,+ HE SAID.

/ACCOMMODATION,

ACCOMMODATION, MR ALLEYNE SAID, WOULD BE FOR GROUPS OF FOUR OR FIVE AND EVERY ATTEMPT WOULD BE MADE, IN THE DESIGN AND FITTING OUT OF THE FLATS, TO ALLOW FOR PERSONAL PRIVACY TO MINIMISE THE POSSIBILITY OF CONFLICT BETWEEN RESIDENTS.

HE SAID A NUMBER OF SUITABLE FLATS IN TSUEN WAN AND SHA TIN HAD BEEN LOCATED AND THE GOVERNMENT WAS LOOKING FOR OTHERS IN THE OLDER BUILT-UP URBAN AREAS.

THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING APPROPRIATE COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES IN THE LOCATIONS WAS ALSO CONSIDERED.

MULTI-SERVICE CENTRES FOR THE ELDERLY ARE PLANNED TO SERVE ALL MAJOR POPULATION AREAS OF 250 000 PEOPLE. SEVEN SUCH CENTRES ARE ALREADY SERVING WAN CHAI, CHAI WAN, SHAM SHUI PO, TSUEN WAN, KOWLOON CITY, MONG KOK AND YUEN LONG. THREE MORE ARE SCHEDULED TO OPEN IN 1983/84 IN TUEN MUN, SHA TIN AND TAI PO.

IN ADDITION, SOCIAL CENTRES FOR THE ELDERLY ARE PLANNED FOR A LOCAL POPULATION OF 30 000 - AND 86 SUCH CENTRES ARE IN OPERATION AND A FURTHER 61 ARE PLANNED OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS.

MR ALLEYNE SAID: +PARTICULAR EMPHASIS IS ALSO BEING GIVEN TO THE EXPANSION OF HOME HELP SERVICES WHICH PLAY SUCH A VITAL ROLE IN ENABLING THE ELDERLY TO REMAIN IN THE COMMUNITY.

HE SAID MUCH EMPHASIS WAS PLACED ON PROVIDING A RANGE OF RESIDENTIAL CARE FOR THE ELDERLY WHICH WOULD ENABLE THEM TO REMAIN IN CONTACT WITH THE COMMUNITY AND NOT BECOME ISOLATED IN INSTITUTIONS IF THIS COULD BE AVOIDED.

MR ALLEYNE SAID +THE GOVERNMENT'S PLANS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF RESIDENTIAL CARE EMPHASISE THE NEED FOR FLEXIBILITY.+

FOR EXAMPLE, WHILE HOSTELS FOR THE ELDERLY CATER FOR THOSE WHO ARE LARGELY ABLE TO TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES, THEY INCLUDE A SECTION WHICH PROVIDES MEALS AND ASSISTANCE WITH HOUSEKEEPING AND LAUNDRY.

SIMILARLY, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, OLD PEOPLE'S HOMES ARE PLANNED IN CONJUNCTION WITH CARE-AND-ATTENTION HOMES OR INCLUDE A SMALL CARE-AND-ATTENTION UNIT TO PROVIDE FOR THOSE RESIDENTS WHOSE CONDITION DETERIORATES, BUT WHERE IT IS DESIRABLE TO AVOID THE ANGUISH OF A TRANSFER TO ANOTHER HOME.

MR ALLEYNE SAID A RECENT UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG RESEARCH PROJECT CONFIRMED HIS BELIEF THAT ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE INFIRM ELDERLY AND BUILDING MORE CARE-AND-ATTENTION HOMES SHOULD BE EXPLORED.

SPECIFICALLY, THE SUGGESTION IS THAT IF DAY CARE FOR THE ELDERLY WERE MORE WIDELY AVAILABLE, THE DEMAND FOR RESIDENTIAL CARE-AND-ATTENTION HOMES WOULD BE REDUCED FROM A POSSIBLE 8.8 PLACES PER 1 000 ELDERLY POPULATION TO FIVE PLACES PER 1 000, OR NOT GREATLY IN EXCESS OF THE PRESENT PLANNING TARGET OF FOUR PLACES PER 1 000.

/TO PROVIDE

TO PROVIDE MORE IMPETUS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF DAY CARE CENTRES, MR ALLEYNE SAID IT WAS NOW PLANNED TO PROVIDE AT LEAST ONE SUCH CENTRE IN ALL URBAN AND NEW TERRITORIES DISTRICTS.

AT PRESENT THERE ARE 60 PLACES IN DAY CARE CENTRES AND A FURTHER 160 PLACES ARE PLANNED FOR 1983/84.

MR ALLEYNE ASSURED COUNCIL MEMBERS THAT HE WAS +NOT IN ANY WAY COMPLACENT ABOUT THE ADEQUACY OF OUR PLANNING TARGET FOR THE PROVISION OF CARE-AND-ATTENTION HOMES AND THIS IS NOW UNDER REVIEW.+

PRESENT PLANS PROVIDE FOR AN ADDITIONAL 3 000 PLACES IN SUCH HOMES BY 1986/87, BRINGING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PLACES TO NEARLY 3 400. THIS REPRESENTS A RATIO OF NEARLY FIVE PLACES PER 1 000 ELDERLY POPULATION IN THAT YEAR EXCEEDING THE STRICT PLANNING TARGET BY 25 PER CENT.

REFERRING TO BED-RIDDEN CASES IN NEED OF ALMOST CONSTANT NURSING CARE, MR ALLEYNE SAID THAT AS AN INTERIM MEASURE, IT HAD BEEN AGREED THAT SMALL INFIRMARY UNITS SHOULD BE SET UP IN SOME LARGER CARE-AND-ATTENTION HOMES TO PROVIDE THE HIGHER DEGREE OF NURSING CARE REQUIRED.

HE SAID ALSO THAT A PROPOSAL WAS UNDER CONSIDERATION TO OFFER CONCESSIONARY FARES ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT TO ELDERLY PEOPLE DURING OFF-PEAK HOURS.

DISCUSSING CHILD ABUSE, HE SAID IT WAS +A COMPLEX ISSUE TO WHICH CONSIDERABLE EFFORT AND RESOURCES HAD BEEN DEVOTED AND WOULD CONTINUE TO BE DEVOTED.

IN RECENT YEARS, THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT'S FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES HAVE BEEN STRENGTHENED.

+SADLY, IT MUST BE ADMITTED THAT A FEW CASES DO GO WRONG EVEN WITH THE CLOSEST SUPERVISION AND THE BEST OF INTENTIONS,+ THE DIRECTOR SAID.

MR ALLEYNE GAVE AN ASSURANCE THAT +THE PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING CHILD ABUSE CASES WOULD BE REVIEWED REGULARLY, PARTICULARLY IN THE LIGHT OF THE EVIDENCE OF SPECIFIC COURT CASES, TO ENSURE THAT THEY REMAIN RESPONSIVE AND ADEQUATE TO MEET THE NEED, AND A REVIEW IS NOW UNDERWAY IN THE LIGHT OF THE RECENT AMALGAMATION OF THE MEDICAL SOCIAL WORKER GRADE WITH THE SOCIAL WORKER GRADE IN THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT.+

TWO YEARS AGO, THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT ESTABLISHED A HOT-LINE TO FACILITATE, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE VOLUNTARY REPORTING OF POSSIBLE CHILD ABUSE CASES.

+THE RESPONSE HAS BEEN ENCOURAGING AND WE WILL CONTINUE TO PUBLICISE THIS SERVICE,+ MR ALLEYNE SAID.

THE POLICE WILL ACT ON ANY REPORT RECEIVED, AS WILL SOCIAL WORKERS IN FAMILY SERVICES CENTRES OPERATED EITHER BY THE S.W.D. OR VOLUNTARY AGENCIES.

DISTRICT BOARDS' POWER
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THE POWER OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS LIES IN THE STRENGTH AND ACCURACY OF THEIR ADVICE TO THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND IN THEIR ABILITY TO CONVEY IN THE OTHER DIRECTION THE DECISIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT TAKEN IN THE LIGHT OF THAT ADVICE.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION, MR DAVID AKERS-JONES, AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

RESPONDING TO COMMENTS RAISED BY UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS, HE SAID IT IS NOT AN OVERSIGHT THAT THE DISTRICT BOARDS THEMSELVES HAVE NO EXECUTIVE POWER.

+THIS IS NOT THE WAY HONG KONG WORKS. HONG KONG IS TOO SMALL TO BE DIVIDED INTO A NUMBER OF WARRING KINGDOM CONTINUALLY AT LOGGERHEADS WITH THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, EACH PURSUING LOCALLY DECIDED POLICIES, EACH WITH ITS OWN REVENUE AND PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMMES.+

CONCERNING +PLATFORMS OF OPINION+ MENTIONED BY DR RAYSON HUANG, MR AKERS-JONES SAID THERE WERE 385 OF THESE PLATFORMS --- ADVISORY COMMITTEES COVERING EVERY CONCEIVABLE ACTIVITY, AND THEY, IN ADDITION TO THE DISTRICT BOARD, AMOUNTED TO A FAIRLY FORMIDABLE EDIFICE.

+THERE WILL NO DOUBT BE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION, BUT WE ESTABLISH, BY THESE CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION, A CONSENSUS.

+AND THAT IS WHAT GIVES US OUR STRENGTH, BECAUSE, BY ITS NATURE, A CONSENSUS COMMANDS BROAD SUPPORT AND IS REMOVED FROM THE POLITICAL ARENA.

+AND A CONSENSUS ARRIVED AT BY CONSULTATION CERTAINLY PROVIDES A SOUND BASIS FOR SOUND DECISIONS,+ HE SAID.

REFERRING TO CRITICISM THAT THE DISTRICT BOARDS WERE NOT WHOLLY ELECTED, MR AKERS-JONES STRESSED THAT APPOINTED MEMBERS WERE THERE BECAUSE OF THEIR SPECIAL SKILLS OR KNOWLEDGE OR BECAUSE OF THE CONTRIBUTION THEY WERE ALREADY MAKING TO THE LIFE OF THE DISTRICT.

+THEIR EXPERTISE WILL BE EXTREMELY VALUABLE AT THIS TIME.+

AS FOR ELECTED MEMBERS, HE NOTED THAT THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG WERE NOT EASILY DECEIVED, AND THAT WAS WHY A QUARTER OF A MILLION PEOPLE TURNED OUT TO VOTE IN THE ELECTIONS IN SEPTEMBER.

IN REPLY TO MISS TAM WHO HAD ASKED WHETHER DISTRICT BOARDS COULD CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS INTEGRATING RECENT IMMIGRANTS INTO THE FABRIC OF SOCIETY, MR AKERS-JONES SAID THE WONG TAI SIN BOARD HAD ALREADY INVESTIGATED THIS AND EXECUTIVE ACTION HAD BEEN TAKEN TO FURTHER THIS OBJECTIVE.

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ON A SUGGESTION BY DR HUANG OF FURTHER CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE, MR AKERS-JONES SAID THAT SO FAR AS THE DISTRICT BOARDS WERE CONCERNED, +WE MUST, PLEASE, BE ALLOWED A BRIEF PERIOD OF CONSOLIDATION AND NOW ALLOW THE BOARDS TO GET ON WITH THEIR JOB.+

TURNING TO THE URBAN COUNCIL ELECTIONS NEXT MARCH, MR AKERS-JONES MAINTAINED THAT THIS WAS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE REFORM OF DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION.

+THIS, TOO, IS NOT A FRAUD AND A DECEPTION. THE URBAN COUNCIL HAS A VITAL ROLE TO PLAY IN THE DAY-TO-DAY MANAGEMENT OF OUR CITY.+

+THE LINK WITH THE WORK OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS IS AN OBVIOUS ONE, AND THIS IS RECOGNISED IN THE SEATS THE URBAN COUNCILLORS WILL OCCUPY ON THE BOARDS,+ HE SAID.

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BRAY DEFENDS PRESS FREEDOM
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THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON DENIS BRAY TODAY SPOKE IN SUPPORT OF THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS, BUT CAUTIONED AGAINST OVER-DRAMATISATION OR SENSATIONALISM IN REPORTING, PARTICULARLY ABOUT THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG.

NEITHER REPORTERS NOR THE REPORTED ON ARE INFALLIBLE, HE TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, STRESSING THAT ASSESSMENT OF THE VALUE OF THE NEWS MEDIA MUST BE BASED ON THEIR LONGTERM PERFORMANCE DAY IN AND DAY OUT, ON THEIR BALANCE IN REPORTING OF EVENTS, AND ON THE STANDARD OF THEIR COMMENTARY.

+BY THESE STANDARDS HONG KONG IS REMARKABLY WELL SERVED.+

MR BRAY SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS IN NO POSITION TO DICTATE WHAT EMPHASIS THE MEDIA SHOULD ADOPT, +NOR, I AM SURE, WOULD ANY MEMBER WISH TO FIND HIMSELF IN A SOCIETY WHERE THE GOVERNMENT WAS ABLE TO DO SO.+

PEOPLE IN THE PUBLIC EYE, HE SAID, HAVE A LOVE-HATE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MEDIA.

+WE FEEL RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION WHEN WE ARE AFFRONTED AND SATISFACTION WHEN WE ARE APPLAUDED. BUT WE SELDOM PAUSE TO REFLECT THAT THE COLOUR AND VARIETY OF OUR NEWS AND COMMENT SPRING DIRECTLY FROM THE FREEDOM OF A HIGHLY COMPETITIVE PRESS.

+WE DO WRONG TO TAKE THIS FOR GRANTED,+ MR BRAY SAID, POINTING OUT THAT THERE ARE A GREAT MANY PLACES WHERE SUCH FREEDOM IS NOT TO BE FOUND.

+HONG KONG WOULD BE A VERY MUCH DULLER AND MORE DANGEROUS AND UNSTABLE A PLACE WITHOUT IT,+ HE ADDED.

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LEGCO TRIBUTE FOR 'BIM' DAVIES

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THE GOVERNOR, SIR EDWARD YOUDE TODAY PAID WARM TRIBUTE TO MR LEWIS DAVIES WHO RETIRES FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AFTER SERVING FOR MORE THAN EIGHT YEARS AS SECRETARY FOR SECURITY.

MR DAVIES HAS BEEN APPOINTED SECRETARY WITHOUT PORTFOLIO AND HIS MAIN TASK WILL BE TO PROVIDE SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE CHIEF SECRETARY IN DEALING WITH ADDITIONAL WORK ARISING FROM THE TALKS ON THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG.

THANKING HIM FOR HIS OUTSTANDING LOYAL AND VALUABLE SERVICES IN THE COUNCIL, THE GOVERNOR SAID HE WAS GRATEFUL MR DAVIES HAD POSTPONED HIS WELL EARNED RETIREMENT AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO HAVE THE BENEFIT OF HIS WIDE EXPERIENCE FOR SOME TIME TO COME.

UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS ALSO JOINED IN PRAISING MR DAVIES.

THE SENIOR UNOFFICIAL MEMBER, THE HON ROGER LOBO NOTED THAT MR DAVIES' TENURE AS CHIEF SPOKESMAN ON SECURITY AFFAIRS HAD SEEN SOME MOMENTOUS EVENTS, PARTICULARLY THE ISSUES OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION AND THE INFLUX OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES.

MR DAVIES, HE SAID, HAD SPENT MANY HOURS WITH UNOFFICIALS, ANSWERING QUESTIONS AND EXAMINING PROBLEMS BRINGING TO THE DELIBERATIONS +ELOQUENCE, COURAGE, DEDICATION AND UNFAILING PATIENCE+.

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FINANCIAL SECRETARY CALLS FOR IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY
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IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY MUST BECOME A MAJOR GOAL FOR PERSONNEL MANAGERS IF HONG KONG IS TO MAINTAIN ITS COMPETITIVENESS IN WORLD MARKETS, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, MR JOHN BREMRIDGE, SAID TODAY.

OPENING THE THIRD ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT AT THE SHERATON HOTEL THIS (THURSDAY) MORNING, MR BREMRIDGE SAID HONG KONG HAS THE HIGHEST LABOUR RATES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, EXCEPT FOR JAPAN, AND MUST CONTINUE TO BE COMPETITIVE.

+WE HAVE TO ENSURE THAT WE DO NOT ENCOURAGE INFLATIONARY GROWTH BY INTERNAL COST PUSH INFLATION AS A RESULT OF INCREASED LABOUR COSTS,+ HE SAID.

MR BREMRIDGE SAID IT WAS THE TASK OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT TO GUIDE BUSINESS LEADERS IN THE RECONCILIATION OF THESE PRESSURES.

+TO DO THIS, THEY MUST ENSURE THAT MONEY SPENT ON SALARIES AND FRINGE BENEFITS IS SO APPORTIONED THAT EQUITY IS SEEN TO PREVAIL IN COMPANY POLICIES, AND SIMULTANEOUSLY THAT THE REWARD SYSTEMS ARE DESIGNED IN SUCH A WAY TO MOTIVATE PEOPLE TO IMPROVE BOTH THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF PRODUCTS OR SERVICES PRODUCED.

NOTING THAT IN THE CONVENTION'S PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES, GREAT EMPHASIS WAS PLACED +ON THE HANDLING OF CHANGE+, MR BREMRIDGE SAID, +I WELCOME THIS APPROACH AND APPLAUD YOUR ORGANISING COMMITTEE'S SKILLS IN IDENTIFYING OTHER WAYS IN WHICH YOU CAN ASSIST THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR ECONOMY.+

HE SAID THAT HONG KONG HAD TO BE FLEXIBLE IN COPING WITH WORLD RECESSION AND INCREASING MOVES TOWARDS PROTECTIONISM IN SOME OF ITS MAJOR MARKETS, AND HONG KONG'S INDUSTRIALISTS HAD IN THIS FREE MARKET ECONOMY CONTINUALLY TO ADAPT TO CHANGING EXTERNAL CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES.

+WE ARE FORTUNATE INDEED TO HAVE SUCH A HIGHLY-MOTIVATED AND FLEXIBLE WORK FORCE. THIS IS IN NO SMALL WAY DUE TO THE PROFESSIONAL MANNER IN WHICH SUCH RAPID ADAPTATION IS HANDLED BY PERSONNEL MANAGERS,+ HE SAID.

MR BREMRIDGE SAID IT WAS GRATIFYING TO SEE THAT SERIOUS STUDY IS BEING UNDERTAKEN IN SUCH AREAS AS CHANGING TECHNOLOGY AND THE MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE, FOR HONG KONG WILL ONLY SURVIVE IF IT CONTINUES TO DIVERSIFY, IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF ITS PRODUCTS AND MAKE THE MOST OF THESE GAPS IN THE WORLD MARKET-PLACE WHICH IT CAN PROFITABLY EXPLOIT.

+THIS WILL HELP MAINTAIN OUR RECORD OF REASONABLY FULL EMPLOYMENT TO WHICH I AM COMMITTED,+ HE SAID.

/HE NOTED

HE NOTED THAT THE HONG KONG INSTITUTE PLAYS A LEADING ROLE IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ASIAN-PACIFIC FEDERATION FOR PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT, AND SAID IT WAS FITTING THAT HONG KONG'S PROFESSIONAL MANAGERS SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN AND INFLUENCE MATTERS WHICH IMPINGE ON ITS REGIONAL RELATIONSHIPS.

HE WAS A FIRM SUPPORTER OF THE IDEALS OF THE INSTITUTE BECAUSE THEY ARE ACCORD WITH HONG KONG'S OWN ASPIRATIONS, HE SAID.

+WE HAVE NO RESOURCES EXCEPT OUR PEOPLE,+ MR BREMRIDGE CONCLUDED, IN DECLARING OPEN THE CONVENTION.

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ROLE FOR BAPTIST COLLEGE IN SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION
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THE UNIVERSITY AND POLYTECHNIC GRANTS COMMITTEE HAS MADE A NUMBER OF POSITIVE SUGGESTIONS TO THE BAPTIST COLLEGE ABOUT COURSES TO BE INCLUDED IN ITS FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PLANS, AND HAS DELINEATED A ROLE FOR THE COLLEGE IN THE SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

THE COLLEGE IS SEEN AS A COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, IN WHICH PROVISION IS MADE FOR LIBERAL EDUCATION, BUT WITH AN ORIENTATION MORE TOWARDS PREPARATION FOR LOCAL EMPLOYMENT THAN POST-GRADUATE EDUCATION.

+THIS IS A ROLE WHICH IS NOT, ACCORDING TO THE UPGC, BEING PERFORMED BY OTHER INSTITUTIONS AND IN WHICH THE BAPTIST COLLEGE CAN BE SEEN TO BE PRE-EMINENT,+ SAID A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN TODAY.

THE UPGC HAS ASKED THE COLLEGE TO CONSIDER AN INCREASED DEGREE OF COMPUTER LITERACY FOR ALL STUDENTS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF COURSES WHICH EMPHASIZE COMPUTER APPLICATIONS WITHIN PARTICULAR ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES. THE COLLEGE MIGHT ALSO CONSIDER DEVELOPMENTS IN GEOTECHNICAL SCIENCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL STUDIES. THESE PROPOSALS ARE ALL INTENDED TO INTRODUCE FRESH AND PRACTICAL ELEMENTS INTO ACADEMIC COURSES.

THE UPGC HAS SAID THAT THE COLLEGE SHOULD MAKE PROPOSALS COMPATIBLE WITH A RECURRENT EXPENDITURE CEILING OF \$40 M FOR 1983-84 FOR POST-ADVANCED LEVEL STUDIES. +THE FIGURE OF \$40 M SHOULD GIVE SCOPE FOR POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS+, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

THE COMMITTEE WILL MAKE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT AFTER IT HAS RECEIVED AND CONSIDERED DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS NOW BEING INVITED FROM THE COLLEGE.

/MEANWHILE,

MEANWHILE, THE FULL UPGC, AFTER DISCUSSION WITH THE COLLEGE AND ITS PRESIDENT, HAS CONCLUDED THAT DEVELOPMENT OF A CIVIL ENGINEERING COURSE IS NOT CONSISTENT WITH THE ROLE OF THE COLLEGE, AND THE GOVERNMENT HAS AGREED TO THIS VIEW.

THE GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN EXPLAINED THAT THIS VIEW WAS ONLY REACHED AFTER CAREFUL STUDY OF THE CASE FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE COURSE AT THE COLLEGE, PARTICULARLY IN THE WIDER CONTEXT OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM IN HONG KONG.

+GIVEN THE ROLE ENVISAGED FOR THE BAPTIST COLLEGE IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM, DEVELOPMENT OF A FULLY PROFESSIONAL CIVIL ENGINEERING COURSE WILL INHIBIT THE ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE OTHER DEPARTMENTS OF THE COLLEGE. DEVELOPMENT OF A PROGRAMME IN CIVIL ENGINEERING AT THE COLLEGE WOULD, THEREFORE, BE NEITHER IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE COLLEGE NOR OF HONG KONG, AND RESOURCES FOR SUCH DEVELOPMENT WILL BE MORE PRODUCTIVE IF SPENT WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG AND THE POLYTECHNICS,+ HE SAID.

HE EMPHASIZED, HOWEVER, THAT BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE UPGC BELIEVED THAT THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD NOT BE CLOSED BEFORE 1985 SO AS TO ENSURE THAT EXISTING STUDENTS ARE IN NO WAY AFFECTED, AND THAT THEY HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMPLETE THEIR STUDIES WITH THE SAME FACILITIES AS THEY NOW ENJOY.

+THE UPGC HAS TOLD THE GOVERNMENT THAT IT EXPECTS THAT THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG AND THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC WOULD INCLUDE ALL BRANCHES OF ENGINEERING AS PRIORITY SUBJECTS IN THEIR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES,+ THE SPOKESMAN ADDED.

THE COMMITTEE ALSO BELIEVED, AS A RESULT OF PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS WITH THE DIRECTOR OF THE POLYTECHNIC, THAT THE POLYTECHNIC WILL BE ABLE TO PROVIDE FROM 1983 A SIMILAR NUMBER OF PLACES TO THAT TO BE DISCONTINUED AT THE BAPTIST COLLEGE. FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES WOULD ALSO BE AVAILABLE WHEN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SECOND POLYTECHNIC IS COMPLETED IN ABOUT 1988.

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SITE INVESTIGATION FOR JUNK BAY ROAD TUNNEL

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THE JUNK BAY DEVELOPMENT OFFICE OF THE NEW TERRITORIES DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT TODAY (THURSDAY) AWARDED A \$2 MILLION CONTRACT TO LAM SOIL AND CONCRETE LABORATORY LTD. FOR THE SITE INVESTIGATION OF THE PROPOSED PRINCIPAL ACCESS - A ROAD TUNNEL - TO JUNK BAY NEW TOWN.

THE CONTRACT WAS SIGNED BY MR M.J. JEFFERY, ACTING CHIEF ENGINEER OF THE JUNK BAY DEVELOPMENT OFFICE AND A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE COMPANY.

MR JEFFERY SAID THE ROAD TUNNEL WOULD RUN FROM THE NORTHERN END OF THE EXISTING JUNK BAY ROAD TO FUTURE DEVELOPMENT AREAS IN JUNK BAY.

THE CONTRACT CONSISTS OF TAKING VARIOUS SOIL SAMPLES THROUGH WHICH THE ROAD TUNNEL WILL PASS TO ESTABLISH THE GROUND CONDITIONS AND VARIOUS METHODS OF DRILLING WILL BE EMPLOYED BY THE CONTRACTOR.

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FEEDER BUS SERVICES IN KWAI CHUNG TO TAKE MORE DIRECT ROUTE

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MORE DIRECT BUS FEEDER SERVICES TO THE KWAI FONG MTR STATION WILL BE INTRODUCED FROM 11 AM TOMORROW (FRIDAY), A TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN ANNOUNCED TODAY.

KMB ROUTES 31M, 36M AND 50M AT PRESENT TRAVELLING ALONG KWAI CHUNG ROAD SOUTHBOUND WILL BE TAKING A MORE DIRECT ROUTE BY TURNING RIGHT INTO KWAI FOO ROAD, INSTEAD OF TRAVELLING VIA KWAI ON ROAD AND HING FONG ROAD.

BY SEGREGATING BUSES FROM OTHER VEHICLES ALONG THE CONGESTED HING FONG ROAD, TRAFFIC FLOW IN THE AREA IS EXPECTED TO IMPROVE SUBSTANTIALLY, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

MEANWHILE, THE BUS STOPS ON HING FONG ROAD WILL BE RE-LOCATED TO THE SOUTHBOUND SECTION OF KWAI CHUNG ROAD BETWEEN KWAI ON ROAD AND KWAI FOO ROAD.

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INDUSTRIAL SAFETY SEMINAR FOR EMPLOYEES
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SUPERVISORS AND FOREMEN IN INDUSTRIAL CONCERNS WERE TODAY (THURSDAY) URGED TO ATTEND AN INDUSTRIAL SAFETY SEMINAR TO BE HELD NEXT WEEK.

THE APPEAL WAS MADE BY MR NICOLAS YEUNG SHU-YAN, CHAIRMAN OF THE ORGANISING SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE TWO-DAY SEMINAR, AT A PRESS CONFERENCE HELD IN THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS, LEE GARDENS THIS (THURSDAY) AFTERNOON.

MR YEUNG SAID THAT THE SEMINAR WAS ORGANISED BY THE COMMITTEE ON INDUSTRIAL SAFETY AND ACCIDENT PREVENTION OF THE LABOUR ADVISORY BOARD TO PROMOTE SAFETY AT WORK AMONG EMPLOYEES.

THE SEMINAR WILL BE HELD AT THE CHINESE Y.M.C.A., WATERLOO ROAD CENTRE ON NOVEMBER 18 AND 19, WITH MR ANDREW SO KWOK-WING, AN UNOFFICIAL MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, OFFICIATING AT THE OPENING CEREMONY.

SAFETY PROFESSIONALS, ACADEMICS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN INVITED TO GIVE TALKS ON VARIOUS TOPICS AT THE SEMINAR, MR YEUNG SAID.

AMONG THE SPEAKERS ARE MR YIP YUK-LUN, DEPUTY CHIEF FACTORY INSPECTOR OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT AND MR HO KAM-CHUEN, INDUSTRIAL SAFETY OFFICER OF THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION, WHO WILL SPEAK ON THE RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYERS, EMPLOYEES AND THE GOVERNMENT IN PROMOTING INDUSTRIAL SAFETY. OTHER SPEAKERS INCLUDE MR NGAN KWAN-LEUNG, ENGINEER OF HONG KONG ELECTRIC CO. LTD., DR ONG SAY-GARK, LECTURER OF THE COMMUNITY MEDICINE DEPARTMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG AND MR HO KWOK-WAH, ASSISTANT DIVISIONAL OFFICER OF FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT.

TWO FILMS FEATURING SAFETY AT WORK WILL ALSO BE SHOWN DURING THE TWO-DAY SEMINAR, MR YEUNG ADDED.

THE REGISTRATION FEES FOR THE SEMINAR IS \$45 PER PERSON.

THOSE WISHING TO JOIN THE SEMINAR SHOULD CONTACT THE FACTORY INSPECTORATE DIVISION OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT ON 3-688111 EXT. 401.

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NEW KINDERGARTEN OPENS IN TUEN MUN

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THE YAN OI TONG KINDERGARTEN IS A FINE EXAMPLE OF THE VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION THAT LOCAL CHARITABLE ORGANISATIONS CAN MAKE TO HELP SMOOTH SOME OF THE ROUGH EDGES THAT APPEAR DURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW TOWN.

THIS WAS STATED BY MRS JANE AKERS-JONES, WIFE OF THE SECRETARY FOR CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION, WHEN SHE OPENED THE KINDERGARTEN AT YAU OI ESTATE IN TUEN MUN TODAY (THURSDAY).

+AS A RESULT OF CLOSE CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE DISTRICT BOARD, THE DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, TUEN MUN NOW HAS 45 KINDERGARTENS SERVING A POPULATION OF 190 000,+ MRS AKERS-JONES SAID.

HOWEVER SHE POINTED OUT THAT WITH 14 PER CENT OF THE POPULATION BELOW THE AGE OF FOUR AND THE POPULATION INCREASING BY 70 000 A YEAR, EVERY ENCOURAGEMENT WOULD BE GIVEN TO PRIVATE ORGANISATIONS TO KEEP UP WITH THE DEMAND.

+THIS KINDERGARTEN WELCOMED ITS FIRST CHILDREN IN FEBRUARY THIS YEAR AND MARKS YET ANOTHER SERVICE THE TONG IS PROVIDING IN TUEN MUN,+ SHE CONTINUED.

+IT WAS COMPLETED IN RECORD TIME AND FULFILLS AN IMMEDIATE NEED TO THE MANY RESIDENTS OF ON TING AND YAU OI ESTATES AT A TIME WHEN KINDERGARTEN PLACES ARE IN GREAT DEMAND.

+IT ALSO SHOWS THE GENUINE CONCERN OF THE DIRECTORS OF YAN OI TONG, WHO ARE SENSITIVE TO THE NEEDS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND ARE READY TO OFFER THEIR HELP,+ SHE ADDED.

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TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE IN SAI YING PUN

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CHUNG CHING STREET IN SAI YING PUN WILL BE TEMPORARILY CLOSED TO TRAFFIC BETWEEN 8 AM AND 8 PM ON SUNDAY (NOVEMBER 14) FOR THE LAYING OF WATER MAINS, A SPOKESMAN FOR THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT SAID TODAY.

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