



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

WEDNESDAY, MAY 7, 1975

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M.T.R. CORPORATION BILL PASSED
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LEGISLATION SETTING UP THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION TO BUILD AND RUN THE \$5,800 MILLION MODIFIED INITIAL SYSTEM WAS FORMALLY PASSED IN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, REMOVING THE LAST LEGAL HURDLE TO THE GIGANTIC PROJECT.

ONLY ONE UNOFFICIAL MEMBER, THE HON. LO TAK-SHING, VOTED AGAINST THE BILL WHICH WILL COME INTO EFFECT ON A DATE TO BE APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR.

THE BILL WAS PASSED WITH THREE AMENDMENTS. THE FIRST VESTED THE AUTHORITY FOR GOVERNMENT GUARANTEES OF THE CORPORATION'S BORROWINGS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, INSTEAD OF IN THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

THE SECOND EMPOWERED THE GOVERNOR TO GIVE DIRECTIONS OF A GENERAL CHARACTER TO THE CORPORATION IF HE CONSIDERED THAT THE PUBLIC INTEREST SO REQUIRED. THIS PROVISION IS DESIGNED FOR EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES, NOT EVERY DAY USE, AND THE GOVERNOR WOULD BE ASSISTED BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL BEFORE EXERCISING THIS POWER.

THE THIRD AMENDMENT REMOVED STAMP DUTY ON THE TRANSFER OF PROPERTY FROM THE PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY TO THE CORPORATION. THIS EXEMPTION APPLIES ONLY TO THAT TRANSFER AND THE CORPORATION ITSELF WILL BE SUBJECT TO TAXATION IN THE SAME WAY AS OTHER COMMERCIAL UNDERTAKINGS.

IN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON. G.C. THORNTON, RE-ITERATED THE GOVERNMENT'S FIRM BELIEF THAT THE UNDERGROUND RAILWAY +IS A VITAL NECESSITY TO HONG KONG IN ORDER TO AFFORD MAXIMUM RELIEF FROM CONGESTION ON THE ROADS IN THE YEARS AHEAD.+

IT WAS RECOGNISED, HOWEVER, THAT THE SYSTEM WAS BUT A VALUABLE PALLIATIVE -- NOT A CURE TO HONG KONG'S TRANSPORT PROBLEM, HE ADDED.

ON THE VIABILITY OF THE SYSTEM, MR. THORNTON EMPHASISED THAT THIS HAD CONSISTENTLY BEEN AT THE HEART OF GOVERNMENT THINKING FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS AND THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONVINCED THAT THE SYSTEM WAS VIABLE.

AS TO THE ESTIMATED COST OF THE PROJECT, MR. THORNTON SAID THIS HAD BEEN PREPARED ON CONSERVATIVE LINES, INCLUDING PROVISION FOR BOTH COST ESCALATION AND UNFORESEEN CONTINGENCIES.

SINCE THE ESTIMATES WERE PREPARED FIVE MONTHS AGO, WORLD INFLATION HAD SLOWED DOWN AND LOCAL BUILDING COSTS HAD FALLEN, HE SAID. +THERE ARE GOOD REASONS THEREFORE TO BELIEVE THAT THE ESTIMATE FOR THE TOTAL CONTRACT PRICE AND NON-CONTRACTUAL COSTS OF \$5,800 MILLION REMAINS CONSERVATIVE.+

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PROVISIONS OF LABOUR RELATIONS BILL CLARIFIED

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THE NEW LABOUR RELATIONS BILL WILL PROVIDE HONG KONG WITH A FRAMEWORK FOR THE SETTLEMENT OF TRADE DISPUTES WITH THE MINIMUM OF SOCIAL FRICTION OR ECONOMIC DISRUPTION, THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON. IAN PRICE, TOLD LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

+THE PROCEDURES IN THE BILL REPRESENT METHODS WELL ESTABLISHED ELSEWHERE,+ HE SAID, +ALTHOUGH FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HONG KONG THEY BRING TOGETHER, IN ONE ORDINANCE, VARIOUS METHODS OF RESOLVING DISPUTES.+

MR. PRICE WAS MOVING THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, WHICH WAS GAZETTED FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON MARCH 21.

HE SAID : +BECAUSE NO TWO INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES ARE IDENTICAL, IT IS DESIRABLE TO DEVISE FLEXIBLE PROCEDURES WHICH CAN BE APPLIED TO WIDELY DIFFERENT SITUATIONS.

+SO THE PROCEDURE TO BE ADOPTED IN ANY PARTICULAR DISPUTE WILL DEPEND UPON ITS CIRCUMSTANCES.+

HE SAID THE BILL AIMED TO CATER FOR BOTH THE COMMON SITUATION IN HONG KONG -- IN WHICH +AD HOC+ GROUPS OF WORKERS WERE INVOLVED -- AND ALSO FOR THOSE CASES IN WHICH A UNION WAS A DIRECT PARTY TO A DISPUTE.

+THE PRESENT BILL COVERS BOTH STRIKES AND LOCK-OUTS, AND APPLIES EQUALLY TO EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES,+ HE SAID. +IT SHOULD BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL TO THOSE WORKERS WHO DO NOT BELONG TO TRADE UNIONS.+

THE COMMISSIONER SAID SOME PEOPLE MIGHT ARGUE THAT THE PROVISIONS OF THE BILL RELATING TO A COMPULSORY COOLING-OFF PERIOD WERE UNDESIRABLE.

BUT THESE PROVISIONS -- WHICH WOULD ONLY BE IMPLEMENTED IN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND IN CONJUNCTION WITH ARBITRATION OR BOARD OF INQUIRY PROCEDURES WERE NOT AN ATTEMPT ON THE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE AWAY THE RIGHT TO STRIKE.

+THEY ARE AN ATTEMPT TO PROVIDE FOR A FLEXIBLE APPROACH LEADING TO A LESS HEATED ATMOSPHERE, MORE CONDUCTIVE TO THE SETTLEMENT OF THE DISPUTE,+ HE SAID.

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+INDEED, IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES THEY MIGHT BE WELCOMED BY THE PARTIES TO THE DISPUTE, PARTICULARLY WHERE THE PERIOD MIGHT ASSIST THEM TO REASSESS THEIR ATTITUDES AND, WITHOUT LOSS OF FACE, TO ABANDON ENTRENCHED VIEWS.+

MR. PRICE SAID SOME COUNTRIES SUCH AS THE UNITED KINGDOM HAD TRIED AND ABANDONED SIMILAR MEASURES, BUT OTHERS -- SUCH AS THE U.S.A., CANADA, JAPAN AND SINGAPORE -- FELT IT DESIRABLE TO HAVE SPECIAL COMPULSORY POWERS TO DEAL WITH WHAT MIGHT LOOSELY BE TERMED +ESSENTIAL SERVICES+.

HE ADDED : +SUCH COUNTRIES FEEL THAT PROVISIONS SIMILAR TO THOSE CONTAINED IN PART V OF THE LABOUR RELATIONS BILL ARE NECESSARY TO PROTECT THE COMMUNITY AGAINST THE POSSIBILITY OF STRIKERS OR EMPLOYERS, BY A SELFISH PURSUIT OF THEIR OWN INTERESTS, BREAKING THE RICE BOWLS OR AFFECTING THE DAILY WORK OF THOSE WHO ARE NOT INVOLVED IN THE DISPUTE -- BE THEY OTHER WORKERS OR THE PUBLIC IN GENERAL.

+IT IS THIS SORT OF SITUATION WHICH THE COOLING-OFF PROVISIONS ARE DESIGNED TO AVOID.+

MR. PRICE POINTED OUT THAT ONLY IN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES COULD THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL IMPOSE A +COOLING-OFF+ ORDER DURING A TRADE DISPUTE. SUCH AN ORDER WOULD BE FOR AN INITIAL 30 DAYS, AND THERE WERE PROVISIONS FOR AN EXTENSION OF ANOTHER 30 DAYS.

THE ORDER WOULD PLACE THE PARTIES TO A DISPUTE -- OR THIRD PARTIES -- UNDER AN OBLIGATION TO STOP ANY INDUSTRIAL ACTION WHICH MIGHT INTERFERE WITH, OR UNDERMINE, THE SETTLEMENT OF A DISPUTE BY ARBITRATION OR A BOARD OF INQUIRY.

THE ORDER COULD ONLY BE ENFORCED BY CONTEMPT OF COURT PROCEEDINGS, AND NOT BY CRIMINAL PROSECUTION.

MR. PRICE SAID A COOLING-OFF ORDER COULD ALSO ONLY BE CONSIDERED WHEN A DISPUTE WAS CONSIDERED LIKELY TO CAUSE AN INTERRUPTION IN THE SUPPLY OF GOODS OR THE PROVISION OF SERVICES WHICH MIGHT -

- * BE GRAVELY INJURIOUS TO THE ECONOMY OF HONG KONG OR SERIOUSLY AFFECT THE LIVELIHOOD OF A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF PERSONS=
- * CREATE A SERIOUS RISK OF PUBLIC DISORDER OR SERIOUSLY JEOPARDISE THE INTERNAL SECURITY OF HONG KONG= OR
- * ENDANGER THE LIVES OF A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF PERSONS OR EXPOSE THEM TO SERIOUS RISK OR DISEASES OR PERSONAL INJURY.

/OUTLINING

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OUTLINING THE MAIN PROVISIONS OF THE BILL, MR. PRICE SAID IT LAID DOWN FOUR MAIN PROCEDURES -- CONCILIATION, SPECIAL CONCILIATION, VOLUNTARY ARBITRATION AND A BOARD OF INQUIRY.

CONCILIATION -- THE BRINGING TOGETHER VOLUNTARILY OF THE PARTIES IN A DISPUTE TO RESOLVE THEIR PROBLEM -- WAS ALREADY PRACTISED WITH CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS BY THE LABOUR RELATIONS SERVICE.

MR. PRICE SAID THAT SPECIAL CONCILIATION WOULD TAKE PLACE EITHER AFTER, OR INSTEAD OF, CONCILIATION.

+WHEN IT IS USED, THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE SEEN TO BE ACTING BY PUBLISHING THE NAME OF THE CONCILIATOR -- USUALLY AN OFFICER OF THE LABOUR RELATIONS SERVICE APPOINTED BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR,+ HE SAID.

+THE PARTIES WILL KNOW THAT THE GOVERNMENT, THROUGH THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT, IS NOT ONLY WATCHING WITH CARE, BUT IS ACTIVELY INTERVENING IN A POTENTIALLY DAMAGING DISPUTE.

+HAVING SEEN THIS PROCEDURE WORK ELSEWHERE I AM CONFIDENT OF ITS VALUE IN HONG KONG, BECAUSE THE PARTIES WILL KNOW THAT IF THEY IGNORE THE HELP OF THE SPECIAL CONCILIATOR THEY MAY FIND THEIR DISPUTE ON THE PATH TO POSSIBLE ARBITRATION, OR REFERRED TO A BOARD OF INQUIRY.+

MR. PRICE DESCRIBED VOLUNTARY ARBITRATION AS THE SETTLEMENT OF A DISPUTE BY A SOLE ARBITRATOR AFTER HEARING ARGUMENTS FROM BOTH PARTIES.

HE ADDED : +THERE WILL BE NO COMPULSION TO ABIDE BY THE AWARD, BECAUSE OF THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF IMPOSING SANCTIONS ON A LARGE NUMBER OF WORKERS.

+HOWEVER, VOLUNTARY ARBITRATION IS BASED ON AN AGREEMENT OF THE PARTIES TO RESORT TO ARBITRATION, WHICH IMPLIES AN INTENTION TO ABIDE BY THE AWARD.

+IN SOME CASES IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT, OR THE ARBITRATOR, TO SECURE BY ADMINISTRATIVE MEANS AN AGREEMENT IN ADVANCE TO ACCEPT THE AWARD.+

MR. PRICE SAID A PANEL OF ARBITRATORS WOULD BE DRAWN FROM PERSONS WHO WERE INDEPENDENT OF WORKERS AND EMPLOYERS AND NOT ALLIED IN THE PUBLIC EYE WITH EITHER.

THE BOARD OF INQUIRY PROPOSED IN THE BILL WOULD BE AN ALTERNATIVE TO VOLUNTARY ARBITRATION IF THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL BELIEVED IT WAS IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST THAT ALL THE FACTS PERTAINING TO THE DISPUTE SHOULD BE REVEALED FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY.

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HE ADDED : +THE PUBLISHED REPORT OF A BOARD OF INQUIRY MAY INCLUDE RECOMMENDATIONS, WHICH, WHILE NOT LEGALLY BINDING, SHOULD BY VIRTUE OF THEIR PUBLICATION HELP TO BRING ABOUT A SETTLEMENT.+

HE STRESSED THAT THE BOARD OF INQUIRY PROCEDURE WOULD BE AN ALTERNATIVE TO ARBITRATION.

MR. PRICE SAID THAT CONSULTATIONS REGARDING THE RIGHT OF AUDIENCE BEFORE AN ARBITRATOR OR BOARD OF INQUIRY HAD BEEN HELD WITH THE LABOUR ADVISORY BOARD AND AS A RESULT AMENDMENTS MAKING IT CLEAR WHO HAD THE RIGHT OF AUDIENCE WOULD BE MOVED IN THE COMMITTEE STAGE.

BOTH THE LABOUR ADVISORY BOARD AND THE JOINT ASSOCIATIONS COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYERS/EMPLOYEES RELATIONS HAD SUPPORTED THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF THE BILL INCLUDING THE COOLING-OFF PROVISIONS.

BUT THE JOINT ASSOCIATIONS COMMITTEE HAD SUGGESTED THAT AN ARBITRATOR'S AWARD SHOULD BE MADE LEGALLY BINDING.

+THIS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO THE GOVERNMENT BECAUSE OF THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF IMPOSING PENAL SANCTIONS ON A LARGE NUMBER OF WORKERS,+ MR. PRICE SAID.

THE COMMISSIONER SAID THAT IN LABOUR LEGISLATION, IT WAS NECESSARY TO STRIKE A BALANCE BETWEEN THE CLAIMS OF EMPLOYEES, THE ABILITY OF EMPLOYERS TO MEET THOSE CLAIMS, AND THE INTERESTS OF THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE.

+I BELIEVE THAT IN THE LABOUR RELATIONS BILL A FAIR BALANCE HAS BEEN STRUCK BETWEEN THESE THREE FACTORS,+ MR. PRICE SAID.

+I ALSO BELIEVE THAT THE BILL WILL ACHIEVE ITS OBJECTIVE OF IMPROVING LABOUR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS AND WILL HELP TO ENSURE THAT HONG KONG CONTINUES TO ENJOY IN THE FUTURE A LOW LEVEL OF INDUSTRIAL UNREST.+

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PUBLIC RESPONSE TO CIGARETTE SMOKING REPORT +LACKING+

PUBLIC RESPONSE TO THE REPORT ON CIGARETTE SMOKING PREPARED BY AN AD HOC INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE PUBLISHED IN JUNE 1974 HAS BEEN +SIGNIFICANTLY LACKING+, THE HON. LI FOOK-KOW, SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES SAID TODAY.

AS A RESULT OF THIS, HE SAID, THE GOVERNMENT HAD COMMISSIONED A COMMERCIAL FIRM TO UNDERTAKE A SURVEY ON PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARDS SMOKING.

+THE RESULTS OF THIS SURVEY ARE STILL UNDER CONSIDERATION BY GOVERNMENT AND IT WOULD THEREFORE BE PRE-MATURE FOR ME TO SAY WHETHER OR NOT A CONTINUOUS CAMPAIGN SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT AGAINST HEAVY CIGARETTE SMOKING AND WHAT RESOURCES ARE REQUIRED TO FACILITATE SUCH A CAMPAIGN,+ MR. LI SAID.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN WHO ASKED IF A CONTINUOUS CAMPAIGN COULD BE CARRIED OUT AGAINST HEAVY CIGARETTE SMOKING AS BEING A LIKELY CAUSE OF CANCER.

THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES ADDED THAT THE SURVEY CARRIED OUT BY THE COMMERCIAL FIRM HAD ALSO INDICATED THAT THE PUBLIC PLACED GREAT EMPHASIS ON THE COMBINED EFFORTS OF SCHOOLS AND PARENTS TO EDUCATE YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT THE DANGERS ASSOCIATED WITH SMOKING.

THIS IS THEREFORE A LIKELY AREA OF PRIORITY WHEN THE INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE FRAMES ITS FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS TO GOVERNMENT, HE SAID.

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WIDER POWERS PROPOSED FOR CATHOLIC BISHOP

THE BISHOP OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN HONG KONG IS TO BE GIVEN WIDER POWERS TO ACQUIRE OR DISPOSE OF PROPERTY AND TO INVEST FUNDS.

THIS IS PROVIDED IN DRAFT NEW LEGISLATION AND IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CURRENT PRACTICE OF ALLOWING SUCH INSTITUTIONS TO EXERCISE GREATER DISCRETION IN THE DISPOSITION OF THEIR ASSETS.

THE BILL, KNOWN AS THE BISHOP OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN HONG KONG INCORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL, GENERALLY AIMS AT UPDATING THE EXISTING ORDINANCE ENACTED IN 1885.

THE AMENDMENT WAS MOVED IN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY BY THE HON. ROGER LOBO. DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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LACK OF MONEY RULES OUT SPECIAL STUDENT AID SCHEME

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THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, THE HON. KENNETH TOPLEY, TODAY RULED OUT A PROPOSAL FOR AN EDUCATION ALLOWANCE FOR NEEDY PUPILS ENTERING FORMS 2, 3 AND 5 THIS SEPTEMBER, BECAUSE OF LACK OF FUNDS AND ADMINISTRATIVE DIFFICULTIES.

+EVEN IF WE COULD AFFORD IT, THE SUGGESTION WOULD REPRESENT A MAJOR CHANGE OF POLICY, CUTTING ACROSS THE PROPOSALS IN THE (EDUCATION) WHITE PAPER WHICH ARE EDUCATIONALLY SOUNDER, + HE TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DURING AN ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON +MEASURES TO PREVENT DISCONTINUATION OF SECONDARY EDUCATION OF CHILDREN OF POORER FAMILIES.+

THE SCHEME WAS ADVOCATED BY THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN WHO ARGUED THAT THERE WAS + A GENUINE CASE TO BE MADE OUT FOR SOME FORM OF SECONDARY ADUCATION ALLOWANCE FOR POORER FAMILIES WHO MEET CERTAIN CRITERIA OF HARDSHIP AND NEED.+

MR. CHEONG-LEEN HAD SUGGESTED THAT SUCH A SCHEME SHOULD AT FIRST BE RESTRICTED TO STUDENTS ENTERING FORMS 2, 3 AND 5 IN THE COMING SCHOOL YEAR AND WHOSE MONTHLY FAMILY INCOME DID NOT EXCEED \$2,000. HE HAD ENVISAGED A FLAT \$25 MONTHLY ALLOWANCE OR ONE-THIRD THE SCHOOL FEE, TO BE PAID DIRECT TO THE PRIVATE SCHOOL THREE TIMES DURING THE YEAR. HE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT SPECIAL CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO LARGE FAMILIES WITH A MONTHLY INCOME OF SLIGHTLY OVER \$2,000 AND WHOSE EDUCATION BUDGET EXCEEDED 30 PER CENT OF THEIR INCOME.

MR. CHEONG-LEEN EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE PRESENT LACK OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES COULD FORCE MANY POORER FAMILIES TO DISCONTINUE THEIR CHILDREN'S SECONDARY EDUCATION FROM SEPTEMBER THIS YEAR.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE EMPLOYMENT MARKET IN THE COMING MONTHS WOULD PROBABLY BE EXPANDED BY SOME 50,000 SECONDARY SCHOOL LEAVERS, PLUS ANOTHER 25,000 PRIMARY SCHOOL GRADULATES UNABLE TO CONTINUE THEIR EDUCATION FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER.

THEY WOULD EITHER HAVE TO STAY AT HOME, LOOK FOR A JOB, OR PERHAPS JOIN A YOUTH GANG TO KEEP THEMSELVES ACTIVE, HE WARNED.

IN REPLY, MR. TOPLEY SAID HE HIMSELF HAD THOUGHT OF A SIMILAR SCHEME AS THAT SUGGESTED BY MR. CHEONG-LEEN BUT HAD RECLUCTANTLY DISCARDED IT.

EXPLAINING HIS REASONS, MR. TOPLEY POINTED OUT THAT THERE WERE ABOUT 165,000 CHILDREN IN UNASSISTED SECONDARY PLACES IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS AT PRESENT, COMPARED WITH 60,000 PUPILS IN ASSISTED PLACES.

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THE MAXIMUM COMMITMENT TO AID THE UNASSISTED CHILDREN IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS AT \$25 PER HEAD A MONTH WOULD AMOUNT TO \$41 MILLION EACH YEAR, HE SAID, AND THE MORE CAUTIOUS SCHEME PROPOSED BY MR. CHEONG-LEEN WOULD STILL INCUR ANNUAL COSTS OF \$15 MILLION WHICH WOULD BE AN OPEN-ENDED COMMITMENT AND VERY DIFFICULT TO MONITOR.

+THIS IS NOT THE KIND OF MONEY WE CAN AFFORD NOW,+ SAID MR. TOPLEY.

+IF WE DO AS MY HONOURABLE FRIEND SUGGESTS WE WOULD ABSORB MUCH NEEDED RESOURCES, A LARGE PROPORTION OF WHICH WE COULD NOT EASILY RE-DIRECT TO THE WHITE PAPER PLAN WHEN THE TIME COMES TO IMPLEMENT IT.+

MR. TOPLEY SAID HE HAD NO WISH TO DENIGRATE MR. CHEONG-LEEN'S PROPOSALS. +OUR INTENTION UNDER THE WHITE PAPER PROPOSALS IS TO OFFER THREE YEARS SECONDARY EDUCATION TO EVERYONE BY DRAWING AS MANY AS POSSIBLE INTO THE AIDED SECTOR AND BUYING PLACES FOR THE REST IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR. BUT LACK OF MONEY, HE ADDED, HAD HELD UP ACTION.

MR. TOPLEY SAID THERE WAS NO SIGN THAT ENROLMENTS IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS WERE FALLING. +IN FACT, ENROLMENT FIGURES FOR SEPTEMBER 1974 SHOW AN INCREASE OF 15 PER CENT OVER THOSE OF SEPTEMBER 1973, ALTHOUGH I WOULD CERTAINLY AGREE THAT MANY PARENTS MAY HAVE A HARD TIME PAYING PRIVATE SCHOOL FEES.+

HE NOTED THAT THERE WERE PRIVATE TRUST FUNDS AVAILABLE TO AID CHILDREN IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES AND SOME CHILDREN WERE SPONSORED FROM THESE FUNDS. MR. TOPLEY APPEALED FOR ADDITIONAL DONATIONS TO HELP EXTEND THIS TYPE OF ASSISTANCE.

+I WOULD CERTAINLY WELCOME ADDITIONAL DONATIONS TO MAKE AN EXTENSION OF THIS TYPE OF ASSISTANCE POSSIBLE.+ HE SAID.

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CENTRAL HEALTH EDUCATION UNIT TO BE SET UP

A CENTRAL HEALTH EDUCATION UNIT TO COORDINATE THE WHOLE RANGE OF PREVENTIVE HEALTH ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT WILL BE SET UP, THE DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES, THE HON. GERALD CHOA SAID TODAY.

DR. CHOA POINTED OUT THAT ACTION WAS ALREADY IN HAND TO TRAIN STAFF IN HEALTH EDUCATION WORK SO THAT THE NUCLEUS OF THE UNIT -- WHICH IS ONE OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEDICAL WHITE PAPER -- COULD BE SET UP AS SOON AS OTHER REQUIREMENTS SUCH AS ACCOMMODATION AND BASIC EQUIPMENT WERE AVAILABLE.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION RAISED BY THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN.

ON THE HEALTH EDUCATION PLANS FOR 1975/76, DR. CHOA NOTED THAT THE REGULAR HEALTH AND EDUCATION PROGRAMMES CARRIED OUT BY INDIVIDUAL UNITS IN HIS DEPARTMENT WOULD CONTINUE THIS YEAR IN ADDITION TO THE MEASURES UNDERTAKEN BY OTHER DEPARTMENTS, THE URBAN COUNCIL AND OTHER BODIES IN THEIR OWN FIELDS.

THE PROGRAMMES COVER SUCH SUBJECTS AS PERSONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE, PREVENTION OF DISEASES AND FAMILY HEALTH SUBJECTS WHICH INCLUDE MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH, FAMILY PLANNING AND NUTRITION.

+WE SHALL MAKE USE OF THE MASS MEDIA OF THE TELEVISION, RADIO AND THE VARIOUS PRESSES, AS WELL AS INDIVIDUAL AND PERSONAL MOTIVATION.

+DEPENDING ON THE SUBJECT AND WHENEVER APPROPRIATE, WE SHALL CONTINUE TO SEEK THE COOPERATION OF OTHER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, NON-GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATIONS AND ORGANISATIONS,+ DR. CHOA SAID.

THE DIRECTOR STRESSED THAT HEALTH EDUCATION CONSTITUTED ONE OF THE MAIN AREAS OF WORK IN THE FAMILY HEALTH SERVICE AND WAS AN IMPORTANT ASPECT IN ALL ACTIVITIES AT HIS DEPARTMENT'S MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH CENTRES.

HE ADDED THAT HEALTH EDUCATION ACTIVITIES WERE ALSO CARRIED OUT BY THE CHEST SERVICE, SOCIAL HYGIENE SERVICE AND BY THE HEALTH STAFF IN THE REGIONAL HEALTH OFFICES AS PART OF THE DISEASE PREVENTION PROGRAMME.

IN ADDITION, A HEALTH EDUCATION UNIT IN THE NEW TERRITORIES UNDERTAKES REGULAR HEALTH EDUCATION ACTIVITIES IN THE TOWNS AND VILLAGES. THESE INCLUDE HEALTH TALKS TO SCHOOLS, THE SHOWING OF HEALTH EDUCATION FILMS TO SCHOOLS AND VILLAGES AND THE ORGANISING OF LOCAL HEALTH EXHIBITIONS.

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EXTENSION OF INITIAL RATE-FREE PERIOD FOR NEW VACANT FLATS
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THE INITIAL THREE-MONTH RATE-FREE RULE NOW APPLIED TO NEWLY COMPLETED UNOCCUPIED DOMESTIC PREMISES WILL BE EXTENDED TO SIX MONTHS IN FACE OF EXISTING MARKET SITUATION, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, TOLD COUNCIL TODAY.

HE NOTED THAT WITH A MARKET FALL-OFF IN THE FORWARD SALE OF NEW FLATS, IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED THAT THE IMPOSITION OF FULL RATES ON DOMESTIC PREMISES THREE MONTHS AFTER AN OCCUPATION PERMIT IS ISSUED IS DISCOURAGING SMALL INVESTORS, AS IT DOES TAKE A FEW MONTHS TO COMPLETE PURCHASING FORMALITIES, FIT OUT PREMISES FOR OCCUPATION AND FIND A TENANT.

+WHILE I SEE NO BENEFIT TO THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE OR DEVELOPERS IN PARTICULAR IN HAVING PREMISES LYING IDLE, I ACCEPT THAT IN THE PRESENT CHANGED MARKET CIRCUMSTANCES THE THREE-MONTH RULE IS, PERHAPS, BEARING RATHER HARSHLY AND IS DOING LITTLE TO ENCOURAGE OCCUPATION.+

HE ADDED THAT SUBJECT TO THE ADVICE OF THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL, HE WILL INTRODUCE A BILL TO AMEND THE RATING ORDINANCE SO AS TO EXTEND THE RATE-FREE RULE.

HOWEVER, HE SAID WHILE THERE IS EXISTING SUCH AN OBVIOUS REQUIREMENT FOR HOUSING AT ALL LEVELS, HE COULD SEE NO JUSTIFICATION FOR RESTORING REFUNDS OF RATES BEYOND THE INITIAL RATE-FREE PERIOD.

ON THE REPERCUSSIONS OF THE CONCESSION, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY DISCLOSED THAT THE LOSS OF REVENUE THUS INCURRED IN 1975/76 IS ESTIMATED BY THE COMMISSIONER OF RATING AND VALUATION AT \$1.5 MILLION, AND ON THIS BASIS, THE LOSS OF REVENUE TO THE URBAN COUNCIL WOULD BE ABOUT \$500,000.

AS THE URBAN COUNCIL'S BUDGET FOR 1975-76 WAS PREPARED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT IT WOULD RECEIVE A CERTAIN YIELD FROM RATES ON UNOCCUPIED DOMESTIC PREMISES, HE FELT IT WOULD BE REASONABLE FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO REIMBURSE THE COUNCIL TO THE EXTENT THAT THIS YIELD IS NOT FORTHCOMING AS A RESULT OF THE CONCESSION.

HOWEVER, MR. HADDON-CAVE POINTED OUT IT IS NOT INTENDED TO CONTINUE TO COVER THE URBAN COUNCIL FOR THE AMOUNT LOST BY THE CONCESSION IN SUBSEQUENT YEARS AS THE COUNCIL WILL BE ABLE TO BUDGET ACCORDINGLY.

HE ADDED THAT HE HAS BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL WHO FINDS THESE ARRANGEMENTS ACCEPTABLE.

NEW CONTROLS SOON ON SMUT PUBLICATIONS
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DRAFT LEGISLATION AIMED AT CURBING PUBLICATIONS OF A PORNOGRAPHIC OR VIOLENT NATURE HAS NOW BEEN DRAFTED AND IS AT PRESENT THE SUBJECT OF CONSULTATION WITHIN VARIOUS BRANCHES OF THE GOVERNMENT.

THIS WAS REVEALED TODAY IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BY THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON. G.C. THORNTON IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. MISS KO SIU-WAH.

MR. THORNTON SAID IT IS EXPECTED THAT A NEW DRAFT BILL WHICH SEEKS TO CURB THESE PUBLICATIONS, PARTICULARLY THOSE AIMED AT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE, WILL SOON BE READY FOR SUBMISSION TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

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BUDGET FOR PROMOTING OVERSEAS INDUSTRIAL INVESTMENT
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THE GOVERNMENT WILL GIVE FURTHER CONSIDERATION TO THE NEED TO INCREASE THE BUDGET OF \$200,000 EARMARKED FOR THE PROMOTION OF INDUSTRIAL INVESTMENT FROM OVERSEAS, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE TOLD COUNCIL TODAY.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. FRANCIS TIEN, HE SAID THAT FINAL PLANS FOR SPENDING THE SUM PROVIDED IN THE 1975-76 ESTIMATES HAVE YET TO BE AGREED.

HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT FURTHER CONSIDERATION WOULD BE GIVEN IN THE LIGHT OF OUR PREVAILING FINANCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, +IF AND WHEN THE TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL AND THE COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY DEPARTMENT HAVE DEMONSTRATED THAT THE SUM PROVIDED IN THE 1975-76 ESTIMATES IS PATENTLY INADEQUATE.+

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BILLS PASSED

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SIX BILLS, IN ADDITION TO THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION BILL, COMPLETED THEIR PASSAGE THROUGH THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THEY ARE : THE BANKING (AMENDMENT) BILL, THE BETTING DUTY (AMENDMENT) BILL, THE BUSINESS REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL, THE ENTERTAINMENTS TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL, THE STAMP (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL AND THE MERCHANT SHIPPING (AMENDMENT) BILL.

AT TODAY'S SITTING, THREE NEW BILLS WERE INTRODUCED INTO THE COUNCIL FOR THEIR FIRST AND SECOND READINGS. THE BILLS ARE : THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) (NO. 3) BILL THE LOANS BILL AND THE LABOUR RELATIONS BILL.

AN UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS BILL -- THE BISHOP OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN HONG KONG INCORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1975 -- WAS ALSO INTRODUCED FOR ITS FIRST AND SECOND READINGS.

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SUPPLEMENTARY S.S.E.E. TO BE HELD ON MAY 12
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ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE FOR CHILDREN WHO WERE PREVENTED BY BAD WEATHER FROM SITTING ALL OR PART OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL ENTRANCE EXAMINATION ON APRIL 30 TO TAKE A SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION NEXT MONDAY (MAY 12) AFTERNOON.

FIFTY-FOUR CANDIDATES WILL BE TAKING ALL THREE PAPERS -- CHINESE, ENGLISH AND ARITHMETIC -- WHILE 165 CANDIDATES WILL BE TAKING EITHER ONE OR TWO PAPERS, THE SECRETARY OF THE S.S.E.E. ANNOUNCED TODAY.

THE SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION WILL BE CONDUCTED IN FOUR CENTRES AT STANLEY, TUEN MUN, SAI KUNG AND TSIM SHA TSUI.

MEANWHILE, COPIES OF THE +PARENTS' FORMS FOR CHOICE OF SCHOOLS, S.S.E.E. 1975+ ARE BEING DISTRIBUTED THROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOLS TO PARENTS OF CHILDREN WHO TOOK THE EXAMINATION.

ON THE FORMS PARENTS ARE ASKED TO STATE THEIR PREFERENCES CONCERNING THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS THEY WISH THEIR CHILDREN TO ATTEND. THEY ARE ASKED TO STATE IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE TEN SCHOOLS WITH FIVE-YEAR PLACES AND TEN SCHOOLS WITH THREE-YEAR PLACES.

ADVICE TO PARENTS ON HOW TO COMPLETE THE FORMS WILL BE GIVEN BY STAFF OF THE EXAMINATIONS DIVISION OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AT A PRESS CONFERENCE TOMORROW MORNING.

NOTE TO EDITORS : YOU ARE INVITED TO SEND REPRESENTATIVES TO COVER THE PRESS CONFERENCE WHICH WILL BE HELD IN THE EXAMINATIONS DIVISION, CANTON ROAD GOVERNMENT OFFICES, 393 CANTON ROAD, 11TH FLOOR, KOWLOON, AT 11 A.M. TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 7, 1975.

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APPLICATIONS INVITED FOR TECHNICAL EVENING COURSES

APPLICATIONS ARE BEING INVITED BY THE MORRISON HILL, KWAI CHUNG AND KWUN TONG TECHNICAL INSTITUTES FOR THEIR EVENING CLASSES WHICH ARE DUE TO COMMENCE IN SEPTEMBER, 1975.

A TOTAL OF 64 COURSES INCLUDING THOSE AT CRAFT LEVEL TAUGHT MAINLY IN CHINESE AND THOSE AT TECHNICIAN LEVEL TAUGHT MAINLY IN ENGLISH WILL BE AVAILABLE.

FIELDS OF STUDY COVERED COMPRISE CONSTRUCTION, ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING, MECHANICAL ENGINEERING, PRINTING, TEXTILE AND CLOTHING.

IN ADDITION, COURSES FOR COMMERCIAL, PRELIMINARY AND GENERAL STUDIES WILL BE OFFERED.

CLASSES WILL BE CONDUCTED AT THE THREE TECHNICAL INSTITUTES AND 19 OTHER CENTRES ON BOTH SIDES OF THE HARBOUR INCLUDING TSUEN WAN.

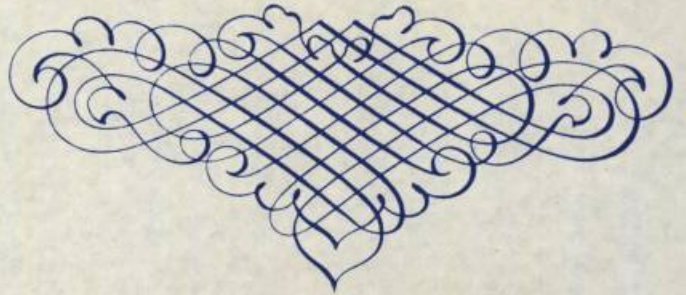
APPLICATION FORMS CAN NOW BE OBTAINED FROM THE MORRISON HILL TECHNICAL INSTITUTE, ALL CITY DISTRICT OFFICES AND THE TSUEN WAN DISTRICT OFFICE.

THE CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS IS MAY 22 (THURSDAY).

FULL TIME, BLOCK-RELEASE AND PART-TIME DAY-RELEASE COURSES AT THE THREE TECHNICAL INSTITUTES WILL BE ADVERTISED SEPARATELY ON OR ABOUT JULY 24, THIS YEAR.

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ROYAL
VISIT
PRESS
RELEASE



Wednesday, May 7, 1975

QUEEN'S MESSAGE OF THANKS

Her Majesty the Queen sent the following message from her aircraft shortly after it took off from Hong Kong this morning:

"Please convey my warm thanks and those of Prince Philip to the Government and people of Hong Kong for all they did to make our visit so memorable and enjoyable. We were deeply moved by the welcome given to us everywhere we went and we were grateful for the arrangements made which made it possible for us to see and understand so much of Hong Kong. I am sad to leave but I do so with confidence of a bright future for Hong Kong and her people."

Elizabeth R

The Governor sent the following reply:

"On behalf of all Hong Kong I thank your Majesty for your gracious message.

"Your visit with His Royal Highness Prince Philip has been an event which Hong Kong will always remember. Your Majesty won the hearts of Hong Kong and brought joy and encouragement to all of us.

"There is a Chinese saying, 'The Royal Presence blesses millions with good fortune and rejoicing; kindness like the gentle rain captures the hearts of our people' ".

Governor

Wednesday, May 7, 1975

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DEPARTURE OF QUEEN & DUKE

After a busy programme of events, which began on Sunday evening, the Queen ended her first visit to Hong Kong this morning. In blustery weather her aircraft, the same British Airways Boeing 707 in which she arrived, took off from Hong Kong International Airport for Japan at 9.44 a.m.

Earlier, she and the Duke of Edinburgh had driven from Government House through the cross-harbour tunnel. As they approached the airport the small Royal Standard on the aircraft was hoisted through the roof.

The Queen and the Duke were seen off at the airport by the Governor, Sir Murray MacLehose, Lady MacLehose, the Commander British Forces, Lieutenant-General Sir Edwin Bramall, Lady Bramall, the Chief Justice, Sir Geoffrey Briggs, the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Denys Roberts, the Senior Unofficial Member of the Executive Council, Sir Y.K. Kan, the Senior Unofficial Member of the Legislative Council, Dr. Chung Sze-yuen, and the Consul-General of Japan, Mr. Fujio Hara.

At the top of the aircraft steps, the Queen and the Duke turned and waved for the last time to the crowd of school children and the watchers on the airport balconies. She was in yet another of the dazzling costumes to which she has treated Hong Kong, a white and turquoise print dress with white hat.

/The aircraft

The aircraft door closed at 9.32 a.m.

The rain, which had been threatening, held off, the Royal Standard was lowered, the Governor and Lady MacLehose waved, and the airliner took off. They stood watching until the aircraft had left the ground.

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