



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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CONTENTS

PAGE NO.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING:

EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION TO CONTINUE, SIR PHILIP SAYS	1
SPECIAL UNIT TO STUDY LAWS	9
FUTURE IN PEOPLE'S HANDS - AKERS-JONES	12
EDUCATION SYSTEM TO CONTINUE	14
CIVIC EDUCATION IS FOR COMMUNITY AT LARGE - HAYE	16
WORK ON NEW POLICE HQ STARTS NEXT YEAR	18
DENTAL CLINICS PLAN FOR HOUSING ESTATES	20
HONG KONG 'A POPULAR WORLD GATHERING PLACE'	23
ELECTORAL ROLL TOPS 1.4 MILLION	24
HK'S LARGEST CULTURAL CENTRE READY BY 1987	25
FAIR DEAL FOR EX-MENTALLY ILL URGED	27
CAREERS EXHIBIT	28
JOINT SAFETY PROMOTION EFFORT URGED	28
MORE SPORTS FACILITIES FOR TAI PO	29
PRE-WAR BUILDING DECLARED DANGEROUS	29
NEW ADDRESS FOR SAI KUNG URBAN SERVICES OFFICE	30
NEW TRAFFIC PLAN FOR SHATIN RACES	30
TEMPORARY TRAFFIC CHANGES	31
KOWLOON CENTRAL LIBRARY PHASE ONE TO OPEN SOON	31
CAS BANDS +BEATING RETREAT+	32

EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION TO CONTINUE, SIR PHILIP SAYS
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THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO ADMINISTER HONG KONG CONSCIENTIOUSLY AND EFFECTIVELY UNTIL JUNE 30, 1997, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

+LET THERE BE NO DOUBT ABOUT THAT,+ SIR PHILIP SAID.

WINDING UP THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S ANNUAL POLICY ADDRESS, SIR PHILIP SAID +THE SO-CALLED TRANSITION PERIOD+ WAS BOUND TO THROW UP SOME UNIQUE SITUATIONS AND DIFFICULTIES.

+THAT IS TO BE EXPECTED, BUT OUR CONSTANT PURPOSE AND CONCERN WILL BE TO SECURE THE PUBLIC INTEREST, THAT IS TO SAY, TO MAINTAIN AND PRESERVE HONG KONG'S ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND SOCIAL STABILITY,+ HE SAID.

+WE SHALL SEEK TO DEVELOP OUR SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT IN THE COMING YEARS SO AS TO FORESTALL, AS MR F.K. HU PUT IT, 'ABRUPT AND DRASTIC CHANGE' IN 1997,+ HE SAID.

REFERRING TO THE WISH THAT THE WHITE PAPER ON THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT COULD HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED EARLIER, SIR PHILIP REPORTED THE AIM WAS TO TABLE IT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON NOVEMBER 21 WITH A VIEW TO A DEBATE ON DECEMBER 5.

+WE COULD NOT HAVE DRAFTED IT, CONSULTED EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND TABLED IT EARLIER WITHOUT REDUCING THE TIME ALLOTTED FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE GREEN PAPER, AND I QUESTION, SIR, WHETHER THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE,+ HE STATED.

CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
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ON CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT, SIR PHILIP POINTED OUT THAT ALL HAD ARGUED FOR A GRADUAL AND PROGRESSIVE APPROACH AND NO ONE HAD BEEN IN FAVOUR OF IMMEDIATE, LET ALONE RADICAL, CHANGE.

THIS, HE ADDED, HAD BEEN THE VERY BASIS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH IN THE GREEN PAPER, AN APPROACH WHICH HAD BEEN SUPPORTED IN THE MANY SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED FROM ORGANISATIONS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WHICH WOULD BE CAREFULLY ANALYSED IN THE WHITE PAPER.

THE GREEN PAPER ENVISAGED THE INTRODUCTION OF A SIGNIFICANT ELECTIVE ELEMENT INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

SIR PHILIP SAID IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S VIEW THAT +WE MUST WAIT TO SEE HOW THIS DEPARTURE FROM THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF NOMINATED APPOINTMENTS SETTLES DOWN BEFORE WE CONSIDER FURTHER THE NATURE OF THE LINK BETWEEN THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS AND THE ADMINISTRATION PROVIDED BY EX-OFFICIO AND OFFICIAL MEMBERS+.

- 2 -

PUBLIC OPINION, HE POINTED OUT, HAD BEEN +OVERWHELMINGLY IN FAVOUR+ OF INDIRECT ELECTIONS IN THE FIRST INSTANCE.

+IT IS NOT MY IMPRESSION THAT DIRECT ELECTIONS ARE OBJECTED TO IN PRINCIPLE, BUT RATHER THAT DIRECT ELECTIONS SHOULD NOT BE CONTEMPLATED UNTIL THE SYSTEM OF INDIRECT ELECTIONS ENVISAGED HAS BEEN FIRMLY ESTABLISHED.

+MEMBERS MAY BE ASSURED THAT FULL ACCOUNT WILL BE TAKEN OF THESE VIEWS IN THE WHITE PAPER,+ HE SAID.

AS FOR THE BROADER IF ISSUE OF CIVIC EDUCATION IN POLITICAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS CALLED FOR BY SOME LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS, SIR PHILIP SAID THE DEVELOPMENT OF GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS COURSES IN SCHOOLS WOULD CONTINUE AND ENCOURAGEMENT WOULD BE GIVEN TO OTHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANISATIONS TO PROVIDE MORE COURSES IN CIVIC EDUCATION FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

OPEN GOVERNMENT

HE SHARED THE VIEW THAT THE MORE OPEN THE GOVERNMENT THE EASIER IT WOULD BE TO ACHIEVE A GREATER LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT BY THE PUBLIC IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF HONG KONG.

THE DECISION BY THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE TO HOLD ITS HEARINGS IN PUBLIC WAS A MAJOR STEP IN THIS DIRECTION.

+I AM PLEASED TO BE ABLE TO ANNOUNCE TODAY THAT, SUBJECT TO THE STANDING ORDER 60 (3) BEING APPROPRIATELY AMENDED, ALL MEETINGS OF FINANCE COMMITTEE WILL BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC WITH EFFECT FROM MARCH NEXT YEAR,+ HE SAID.

HOWEVER, HE ADDED THAT IT WAS ARGUABLE WHETHER ADVISORY BOARDS AND COMMITTEES, AS OPPOSED TO COMMITTEES RELATED TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OR TO THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION SCHEME, SHOULD BE HELD IN PUBLIC.

+CERTAINLY, THERE ARE SOME COMMITTEES WHICH ADVISE THE GOVERNMENT ON A STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL BASIS (E.G. THE BANKING ADVISORY COMMITTEE OR THE ICAC COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE).

+THERE ARE OTHERS, THE PROCEEDINGS OF WHICH, THOUGH NOT OF A HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL NATURE, NEVERTHELESS DO NOT LEND THEMSELVES TO OPEN-FORUM MEETINGS.

+SO THE FURTHER EXTENSION OF THIS ASPECT OF OPEN GOVERNMENT WILL NEED, SIR, FURTHER AND CAREFUL CONSIDERATION,+ HE SAID.

AS TO THE REMARKS THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD PAY MORE ATTENTION TO THE WISHES OF THE PEOPLE IN INTRODUCING ITS POLICIES, SIR PHILIP POINTED OUT THE GOVERNMENT INVESTED HEAVILY IN STAFF TIME AND OTHER RESOURCES TO SEEK OUT PUBLIC VIEWS.

/+I WOULD

+I WOULD NOT CLAIM THAT THE SYSTEM IS PERFECT BUT WE DO SEEK TO PUT THE COMMUNITY'S EXPRESSED WISHES INTO PRACTICE.

+SOMETIMES, OF COURSE, TO DO SO IS NOT PRACTICAL POLITICS OR PRACTICAL ADMINISTRATION AND, ANYWAY, IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, IT IS THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL WHICH MUST DECIDE HOW BEST TO ADMINISTER HONG KONG IN THE INTERESTS OF THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE.

+INEVITABLY, AT TIMES, THIS MUST MEAN THAT DECISIONS ARE TAKEN WHICH MAY BE UNPOPULAR WITH, AND THEREFORE CRITICISED BY, SOME PARTICULAR GROUP.+

AS FOR SUGGESTIONS THAT CIVIL SERVANTS SHOULD BE MORE RESPONSIVE AND LESS DEFENSIVE, SIR PHILIP POINTED OUT THAT +VERY CONSIDERABLE EFFORTS+ WERE DEVOTED TO EXPLAINING GOVERNMENT POLICIES TO THE PUBLIC -- THROUGH GIS AND RTHK, AT DISTRICT BOARDS AND IN ADVISORY BOARDS AND COMMITTEES AND IN THE LEGCO.

+THAT SAID, I ENTIRELY ACCEPT THAT WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO EXPLAIN AS WELL AS DEFEND, TO MODIFY AS WELL AS TO PERSUADE. AS WE MOVE TO AN INCREASINGLY OPEN STYLE OF GOVERNMENT, I WOULD LIKE TO THINK THAT THE MECHANICS OF OUR TWO-WAY SYSTEM OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC WILL IMPROVE AND THAT THERE WILL BE A BETTER APPRECIATION OF THE COMPLEX ISSUES WHICH THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS, WHICH IS A HIGHLY ARGUMENTATIVE PROCESS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR, HAS TO RESOLVE,+ HE SAID.

ORGANISATION OF GOVERNMENT

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ON THE ARGUMENT THAT +FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS DEMAND DECENTRALISATION+, SIR PHILIP SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD RECOGNISED ITS VALIDITY, AS INSTANCED BY THE REGIONALISATION OF SEVERAL MAJOR DEPARTMENTS AND BY THE EXPANSION AND STRENGTHENING OF DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION.

+HOWEVER, IT MUST BE ACCEPTED THAT A GEOGRAPHICALLY COMPACT COMMUNITY, WITH A MULTITUDE OF COMPETING DEMANDS FOR LIMITED RESOURCES OF LAND AND FINANCE, REQUIRES A CERTAIN DEGREE OF CONTROL AT THE CENTRE TO ENSURE PROPER EVALUATION OF PRIORITIES AND FAIR ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES.

+THE ONLY QUESTION IS HOW THAT CENTRAL CONTROL SHOULD BE ORGANISED,+ SIR PHILIP STATED.

HE EXPLAINED THAT THE MAIN DUTIES OF A POLICY SECRETARY IN THE GOVERNMENT WERE FIRST TO FORMULATE POLICIES IN HIS PROGRAMME AREA, SECOND TO ENSURE THAT POLICIES IN HIS PROGRAMME AREA WERE EFFECTIVELY COORDINATED AND IMPLEMENTED, AND THIRD TO SUPPORT, OBJECTIVELY, HIS HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS' ANNUAL AND SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES SUBMISSIONS.

/+TO ENSURE

+TO ENSURE THAT COHERENT AND CONSISTENT POLICIES ARE DEVELOPED IN THE VARIOUS PROGRAMME AREAS, AND GENERALLY TO ASSIST IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS, THERE IS THE CHIEF SECRETARY'S COMMITTEE.

+SPECIFICALLY, ITS TERMS OF REFERENCE ARE FIRST, TO ENSURE THAT ALL SECRETARIES ARE KEPT INFORMED OF THE OVERALL PROGRESS OF GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES, AND OF ANY INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS WHICH COULD AFFECT THEM.

+SECONDLY, TO BE ADVISED OF PROGRESS OR DELAYS, AND OF ANY PROBLEMS WHICH ARISE, OR WHICH ARE LIKELY TO ARISE, IN ANY OF THE PROGRAMME AREAS.

+THIRDLY, TO CONSIDER ANY CURRENT ISSUES WHICH MIGHT INFLUENCE FUTURE PLANNING= AND FOURTHLY, TO DISCUSS MATTERS OF PUBLIC CONCERN WHICH COULD AFFECT THE MORALE AND WELL-BEING OF THE COMMUNITY AND-OR THE CIVIL SERVICE.+

IN ADDITION, THE CHIEF SECRETARY'S COMMITTEE HAD FROM TIME TO TIME, ASSUMED A ROLE IN THE DETERMINATION OF PRIORITIES BETWEEN POLICIES, FOR AVAILABLE RESOURCES OF FINANCE AND MANPOWER WERE ALWAYS RELATIVELY SCARCE.

AS FOR THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SECRETARIES AND HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS, SIR PHILIP EXPLAINED THAT BOTH POLICY AND RESOURCE BRANCH SECRETARIES WERE AUTHORISED TO GIVE DIRECTIONS FROM TIME TO TIME, OR AS THEY SAW FIT, TO A DEPARTMENT HEAD EXCEPT IN THOSE CASES WHERE, BY LAW, THE ULTIMATE RESPONSIBILITY IS VESTED IN A HEAD OF DEPARTMENT.

+THE RATIONALE FOR THIS EXERCISE OF AUTHORITY BY A SECRETARY IS QUITE SIMPLE: A HEAD OF DEPARTMENT IS ANSWERABLE TO THE GOVERNOR FOR THE PROPER RUNNING OF HIS DEPARTMENT, FOR IT IS THE GOVERNOR WHO IS CONSTITUTIONALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR EVERY EXECUTIVE ACT OF THE GOVERNMENT,+ SIR PHILIP EXPLAINED.

IN THE ABSENCE OF A CENTRAL ORGANISATION ALONG THE LINES OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT, THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE INSTEAD SOME OTHER ARRANGEMENT FOR THE EXERCISE OF ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL.

ONE POSSIBILITY, LOOKED AT SEVERAL YEARS AGO, WOULD BE TO DISMANTLE THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT COMPLETELY AND DEVISE A SYSTEM AROUND THE GOVERNOR'S THREE PRINCIPAL ADVISERS: THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY AND THE ATTORNEY GENERAL.

THE BASIC FEATURES OF SUCH A SYSTEM, SIR PHILIP SAID, WOULD BE A SELF-CONTAINED OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR MAKING HIM QUITE INDEPENDENT OF THE COLLECTIVE RESOURCES OF THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT.

THIS WOULD BE THE EQUIVALENT OF A CABINET OFFICE HEADED BY THE CHIEF SECRETARY= A TREASURY HEADED UP BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY= AND WITH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S CHAMBERS BEING A SEPARATE OFFICE AT THE CENTRE OF THE LEGAL GROUP OF DEPARTMENTS.

THE CABINET OFFICE WOULD COMPRISE THE COUNCILS AND ADMINISTRATION BRANCH, THE CIVIL SERVICE BRANCH, THE SECURITY BRANCH AND PERHAPS THE BULK OF THE HOME AFFAIRS BRANCH.

THE TREASURY WOULD COMPRISE THREE DIVISIONS: THE FINANCE BRANCH TOGETHER WITH THE ACCOUNTING SERVICES DEPARTMENT WOULD FORM A PUBLIC FINANCE DIVISION, THE ECONOMIC SERVICES BRANCH AND THE TRADE AND INDUSTRY BRANCH WOULD FORM AN ECONOMIC POLICY DIVISION, AND THE MONETARY AFFAIRS BRANCH WOULD FORM A MONETARY POLICY DIVISION.

THE ECONOMIC DEPARTMENTS SUCH AS THE TRADE DEPARTMENT AND THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT WOULD BE GROUPED AROUND THE TREASURY.

OTHER POLICY SECRETARIES WOULD BE BLISTERED ON TO RELEVANT EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS (E.G. THE HOUSING BRANCH ON TO THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT AND THE TRANSPORT BRANCH ON TO THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT) OR WOULD BE ESTABLISHED AS INDEPENDENT OFFICES IN CLOSE ADMINISTRATIVE PROXIMITY TO THEIR MAIN DEPARTMENTS.

NOTING THAT SUCH A SYSTEM MIGHT WORK, SIR PHILIP SAID, +BUT - AND THIS IS A VERY LARGE BUT - IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY REAL EVIDENCE THAT THE PRESENT SYSTEM DOES NOT WORK WELL, OR RATHER THAT FAULTY PERFORMANCE IS DUE TO INHERENT DEFECTS IN THE SYSTEM ITSELF RATHER THAN THE OCCASIONAL SHORTCOMINGS OF THOSE WHO MAN IT, AND GIVEN THAT IT HAS LENT ITSELF FAIRLY EASILY TO ADAPTATION, MODERNISATION AND FINE TUNING TO MEET CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES, AND AS THERE IS NO VIRTUE IN CHANGE FOR THE SAKE OF CHANGE, I SEE NO REASON FOR A MAJOR ORGANISATIONAL UPHEAVAL, PARTICULARLY AT A TIME WHEN STABILITY AND CONTINUITY IN THE CIVIL SERVICE ARE PARAMOUNT CONSIDERATIONS.

+AS I HAVE SAID BEFORE, ORGANISATIONAL (AND PROCEDURAL) REFORMS ARE BEST DEVISED AND INTRODUCED PROGRESSIVELY AND THE RECORD SHOWS THAT WE DO ADAPT TO MEET CHANGING REQUIREMENTS= AND, IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SECOND 'REGIONAL' COUNCIL, I SHALL BE ANNOUNCING SHORTLY ANOTHER ADJUSTMENT TO THE ORGANISATION OF THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT AND A RECASTING OF RELATIVE DEPARTMENTS.+

ON WHAT SIR PHILIP CONSIDERED AS THE HON LYDIA DUNN'S +MAIN, AND ONLY, SUBSTANTIVE+ ARGUMENT AGAINST THE CENTRAL SECRETARIAT SYSTEM -- THAT IT HAD GROWN LARGER -- HE SAID THAT THIS DID NOT MEAN, AS SHE HAD IMPLIED, THAT THE SYSTEM HAD NOT MADE GOOD, OR BETTER, USE OF SCARCE MANPOWER.

+MISS DUNN HERSELF, PERHAPS INADVERTENTLY, REFERRED TO 'THE CONSEQUENTIAL GROWTH OF THE SECRETARIAT' AND THIS IS PRECISELY WHAT HAS OCCURRED.

+SINCE THE PRESENT-DAY GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1974, THERE HAS BEEN VERY CONSIDERABLE EXPANSION IN GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES AND AMBITIOUS POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1984

- 6 -

+AS A CONSEQUENCE, IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY NOTWITHSTANDING, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT HAS INCREASED.

+IN ANY CASE, AS I SAID IN MY SPEECH IN THIS SAME ANNUAL POLICY DEBATE IN NOVEMBER LAST YEAR, I FIND IT DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT THAT THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT CAN TRULY BE DESCRIBED AS OVER-CENTRALISED OR OVER-LARGE IN RELATION TO ITS OWN FUNCTIONS AND THE NUMBER AND SIZE OF THE EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS IT MUST SERVICE, CONTROL AND COORDINATE,+ HE SAID.

HE THEN UPDATED THE FACTUAL POSITION HE HAD PRESENTED THEN TO SUPPORT THE CONTENTION.

THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT COMPRISES 11 POLICY BRANCHES AND TWO RESOURCE BRANCHES, STAFFED BY JUST UNDER 2 000 OFFICERS OF ALL RANKS.

AGAINST THIS SET UP ARE SOME 55 EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS STAFFED BY ABOUT 170 000 CIVIL SERVANTS, MOST OF WHOM ARE IN VERY CLOSE AND REGULAR CONTACT WITH THE PEOPLE THEY SERVE.

+NOR CAN THE CHARGE THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S BUREAUCRACY IS TOP-HEAVY BE SUBSTANTIATED BY THE FACTS: THE TOTAL STRENGTH OF THE CIVIL SERVICE AT OCTOBER 1 THIS YEAR WAS JUST UNDER 172 000, COMPRISING 900 DIRECTORATE SCALE OFFICERS AND 1 500 OFFICERS AT SENIOR MANAGEMENT-PROFESSIONAL LEVEL AND 169 600 OFFICERS AT ALL OTHER LEVELS.

+PUT SIMPLY, 2 400 SENIOR OFFICERS ARE IN CHARGE OF 169 600 STAFF OF ALL OTHER RANKS: I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT THESE OVERHEADS WERE MEAGRE RATHER THAN LAVISH,+ HE SAID.

CIVIL SERVICE

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TURNING TO CIVIL SERVICE, SIR PHILIP TOLD THE COUNCIL IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO SEEK TO STABILISE ITS SIZE IN 1985-86.

HE SAID THIS WOULD NOT BE EASY TO ACHIEVE AS CUTBACKS IN SOME AREAS WOULD BE NECESSARY TO OFFSET THE ADDITIONAL POSTS REQUIRED FOR HIGH PRIORITY AREAS OF ACTIVITY.

THESE CUTBACKS WOULD BE ACHIEVED BY THE DELETION OF VACANT POSTS AND THE WASTING OUT OF OTHER POSTS AS THEY FELL VACANT, WITH RESOURCES SO FREED TO BE REDEPLOYED ACROSS BOUNDARIES.

HE POINTED OUT THAT WHEREAS OVER THE NINE YEARS ENDING IN 1984-85, THE AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH RATE OF EXPENDITURE ON CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT IN REAL TERMS WAS 10.6 PER CENT, THE AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH RATE OF THE CIVIL SERVICE ESTABLISHMENT WAS ONLY FIVE PER CENT.

/ON THE

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1984

- 7 -

ON THE CALL FOR A REVIEW OF FRINGE BENEFITS FOR CIVIL SERVANTS AND THE REMARK ABOUT AN UNFAIR DISTRIBUTION OF SUCH BENEFITS WITHIN THE SERVICE, SIR PHILIP SAID THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT OF THE SERVICE HAD EVOLVED OVER MANY YEARS UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF PAST SALARIES COMMISSIONS.

THE ADVICE OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL HAD BEEN SOUGHT AND THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THIS COUNCIL HAD BEEN INVITED TO ACCEPT THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL'S ADVICE.

HE POINTED OUT THAT IN MORE RECENT YEARS, TWO INDEPENDENT COMMISSIONS, THE STANDING COMMISSION ON CIVIL SERVICE SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE AND THE STANDING COMMISSION ON DIRECTORATE SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE, HAD BEEN ASKED TO ADVISE ON ALL MATTERS RELATING TO THE PAY AND THE CONDITIONS OF SERVICE OF THE CIVIL SERVICE.

+IF THE CIVIL SERVICE IS TO REMAIN A VIABLE ORGANISATION, ITS CONDITIONS OF SERVICE MUST BE SUFFICIENTLY COMPETITIVE TO MAINTAIN OUR ABILITY TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN STAFF AT ALL LEVELS OF A HIGH CALIBRE, WITHOUT WHICH THE EFFICIENCY AND STABILITY OF THE SERVICE WOULD BE JEOPARDISED.

+THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT IS A GOOD EMPLOYER - THAT, IN MY VIEW, IS INDISPUTABLE - BUT I DO NOT CONSIDER THE RATES OF PAY OFFERED TO BE OVER-GENEROUS.

+NOR DO I THINK IT IS HELPFUL TO SINGLE OUT PARTICULAR FRINGE BENEFITS, SUCH AS HOUSING AND OVERSEAS EDUCATION ALLOWANCES, FOR COMPARISON WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR WITHOUT EXAMINING THE CONSIDERATIONS WHICH LED TO THESE PARTICULAR FRINGE BENEFITS BEING INTRODUCED AND WITHOUT LOOKING AT THE OVERALL REMUNERATION PACKAGE,+ HE SAID.

ON THE EXPATRIATE ELEMENT IN THE CIVIL SERVICE, SIR PHILIP POINTED OUT THE NUMBER OF THESE OFFICERS AT OCTOBER 1 THIS YEAR WAS A MERE 3 067 OR 1.8 PER CENT OUT OF A TOTAL STRENGTH OF 171 909.

BY COMPARISON, THE NUMBER OF EXPATRIATE OFFICERS AT APRIL 1, 1980 WAS 3 025 OR 2.3 PER CENT OUT OF A TOTAL STRENGTH OF 129 217.

EVEN IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE, WHERE THE 100 PER CENT LOCALISATION POLICY AT THE RECRUITMENT LEVEL DID NOT APPLY, LOCAL OFFICERS COMPRISED 57 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL STRENGTH OF 391 AS AT OCTOBER 1, 1984, COMPARED WITH 49 PER CENT AT APRIL 1, 1980.

AGAIN IN THE INSPECTORATE AND GAZETTED RANKS OF THE POLICE FORCE, WHERE THE 100 PER CENT LOCALISATION POLICY AT THE RECRUITMENT LEVEL ALSO DID NOT APPLY, LOCAL OFFICERS COMPRISED 62 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL STRENGTH OF 2 399 AT OCTOBER 1, 1984, COMPARED WITH 55 PER CENT AT APRIL 1, 1980.

/IN BRIEF,

IN BRIEF, THEN THE EXPATRIATE ELEMENT IN THE CIVIL SERVICE HAS BEEN FALLING IN RECENT YEARS BOTH ABSOLUTELY AND RELATIVELY.

+THE GOVERNMENT'S RECRUITMENT POLICY HAS BEEN, AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE, BASED ON THE APPOINTMENT OF SUITABLE AND QUALIFIED LOCAL CANDIDATES IF AVAILABLE.

+RECRUITMENT OF EXPATRIATES IS ONLY UNDERTAKEN WHEN SUCH LOCAL CANDIDATES ARE NOT AVAILABLE OR ARE AVAILABLE IN INSUFFICIENT NUMBERS. GENERALLY SPEAKING AGREEMENT TERMS FOR A LIMITED PERIOD ONLY ARE OFFERED.

+IN ADDITION, SMALL NUMBERS OF EXPATRIATES ARE PRESENTLY RECRUITED, AS A MATTER OF POLICY, INTO THE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE AND THE POLICE INSPECTORATE ON BOTH PERMANENT AND PENSIONABLE AND AGREEMENT TERMS,+ HE SAID.

RECRUITMENT POLICY WOULD HAVE TO BE REVIEWED BEFORE VERY LONG, BEARING IN MIND THE TERMS OF THE SECOND PARAGRAPH OF SECTION IV OF ANNEX 1 TO THE JOINT DECLARATION.

HOWEVER, HE EMPHASISED THAT ALL SERVING MEMBERS OF THE CIVIL SERVICE - LOCALS OR EXPATRIATES, ON PERMANENT AND PENSIONABLE OR AGREEMENT TERMS - WERE PROMOTED AND POSTED ON THE BASIS OF SUCH OBJECTIVE CRITERIA AS SENIORITY, PERFORMANCE, POTENTIAL ABILITY, CHARACTER.

+THIS WILL REMAIN THE CASE. BUT THE PARAGRAPH IN ANNEX 1 TO THE JOINT DECLARATION TO WHICH I HAVE JUST REFERRED ALSO HAS CERTAIN IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CAREER PROSPECTS OF NON-CHINESE OFFICERS AFTER 1997. FOR THEM, THEREFORE, AT AN APPROPRIATE TIME, WE SHALL HAVE TO DEVISE FAIR AND EQUITABLE ARRANGEMENTS,+ HE SAID.

ON THE LANGUAGE ISSUE, HE SAID THAT GIVEN HONG KONG'S POSITION AS AN INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL CENTRE, HE WAS SURE THAT ENGLISH WOULD CONTINUE TO BE WIDELY USED.

+IN THE YEARS AHEAD, THEREFORE, WE MUST ENSURE THAT THE PROFICIENCY OF HONG KONG PEOPLE IN BOTH LANGUAGES IS FURTHER DEVELOPED.

+IN THE CIVIL SERVICE, STEPS ARE BEING TAKEN TO REVIEW THE REQUIREMENT FOR PROFICIENCY IN BOTH CHINESE AND ENGLISH FOR APPOINTMENT PURPOSES AND TO CONSIDER HOW THE IN-SERVICE TRAINING CAPABILITY FOR THESE TWO LANGUAGES SHOULD BE EXPANDED.+

SPECIAL UNIT TO STUDY LAWS
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A SPECIAL UNIT IS BEING SET UP TO DEAL WITH LEGAL TASKS ARISING FROM THE JOINT SINO-BRITISH DECLARATION ON THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, MR MICHAEL THOMAS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MR THOMAS SAID THERE WERE MANY AREAS OF WORK TO BE COVERED, THE GOVERNMENT WAS FULLY AWARE OF WHAT LAY AHEAD AND IT HAD THE DETERMINATION TO TACKLE THESE TASKS.

WARNING THAT IT WOULD TAKE TIME TO PRODUCE RESULTS, GIVEN FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND DIFFICULTIES IN RECRUITING AND RETAINING SKILLED AND EXPERIENCED LAWYERS, PARTICULARLY LAW DRAFTSMEN, MR THOMAS SAID: +I HAVE ALREADY PUT IN MOTION THE MACHINERY TO SET UP A SPECIAL UNIT IN MY CHAMBERS THAT WILL BE SEIZED WITH THE TASKS WHICH WILL ARISE FROM THE JOINT DECLARATION.

+THIS UNIT, I HOPE, WILL BE SUPPORTED BY A STRENGTHENED POLICY DIVISION UNDER THE SOLICITOR GENERAL. THESE THINGS WILL HAVE TO BE DONE, AND, SOMEHOW, WE MUST FIND THE MANPOWER AND RESOURCES WITH WHICH TO DO THEM.+

MR THOMAS SAID HE ACCEPTED THE NEED TO MODIFY HONG KONG LEGISLATION TO ENSURE A SMOOTH TRANSITION IN THE IMPENDING CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE.

+SEVERAL IMPORTANT AREAS OF OUR LAW ARE PRESENTLY CONTAINED, NOT IN HONG KONG LEGISLATION, BUT IN UNITED KINGDOM ACTS AND ORDERS IN COUNCIL. IN MANY CASES, THIS UNITED KINGDOM LEGISLATION WAS NOT MADE ESPECIALLY FOR HONG KONG BUT WAS EXTENDED TO THIS TERRITORY WITH MODIFICATIONS.

+THE RESULT IS THAT THE LAW IN THESE FIELDS IS NOT READILY ACCESSIBLE AND IS OFTEN DIFFICULT TO READ IN THE CONTEXT OF HONG KONG UNLESS ONE IS A LAWYER AND MOREOVER, A LAWYER WITH A SOUND KNOWLEDGE OF HONG KONG AND BRITISH LEGISLATION. THIS IS OBVIOUSLY UNDESIRABLE FOR PURELY PRACTICAL REASONS. HAVING REGARD TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES MENTIONED IN THE JOINT DECLARATION, THE PROGRESSIVE LOCALISATION OF ALL LEGISLATION WILL BE ESSENTIAL.+

AMONG THE FIELDS OF LAW REQUIRING SPECIAL ATTENTION, SAID MR THOMAS WAS THE DRAFTING OF A CODE TO COVER MERCHANT SHIPPING - A TASK WHICH COULD TAKE FIVE YEARS USING TWO DRAFTSMEN - AVIATION, PATENTS AND COPYRIGHT.

ADDITIONALLY, HE SAID: +WE NEED TO GIVE EFFECT TO THE AGREED OBJECTIVE THAT THE RESOLUTION OF LEGAL DISPUTES AND THE INTERPRETATION OF LAWS SHOULD CONCLUDE HERE IN HONG KONG. I AGREE WITH THE CHIEF JUSTICE AND OTHERS THAT IT IS DESIRABLE THAT A FINAL COURT OF APPEAL SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED WELL BEFORE 1997 IN ORDER TO ENSURE A SMOOTH TRANSITION.+

ON TREATIES, MULTILATERAL AND BILATERAL AGREEMENTS, HE SAID:
+BOTH THOSE NOW IN FORCE AND THOSE TO BE MADE WILL HAVE TO BE
SCRUTINISED TO ENSURE THEY ARE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE JOINT
DECLARATION AND THAT THEY WILL CONTINUE IN FORCE BEYOND 1997 WITH
THE CONCURRENCE OF THE OTHER PARTIES, NOTWITHSTANDING THE CHANGE
OF FLAG.+

THERE WOULD BE MUCH ADVANTAGE, SAID MR THOMAS, IF SOME PARTS
OF THE COMMON LAW THAT ARE PRESENTLY FROM THE REPORTS OF JUDICIAL
DECISIONS COULD BE CODIFIED IN CLEAR AND SYSTEMATIC TERMS -
PARTICULARLY THOSE WHICH MOST CONCERN ORDINARY PEOPLE. THE TASK
IS A MASSIVE ONE AND A PILOT STUDY IS NOW UNDERWAY OF THE RESOURCE
IMPLICATIONS OF CODIFICATION OF TWO AREAS OF THE LAW - LAWS RELATING
TO BAIL AND THE CUSTODY OF CHILDREN IN MATRIMONIAL CASES.

+IN ADDITION WE ARE FACED WITH THE NEED FOR LEGISLATION IN
THE NEXT FEW MONTHS TO IMPLEMENT THE FORTHCOMING PROPOSALS FOR
THE DEVELOPMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT WHICH IN TURN WILL
REQUIRE CHANGES IN THE LETTERS PATENT AND ROYAL INSTRUCTIONS,+
HE SAID.

* ON THE USE OF CHINESE LANGUAGE IN THE COURTS AND LEGISLATION,
MR THOMAS MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

MR THOMAS SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN CALLS FOR GREATER USE OF
CHINESE IN COURTS AND RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING
PREDOMINANTLY CHINESE JURORS WHERE CHINESE DEFENDANTS ARE CHARGED.

+THESE POINTS MAKE GOOD SENSE AND THEY WILL BE FULLY
CONSIDERED BY GOVERNMENT IN CONSULTATION WITH THE JUDICIARY,+
HE SAID.

ALTHOUGH ENGLISH MUST RETAIN ITS PLACE, PARTICULARLY IN OUR
HIGHER COURTS, HE SAID: +THE CHINESE LANGUAGE SHOULD HAVE EQUAL
STATUS WITH ENGLISH IN LEGISLATION AND BOTH TEXTS SHOULD BE EQUALLY
AUTHENTIC IN OUR COURTS.+

MR THOMAS SAID THAT, THOUGH THERE WERE PROBLEMS WITH THE
ENORMOUS WORKLOAD INVOLVED IN TRANSLATING EXISTING AND NEW
LEGISLATION, A PROGRAMME AIMED AT THE ENACTMENT OF ALL FUTURE
LEGISLATION IN BOTH ENGLISH AND CHINESE WAS NOW BEING PUT
TOGETHER IN HIS CHAMBERS.

THERE WERE TWO APPROACHES THAT COULD BE FOLLOWED - TRANSLATING
ENGLISH ORIGINAL TEXTS OR PRODUCING LAW IN CHINESE.

+I AM CONVINCED THAT THE WAY TOWARDS PROGRESS IN A REASONABLY
EXPEDITIOUS AND SYSTEMATIC WAY IS TO START WITH TRANSLATION AND
GRADUALLY, WITH THE BENEFIT OF EXPERIENCE, MOVE ON TO THE ULTIMATE
OBJECTIVE OF DRAFTING ALL NEW LEGISLATION IN ORIGINAL CHINESE
VERSIONS AS WELL AS ORIGINAL ENGLISH VERSIONS.+

ARRANGEMENTS ARE BEING MADE, SAID MR THOMAS FOR A SELECTED CORPS OF FULLY-QUALIFIED TRANSLATORS TO BE BUILT UP TO START WORK ON NEW LEGISLATION IN THE 1985-86 SESSION. THE INITIAL EMPHASIS WOULD, THEREFORE, BE ON CURRENT LEGISLATION BUT, AS EXPERIENCE WAS BUILT UP, THE TRANSLATION OF EXISTING LEGISLATION MIGHT GET UNDER WAY IN 1986-87.

+THE AIM WILL BE TO HAVE EVERYTHING IN PLACE BEFORE 1997 AND TO HAVE ON OUR ESTABLISHMENT LAW DRAFTSMEN WHO WILL BE THEN BE DRAFTING ALL NEW LEGISLATION IN ORIGINAL CHINESE, IN ADDITION TO DRAFTSMEN DRAFTING IN ENGLISH.+

* ON PROPOSALS ON THE TRIAL OF COMPLEX COMMERCIAL CRIME, MR THOMAS SAID THE PERIOD OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION WAS NOW COMPLETE, AND +IT IS FAIR TO SAY THAT THEY HAVE ATTRACTED A GOOD DEAL OF SUPPORT+. SOME OF THE POINTS MADE DURING THE CONSULTATION PERIOD HAD MERIT AND WOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN PREPARING REVISED PROPOSALS.

* ON +VIDEO NASTIES+ AND CHEAP SEX MAGAZINES, MR THOMAS SAID THAT PROBLEMS AROSE IN THE DEFINITION AND APPLICATION OF STANDARDS.

MR THOMAS SUGGESTED THAT A BROADLY-BASED TRIBUNAL, REFLECTING DIFFERENT CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS, MIGHT DECIDE WHETHER PARTICULAR ARTICLES WERE IN THEMSELVES OBJECTIONABLE. SECONDLY A QUICK AND SUMMARY METHOD OF PROVISIONALLY ESTABLISHING WHETHER OR NOT A PUBLICATION WAS OBJECTIONABLE PENDING A FINAL HEARING MUST BE DEvised.

A SCHEME WITH THESE TWO AIMS WAS BEING EXAMINED IN CONSULTATION WITH THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, HE SAID.

* ON THE LACK OF RACE AND SEX LEGISLATION IN HONG KONG, MR THOMAS SAID THAT SOME DISCRIMINATION INEVITABLY EXISTED BUT: +MY CONCLUSION IS THAT HONG KONG HAS PROGRESSED VERY WELL WITHOUT LAWS.+

ONE UNNECESSARY LAW IS A LAW TOO MANY, HE SAID.

+DO NOT LET US EMBRACE THE ALLURING SIREN OF RACE OR SEX LEGISLATION AND THE BUREAUCRACIES THAT GO WITH THEM.+

* ON +SPENT CONVICTION SCHEMES+ WHERE, AFTER A CERTAIN NUMBER OF YEARS AN OFFENDER IS AUTHORISED TO SAY NOTHING ABOUT A CONVICTION PROVIDED HE HAS NOT OFFENDED AGAIN, MR THOMAS SAID THAT A CONSULTATIVE PAPER WITH FIRM PROPOSALS SHOULD BE PUBLISHED BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR.

/+I WOULD

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1984

- 12 -

+I WOULD CAUTION SOME ENTHUSIASTS IN THE CIVIL LIBERTIES LOBBY WHO SEE THIS PROPOSED REFORM IN BLACK AND WHITE TERMS THAT THE PUBLIC MAY NOT SHARE THEIR EXCESSIVE ENTHUSIASM,+ HE SAID.

+ONE THING I MUST MAKE CLEAR, BECAUSE I BELIEVE THAT THE PROPOSAL FOR A SPENT CONVICTIONS SCHEME HAS ALREADY GIVEN RISE TO FALSE HOPES THAT IT WILL SMOOTH THE WAY OF THOSE WITH PAST CONVICTIONS WHO WISH TO EMIGRATE. THE FIRST THING IS FOR THEM TO REALISE IS THAT THE REQUIREMENT FOR DISCLOSURES OF PAST CONVICTIONS WHEN APPLICATIONS ARE MADE FOR VISAS, WILL BE PRIMARILY GOVERNED BY THE IMMIGRATION LAWS OF FOREIGN COUNTRIES. THEY MAY BE OBLIGED TO DEMAND FULL DISCLOSURES BEFORE PROCESSING EMIGRATION APPLICATIONS.+

SECONDLY ANY HONG KONG LEGISLATION SEEKING TO PREVENT DISCLOSURE WILL MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR FOREIGN COUNTRIES TO SATISFY THEMSELVES THAT APPLICANTS ARE FIT PERSONS TO BE GRANTED IMMIGRATION PAPERS.

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FUTURE IN PEOPLE'S HANDS - AKERS-JONES
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NEXT YEAR WILL BE A YEAR OF GREAT CHANGE IN THE REPRESENTATIVE CHARACTER OF THE GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE AT ALL LEVELS, THE SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, THE HON DAVID AKERS-JONES SAID TODAY.

+IN PRACTICAL TERMS THERE WILL BE A DIRECT LINK BETWEEN THIS CHAMBER AND THE REMOTEST PART OF HONG KONG,+ HE TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

THERE WOULD BE MORE ELECTED MEMBERS ON THE DISTRICT BOARDS, THE BOARDS WOULD ELECT THEIR OWN CHAIRMEN FROM AMONG THEIR OWN RANKS, THE OFFICIALS WOULD STEP DOWN, THE PROVISIONAL REGIONAL COUNCIL WOULD TAKE OFFICE, AND MEMBERS OF THESE BODIES WOULD ELECT MEMBERS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, HE SAID.

+IN POLITICAL TERMS THIS INTEGRATED SYSTEM MUST SURELY BE REFLECTED IN THE WAY PEOPLE RESPOND TO NEXT YEAR'S DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS AND IN THE NUMBERS OF CANDIDATES WHO PRESENT THEMSELVES FOR ELECTION AND THE NUMBER WHO TURN OUT TO VOTE,+ HE SAID.

+WITH SO MUCH AT STAKE, THIS SURELY IS AN OPPORTUNITY THAT THE HONG KONG PEOPLE ARE NOT GOING TO NEGLECT, FOR IT IS THE FUTURE THAT IS IN THEIR HANDS.+

MR AKERS-JONES NOTED THAT NEXT YEAR THE DISTRICT BOARDS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES WOULD BE LINKED BY ELECTIONS TO THE REGIONAL COUNCIL, GIVING THE BOARDS A SAY IN REGIONAL AFFAIRS.

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1984

- 13 -

AT THE SAME TIME, DISTRICT SUB-COMMITTEES WOULD BE FORMED SO AS TO ENABLE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY DIRECTLY TO JOIN IN THE RUNNING OF DISTRICT FACILITIES AND IN DISTRICT MANAGEMENT.

MR AKERS-JONES STRESSED THAT THERE WAS NO RISK OF DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION CRUMBLING AND DISINTEGRATING WHEN THE DISTRICT OFFICER IS REPLACED AS CHAIRMAN OF THE DISTRICT BOARD BY AN UNOFFICIAL.

THE CHAIRMEN ELECTED BY THE 19 BOARDS WILL HAVE A DIRECT PERSONAL INTEREST IN THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF THE RESIDENTS.

+I CANNOT IMAGINE THAT THIS IS A SITUATION THAT WILL LEAD TO ATROPHY AND NEGLECT, NEITHER CAN I IMAGINE THAT DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES WILL BECOME LESS EFFECTIVE AND RESPONSIVE WHEN THERE ARE MORE MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC IN POSITIONS OF AUTHORITY AND IMPORTANCE.

+THE PUBLIC SERVANTS WILL, AS THEIR NAME IMPLIES, RESPOND SENSIBLY AND RESPONSIBLY TO PUBLIC WISHES,+ HE SAID.

MR AKERS-JONES UNDERLINED THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES, AREA COMMITTEES AND MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS +THE FLESH AND BONES OF DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION+.

+I CANNOT IMAGINE A SITUATION IN WHICH WE COULD AFFORD TO NEGLECT THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING LIVELY AND EFFECTIVE MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES, FOR, WITHOUT THEM, THE BUILDINGS OF OUR CITY WOULD RAPIDLY DETERIORATE INTO FESTERING SLUMS, BREEDING PLACES FOR CRIME AND DEGRADATION,+ HE SAID.

AS A COMMUNITY, HE STRESSED, WE MUST BECOME INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT THOSE BUILDINGS WHERE, FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER, EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT HAS BROKEN DOWN, WHOSE LIGHT WELLS ARE KNEE-DEEP IN RUBBISH, FESTOONED WITH WIRE AND TIN SHEET EXCRESCENCES, SPALLING CONCRETE, BROKEN WINDOWS AND BLOCKED STAIRCASES.

+WE MUST NOW MOBILISE RESOURCES AT ALL LEVELS, IN BUILDING ORGANISATIONS, AREA COMMITTEES, DISTRICT BOARDS, AND, SO FAR AS IS PRACTICABLE, WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT ITSELF, TO TACKLE THIS GROWING PROBLEM,+ HE SAID.

MR AKERS-JONES ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT THERE WAS NO INTENTION TO INTERFERE WITH OR WEAKEN THE POSITION WHERE THERE WAS GOOD MANAGEMENT.

NEITHER WAS THERE ANY INTENTION TO NEGLECT TENANTS AND OWNERS ORGANISATIONS WHICH, HE SAID, HAD BECOME IMPORTANT AS A REPRESENTATIVE VOICE AND ESSENTIAL TO THE CONSULTATIVE PROCESS.

THESE 5 400 ORGANISATIONS, SERVING A POPULATION OF 3.4 MILLION, THOUGH PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH MANAGEMENT OF THEIR BUILDINGS, PROVIDED A MEANS THROUGH WHICH THE ORDINARY CITIZEN AND FAMILY, LIVING ALONE, COULD COMMUNICATE THEIR FEARS, HOPES AND WORRIES THROUGH THEIR COMMITTEES TO THE AREA COMMITTEES AND TO THE DISTRICT BOARD.

MR AKERS-JONES TOLD COUNCIL HE WOULD TRY TO DEVISE A SYSTEM FOR FORMAL PERIODIC MEETINGS OF MUTUAL AID COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN AND MEMBERS OF THEIR AREA COMMITTEES.

THE WORKING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISTRICT BOARDS AND THE AREA COMMITTEES COULD ALSO BE MADE MORE EFFECTIVE BY MEANS OF REGULAR PERIODIC MEETINGS AND POSSIBLY AN ELEMENT OF OVERLAPPING MEMBERSHIP, HE ADDED.

ON THE PROVISION OF COMMUNITY CENTRE FACILITIES, MR AKERS-JONES SAID THAT IDEALLY EACH DISTRICT SHOULD HAVE ITS SHARE OF FACILITIES, COMMUNITY CENTRES AND SO ON.

THIS WAS BEING ATTEMPTED IN THE NEW TOWNS, HE SAID, BUT IN THE OLDER URBAN AREA IT WAS NOT ALWAYS POSSIBLE TO FIND SITES FOR THEM.

+WITH REGARD TO THE STANDARD TO WHICH THEY ARE BUILT, THIS IS BEING REVIEWED AND I HOPE TO PRESENT PROPOSALS TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL IN A FEW WEEKS TIME,+ HE SAID.

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EDUCATION SYSTEM TO CONTINUE

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HONG KONG'S PRESENT EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM WILL CONTINUE AFTER 1997 AND THIS IS AS MUCH IN CHINA'S AS THE TERRITORY'S INTEREST, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON NEIL HENDERSON, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THE DRAFT AGREEMENT HAD MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE SYSTEM WOULD CONTINUE, HE SAID, AND HE QUOTED FROM THE DOCUMENT TO BACK UP THIS POINT.

+NATURALLY, OUR EDUCATION POLICY WHICH INCLUDES THE PROVISION OF ACADEMIC EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AND INDUSTRIAL TRAINING WILL NOT REMAIN STATIC BUT EVOLVE,+ SAID MR HENDERSON.

THE VARIOUS EDUCATIONAL ADVISORY BODIES WOULD PROVIDE ADVICE TO ENSURE THE SYSTEM WOULD MEET THE DEMANDS OF THE FUTURE AND WOULD KEEP PACE WITH THE LATEST TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS.

MR HENDERSON OUTLINED THE EXPANSION THAT WOULD TAKE PLACE IN THE PROVISION OF EVENING PLACES IN THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL'S TECHNICAL INSTITUTES. AT PRESENT THERE ARE 25 000 PART-TIME EVENING PLACES, THIS WILL RISE TO OVER 30 000 IN 1986-87 AND TO OVER 36 000 IN 1987-88 AS NEW FACILITIES ARE COMPLETED.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1984

- 15 -

ON THE TOPIC OF A THIRD UNIVERSITY, MR HENDERSON SAID THAT AT PRESENT ABOUT THREE PER CENT OF THE MEAN 17 TO 20 YEAR OLD AGE GROUP WERE PROVIDED WITH FIRST-YEAR FIRST DEGREE PLACES. THE PLAN WAS TO RAISE THIS TO SIX PER CENT BY 1989-90, AND TO EIGHT PER CENT BY 1994-1995.

A THIRD UNIVERSITY MIGHT BE NEEDED IN THE LATE NINETIES, HE SAID, BUT EXPANDING EXISTING UNIVERSITIES MUST BE THE FIRST STEP. ALTHOUGH SOME SUITABLE SITES HAD BEEN IDENTIFIED, RIGOROUS ANALYSIS WOULD BE REQUIRED BEFORE ANY DECISION COULD BE MADE.

MR HENDERSON SAID HE WAS GRATEFUL FOR SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF A LOCAL BODY TO VALIDATE DEGREE COURSES TO BE OFFERED AT NON-UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONS. ON DISTANCE LEARNING HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDERS OPEN EDUCATION AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AND THE FEASIBILITY OF WIDENING THE SCOPE OF SUCH EDUCATION WILL BE ONE OF THE SUBJECTS COVERED IN THE FIRST REPORT OF THE EDUCATION COMMISSION.

A REPORT WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL SHORTLY BY THE WORKING PARTY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CHINESE LANGUAGE FOUNDATION, HE SAID. SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL, THE GOVERNMENT WILL ENSURE THAT THE PRODUCTION OF CHINESE TEXTBOOKS IS GIVEN TOP PRIORITY TO FILL ALONG FELT NEED.

MR HENDERSON PAID TRIBUTE TO THE SPEEDY ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CITY POLYTECHNIC SAYING THAT IT WOULD REACH ITS INITIAL CAPACITY OF 8 000 FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT STUDENTS IN 1994-95 WITH POTENTIAL FOR EXPANSION TO ACCOMMODATE A FURTHER 5 500 FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT STUDENTS.

ON REHABILITATION, HE SAID THAT REGULATIONS ON ACCESS FOR THE DISABLED TO BUILDINGS WERE MADE BY THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL ON OCTOBER 23. THEY WOULD COME INTO EFFECT IN RESPECT OF BUILDINGS FOR WHICH PLANS ARE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL, OR FOR WHICH CONSENT TO COMMENCE WORK IS SOUGHT, ON AUGUST 1, 1985. A PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN WOULD BE LAUNCHED IN 1985/86 TO PROMOTE PUBLIC AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEMS OF THE HANDICAPPED, IN PARTICULAR THE MENTALLY ILL.

THERE ARE NO PLANS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT IN HONG KONG OF A CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND, SAID MR HENDERSON. SUCH A FUND NEEDS TO BE VIEWED OUTSIDE A PURELY SOCIAL SECURITY CONTEXT IN THE CONTEXT OF LABOUR POLICY. HE QUESTIONED WHETHER EMPLOYEES OR EMPLOYERS WOULD BE PREPARED TO ACCEPT THE LEVEL OF CONTRIBUTIONS NECESSARY FOR A VIABLE CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND. IN SINGAPORE THESE COULD AMOUNT TO 25 PER CENT OF WAGES FROM EACH SIDE.

HOWEVER, THERE WOULD BE NO OBJECTION TO A WORKING GROUP BEING SET UP TO EXAMINE PROPOSALS FOR SUCH A FUND SHOULD THERE BE IN FUTURE WIDESPREAD SUPPORT FOR SUCH A SCHEME.

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/16

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1934

- 16 -

CIVIC EDUCATION IS FOR COMMUNITY AT LARGE - HAYE
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THE PROMOTION OF CIVIC EDUCATION HAD BEEN DIRECTED NOT ONLY AT SCHOOL CHILDREN BUT ALSO AT THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE, THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, THE HON COLVYN HAYE, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY.

+WHAT HAS BEEN PLANNED FOR SCHOOLS IS AIMED ALSO AT PARENTS, TEACHERS AND THE COMMUNITY.

+WE HAVE THE MECHANISM WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT NOT ONLY TO HEIGHTEN PUBLIC AWARENESS OF CIVIC RESPONSIBILITIES BUT TO PUT THAT AWARENESS TO THE TEST BY ACTIVE PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT,+ MR HAYE SAID.

HE LISTED, AS EXAMPLES, THE DISTRICT BOARDS AND GREEN PAPER PLANS FOR FURTHER DEMOCRATISATION IN WHICH THERE HAD BEEN WIDESPREAD COMMUNITY INTEREST.

ON THE SCHOOL FRONT, THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW SUBJECT OF GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS WAS PROCEEDING ON SCHEDULE, AND THE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE WOULD SHORTLY BE INVITED TO ADVISE HOW THE CIVIC EDUCATION ELEMENT IN EXISTING SUBJECTS AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES COULD BE STRENGTHENED.

MR HAYE SAID THAT SEMINARS HAD BEEN SCHEDULED TO SEEK THE VIEWS OF SECONDARY AND PRIMARY SCHOOL HEADS ON CIVIC EDUCATION, AND THAT THERE HAD BEEN PRELIMINARY THINKING FOR A COMPREHENSIVE SET OF GUIDELINES WHICH WOULD BE ISSUED TO HELP SCHOOLS TO FURTHER PROMOTE CIVIC AND POLITICAL AWARENESS AMONG STUDENTS.

HE SAID THAT MANY OF THE POINTS RAISED BY UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS REGARDING THE LANGUAGE ISSUE, SUCH AS THE STRENGTHENING OF THE TEACHING OF CHINESE AND PUTONGHUA, HAD BEEN DEALT WITH IN THE FIRST REPORT OF THE EDUCATION COMMISSION WHICH WOULD SOON BE SUBMITTED TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

+MEANWHILE, I AM HAPPY TO REPORT THAT WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION, THE APPOINTMENT OF SEVERAL HUNDREDS OF ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN STANDARD SECONDARY SCHOOLS, THE REFORM OF LANGUAGE CURRICULA AT PRIMARY AND SECONDARY LEVELS AND THE LAUNCHING OF EXTENSIVE RESEARCH PROGRAMMES INTO LANGUAGE PROBLEMS THREE YEARS AGO, THERE HAS BEEN A DECIDED IMPROVEMENT IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF BOTH CHINESE AND ENGLISH IN OUR SCHOOLS,+ HE SAID.

ON THE JUNIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION ASSESSMENT (JSEA), ANOTHER ISSUE DEALT WITH BY THE EDUCATION COMMISSION, MR HAYE POINTED OUT THAT EFFORTS HAD BEEN MADE TO TAKE MUCH OF THE PAIN AND STRAIN OUT OF THE SELECTION AND ALLOCATION ARRANGEMENTS, AND FURTHER EFFORTS WOULD BE MADE TO ALLEVIATE ANY SUCH STRESS.

/+PARENTS ARE

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1984

- 17 -

+PARENTS ARE MORE FRIGHTENED THAN THEIR CHILDREN OF THE JSEA, BUT EVEN PARENTS APPRECIATE THE NECESSITY FOR JUST AND EFFICIENT SELECTION AND ALLOCATION PROCEDURES WHEN THERE IS NOT A SUBSIDISED SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACE FOR EVERY CHILD WHO WANTS ONE,+ HE SAID.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE EDUCATION COMMISSION APART, MR HAYE WAS CONFIDENT THE RECENT REFORM OF THE SENIOR SECONDARY CURRICULUM AND EXAMINATION SYSTEM, TOGETHER WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR MAKING CRAFT EDUCATION MORE ATTRACTIVE AND AVAILABLE TO POST-FORM 3 STUDENTS, WOULD HELP TO MAKE SELF-SELECTION POSSIBLE AFTER FORM 3 SO AS TO OBTAIN THE NECESSITY FOR THE JSEA.

WITH REGARD TO COMPUTER EDUCATION, HE SAID APPROVAL WAS BEING SOUGHT TO EXTEND THE SUBJECT TO ALL PUBLIC-SECTOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS, HOPEFULLY IN TWO YEARS TIME IF FUNDS WERE AVAILABLE.

+HOWEVER, NO DECISION HAS YET BEEN TAKEN ON WHETHER COMPUTER COURSES SHOULD BE INTRODUCED IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS BECAUSE THERE ARE MANY OPTIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPING COMPUTER EDUCATION IN THE SCHOOLS, AND A WORKING GROUP UNDER THE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE HAS BEEN SET UP TO EXAMINE THIS MATTER IN DETAIL,+ HE ADDED.

IN RESPONSE TO THE HON HENRIETTA IP'S PROPOSAL THAT GREATER USE SHOULD BE MADE OF TEACHER RESOURCES DURING THE SCHOOLS' SUMMER VACATION, MR HAYE POINTED OUT THAT LAST SUMMER ALONE, OVER 16 000 TEACHERS HAD ASSISTED IN THE RUNNING OF SUMMER ACTIVITIES PROGRAMMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

MOST TEACHERS WERE EXPECTED TO ASSIST WITH THE MANY ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS IN THEIR SCHOOLS DURING THE SUMMER HOLIDAYS, WHILE MANY ALSO USED THE OPPORTUNITY TO UPDATE THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND PREPARE MATERIAL FOR THE COMING SCHOOL SESSION.

+IN BRIEF,+ MR HAYE SAID, +I AM NOT CONVINCED THAT THERE IS ANY JUSTIFICATION FOR A MAJOR INCREASE IN THE WORKLOADS OF TEACHERS AS PROPOSED BY DR IP OR THAT THE DEPLOYMENT SUGGESTED WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE OUR EDUCATION PROVISION.+

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/18

WORK ON NEW POLICE HQ STARTS NEXT YEAR
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CONSTRUCTION WORK ON THE FIRST PHASE OF A NEW POLICE HEADQUARTERS AT ARSENAL STREET WILL START NEXT YEAR, SUBJECT TO THE DECISION OF THE PUBLIC WORKS SUB-COMMITTEE AT ITS NEXT MEETING, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THIS PROJECT WOULD PROVIDE PURPOSE-BUILT ACCOMMODATION FOR THE MODERN EQUIPMENT AND COMPUTER-BASED TECHNOLOGY THAT WAS PROGRESSIVELY BEING INTRODUCED INTO POLICE WORK, MR JEAFFRESON SAID.

IN PARTICULAR IT WOULD HOUSE A NEW COMPUTER-BASED COMMAND AND CONTROL SYSTEM WHICH WOULD GREATLY IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE BEAT RADIO NETWORK.

IT WOULD PROVIDE INSTANT INFORMATION ON THE WHEREABOUTS OF POLICEMEN SO THAT THEY COULD BE DEPLOYED QUICKLY TO MAXIMUM EFFECT TO DEAL WITH INCIDENTS, AND ON VARIOUS OTHER MATTERS THAT WOULD HELP THE POLICE TO BE MORE EFFECTIVE ON THE GROUND.

+THE NEW EQUIPMENT WILL BE INTRODUCED AT THE END OF THIS DECADE AND WILL RESULT IN THE EXTENSION OF THE BEAT RADIO NETWORK TO THE NEW TERRITORIES.

+MEANWHILE A PROGRAMME FOR INTRODUCING LOCAL BEAT RADIO SYSTEMS AS A TEMPORARY EXPEDIENT IN THE MAJOR POPULATION CENTRES OF THE NEW TERRITORIES IS BEING PURSUED,+ MR JEAFFRESON REPORTED.

HE SAID THE HON CHEUNG YAN-LUNG HAD RIGHTLY LINKED THE INCREASE IN CRIME IN THE NEW TERRITORIES SINCE 1979 TO THE DRAMATIC POPULATION EXPANSION AS A RESULT OF THE RAPID DEVELOPMENT OF NEW TOWNS.

THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE'S OBJECT HAD BEEN TO EXPAND THE POLICE PRESENCE AHEAD OF THE GROWTH IN THE POPULATION, AND THIS TACTICS, MR JEAFFRESON SAID, SEEMED TO HAVE WORKED WELL.

HE PREDICTED ONLY A TWO TO THREE PER CENT INCREASE IN OVERALL CRIME LEVELS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES DESPITE THE CONTINUED POPULATION EXPANSION THERE.

ON THE POLICING OF THE KCR ABOUT WHICH MR CHEUNG HAD EXPRESSED CONCERN, MR JEAFFRESON TOLD THE COUNCIL THE POLICE HAD COMPLETED A THOROUGH REVIEW OF THE REQUIREMENTS IN JUNE THIS YEAR.

+THE COMMISSIONER CONCLUDED THAT THE LEVEL OF CRIME AND THE DEMANDS FOR GENERAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE POLICE ON THE RAILWAY WERE NOT SUCH AS TO JUSTIFY ESTABLISHING A DEDICATED POLICE UNIT FOR THE KCR, A UNIT WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN COSTLY IN TERMS OF MANPOWER AND GENERAL LOGISTICAL SUPPORT,+ HE EXPLAINED.

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BUT THE COMMISSIONER HAD INSTRUCTED THAT THE SITUATION SHOULD BE CAREFULLY MONITORED AND REVIEWED EVERY SIX MONTHS SO THAT SUCH A UNIT COULD BE FORMED QUICKLY IN RESPONSE TO ANY DETERIORATION IN THE PRESENT SITUATION.

MR JEAFFRESON REPORTED THAT THE POLICE PATROLLED ON THE TRAINS DURING THE RUSH HOURS WHILE THE BUSIEST STATIONS HAD POLICEMEN THERE ALL THE TIME.

ALL THE NEW PERMANENT RAILWAY STATIONS, UNLESS COVERED FROM AN ADJACENT POLICE FACILITY, HAD BEEN DESIGNED TO ALLOW FOR SOME FORM OF POLICE PRESENCE.

ON THE POSITION OF REPORTED CRIME ON THE KCR, HE SAID BETWEEN THE END OF 1982 AND THE END OF 1983, THE DAILY NUMBER OF PASSENGERS HAD NEARLY DOUBLED WHILE REPORTED CRIME HAD DROPPED BY 15 PER CENT.

BUT HE ADDED, +WORRYING WAS THAT PICK-POCKETING WAS UP BY AROUND 40 PER CENT, PREDICTABLE I'M AFRAID WITH THE KCR COACHES DESIGNED THE WAY THEY ARE RATHER THAN AS ONE LONG CORRIDOR IN THE MTR STYLE.

+SO FAR THIS YEAR, IT LOOKS AS IF A FURTHER INCREASE IN PASSENGERS IS BEING ACCOMPANIED BY A REALLY SUBSTANTIAL DROP IN CRIME INCLUDING PICK-POCKETING.+

A RECENT OPINION SURVEY AMONG RESIDENTS OF PUBLIC HOUSING RATED CRIME AS THE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM WHICH THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD TACKLE URGENTLY.

NOTING THAT THIS WAS A +NOTORIOUSLY DIFFICULT+ SUBJECT, HE SAID, +TO THIS END, THERE ARE NOW SOME 10 SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS UNDER THE FIGHT CRIME COMMITTEE EXAMINING WAYS AND MEANS OF GIVING FURTHER SUPPORT TO THE POLICE FORCE,+ HE SAID.

AND THE COMMITTEE WOULD BE SUBMITTING ITS LATEST REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR NEXT WEEK.

HE ALSO REPORTED THAT A WORKING GROUP WAS CURRENTLY EXAMINING THE ISSUE OF TRIAD INFILTRATION INTO SCHOOLS, WHILE ANOTHER GROUP HAD IDENTIFIED THE EXTENT TO WHICH LEGAL IMMIGRANTS HAD BECOME INVOLVED IN CRIME.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1984

- 20 -

DENTAL CLINICS PLAN FOR HOUSING ESTATES
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THE GOVERNMENT WAS EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITY, TOGETHER WITH THE HONG KONG DENTAL ASSOCIATION, OF ESTABLISHING DENTAL CLINICS IN NEW HOUSING ESTATES ON SIMILAR LINES AS THE ESTATE DOCTORS SCHEME, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON HENRY CHING, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THIS SCHEME HAD HELPED TO IMPROVE THE DISTRIBUTION OF DOCTORS' PRACTICES, AND MR CHING BELIEVED SIMILAR ARRANGEMENTS COULD HELP BRING DENTAL CLINICS TO THE UNDER-PROVIDED DISTRICTS.

EARLIER, THE HON DR HARRY FANG HAD SUGGESTED LOW-INTEREST OR INTEREST-FREE LOANS TO HELP NEW DENTAL GRADUATES SET UP THEIR OWN PRACTICES.

+EVIDENCE HAS NOT BEEN FORTHCOMING TO SUPPORT THE VIEW THAT PRIVATE PRACTICE IS NO LONGER VIABLE AND THAT SUCH LOANS ARE THEREFORE NECESSARY,+ MR CHING SAID.

HE ADDED THAT SUCH LOANS WOULD BE A FORM OF SUBSIDY AND WOULD NEED +VERY CAREFUL+ CONSIDERATION ON HEALTH CARE GROUNDS.

ON DR FANG'S SUGGESTION THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ENCOURAGE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A HONG KONG ACADEMY OF MEDICINE TO VALIDATE HIGHER QUALIFICATIONS FOR CLINICAL SPECIALISTS AND TO MAINTAIN INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTED STANDARDS, MR CHING SAID IT WOULD RECEIVE MOST CAREFUL CONSIDERATION.

+THE PROBLEMS INHERENT IN THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR POST-GRADUATE MEDICAL TRAINING WERE IN FACT ONLY RECENTLY DISCUSSED BY THE MEDICAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE, WHICH DR FANG CHAIRS, AND IT WAS RESOLVED THAT A WORKING PARTY SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED TO CONSIDER WHAT CHANGES TO THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS ARE NEEDED. WORK ON THIS SHOULD START FAIRLY SOON,+ HE SAID.

AS FOR THE HON DR HO KAM-FAI'S SUGGESTION THAT A WIDOWHOOD AND A CHRONIC SICKNESS SUPPLEMENT BE ADDED TO THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE SCHEME, MR CHING SAID IT WOULD BE CONSIDERED AND ADVICE WOULD BE SOUGHT FROM THE SOCIAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

+BUT MY OWN INITIAL REACTION IS THAT THESE TWO SUGGESTED NEW CATEGORIES OF SUPPLEMENTARY BENEFITS ARE PROBABLY UNNECESSARY.

+CHRONICALLY SICK PERSONS AND WIDOWS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN ARE, OF COURSE, ALREADY ELIGIBLE FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE INsofar AS THEIR ESSENTIAL NEEDS ARE CONCERNED.

/+SUCH SPECIAL

+SUCH SPECIAL NEEDS OF WIDOWS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN AS CHILD-MINDING AND DOMESTIC HELP WOULD SEEM TO BE MORE APPROPRIATELY MET BY THE PROVISION OF SERVICES RATHER THAN BY CASH GRANTS,+ HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT FOR THE CHRONICALLY SICK, THE SCHEME ALREADY PROVIDED FOR SUCH SPECIAL EXPENSES AS THE COST OF MEDICALLY-APPROVED DIETS TO BE MET BY DISCRETIONARY PAYMENTS.

HE TOLD THE COUNCIL THAT THE REVIEW OF THE SCHEME NOW IN PROGRESS WOULD GIVE SYMPATHETIC CONSIDERATION TO THOSE IN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES WITH SPECIAL NEEDS.

+A GREAT DEAL OF THOUGHT HAS ALREADY BEEN GIVEN, FOR EXAMPLE, TO WAYS IN WHICH AN ELDERLY PERSON MIGHT BE HELPED TO MAINTAIN A DEGREE OF FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE AND DIGNITY, INSTEAD OF BEING REGARDED SIMPLY AS A MEMBER OF THE HOUSEHOLD FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PURPOSES,+ HE SAID.

CONSIDERATIONS HAD ALSO BEEN GIVEN TO WAYS IN WHICH A YOUNG PERSON MIGHT BE ENCOURAGED TO SEEK EMPLOYMENT AND YET REMAIN AS A CONTRIBUTING MEMBER OF HIS FAMILY, WITHOUT THE FAMILY'S LEVEL OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE BEING REDUCED TO FULLY OFFSET HIS EARNINGS.

AS TO THE QUESTION OF +STREET SLEEPERS+ RAISED BY THE HON PAULINE NG, MR CHING REPORTED THAT IN A RECENT EXERCISE, NEARLY 1 000 OF THEM HAD BEEN LOCATED AND INTERVIEWED.

FIFTEEN PER CENT OF THEM SAID THEY SLEPT IN THE STREETS BECAUSE THEY LIKED DOING SO WHILE ANOTHER 50 PER CENT CLAIMED THEY COULD NOT AFFORD TO RENT ACCOMMODATION. THIRTY PER CENT WERE EMPLOYED OR SELF-EMPLOYED, WITH AVERAGE MONTHLY EARNINGS OF JUST OVER \$1 000 EACH.

+OF COURSE THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO SLEEP IN THE STREETS WHO HAVE WELFARE NEEDS, JUST AS THERE ARE UNFORTUNATE AND NEEDY MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY WHO ENJOY THE PRIVACY OF OFF-STREET SLEEPING.

+AND I WOULD REMIND MRS NG THAT AT LEAST SOME OF THE VAGABONDS SHE SEES DURING THE DAY TIME, WHEN THEY ARE MOST EVIDENT, HAVE SHELTER TO RETURN TO AT NIGHT,+ HE SAID.

HE REPORTED THAT 30 PER CENT OF THOSE LOCATED IN THE EXERCISE WERE RECEIVING ASSISTANCE FROM PUBLIC FUNDS.

THE EXERCISE ALSO SHOWED ABOUT 15 PER CENT OF THOSE CONTACTED HAD UNSPECIFIED MENTAL PROBLEMS.

/+EVEN THEN,.....

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1984

- 22 -

+EVEN THEN, IT WOULD BE WRONG TO SUPPOSE THAT, BY VIRTUE OF THEIR CONDITION, THEY PRESENT A THREAT TO THE SAFETY OF THE PUBLIC, SUCH AS TO JUSTIFY THEIR COMPULSORY INCARCINATION IN INSTITUTIONS.

+AS LONG AS THEY DO NOT POSE A DANGER EITHER TO THEMSELVES OR TO THE PUBLIC, I CAN SEE NO JUSTIFICATION TO DEPRIVE THEM OF THEIR PERSONAL LIBERTY,+ HE SAID.

ON THE HON DR HENRIETTA IP'S SUGGESTION THAT FEES AT GOVERNMENT OUTPATIENT CLINICS SHOULD BE RAISED SO THE THEY MIGHT BREAK EVEN, MR CHING EXPLAINED THAT THESE CLINICS SERVED A WIDE AIM FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE WHOLE COMMUNITY.

BESIDES MEETING THE NEEDS OF THOSE UNABLE TO AFFORD PRIVATE CLINICS, THEY WERE THE MEANS OF IDENTIFYING PERSONS WHO HAD CONTRACTED COMMUNICABLE DISEASES, WITH A VIEW TO THEIR ISOLATION.

THEY ENABLED THE INCIDENCE OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF ILLNESSES TO BE MONITORED, AND ACUTE CASES TO BE IDENTIFIED SO THAT THEY MIGHT BE REFERRED TO HOSPITALS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS FOR FURTHER EXAMINATION AND FOLLOW-UP TREATMENT.

+FOR THESE REASONS, IT IS IMPORTANT TO ENSURE THAT THERE IS NO FINANCIAL DISINCENTIVE TO PERSONS PRESENTING THEMSELVES AT GOVERNMENT OUTPATIENT CLINICS,+ HE SAID.

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/23

HONG KONG 'A POPULAR WORLD GATHERING PLACE'

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PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD WERE INCREASINGLY RECOGNISING HONG KONG AS AN INTERNATIONAL GATHERING CENTRE, THE DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION SERVICES, MR PETER TSAO SAID TODAY.

+THIS IS A TENDENCY THAT IS GOING TO INCREASE, RATHER THAN DIMINISH, OVER THE YEARS AHEAD. FOR I AM CONVINCED THAT THE REASSURING JOINT DECLARATION ON HONG KONG'S FUTURE WILL SERVE AS A SPUR TO ACCELERATE THAT TREND EVEN FURTHER,+ MR TSAO TOLD THE LIONS CLUB OF TAI PING SHAN AT LUNCH TODAY.

HE SAID HONG KONG'S POPULARITY WAS SHOWN FROM THE MANY INTERNATIONAL EVENTS AND EXHIBITIONS BEING HELD THIS MONTH IN HONG KONG.

NOVEMBER, HE SAID, WAS THE MOST CROWDED MONTH ON THE HONG KONG CALENDAR, AND HE CHOSE IN HIS SPEECH TO ILLUSTRATE THIS FACT, AND ALSO THE FACT THAT THIS WAS WIDELY RECOGNISED BY PEOPLE OUTSIDE OF HONG KONG.

NOVEMBER IN HONG KONG, MR TSAO SAID, WAS QUITE DIFFERENT FROM +THE JAUNDICED VIEW+ OF THE ENGLISH NOVEMBER TAKEN BY THE 19TH CENTURY ENGLISH POET THOMAS HOOD, WHO DESCRIBED IT AS:

+NO WARMTH, NO CHEERFULNESS, NO HEALTHFUL EASE,
NO SHADE, NO SHINE, NO BUTTERFLIES, NO BEES,
NOVEMBER!+

+HERE THINGS ARE DIFFERENT,+ MR TSAO SAID.

+OUR NOVEMBER BRINGS US, IF ANYTHING, A QUICKENING OF THE TEMPO AND AN ACCELERATION OF THE NORMAL ALACRITY WITH WHICH WE LEAD OUR LIVES.

+IT IS A MONTH WHEN HONG KONG IS VISITED BY BETTER WEATHER, INCREASED NUMBERS OF TOURISTS AND A HOST OF DELEGATES TO ALL KINDS OF CONFERENCES AND CONVENTIONS.

+LOOKING AT HOTEL REGISTERS FILLED WITH GUESTS, WE MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO MISQUOTE HOOD AND SAY 'NOVEMBER? NO WONDER.'+

THE NOVEMBER ENTRIES OF EVENTS PUBLISHED BY THE HONG KONG TOURIST ASSOCIATION IN ITS +DIARY OF COMING CONFERENCES AND EXHIBITIONS+ IN HONG KONG WAS +ENLIGHTENING+, HE SAID.

THERE WERE THE 1984 WORLD AMATEUR TEAM GOLF CHAMPIONSHIPS TAKING PLACE AT THE ROYAL HONG KONG GOLF CLUB IN FANLING, TO BE FOLLOWED LATER BY THE HONG KONG OPEN AMATEUR GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP AT THE DISCOVERY BAY GOLF CLUB.

THERE WAS ALSO THE THIRD HONG KONG INTERNATIONAL BOWLS CLASSIC, TO BE HELD FROM NOVEMBER 17 TO 25 AT THE HONG KONG FOOTBALL AND KOWLOON BOWLING GREEN CLUBS.

EARLIER THIS MONTH, THE +TOURISM '84,+ HAD BEEN HELD AT THE HOTEL FURAMA INTER-CONTINENTAL, AND DUE NEXT WEEK, IS THE +FIRST CONGRESS OF THE HAND SECTION OF THE WESTERN PACIFIC ORTHOPAEDIC ASSOCIATION+.

IN ADDITION TO VARIOUS OTHER FESTIVALS AND EXHIBITIONS, HELD EARLIER THIS MONTH, THERE WOULD BE NUMEROUS OTHER EVENTS, INCLUDING THE +SEATRADE CONFERENCE+, +EXPOSHIP FAR EAST '84 INTERNATIONAL MARITIME EXHIBITION+, THE +FABRICS FROM FRANCE+ EXHIBITION, +FOODFEST '84+, AS WELL AS THE +IDEAL LIVING SHOW+.

OTHER GATHERINGS SCHEDULED FOR LATER THIS MONTH ARE THE EUROPEAN STUDY CONFERENCES, AND THE INTERNATIONAL TAX PLANNING ASSOCIATION MEETING, THE COMMONWEALTH BROADCASTING ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE, THE 3RD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TALL BUILDINGS.

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ELECTORAL ROLL TOPS 1.4 MILLION
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SOME 530 000 NEWLY REGISTERED VOTERS HAVE BEEN ADDED TO THE GENERAL ELECTORAL ROLL FOLLOWING THE RECENT REGISTRATION DRIVE.

THIS BRINGS TO 1.42 MILLION THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS WHO WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO CAST THEIR BALLOT IN THE FIRST TERRITORY-WIDE DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS ON MARCH 7 NEXT YEAR.

A TOTAL OF 236 ELECTED SEATS ON THE 19 DISTRICT BOARDS WILL BE AT STAKE IN THE CONSTITUENCY BASED ELECTIONS.

THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (ELECTORAL SERVICES) OF THE COUNCILS AND ADMINISTRATION BRANCH, MR LEE LAP-SUN, SAID TODAY THAT 736 027 APPLICATIONS TO REGISTER AS A VOTER HAD BEEN RECEIVED DURING THE SIX-WEEK REGISTRATION DRIVE WHICH ENDED ON OCTOBER 1.

THESE HAD BEEN PROCESSED BY COMPUTER TO ELIMINATE DOUBLE REGISTRATION, INCOMPLETE FORMS AND CHANGE OF ADDRESS CASES.

+EVERY EFFORT HAS BEEN MADE TO CLARIFY DEFECTIVE APPLICATIONS AND TO ACCEPT ALL ELIGIBLE PERSONS WHO HAVE APPLIED,+ HE SAID.

MR LEE SAID A PROVISIONAL REGISTER OF ELECTORS WOULD BE PUBLISHED TOMORROW (FRIDAY) AND WOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION UNTIL NOVEMBER 20 AT ALL DISTRICT OFFICES AND THE REGISTRATION AND ELECTORAL DIVISION.

+DURING THIS PERIOD, ANY PERSON WHOSE NAME DOES NOT APPEAR ON THE REGISTER AND WHO CONSIDERS THAT HE IS ENTITLED TO BE REGISTERED MAY APPLY TO THE REGISTRATION OFFICER FOR INCLUSION.+

/THESE LATE

THESE LATE APPLICATIONS MUST BE MADE IN PERSON AT THE REGISTRATION AND ELECTORAL DIVISION ON THE 10TH FLOOR OF HARBOUR CENTRE, 25 HARBOUR ROAD, WAN CHAI.

MR LEE SAID THAT PERSONS WHO WISHED TO OBJECT TO ANY ENTRY IN THE PROVISIONAL REGISTER SHOULD LODGE THEIR OBJECTIONS BEFORE NOVEMBER 26.

IN ADDITION, ELECTORS WHO WISHED TO CORRECT THEIR REGISTERED PARTICULARS, SUCH AS A CHANGE OF ADDRESS, WOULD HAVE TO DO SO BEFORE DECEMBER 10.

CHANGES TO REGISTERED PARTICULARS MAY BE REPORTED IN WRITING, BY GIVING THE NAME, IDENTITY CARD NUMBER AND NEW RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, OR BY COMPLETING A SPECIAL POSTAGE-FREE FORM, WHICH IS AVAILABLE FROM ANY DISTRICT OFFICE.

MR LEE STRESSED THAT SINCE AN ELECTOR MIGHT ONLY VOTE IN THE CONSTITUENCY IN WHICH HE WAS REGISTERED, IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT HE REPORT ANY CHANGE OF RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS AS SOON AS IT OCCURS.

+IF THE CHANGE OF ADDRESS IS NOT REPORTED BY DECEMBER 10, A VOTER MAY FIND, TO HIS INCONVENIENCE, THAT HE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO VOTE IN THE CONSTITUENCY IN WHICH HE LIVES, BUT WILL HAVE TO RETURN TO HIS FORMER CONSTITUENCY TO VOTE.

+MOREOVER, IF NO REPORT IS MADE AT ALL, HE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO RECEIVE HIS POLL CARD AND MAY EVENTUALLY HAVE HIS NAME REMOVED FROM THE REGISTER OF ELECTORS,+ MR LEE SAID.

A FINAL REGISTER OF ELECTORS WOULD BE COMPILED AND PUBLISHED IN EARLY JANUARY, HE ADDED.

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HK'S LARGEST CULTURAL CENTRE READY BY 1987

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THE GOVERNMENT TODAY (THURSDAY) AWARDED A \$374-MILLION CONTRACT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TSIM SHA TSUI CULTURAL CENTRE, THE LARGEST IN HONG KONG.

SIGNING THE CONTRACT ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT WAS THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF BUILDING DEVELOPMENT, MR JOSE LEI, AND REPRESENTATIVES OF KUMAGAI GUMI (HONG KONG) LIMITED.

THE CONTRACT MARKS THE FINAL PHASE OF A PROJECT WHICH INCLUDES THE SPACE MUSEUM.

ALSO PRESENT AT TODAY'S SIGNING CEREMONY WERE THE CHAIRMAN OF THE URBAN COUNCIL, MR HILTON CHEONG-LEEN, AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CULTURE SELECT COMMITTEE, MR LAWRENCE FUNG.

MR LEI SAID THAT ON COMPLETION AT THE END OF 1987, THE TSIM SHA TSUI CULTURAL CENTRE WILL HAVE A CONCERT HALL WHICH WILL BE AMONG THE FINEST IN THE WORLD.

+THIS 2 300-SEAT CONCERT HALL WILL BE IN AMPHITHEATRE FORM AND WILL PROVIDE A VENUE FOR ORCHESTRAL AND CHORAL EVENTS TOGETHER WITH POPULAR MUSIC CONCERTS.

+THE HALL WILL BE PROVIDED WITH A FINE ORGAN WHICH IS CURRENTLY BEING BUILT IN AUSTRIA,+ HE SAID.

IT WILL HAVE NATURAL ACOUSTICS AND PROVIDE THE VIEW OF THE STAGE FROM ALL ANGLES OF SEATING.

THE CENTRE WILL ALSO INCLUDE A 1 850-SEAT THEATRE FOR THE STAGING OF BALLET, OPERA AND OTHER MUSIC-DRAMA EVENTS. THE AUDITORIUM IS EQUIPPED WITH CINEMATIC PROJECTORS AND FACILITIES FOR CONFERENCES.

+WHILE THE AUDITORIUM IS IN A FAIRLY TRADITIONAL THREE-TIER HORSESHOE FORMAT, THE ACOUSTIC DESIGN CONTAINS NOVEL FEATURES THAT SHOULD MAKE THE SPACE SIGNIFICANT IN TERMS OF LIVE PERFORMANCE ATTRACTIVENESS AND THUS MAKE IT A DESIRABLE VENUE FOR INTERNATIONAL TOURING COMPANIES,+ MR LEI SAID.

A DRAMA THEATRE SEATING 400 TO 500 PEOPLE IS ALSO INCLUDED AND WILL BECOME THE FUTURE HOME OF THE HONG KONG REPERTORY THEATRE.

IT HAS BEEN PLANNED AS A FLEXIBLE SPACE WITH MOVABLE SEATING TIERS TO SUIT THE REQUIREMENTS OF PARTICULAR PRODUCTIONS. THE ACTUAL NUMBER OF SEATS WILL DEPEND ON HOW SEATING IS ARRANGED.

THERE ARE ADDITIONAL BUILDINGS WITHIN THE CENTRE, SEPARATE FROM THE MAIN BUILDING, AND WILL HOUSE AN ARTS LIBRARY, A TWO-STORY RESTAURANT WITH A PANORAMIC VIEW OF THE HARBOUR, A MARRIAGE REGISTRY AND OFFICE ACCOMMODATION FOR THE CULTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT.

+SURROUNDING THE ENTIRE COMPLEX WILL BE A PEDESTRIAN PIAZZA WHICH WILL LINK UP WITH THE TSIM SHA TSUI PROMENADE TO PROVIDE A CONTINUOUS WALKWAY FROM THE STAR FERRY TO HUNG HOM,+ MR LEI SAID.

THE ENTIRE PROJECT, INCLUDING SUBSTRUCTURAL WORK, WILL COST \$474 MILLION, WITH THE GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTING \$363.4 MILLION AND THE URBAN COUNCIL, THE BALANCE.

+ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING DESIGN FEATURES WILL PERHAPS BE THE SUSPENDED CABLE ROOF, SOMETHING ENTIRELY NEW IN HONG KONG,+ MR LEI SAID.

ON COMPLETION, THE TSIM SHA TSUI CULTURAL CENTRE WILL PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE CULTURAL LIFE OF HONG KONG. IT WILL BE THE +FLAGSHIP+ OF A SERIES OF CULTURAL CENTRES.

THE FIRST DISTRICT-LEVEL CULTURAL CENTRE -- TSUEN WAN TOWN HALL -- HAS BEEN IN OPERATION FOR FIVE YEARS. TWO OTHERS ARE NOW UNDER CONSTRUCTION AT TUEN MUN AND SHA TIN AND MORE ARE BEING PLANNED.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1984

- 27 -

FAIR DEAL FOR EX-MENTALLY ILL URGED
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EX-MENTALLY ILL PEOPLE WERE IN NEED OF A +FAIR DEAL+ FROM THE COMMUNITY, THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, MR JOHN CHAMBERS, SAID TODAY.

SPEAKING AT THE OPENING OF THE MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION'S KWUN TONG SHELTERED WORKSHOP, HE SAID A HALF-WAY HOUSE WAS AN EFFECTIVE MEANS OF PROVIDING A SUPPORTING TRANSITIONAL ENVIRONMENT TO HELP THEM RE-INTEGRATE INTO THE COMMUNITY.

+THE SUCCESS OF THIS REHABILITATION PROCESS DEPENDS VERY MUCH ON THE COMMUNITY'S UNDERSTANDING OF MENTAL ILLNESS AND ITS ACCEPTANCE AND SUPPORT OF THE EX-MENTALLY ILL,+ HE SAID.

MR CHAMBERS SAID THAT EXPERIENCE HERE AND OVERSEAS HAD CONFIRMED THAT BOTH HALF-WAY HOUSES AND SHELTERED WORKSHOPS WERE ESSENTIAL SERVICES FOR MANY OF THOSE SUFFERING FROM MENTAL ILLNESS.

WITHOUT THESE, THE RISK OF RELAPSE AFTER THEIR DISCHARGE FROM HOSPITAL WOULD BE MUCH GREATER, HE SAID.

THE WORKSHOP PROVIDES EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR 100 EX-MENTALLY ILL AND MENTALLY HANDICAPPED WORKERS WHO ARE TEMPORARILY OR PERMANENTLY UNABLE TO COMPETE IN THE OPEN LABOUR MARKET.

+THE ULTIMATE GOAL,+ HE SAID, +IS TO ENABLE AS MANY AS POSSIBLE OF THE WORKERS TO MOVE ON TO OPEN EMPLOYMENT AFTER A PERIOD OF WORK ADJUSTMENT, ORIENTATION AND PREPARATION IN THE WORKSHOP.+

THE WORKSHOP, LOCATED IN KWUN TONG ESTATE, TSUI PING ROAD, BEGAN OPERATION IN FEBRUARY AND SIX WORKERS HAVE SUCCESSFULLY TAKEN UP OPEN EMPLOYMENT.

+CASES LIKE THESE PROVIDE EXCELLENT EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL REHABILITATION OF THE EX-MENTALLY ILL AND THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED ENABLING THEM TO BECOME SELF-RELIANT AND PRODUCTIVE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY,+ HE SAID.

THE LOTTERIES FUND HAD ALLOCATED OVER \$925 000 TO MEET THE CAPITAL COST OF THIS SHELTERED WORKSHOP AND THE GOVERNMENT ALSO GRANTED SUBVENTION TOTALLING MORE THAN \$837 000 TOWARDS ITS EXPENDITURE IN THE CURRENT YEAR.

MR CHAMBERS PAID TRIBUTE TO THE MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION FOR ITS NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS OVER THE LAST 30 YEARS AND THE STERLING EFFORTS OF ITS MEMBERS AND STAFF.

THIS SHELTERED WORKSHOP WAS AN INVALUABLE ADDITION TO THE ASSOCIATION'S ACTIVITIES AND MARKED ANOTHER MILESTONE IN ITS RECORD OF DISTINGUISHED SERVICES, HE SAID.

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/28

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1984

- 28 -

CAREERS EXHIBIT

THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT'S 13TH ANNUAL CAREERS EXHIBITION WILL BE OPENED AT THE CITY HALL CONCERT HALL AT 3 PM TOMORROW (FRIDAY).

THE DIRECTOR OF CITY POLYTECHNIC, DR DAVID JOHNS, THE CHAIRMAN OF URBAN COUNCIL, MR HILTON CHEONG-LEEN AND THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, MR RON BRIDGE, WILL OFFICIATE.

THE CAREERS '85 EXHIBITION, ORGANISED BY THE DEPARTMENT'S YOUTH EMPLOYMENT ADVISORY SERVICE AND CO-SPONSORED BY THE URBAN COUNCIL, WILL BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC DAILY FROM 9.30 AM TO 6.30 PM UNTIL NOVEMBER 19 IN THE CITY HALL EXHIBITION HALL.

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JOINT SAFETY PROMOTION EFFORT URGED

SAFETY PROMOTION WAS AN ONEROUS TASK WHICH NEEDED THE CONCERTED EFFORTS OF ALL CONCERNED, THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR AND CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON INDUSTRIAL SAFETY AND ACCIDENT PREVENTION DR JAMES HAYES SAID TODAY.

SPEAKING AT THE OPENING OF A SAFETY SEMINAR ORGANISED BY THE PLASTICS INDUSTRY SAFETY SUB-COMMITTEE AT THE CHINESE YMCA IN WATERLOO ROAD, DR HAYES CALLED FOR THE PARTICIPANTS TO GIVE THEIR STRONGEST SUPPORT FOR THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE.

HE SAID THAT THE SEMINAR, ORGANISED FOR THE SECOND TIME IN TWO SUCCESSIVE YEARS FOR THE PLASTICS INDUSTRY, OFFERED A GOOD OPPORTUNITY FOR PEOPLE IN THE TRADE TO OPENLY DISCUSS AND EXCHANGE VIEWS ON MATTERS RELATING TO SAFETY.

IT ALSO SHOWED THE WHOLE-HEARTED SUPPORT OF ALL CONCERNED FOR THE PROMOTION OF VOLUNTARY SAFETY MOVEMENT IN INDUSTRY.

DURING THE PAST YEAR, THE PLASTICS INDUSTRY SAFETY SUB-COMMITTEE HAD PREPARED A CODE OF PRACTICE WHICH DREW ATTENTION TO THE IMPORTANCE OF SAFETY AT WORK AND SET OUT PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES TO BE OBSERVED BY EMPLOYERS, SUPERVISORS AS WELL AS WORKERS, HE SAID.

ALTHOUGH STATISTICS SHOWED THAT ACCIDENTS IN THE INDUSTRY HAD INCREASED FROM 506 CASES IN THE FIRST HALF YEAR OF 1983 TO 724 CASES IN THE SAME PERIOD THIS YEAR, HE BELIEVED THAT WITH THE CONCERTED EFFORTS OF ALL CONCERNED THE SITUATION WOULD IMPROVE.

AT THE SEMINAR, PARTICIPANTS HEARD SPECIALIST TALKS GIVEN BY SAFETY PROFESSIONALS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICERS AND SAW A FILM ON THE SUBJECT OF FIRE HAZARDS IN FACTORIES.

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1984

- 29 -

MORE SPORTS FACILITIES FOR TAI PO

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS A LONG-TERM PLAN TO PROVIDE VARIOUS SPORTS FACILITIES FOR RESIDENTS OF TAI PO.

THE DISTRICT OFFICER, MR THOMAS CHAN, SAID THIS AT THE PRIZE-PRESENTATION CEREMONY OF THE ANNUAL SPORTS DAY OF THE TAI PO WONG SHIU CHI MIDDLE SCHOOL TODAY (THURSDAY).

+WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW TOWN, THE EXISTING SPORTS FACILITIES IN THE DISTRICT CAN NO LONGER COPE WITH THE NEED OF THE INCREASING POPULATION,+ HE SAID.

+THE FACILITIES NOW UNDER PLANNING INCLUDE A SWIMMING POOL COMPLEX, A MULTI-PURPOSE INDOOR GAMES HALL AND A PERMANENT GRASS SOCCER PITCH.+

MR CHAN PRAISED STUDENTS OF THE SCHOOL FOR THEIR REMARKABLE PERFORMANCE ON THE SPORTS DAY.

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PRE-WAR BUILDING DECLARED DANGEROUS

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THE BUILDING AUTHORITY TODAY (THURSDAY) DECLARED A BUILDING AT NO. 128 JERVOIS STREET, CENTRAL LIABLE TO BECOME DANGEROUS.

IT IS A PRE-WAR FIVE-STOREY BUILDING MAINLY CONSTRUCTED WITH LOAD-BEARING BRICK WALLS, TIMBER FLOORS AND REINFORCED CONCRETE ROOF.

+THE BUILDING HAS BEEN UNDER OBSERVATION SINCE 1979,+ THE PRINCIPAL GOVERNMENT BUILDING SURVEYOR SAID.

A RECENT INSPECTION INDICATED THAT THERE WAS A RISK OF COLLAPSE OF THE BUILDING DUE TO THE DEMOLITION OF A BUILDING AT NO. 325 QUEEN'S ROAD CENTRAL EARLIER.

+IT IS THEREFORE NECESSARY TO CLOSE AND DEMOLISH THE BUILDING,+ HE SAID.

A NOTICE OF INTENTION TO APPLY FOR A CLOSURE ORDER IN VICTORIA DISTRICT COURT ON DECEMBER 6 AT 9.30 AM WAS POSTED TODAY.

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1984

- 30 -

NEW ADDRESS FOR SAI KUNG URBAN SERVICES OFFICE
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THE SAI KUNG URBAN SERVICES OFFICE WILL HAVE A NEW ADDRESS FROM TOMORROW (FRIDAY).

IT WILL BE MOVING FROM THE GROUND AND FIRST FLOORS OF 69 MAN NIN STREET, SAI KUNG, TO THE FIFTH FLOOR OF SAI KUNG GOVERNMENT OFFICES AT A NEW STREET NEAR MAN NIN STREET.

ITS TELEPHONE NUMBER, 3-2813604, REMAINS UNCHANGED.

ENQUIRIES ON ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE, LICENSING AND CLEANSING MATTERS MAY BE MADE BY DIALLING THIS NUMBER DURING OFFICE HOURS, A SPOKESMAN FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES SERVICES DEPARTMENT SAID.

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NEW TRAFFIC PLAN FOR SHATIN RACES
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NEW ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE INTRODUCED FOR TRAFFIC PROCEEDING FROM KOWLOON TO SHA TIN RACE COURSE DURING RACE MEETINGS AS FROM SATURDAY (NOVEMBER 10), FOLLOWING THE RECENT OPENING OF SHA TIN ROAD.

UNDER THE ARRANGEMENTS, NORTHBOUND VEHICLES ON LION ROCK TUNNEL ROAD SHOULD USE SHA TIN ROAD TO PROCEED TO TAI PO ROAD, A TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY. ONCE THEY ENTERED TAI PO ROAD, FRANCHISED BUSES, PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES AND TAXIS SHOULD USE THE FLYOVER SOUTH OF FO TAN RAILWAY DEPOT TO CROSS OVER TO THE RACE COURSE. OTHER VEHICLES SHOULD CONTINUE ALONG TAI PO ROAD AND THEN USE THE FLYOVER LEADING TO MEMBERS' MAIN ENTRANCE TO THE RACE COURSE GRAND STAND.

TAXIS AND PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES FROM TAI PO ROAD (TAI WAI SECTION) NORTHBOUND, MUST TAKE A NEW ROUTE VIA THE SLIP ROAD OFF TAI PO ROAD LEADING TO FO TAN ROAD. THEY SHOULD THEN PROCEED VIA FO TAN ROAD, YUEN WO ROAD AND THE SLIP ROAD LEADING TO TAI PO ROAD. IN TAI PO ROAD, THEY WILL USE THE FLYOVER SOUTH OF FO TAN RAILWAY DEPOT TO CROSS OVER TO THE RACE COURSE.

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1984

- 31 -

TEMPORARY TRAFFIC CHANGES

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LEFT TURNS FROM SHIP STREET SOUTHBOUND IN WAN CHAI INTO QUEEN'S ROAD EAST WILL BE TEMPORARILY BANNED FROM 2 PM ON SATURDAY (NOVEMBER 10) TO 7 PM THE FOLLOWING DAY, TO FACILITATE ROAD WORK.

DURING THE PERIOD, TRAFFIC WILL BE DIVERTED VIA LEE TUNG STREET OR LANDALE STREET.

IN CENTRAL, EDINBURGH PLACE EAST BETWEEN THE EASTERN END OF URBAN COUNCIL CHAMBERS AND QUEEN'S PIER WILL BE CLOSED TO TRAFFIC FROM 8 AM TO 6 PM DAILY ON NOVEMBER 10, 11, 17 AND 18 TO ALLOW THE +CAREERS '85+ EXHIBITION TO BE HELD.

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KOWLOON CENTRAL LIBRARY PHASE ONE TO OPEN SOON

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MEMBERS OF THE URBAN COUNCIL, INCLUDING THE CHAIRMAN OF THE LIBRARIES SELECT COMMITTEE MRS ELSIE ELLIOTT, WILL VISIT PHASE I OF THE KOWLOON CENTRAL LIBRARY AT 11.30 AM ON NOVEMBER 15 (THURSDAY), WHICH WILL BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC THE FOLLOWING DAY.

FACILITIES OF THE FIRST PHASE COMPRISE AN ADULT LENDING LIBRARY, A JUNIOR LENDING LIBRARY, A QUICK REFERENCE COLLECTION, A NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS SECTION, A STUDENTS' STUDY ROOM AND AN EXTENSION ACTIVITIES ROOM.

YOU ARE INVITED TO SEND A REPORTER AND/OR PHOTOGRAPHER TO COVER THE EVENT. MRS ELLIOTT AND CHIEF LIBRARIAN MRS BARBARA LUK WILL BE AVAILABLE TO MEET MEMBERS OF THE PRESS ABOUT HALF AN HOUR BEFORE THE TOUR.

FREE TRANSPORT WILL BE PROVIDED. AN URBAN COUNCIL VAN WILL LEAVE THE QUEEN'S PIER AT 10.15 AM SHARP THAT DAY.

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1984

- 32 -

CAS BANDS +BEATING RETREAT+
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BANDS OF THE CIVIL AID SERVICES WILL BE +BEATING RETREAT+ ON SATURDAY (NOVEMBER 10), FROM 8 PM TO 10 PM AT THE VICTORIA PARK MINI-SOCCER PITCHES NUMBERS 4, 5 AND 6.

THE CEREMONY WILL BE REVIEWED BY THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE, MR ROY HENRY.

THE +RETREAT+ IS A TRADITIONAL MILITARY CEREMONIAL THAT HAS BECOME A SPECTACLE FOR PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENT.

THE PROGRAMME WILL INCLUDE MARCHING BANDS AND PIPES AND DRUMS DISPLAYS.

ADMISSION IS FREE.

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