



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21, 1976

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METRICATION BILL TO BE INTRODUCED INTO LEGCO SHORTLY

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A BILL WILL SHORTLY BE INTRODUCED TO GIVE LEGISLATIVE EFFECT TO THE METRIC SYSTEM AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE USE OF METRIC UNITS IN ALL EXISTING LEGISLATION WHERE IMPERIAL OR CHINESE UNITS HAVE BEEN LAID DOWN.

THIS WAS ANNOUNCED TODAY IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BY THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, THE HON. DAVID MCDONALD, IN REPLY TO POINTS RAISED DURING AN ADJOURNMENT DEBATE ON METRICATION.

MR. MCDONALD SAID A FEW OUTSTANDING POINTS REGARDING ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS HAD BEEN LARGELY SETTLED AND THE BILL WOULD BE PUBLISHED SHORTLY FOR GENERAL INFORMATION.

THE DIRECTOR EMPHASISED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS RESOLVED TO MOVE AHEAD IN ENCOURAGING THE WIDER ADOPTION OF METRICATION IN THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE, BUT THE PRIVATE SECTOR WOULD NOT BE COMPELLED TO ADOPT METRIC MEASUREMENTS.

THE GOVERNMENT, HE SAID, HAD SOME RESERVATIONS AS TO WHETHER THE SETTING UP OF A METRICATION BOARD SUPPORTED BY A FULL-TIME SECRETARIAT, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE METRICATION COMMITTEE, WAS THE MOST SUITABLE WAY OF ORGANISING FURTHER MOVES TOWARDS METRICATION.

+OUR PRESENT VIEW, ALTHOUGH IT HAS YET TO BE FINALLY SETTLED AND CLEARLY WE MUST CONSULT THOSE OUTSIDE THE GOVERNMENT WHO HAVE AN INTEREST, IS THAT A NON-STATUTORY ADVISORY BODY SHOULD BE SET UP WITH THE TASK OF GUIDING AND FACILITATING THE ADOPTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM OF UNITS THROUGH ALL SECTORS OF THE COMMUNITY,+ HE SAID.

HE ADDED IT WOULD TAKE A LITTLE TIME BEFORE THE COMPOSITION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THIS BODY COULD BE SETTLED, BUT IN THE MEANTIME A METRICATION OFFICER WAS TO BE APPOINTED TO THE ECONOMIC SERVICES BRANCH OF THE COLONIAL SECRETARIAT WHO WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR INTRODUCING METRICATION THROUGHOUT THE GOVERNMENT AND ADVISING THE PRIVATE SECTOR ON METRICATION MATTERS GENERALLY.

THE INTENTION, HE SAID, WAS THAT THE METRICATION OFFICER WITH A SMALL STAFF WOULD FORM THE NUCLEUS OF THE TEAM WHICH WOULD SERVICE AND SUPPORT THE PROPOSED NON-STATUTORY ADVISORY BODY.

MR. MCDONALD NOTED THAT WHILE THE GOVERNMENT HAD NOT BEEN ABLE FOR VARIOUS REASONS TO PRESS AHEAD AS QUICKLY AS HAD BEEN HOPED WITH THE METRICATION PROGRAMME, A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF PROGRESS HAD BEEN ACHIEVED IN AREAS DIRECTLY UNDER THE GOVERNMENT'S CONTROL.

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IN THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, FOR EXAMPLE, THE PROGRAMME FOR METRICATION WAS BEING ADHERED TO AND THE TARGET DATES BEING MET.

THE ROYAL OBSERVATORY AND THE POLYTECHNIC WERE USING METRIC UNITS EXCLUSIVELY, AND THE SYSTEM HAD BEEN EXTENSIVELY INTRODUCED IN THE CURRICULA OF SCHOOLS THROUGHOUT HONG KONG.

IN ADDITION, THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT WAS NOW USING METRIC SYSTEM IN ALL NEW LEGISLATION. FOR EXAMPLE, THE DRAFT MOTOR VEHICLE CONSTRUCTION AND USE REGULATIONS NOW BEING PREPARED WOULD USE METRIC TERMS ALONGSIDE IMPERIAL MEASUREMENTS.

MR. MCDONALD ALSO POINTED OUT THAT PLANS HAD BEEN PREPARED FOR CHANGING ROAD SIGNS TO METRIC.

EARLIER, DR. THE HON. CHUNG SZE-YUEN URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO ACCEPT AND IMPLEMENT THE FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE METRICATION COMMITTEE SO THAT HONG KONG COULD GO AHEAD WITH FULL STEAM ON METRICATION WITH MINIMUM DELAY.

HE SAID THAT 99 PER CENT OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION HAD GONE OR WERE GOING METRIC.

WITH THE INCREASING USE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM OF UNITS, GENERALLY KNOWN AS SI UNITS, HE SAID, THE DREAM OF WORLD STANDARDIZATION ON WEIGHTS AND MEASURES WOULD SOON COME TRUE AND A GREAT DEAL OF INEFFICIENCY AND WASTE RESULTING FROM THE PARALLEL USE OF TWO MAJOR SYSTEMS COULD ULTIMATELY BE ELIMINATED.

+THIS IS PARTICULARLY TRUE TO HONG KONG'S EXPORT-ORIENTED MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES,+ DR. CHUNG SAID.

ANOTHER UNOFFICIAL MEMBER, THE HON. JAMES WU, SAID WHILE THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE SOME INITIAL EXPENSES FOR THE CHANGE, THESE WOULD BE FAR OUTWEIGHED BY SUBSEQUENT BENEFITS.

HE AGREED THAT THE SPEED WITH WHICH HONG KONG COULD PROCEED WITH METRICATION WAS TO SOME EXTENT DICTATED BY THE DEMAND IN ITS MARKETS BUT NOW THAT THE UNITED STATES HAD DECIDED TO GO FULL STEAM AHEAD, THIS RESERVATION SHOULD HAVE BEEN REMOVED.

MR. WU SAID THAT IN A SURVEY BY THE FEDERATION OF HONG KONG INDUSTRIES, HONG KONG MANUFACTURERS, MANY OF WHOM HAVE BEEN USING PARALLEL SYSTEMS, SAID IT WOULD TAKE FROM ONE TO THREE YEARS FOR A COMPLETE CHANGE.

HE ASKED THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO APPROPRIATE A SUM OF LESS THAN ONE MILLION DOLLARS IN THE FORTHCOMING BUDGET SO THAT THE METRICATION BOARD AND THE SECRETARIAT COULD BE SET UP AND GET ON WITH THE JOB WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS IMPORTANT TO +OUR COMMERCE, INDUSTRY AND DAILY LIFE.+

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DEBATE ON APPRENTICESHIP BILL

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DR. THE HON. S.Y. CHUNG TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY THAT ONE OF THE MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE APPRENTICESHIP BILL SHOULD BE TO PROVIDE MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR APPRENTICE TRAINING AND TO MINIMISE EXPLOITATION OF APPRENTICES BY UNSCRUPULOUS EMPLOYERS.

SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE BILL, HE EXPRESSED RESERVATION ON A CLAUSE WHICH EMPOWERS THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR TO EXEMPT AN EMPLOYER FROM THE PROVISIONS OF THE BILL IF THE EMPLOYER IS UNABLE TO GIVE ANY YOUNG PERSON ADEQUATE TRAINING IN THE DESIGNATED CRAFT TRADE.

DR. CHUNG THOUGHT IT WOULD BE WRONG IN PRINCIPLE TO EXEMPT ANY EMPLOYER FROM HIS LEGAL OBLIGATIONS SIMPLY BECAUSE HE WAS UNABLE TO MEET THE MINIMUM TRAINING STANDARDS REQUIRED BY THE BILL.

HE NOTED FROM THE SPEECH OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR TWO WEEKS AGO THAT ALTHOUGH THE BILL IN THE FIRST INSTANCE WOULD APPLY ONLY TO CERTAIN DESIGNATED CRAFT TRADES, IT WOULD EVENTUALLY COVER ALL CRAFT TRADES. THE COMMISSIONER SAID THEN THAT THE FIRST BATCH OF RECOMMENDED CRAFT TRADES WOULD BE SELECTED ON THE BASIS OF THE DEGREE OF SKILLS INVOLVED, THEIR NUMBERS AND IMPORTANCE TO INDUSTRY AND WITH REGARD TO THE AVAILABILITY OF RELATED TECHNICAL EDUCATION FACILITIES.

+THIS IS FINE FROM THE INDUSTRIAL POINT OF VIEW,+ HE SAID, +BUT IT APPEARS THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL IGNORE, FOR A LONG TIME TO COME, THOSE APPRENTICES ENGAGED IN MINOR CRAFT TRADES.+

DR. CHUNG POINTED OUT THAT IF THERE WERE ANY EXPLOITATION OF APPRENTICES, IT WAS MOST LIKELY TO BE IN THE MINOR CRAFT TRADES.

ANOTHER UNOFFICIAL SPEAKING IN FAVOUR OF THE BILL WAS THE HON. FRANCIS TIEN, WHO REMINDED THE GOVERNMENT THAT THE AIMS OF THE BILL WOULD ONLY BE ACHIEVED IF IT WAS EFFECTIVELY ADMINISTERED.

HE HOPED THAT THIS LEGISLATION +WILL NOT BECOME MEANINGLESS BECAUSE INADEQUATE MANPOWER IS PROVIDED TO ADMINISTER IT.+

MR. TIEN SAID THERE WAS ONE POINT IN THE BILL ABOUT WHICH A GREAT DEAL OF MISGIVINGS HAD BEEN EXPRESSED RECENTLY.

HE SAID THAT THE INDUSTRY TRAINING BOARDS HAD MADE STRONG REPRESENTATIONS TO THE TRAINING COUNCIL REQUESTING IT TO DO ALL THAT WAS POSSIBLE TO RAISE THE UPPER AGE LIMIT TO UNDER 19 YEARS OF AGE IN THE DEFINITION OF A YOUNG PERSON BEFORE THE BILL BECAME LAW.

/MR. TIEN

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MR. TIEN EXPLAINED THAT SETTING THE UPPER AGE LIMIT AT "UNDER 17" COULD EFFECTIVELY DEFEAT THE PURPOSE OF THE BILL.

+ALL THAT EMPLOYERS NEED TO DO TO BYPASS THE BILL WOULD BE TO EMPLOY ONLY YOUNG PEOPLE OF 17 OR OVER,+ HE SAID.

ANOTHER REASON WAS THAT YOUNG PEOPLE OF UNDER 17 MIGHT, AS A RESULT OF THE BILL, FIND IT DIFFICULT IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE TO OBTAIN OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRAINING IN DESIGNATED TRADES.

MR. TIEN SAID HE INTENDED TO MOVE AN AMENDMENT TO THE DEFINITION OF A YOUNG PERSON, AT THE COMMITTEE STAGE, IN HIS OWN PERSONAL CAPACITY AS WELL AS ON BEHALF OF THE TRAINING COUNCIL.

ALSO SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE BILL, THE HON. JAMES WU SAID : +TO INCREASE THE OUTPUT AND PRODUCTIVITY OF OUR INDUSTRIES, WE MUST MAKE SURE THAT ALL OUR WORKERS GET ADEQUATE TRAINING TO EARN THEIR WAY IN THE JOB MARKET.+

IN REPLY, THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON. IAN PRICE, EXPLAINED THAT THE CLAUSE TO WHICH DR. CHUNG REFERRED WAS NOT SPECIFICALLY DRAFTED TO PROVIDE A METHOD WHEREBY SMALL FACTORIES COULD BE EXEMPTED FROM THE REQUIREMENT TO TRAIN APPRENTICES.

+RATHER IT WAS FELT DESIRABLE TO INCLUDE A GENERAL PROVISION WHEREBY AN EMPLOYER COULD BE EXEMPTED FROM THE LEGISLATION IN CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH THERE WAS GOOD REASON FOR HIM BEING UNABLE TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE TRAINING FOR AN APPRENTICE -- THE CRITERION IS INABILITY NOT UNWILLINGNESS.+

HE POINTED OUT THAT DURING THE EARLY DAYS OF THIS NEW LEGISLATION AN INBUILT DEGREE OF FLEXIBILITY WAS ADVANTAGEOUS.

HOWEVER, MR. PRICE SAID THAT THE CLAUSE COULD BE DELETED AT SOME LATER DATE IF IT PROVED PRACTICAL.

REFERRING TO THE GROUP OF CRAFT TRADES RECOMMENDED FOR DESIGNATION, MR. PRICE ASSURED DR. CHUNG THAT IN PREPARING THE FIRM LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS DUE CONSIDERATION WOULD BE GIVEN TO THOSE TRADES IN WHICH IT WAS KNOWN THAT APPRENTICES WERE BEING EXPLOITED.

HE STRESSED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD NO INTENTION OF IGNORING THOSE CRAFT TRADES IN WHICH EXPLOITATION WAS MOST LIKELY.

BUT HE EMPHASISED THAT EVERYTHING COULD NOT BE TACKLED AT ONCE AND A START MUST BE MADE WITH A LIMITED GROUP, WHICH MIGHT NOT, FOR PRACTICAL REASONS, INCLUDE MINOR TRADES IN WHICH ONLY FEW APPRENTICES WERE EMPLOYED.

MR. PRICE SUPPORTED AN AMENDMENT TO BE PROPOSED BY MR. TIEN AT THE COMMITTEE STAGE TO RAISE TO "UNDER 19 YEARS OF AGE" THE UPPER AGE LIMIT IN THE DEFINITION OF "YOUNG PERSON".

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RESTRICTIONS ON USE OF TSING YI BRIDGE TO BE EASED

THE GENERAL RESTRICTION ON THE USE OF TSING YI BRIDGE WILL BE LIFTED VERY SHORTLY, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. JAMES ROBSON, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. OSWALD CHEUNG, MR. ROBSON SAID HOWEVER THAT IT WOULD STILL BE NECESSARY TO IMPOSE SOME RESTRICTIONS ON THE ROAD GOING NORTH FROM THE BRIDGE TO TSING YI TOWN ITSELF.

+IT IS PROPOSED TO ALLOW TAXIS, A LIMITED NUMBER OF PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES AND PRIVATE CARS BELONGING TO RESIDENTS, TO HAVE ACCESS TO THE TOWN,+ MR. ROBSON SAID.

+UNRESTRICTED ACCESS OF PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES TO THE ISLAND WOULD LEAD TO A CHOKING OF THE ROAD NETWORK AND THIS IS NOT NECESSARY BECAUSE A KMB BUS SERVICE ALREADY RUNS FROM TSING YI TOWN TO LAI CHI KOK AND THE HONG KONG AND YAUMATI FERRY COMPANY PROVIDES A SERVICE TO TSUEN WAN AND CENTRAL.

+APART FROM THE RESTRICTIONS ON P.L.B'S, THERE WILL BE NO RESTRICTIONS ON VEHICLES USING BOTH THE BRIDGE AND THE ROAD GOING SOUTH FROM THE BRIDGE TO THE POWER STATION,+ HE ADDED.

MR. ROBSON SAID THE EASING OF RESTRICTIONS WAS POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF IMPROVEMENTS TO THE ACCESS ROADS LEADING TO THE BRIDGE AND TO THE ROAD JOINING THE BRIDGE TO THE TOWN.

THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS WOULD BE ADEQUATE FOR THE PRESENT REQUIREMENTS BUT WHEN THE FIRST HOUSING BLOCKS WERE COMPLETED, IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO CONSIDER THE NEED OF A FRANCHISED BUS SERVICE TO TSUEN WAN, HE SAID.

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FACTORIES IN NON-INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS: GOV'T TO ACT
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THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. JAMES ROBSON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY THAT WITH THE PRESENT SURPLUS OF FLATTED FACTORY ACCOMMODATION, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD MAKE A START ON A STAGED PROGRAMME OF ACTION AGAINST CERTAIN INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS IN NON-INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS.

IN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976, HE SAID THAT IN THE PAST, THE ECONOMIC FACTS OF LIFE IN HONG KONG HAD DICTATED ACCEPTANCE OF INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITY IN NON-INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS ON A WIDE SCALE.

HOWEVER, HE SAID, +MANY FAMILIES ARE NOW UNWILLING TO PUT UP WITH THIS KIND OF DISCOMFORT AND AT THE PRESENT TIME THIS IS QUITE RIGHT BECAUSE REASONABLY CHEAP FLATTED FACTORY ACCOMMODATION IS NOW IN MORE PLENTIFUL SUPPLY THAN REASONABLY PRICED RESIDENTIAL FLATS.+

REFERRING TO THE ACTION PROGRAMME, HE SAID THE FIRST STAGE WOULD INVOLVE AN ATTACK ON THREE FRONTS BY LAW AND LEASE ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES IN THE URBAN AREAS AND IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

+THE FIRST ACTION TO BE TAKEN WILL BE TO REMOVE DANGEROUS AND OBNOXIOUS INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS FROM EXISTING NON-INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS. IN THIS RESPECT, THE DIRECTOR OF FIRE SERVICES AND THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR ESTIMATE THAT BETWEEN 200 AND 350 EXISTING DANGEROUS OR OBNOXIOUS INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS WILL BE AFFECTED,+ MR. ROBSON SAID.

+NEVERTHELESS, UNLESS THE RISK TO PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY IS INTOLERABLE, REASONABLE NOTICE WILL BE GIVEN TO OPERATORS TO ENABLE THEM TO MOVE THEIR UNDERTAKINGS TO MORE SUITABLE PREMISES.+

AT THE SAME TIME, HE CONTINUED, ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN TO PREVENT NEW INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS, EXCEPT SPECIFIC SERVICE TRADES, GAINING A Foothold IN NEW NON-INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS.

WHENEVER POSSIBLE DURING THE FIRST STAGE OF PROGRAMME, ACTION WOULD ALSO BE TAKEN TO CLEAR INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS FROM PURELY RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS.

MR. ROBSON SAID: +IF HOWEVER, INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS IN EXISTING NON-INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS ARE NEITHER DANGEROUS NOR OBNOXIOUS, THEY WILL NOT BE TARGET FOR ACTION DURING THE FIRST STAGE. FUTURE ACTION AGAINST THEM WILL DEPEND ON WHETHER THERE ARE REASONABLE MEANS BY WHICH THE INDIVIDUAL UNDERTAKING CAN CONTINUE TO OPERATE.+

/HE SAID

HE SAID THAT OWNERS OF SUCH UNDERTAKINGS SHOULD NOT, HOWEVER, ASSUME THAT THEY WERE UNDER INDEFINITE REPRIEVE. NOR SHOULD THEY ASSUME THAT THE LINE OF ACTION THE GOVERNMENT INTENDED TO TAKE WOULD PROTECT THEM FROM SUCH LEGAL REMEDIES AS OWNERS AND RESIDENTS OF THE BUILDING MIGHT WISH TO PURSUE.

MR. ROBSON SAID THAT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FIRST STAGE OF THE ACTION PROGRAMME +WILL BEGIN IN EARNEST ON MARCH 1, 1976.+

REFERRING TO THE BILL ITSELF, HE SAID ITS PURPOSE WAS TO PROHIBIT THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR FROM REGISTERING ANY WORKPLACE IN NEW NON-INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS OTHER THAN WORKPLACES FOR SPECIFIED SERVICE TRADES.

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KCR TO GET MORE LOCOMOTIVES

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ADDITIONAL LOCOMOTIVES ARE BEING ACQUIRED AND TRACK CAPACITY IS BEING EXPANDED FOR THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY TO CARRY THE INCREASING VOLUME OF GOODS TRAFFIC FROM CHINA, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. JAMES ROBSON, SAID TODAY.

IN HIS REPLY TO QUESTIONS BY THE HON. LI FOOK-WO IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR. ROBSON SAID HE HAD BEEN ADVISED THAT THE FINANCE COMMITTEE HAD APPROVED THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSAL TO BUY TWO NEW LOCOMOTIVES, SUBJECT TO THE INCLUSION OF PROVISION IN THE 1976-77 ESTIMATES IF THE BUDGETARY SITUATION SO ALLOWED.

+AS REGARDS TRACK CAPACITY, DOUBLE-TRACKING BETWEEN HUNG HOM AND SHA TIN, THE BUILDING OF A MARSHALLING YARD AT LO WU AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF GOODS SIDINGS AT FO TAN ARE ALL PROCEEDING AND WILL BE COMPLETED IN 1977,+ HE SAID.

+WORK ON A GOODS SIDING AT HO MAN TIN FOR THE UNLOADING OF LIVESTOCK WILL ALSO START SOON AND IS EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED BEFORE THE AUTUMN OF THIS YEAR.

+THE COMPLETION OF THESE TRACK WORKS WILL GREATLY INCREASE THE RAILWAY'S CAPACITY FOR FREIGHT TRAFFIC,+ HE ADDED.

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REGULATIONS TO ENSURE SAFER AND CLEANER WORKPLACES
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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY APPROVED REGULATIONS TO ENSURE STRICTER PRECAUTIONS AGAINST FIRE AND BETTER STANDARDS OF CLEANLINESS AND TIDINESS IN INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS.

MOVING A RESOLUTION FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 1976, THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON. IAN PRICE, SAID THEY WERE OF "A TIDYING-UP NATURE."

HE SAID THE NEW REGULATION ON PRECAUTIONS AGAINST FIRE WAS MORE PRECISE IN RELATION TO THE FIRE RESISTENT CHARACTERISTICS OF DOORS LEADING OUT OF REGISTRABLE WORKPLACES, AND THE NEW REQUIREMENTS WERE IN LINE WITH THE BUILDING (CONSTRUCTION) REGULATIONS 1975.

ON GENERAL HOUSEKEEPING, THE COMMISSIONER SAID AN AMENDMENT WAS MADE TO THE PRINCIPAL REGULATIONS TO PROVIDE FOR THE REPAINTING AND VARNISHING OF REGISTRABLE WORKPLACES.

IN ORDER TO PREVENT ARGUMENTS AS TO WHEN SUCH DECORATION HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT, THERE WOULD BE A NEW REQUIREMENT FOR KEEPING THE APPROPRIATE RECORDS.

+TO REDUCE THE RISK OF ACCIDENTS CAUSED BY BAD HOUSEKEEPING,+ MR. PRICE SAID, +ALL PROPRIETORS ARE AT PRESENT REQUIRED, AS A SPECIAL PRECAUTION UNDER SECTION 7(4) OF THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS ORDINANCE, TO MAINTAIN WALLS AND FLOORS IN GOOD REPAIR, KEEP FLOORS EVEN, NON-SLIPPERY AND GENERALLY FREE FROM HAZARDS, AND KEEP GANGWAYS CLEAR.

+THEY ARE ALSO REQUIRED TO STORE AND STACK GOODS AND MATERIALS IN A PROPER MANNER.+

HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT BECAUSE 40 PERCENT OF ALL INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS WERE ATTRIBUTABLE TO STEPPING ON OR STRIKING AGAINST OBJECTS, FALLING OBJECTS OR HANDLING GOODS OR RAW MATERIALS, IT WAS CONSIDERED THAT A NEW REGULATION SHOULD BE ADDED TO THE PRINCIPAL REGULATIONS RATHER THAN RELY ON SPECIAL PRECAUTION ORDERS AS AT PRESENT.

THE PRINCIPLES OF THESE REGULATIONS HAD BEEN UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE LABOUR ADVISORY BOARD. THE DIRECTOR OF FIRE SERVICES HAD ALSO BEEN CONSULTED AND HE FOUND THEM DESIRABLE, MR. PRICE ADDED.

/DR. THE HON. S.Y. CHUNG

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DR. THE HON. S.Y. CHUNG WELCOMED THE AMENDING REGULATIONS BUT DREW THE ATTENTION OF THE COMMISSIONER TO TWO POINTS. REFERRING TO THE REGULATION GOVERNING GENERAL HOUSEKEEPING OF WORKPLACE, HE SAID THERE HAD BEEN FAST INCREASING USE OF AIR-CONDITIONING WITH EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE AIR FILTERING IN FACTORIES, EITHER DUE TO THE NEED OF THE MANUFACTURING PROCESS OR FOR IMPROVING THE WORKING CONDITIONS AND LABOUR PRODUCTIVITY.

+TO GROUP THIS KIND OF AIR-CONDITIONED OPERATIONS WITH OTHER NON-AIR-CONDITIONED ONES WOULD SEEM RATHER UNFAIR.

+THE VERY RIGID REQUIREMENT OF LIMEWASHING ALL WALLS AND CEILINGS AT LEAST ONCE IN EVERY YEAR FOR AIR-CONDITIONED WORKPLACES IS, IN MY VIEW, AN UNNECESSARY BURDEN BOTH IN COST AND ESPECIALLY DISRUPTION OF WORK,+ HE SAID.

IN REPLY, MR. PRICE SAID HE DID CONSIDER THE QUESTION OF REGISTRABLE WORKPLACES IN WHICH AIR-CONDITIONING WAS INSTALLED, BUT DECIDED THAT THERE WAS "NO STRONG CASE" FOR WRITING INTO THESE REGULATIONS PROVISIONS EXEMPTING SUCH WORKPLACES FROM THE REQUIREMENT OF THE REGULATION GOVERNING GENERAL HOUSEKEEPING.

HE GAVE AN ASSURANCE THAT HE WOULD GIVE "SYMPATHETIC CONSIDERATION" TO ANY REPRESENTATIONS THAT THIS REGULATION WAS OPERATING, OR BEING APPLIED, HARSHLY AGAINST A PARTICULAR WORKPLACE.

WHERE HE WAS CONVINCED THAT THERE COULD BE INJUSTICE, HE WOULD BE PREPARED TO EXERCISE HIS POWERS TO GRANT EXEMPTIONS.

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MAC'S MAY BE ABLE TO HELP YOUNG OFFENDERS

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THERE MAY BE OCCASIONS WHEN MEMBERS OF A MUTUAL AID COMMITTEE COULD ASSIST AND ADVISE A YOUNG DISCHARGED PRISONER LIVING IN THE SAME BUILDING WHO IS ANXIOUS TO MAKE A FRESH START, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON. DENIS BRAY, SAID TODAY.

HE WAS REPLYING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN WHO HAD PROPOSED FOR CONSIDERATION THE USE OF MAC'S, IN CO-OPERATION WITH THE DISCHARGED PRISONERS AID SOCIETY, TO HELP YOUNG OFFENDERS.

MR. BRAY SAID THIS WAS A GOOD IDEA AND WAS SOMETHING THE BETTER MAC'S HE KNEW OF COULD DO WELL.

+INDEED, IT IS CLEARLY IN THE MAC'S OWN INTEREST TO DO SO AS THEY ARE SO MUCH CONCERNED WITH PERSONAL SECURITY,+ HE SAID.

HE POINTED OUT HOWEVER THAT TWO POINTS HAD TO BE MADE: THE INITIATIVE TO SEEK ASSISTANCE AND ADVICE SHOULD COME FROM THE EX-PRISONER HIMSELF AND THE MAC MUST COMPLEMENT, NOT REPLACE, THE EXCELLENT WORK OF THE SOCIETY.

HE SAID HE WOULD BE HAPPY TO ENSURE THAT THE SOCIETY WAS FULLY AWARE OF THE EXISTENCE AND ROLE OF THE MAC'S AND IT APPRECIATED THAT IT MIGHT SEEK THEIR ASSISTANCE WHEREVER APPROPRIATE.

IN REPLY TO ANOTHER QUESTION BY THE HON. Q.W. LEE ON HELP GIVEN TO MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES TO COLLECT FEES, MR. BRAY SAID THE HOME AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT HAD SOME 113 COMMUNITY ORGANISERS APPOINTED SPECIFICALLY TO ASSIST THE COMMITTEES IN THEIR WORK.

+HELPING MAC'S IN THE COLLECTION OF MAINTENANCE FEES -- USUALLY BY PERSUASION AND MEDIATION -- IS A NORMAL PART OF THIS ASSISTANCE AND HELPS TO BRING ABOUT A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS BETWEEN THE MAC'S AND THE OCCUPIERS,+ HE SAID.

MR. BRAY ADDED THAT THE SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL, WHEN SET UP, WOULD SIMPLIFY THE PROCEDURE FOR CIVIL ACTION TO COLLECT OUTSTANDING FEES ALTHOUGH IT WOULD NOT IN ITSELF ENSURE THAT THERE WOULD BE NO MORE PROBLEMS AS IT DID NOT ALTER THE FUNDAMENTAL LAW RELATING TO CONTRACT AND TORT NOR CREATE ANY NEW RIGHTS FOR MAC'S.

THE TRIBUNAL WOULD PROBABLY BE OF MORE HELP TO THOSE MULTI-STORY MANAGEMENT ORGANISATIONS WHICH HAD FORMED THEMSELVES INTO OWNERS CORPORATIONS THAN TO MAC'S, HE SAID.

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GOVERNOR TO INSPECT PARADE AT STANLEY

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THE GOVERNOR, SIR MURRAY MACLEHOSE, WILL TAKE THE SALUTE AND PRESENT COLONIAL PRISON SERVICE MEDALS AND CLASPS TO 40 PRISON OFFICERS AS WELL AS A NUMBER OF CIVILIAN STAFF AT THE DEPARTMENT'S ANNUAL INSPECTION AT STANLEY ON FRIDAY (JANUARY 23).

TEN CONTINGENTS FROM 15 PENAL INSTITUTIONS AND THE DEPARTMENT'S STAFF TRAINING INSTITUTE WILL TAKE PART IN THE CEREMONIAL PARADE.

SIR MURRAY WILL INSPECT THE PARADE ACCOMPANIED BY THE COMMISSIONER OF PRISONS, MR. T.G. GARNER.

THE BAND FROM CAPE COLLINSON TRAINING CENTRE WILL BE IN ATTENDANCE.

NOTE TO EDITORS :

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO SEND A REPORTER/PHOTOGRAPHER TO COVER THE PARADE. THE CEREMONY WILL BEGIN AT 4.30 P.M. ON FRIDAY (JANUARY 23) AT THE STAFF TRAINING INSTITUTE PARADE GROUND AT STANLEY. PRESS REPRESENTATIVES ARE ADVISED TO ARRIVE NOT LATER THAN 4 P.M. COPIES OF THE PROGRAMME AS WELL AS THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE CEREMONY.

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SEMINAR ON LEARNING AND TEACHING TECHNICAL SUBJECTS

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A SEMINAR ON THE LEARNING AND TEACHING OF TECHNICAL SUBJECTS BY ACTIVITY METHODS WILL BE HELD TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AND FRIDAY IN THE TECHNICAL TEACHERS' COLLEGE, WAN CHAI, FROM 9 A.M. TO 4.30 P.M. EACH DAY.

ACTIVITY METHOD IS A WAY OF TEACHING WHEREBY STUDENTS CARRY OUT SIMPLE AND PRACTICAL INVESTIGATIONS IN ORDER TO DISCOVER FOR THEMSELVES THE PRINCIPLES INVOLVED RATHER THAN MERELY GETTING THE TEACHER TO CHALK-AND-TALK BY WAY OF EXPLANATION.

THE SEMINAR, TO BE OPENED BY MR. P.R. SMITH, PRINCIPAL OF THE TECHNICAL TEACHERS' COLLEGE, ENABLES PARTICIPANTS TO EXCHANGE IDEAS AND OPINIONS ON THE APPLICATION OF ACTIVITY METHOD TO THE TEACHING OF TECHNICAL SUBJECTS.

IT WILL CONSIST OF ACTIVITY GROUPS CONSTRUCTING PROJECTS AND INVESTIGATIONS FOR THE TEACHING OF TECHNICAL SUBJECTS.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21, 1976.

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LION ROCK TUNNEL VENTILATION ADEQUATE

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ADEQUATE VENTILATION EXISTS AT THE LION ROCK TUNNEL TO DISPERSE FUMES EMITTED BY VEHICLES, THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, THE HON. DAVID MCDONALD, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MONITORING DEVICES OPERATING AT LION ROCK TUNNEL, HE SAID, INDICATED THAT UNDER PRESENT USAGE VISIBILITY AND CARBON MONOXIDE LEVELS WERE WELL WITHIN ACCEPTED INTERNATIONAL LIMITS, AND NO ADDITIONAL VENTILATORS WERE REQUIRED AT THIS TIME.

MR. MCDONALD WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM DR. THE HON. HARRY FANG, WHO WANTED TO KNOW WHETHER THE VENTILATION IN THE TUNNEL WOULD BE IMPROVED.

THE DIRECTOR NOTED THAT THE VENTILATION EQUIPMENT WAS OPERATED TO SUIT PREVAILING TRAFFIC CONDITIONS AND THE PLANT NORMALLY RAN AT BETWEEN 20 PER CENT AND 85 PER CENT OF FULL POWER.

+THERE IS THEREFORE SPARE CAPACITY TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS WHENEVER THIS IS FOUND TO BE NECESSARY,+ HE SAID.

MR. MCDONALD POINTED OUT THAT FURTHER IMPROVEMENT COULD BE EXPECTED WHEN THE SECOND LION ROCK TUNNEL, NOW UNDER CONSTRUCTION, IS COMPLETED TOWARDS THE END OF NEXT YEAR.

+WHEN BOTH TUNNELS ARE IN USE EACH TUBE WILL OPERATE ON A ONE-WAY TRAFFIC SYSTEM, AND THE INTRODUCTION OF THIS SYSTEM WILL IMPROVE VENTILATION DUE TO THE PISTON EFFECT CREATED BY ONE-WAY VEHICLE MOVEMENT,+ HE SAID.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21, 1976

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BILLS PASSED

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THE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976 AND THE WILD ANIMALS PROTECTION BILL 1976 PASSED THEIR COMMITTEE STAGE AND THIRD READING IN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

TWO OTHER BILLS, THE PLANT (IMPORTATION AND PEST CONTROL) BILL 1976 AND THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976 WERE INTRODUCED FOR FIRST READING.

DEBATE ON THEIR SECOND READING WAS ADJOURNED WHILE DEBATE RESUMED ON THE APPRENTICESHIP BILL 1975.

A MOTION TO HAVE THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 1976 APPROVED WAS PASSED BY THE COUNCIL.

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WATER CUT IN FANLING

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WATER SUPPLY TO A NUMBER OF PREMISES IN FANLING, NEW TERRITORIES, WILL BE INTERRUPTED FROM 10 P.M. ON FRIDAY (JANUARY 23) TO 6 A.M. THE FOLLOWING DAY TO ALLOW WATERWORKS TO BE CARRIED OUT.

AFFECTED WILL BE ALL PREMISES ALONG SHA TAU KOK ROAD BETWEEN FANLING ROUDABOUT AND SHA TAU KOK MARKET, INCLUDING THE VILLAGES ALONG PING CHE ROAD, SHA TAU KOK ROAD AND LUEN WO MARKET.

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