



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6, 1979

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ONLY MINIMUM STANDARD OF SERVICES,  
FACILITIES PROVIDED FOR REFUGEES

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IT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY WHEREVER REFUGEES ARE ACCOMMODATED TO PROVIDE ONLY THE MINIMUM STANDARD OF SERVICES AND FACILITIES AT AS HIGH A DENSITY AS IS CONSISTENT WITH BASIC PUBLIC HEALTH STANDARDS, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON. LEWIS DAVIES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO QUESTIONS CONCERNING VIETNAMESE REFUGEES, HE SAID THAT STEPS ARE BEING TAKEN TO INCREASE THE NUMBERS ACCOMMODATED IN EXISTING CAMPS.

HE ADMITTED THE ADMINISTRATION HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO DEVISE ANY TOUGHER MEASURES THAN ARE BEING APPLIED TO PROVIDE A GREATER DETERRENT THAN NOW EXISTS FROM CROSSING THE SOUTH CHINA SEA IN SMALL OPEN BOATS.

REFERRING TO THE CHOICE OF SITES IN WHICH TO ACCOMMODATE VIETNAMESE REFUGEES, HE SAID THIS WOULD NOT HAVE MORE THAN A POSSIBLE MARGINAL INFLUENCE ON THEM IN CONSIDERING WHETHER TO COME TO HONG KONG.

ON THE QUESTION OF USING SOKO ISLANDS, HE SAID THEY WERE ALMOST DEVOID OF WATER AND TO PROVIDE IT WOULD BE EXPENSIVE.

+ITS REMOTENESS WOULD ALSO ADD TO THE COST OF THE PROVISION OF FOOD AND MAKE THE PROVISION OF THE NECESSARY FORCES TO ENSURE LAW AND ORDER AND THAT PERSONS DID NOT DISPERSE FROM THE ISLANDS DIFFICULT AND TIME-CONSUMING,+ HE SAID.

+ACCORDINGLY THE GOVERNMENT IS MAKING ACCOMMODATION AVAILABLE IN PLACES IN WHICH THE PRESENCE OF REFUGEES WILL NOT DISLOCATE EXISTING GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMES, WHERE SO FAR AS POSSIBLE HONG KONG PEOPLE WILL NOT BE INCONVENIENCED, WHERE THE REFUGEES WILL ADD TO THE LABOUR FORCE AND WHERE ITS MANAGEMENT CAN BE MOST ECONOMICALLY EFFECTED.+

SO FAR SUCH FACILITIES HAD BEEN FOUND MOSTLY WITHIN URBAN AREAS OR AT CHI MA WAN, MR. DAVIES SAID. IF THE NUMBERS OF REFUGEES INCREASE IT MIGHT BE NECESSARY TO LOOK AGAIN AT REMOTE AREAS, INCLUDING ISLANDS, DESPITE THE COST AND PROBLEMS OF DEVELOPMENT AND THE INCONVENIENCE OF SUSTAINING REFUGEES ON THEM.

+THE ETHNIC CHINESE POPULATION IN VIETNAM IS BEING SYSTEMATICALLY FORCED EITHER INTO THE NEW ECONOMIC ZONES OR TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY BY MEANS WHICH MRS. THATCHER IN HER RECENT LETTER TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL, UNITED NATIONS REFERS TO AS 'INHUMAN'.

+THESE PEOPLE FEEL SO OPPRESSED THAT THEY ARE DETERMINED TO LEAVE DESPITE THE RISKS INHERENT IN THE SEA VOYAGE IN SMALL OVERCROWDED VESSELS.

+THE LOSSES IN THIS EXODUS HAVE BEEN ESTIMATED AT 50 PER CENT AND THEY MAY WELL BE HIGHER.

/+SUCH PERSONS.....

+SUCH PERSONS LEAVE EVEN THOUGH THEY KNOW THAT IF THEY REACH CERTAIN SHORES WITHIN THE REGION THEY WILL BE DIVERTED FROM LANDING AND TOWED AWAY. THIS TREATMENT, HOWEVER, HAS NOT DETERRED THEM FROM ATTEMPTING TO GO TO THE COUNTRIES WHICH ADOPT THIS PRACTICE.

+THE FACT THAT VERY LARGE NUMBERS ARE NOW ACCOMMODATED IN OVERCROWDED GODOWNS AND IN THEIR JUNKS IN ANCHORAGES IN HONG KONG HAS NOT DETERRED THEM EITHER,+ MR. DAVIES POINTED OUT.

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AVAILABLE RESOURCES FULLY DEPLOYED  
IN OPERATIONS AGAINST ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS  
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ALL AVAILABLE RESOURCES WERE BEING DEPLOYED TO PREVENT ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS FROM SLIPPING INTO HONG KONG, AND ADDITIONAL MANPOWER COULD BE DEPLOYED FOR THIS OPERATION, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON. LEWIS DAVIES TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

+IN DEPLOYING THESE FORCES ON ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION DUTIES IT IS NECESSARY TO PROVIDE LEVELS WHICH CAN BE SUSTAINED, AND IN THE CASE OF THE POLICE FORCE TO MAINTAIN ITS NORMAL LAW AND ORDER COVERAGE OF HONG KONG,+ HE SAID IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN.

REFERRING TO THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE GARRISON IN ANTI-ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION OPERATION, MR. DAVIES SAID UNTIL RECENTLY TWO BATTALIONS AND TWO COMPANIES OF A THIRD BATTALION WERE ENGAGED. THIS HAD NOW BEEN INCREASED TO FOUR. SUPPORT TROOPS PROVIDED ADDITIONAL EFFORT WHENEVER THEY COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE.

FURTHERMORE, THE ROYAL NAVY HAD AUGMENTED ITS FIVE PATROL CRAFT BY ONE AUXILIARY VESSEL. UNTIL RECENTLY TWO VESSELS HAD BEEN ON PATROL WITH A THIRD AND FOURTH AT SHORT NOTICE. THE ROYAL NAVY HAD NOW INCREASED THE VESSELS ON PATROL TO THREE WITH OTHERS AT SHORT NOTICE IN RESERVE.

AS FOR THE ROYAL AIR FORCE AND ARMY AIR CORPS HELICOPTERS, THEY WERE PROVIDING THE MAXIMUM EFFORT POSSIBLE FOR SUPPORT OF ANTI-ILLEGAL OPERATIONS.

MR. DAVIES ADDED THAT THE POLICE WERE DEPLOYING NEARLY 2,000 OFFICERS ON ANTI-ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT OPERATIONS.

+AT SEA THEY ARE OPERATING 24 OF THEIR OWN LAUNCHES, REINFORCED BY FOUR VESSELS FROM OTHER DEPARTMENTS. AN ADDITIONAL SIX GOVERNMENT VESSELS ARE AT PRESENT ASSISTING THE POLICE IN SHORT TERM INTENSIVE OPERATIONS,+ HE SAID.

THE ROYAL HONG KONG REGIMENT IS ALSO ENGAGED IN THIS ACTIVITY. IT PROVIDES TWO SQUADRONS FOR PATROLLING PRIMARILY AT WEEKENDS AND THE AUXILIARY AIR FORCE IS OPERATING BOTH FIXED WING AIRCRAFT AND HELICOPTERS IN SUPPORT OF ANTI-ILLEGAL OPERATIONS.

/MR. DAVIES .....

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MR. DAVIES SAID THE AUXILIARY POLICE ALSO DEPLOYED NEARLY 900 MEN DAILY IN THE URBAN AREAS, THUS RELEASING REGULAR POLICEMEN FOR OTHER DUTIES.

HE ASSURED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THAT THE DEPLOYMENT OF EXISTING RESOURCES HAD ALREADY BEEN GREATLY INCREASED AND THAT ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF MANPOWER AND EQUIPMENT WERE CURRENTLY UNDER +VERY ACTIVE+ CONSIDERATION.

+DEPLOYMENT ARE KEPT UNDER CONSTANT REVIEW BY OPERATIONAL COMMANDERS AND ARE ALTERED TO MEET CHANGES IN THE SITUATION. IN ADDITION THE COMMANDER BRITISH FORCES AND THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE ARE KEEPING VERY CLOSE WATCH ON FORCE LEVELS IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT WE CAN MAINTAIN AND SUSTAIN THE OPERATIONS AGAINST ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS,+ MR. DAVIES SAID.

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#### CONTROL OF SPECULATION IN LAND AND PROPERTY NEEDED

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UNOFFICIAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR, REV. THE HON. PATRICK MCGOVERN MAINTAINED HIS VIEW THAT THERE WAS NO SUCH THING IN HONG KONG AS A +FAIR MARKET RENT+ AND VOTED AGAINST THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979 WHEN IT WAS PASSED AT THE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

FR. MCGOVERN SAID THERE WAS NEED FOR MORE RENT CONTROL, NOT LESS, AS PROPOSED IN THE BILL, AND NEED FOR CONTROL OF SPECULATION IN LAND AND PROPERTY.

HE THOUGHT THE SCARCITY OF LAND WAS NOT AN ARGUMENT TO JUSTIFY A HIGH PRICE. TO HIM, IT JUSTIFIED CONTROL OF THAT HIGH PRICE, WHICH HAD BECOME THE BASE OF THE INFLATIONARY SPIRAL.

+A BETTER SYSTEM THAN AUCTIONING TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER COULD BE DEvised WHEN WE ARE DEALING WITH A COMMODITY WHICH IS ESSENTIAL TO LIFE AND THE SUPPLY OF WHICH DOES NOT EQUAL THE DEMAND,+ HE SAID.

HE FURTHER POINTED OUT THAT IN THE WHOLE CHAIN OF OPERATIONS FROM LEASING LAND, TO BUILDING, TO SELLING OR RENTING A FLAT, THERE WAS TOO MUCH ROOM FOR SPECULATION AND PROFITEERING, THE END RESULT OF WHICH WAS THAT RENTS FOR PRIVATE PREMISES WERE TOO HIGH.

HE SAID IT WAS TRUE THAT THE PRODUCTION OF LAND WAS BEING DOUBLED IN TWO CONSECUTIVE YEARS AND MORE HOUSING WAS BEING RAPIDLY PRODUCED IN THE NEW TOWNS, BUT HE DOUBTED THAT SUPPLY WOULD CATCH UP ON DEMAND, BY WHICH THE DECONTROL OF RENT WAS JUSTIFIED.

HE HAD FURTHER REASON TO DOUBT THIS, IN VIEW OF THE MASSIVE INFLOW OF BOTH 'LEGAL' AND ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS, COMING IN +SEVERAL ESTATES FULL ANNUALLY+, WHICH WAS BEYOND OUR CONTROL AND WAS LIKELY TO CONTINUE FOR SOME TIME.

/HE COMMENTED.....

HE COMMENTED THAT WHILE RENT CONTROL WAS SAID TO BE A TEMPORARY MEASURE FOR ABNORMAL TIMES, THE HOUSING SITUATION HAD BEEN PERMANENTLY ABNORMAL SINCE THE EARLY 1950S.

ANOTHER REASON HE GAVE FOR OPPOSING THE BILL WAS THE FACT THAT IF RENTS CONTINUE TO RISE, RATES, THE CALCULATION FOR WHICH IS BASED ON THE +UNFAIR MARKET RENT+, WILL ALSO RISE UNLESS THE POUNDAGE IS REDUCED. +THIS WILL AFFECT NOT ONLY THE OVERBURDENED TENANTS IN PRIVATE HOUSING, BUT ALSO TENANTS IN PUBLIC HOUSING,+ HE SAID.

HE CONCEDED, HOWEVER, THAT THE BILL WAS +NOT TOO BAD IN PARTS.+ THE PART ON PREWAR HOUSING DID NOT WORRY HIM TOO MUCH BECAUSE ONLY 8,820 UNITS WERE INVOLVED AND +THEY WILL NOT BE FREE TO REACH THE UNFAIR MARKET RENT UNTIL 1984+ BY WHICH TIME THEY COULD HAVE ALL COME DOWN. ANOTHER PART WAS THE EXTENSION OF CONTROL ON POST-WAR DOMESTIC PREMISES, +INADEQUATE AS IT IS,+ HE SAID, BY THREE YEARS.

ANOTHER UNOFFICIAL COUNCILLOR, THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN, ALSO SPOKE ON THE BILL. HE DREW ATTENTION TO THE RECENT TREND OF RENT INCREASE FOR POST-1973 UNCONTROLLED SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZE FLATS BY ANYTHING BETWEEN 25 AND 100 PER CENT, HIGHER THAN ALLOWED UNDER THE RENT CONTROL LEGISLATION.

THE REASON FOR THIS, HE EXPLAINED, WAS THAT MORE NEWCOMERS WERE ARRIVING IN HONG KONG, MANY OF WHOM EITHER COULD NOT FIND OR AFFORD DE LUXE FLATS, AND SO OPTED TO PAY MUCH HIGHER RENTS FOR THE IMMEDIATE OCCUPATION OF MEDIUM AND SMALL SIZE FLATS.

UPPER MEDIUM-INCOME FAMILIES EARNING, SAY, BETWEEN \$5,000 TO \$10,000 A MONTH WERE THEREFORE FACING THE PROSPECT OF HAVING TO PAY BETWEEN 35 TO 50 PER CENT OF THEIR INCOME ON RENT ALONE, HE SAID.

MR. CHEONG-LEEN THEREFORE WELCOMED THE STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING THAT HE WOULD CONTINUE TO KEEP A CLOSE WATCH ON HOUSING PRODUCTION AND RENT LEVELS AND IF NECESSARY PROPOSE FURTHER MEASURES.

HE HOPED THE SECRETARY WOULD BE ABLE TO ADVISE THE COUNCIL IN THE NEXT SESSION SOMETIME IN OCTOBER OR NOVEMBER AS TO THE LATEST POSITION.

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TIME ALLOWED FOR MAKING LABOUR CLAIMS TO BE EXTENDED  
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THE LABOUR TRIBUNAL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979 WHICH SEEKS TO EXTEND THE TIME ALLOWED FOR MAKING CLAIMS FROM SIX TO 12 MONTHS WAS INTRODUCED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE LABOUR TRIBUNAL WAS BROUGHT INTO BEING BY THE LABOUR TRIBUNAL ORDINANCE IN 1972.

THE OBJECT OF THE LEGISLATION WAS TO PROVIDE A COURT WITH SPECIAL EXPERTISE IN LABOUR MATTERS, WHOSE PROCEDURES WOULD BE QUICK AND INFORMAL AND INEXPENSIVE, TO TRY DISPUTES ABOUT CONTRACTS OF EMPLOYMENT OR APPRENTICESHIP AND RELATED MATTERS.

IN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON. JOHN GRIFFITHS, SAID THAT BY SECTION 9 OF THAT ORDINANCE CLAIMS HAVE TO BE BROUGHT WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF THE CAUSE OF ACTION ARISING.

+THE REASON FOR THIS WAS TO MAINTAIN THE PRINCIPLE OF SIMPLICITY AND SWIFT JUSTICE. DELAYED CLAIMS TEND TO TAKE LONGER TO INVESTIGATE AND BECOME MORE DIFFICULT TO PROVE,+ HE SAID.

MR. GRIFFITHS POINTED OUT THAT EXPERIENCE HAD SHOWN THAT THERE WERE A SMALL BUT SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF CASES IN WHICH HARDSHIP HAD BEEN CAUSED BY THIS SECTION: IN PARTICULAR CLAIMS INVOLVING ARREARS OF WAGES OR ESPECIALLY COMMISSION, OR DISPUTES ABOUT ANNUAL HOLIDAY PAY, BOTH OF WHICH ARE SUBJECT TO A NATURAL DELAY IN PRESENTATION.

FOLLOWING A STUDY TOUR OF OTHER JURISDICTIONS ARRANGED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION IN 1978, THE PRESIDING OFFICER OF THE TRIBUNAL RECOMMENDED THAT SECTION 9 BE AMENDED SO AS TO EXTEND THE TIME ALLOWED FOR MAKING CLAIMS, HE SAID.

+THE PURPOSE OF THIS SHORT BILL IS TO GIVE EFFECT TO THAT RECOMMENDATION. ACCORDINGLY IT IS PROPOSED BY CLAUSE 2 OF THE BILL TO EXTEND THE PERIOD FOR FILING CLAIMS FROM SIX TO 12 MONTHS FROM THE DATE OF THE CAUSE OF ACTION,+ HE ADDED.

MR. GRIFFITHS NOTED THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT TO FORECAST EXACTLY HOW MANY EXTRA CLAIMS WOULD RESULT BECAUSE THERE WERE NO COMPLETE RECORDS IN EXISTENCE OF OUT-OF-TIME CLAIMS.

ON PRESENT INDICATIONS, HE EXPLAINED, IT WAS NOT THOUGHT THAT THE NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL CASES WOULD BE LARGE NOR THAT THEIR NUMBER WOULD MATERIALLY AFFECT THE EFFICIENCY OF THE TRIBUNAL.

+TO GUARD AGAINST THIS DANGER, IT HAS BEEN DECIDED THAT THE ACTUAL NUMBER AND TYPE OF CLAIMS WILL BE MONITORED HENCEFORTH SO THAT THE RESULTS OF THIS AMENDMENT CAN BE REVIEWED IN A YEAR'S TIME,+ MR. GRIFFITHS SAID.

HOWEVER, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL EMPHASISED THAT THE BILL DOES NOT OPEN UP A NEW CATEGORY OF CLAIMS. IT WILL SIMPLY MEAN THAT SOME LABOUR CLAIMS WILL NOW BE HEARD BY IT RATHER THAN BY ANY OTHER COURT.

+PREVIOUSLY SUCH CLAIMS COULD HAVE BEEN BROUGHT EITHER IN THE SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL OR THE DISTRICT COURT IF THEY WERE OUT-OF-TIME FOR THIS TRIBUNAL. IT IS CONSIDERED HOWEVER THAT THEY WILL MUCH MORE APPROPRIATELY BE BROUGHT IN THE LABOUR TRIBUNAL WHICH IS THE MOST EXPERT, CONVENIENT AND APPROPRIATE FORM,+ HE SAID.

MR. GRIFFITHS SAID IT WAS ONLY PROPER AND FAIR THAT A PERSON WHOSE CLAIM WAS ALREADY BARRED BY AN EXISTING LIMITATION PERIOD WAS NOT SUDDENLY GIVEN A SECOND CHANCE TO BRING HIS CLAIM BY REASON OF THE EXTENDED TIME LIMIT PROPOSED BY THIS AMENDMENT.

+FOR THIS REASON CLAUSE 3 OF THE BILL PROVIDES THAT THE EXTENDED TIME LIMIT SHALL NOT APPLY FOR CLAIMS WHICH ARE ALREADY OUT-OF-TIME WHEN THE AMENDMENT TAKES EFFECT, UNLESS OF COURSE BOTH PARTIES AGREE TO THE CLAIM BEING HEARD,+ HE CONCLUDED.

## GOVT TO ANALYSE EEC IMPORT STATISTICS

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THE DIRECTOR OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND CUSTOMS, THE HON. DAVID JORDAN, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD ANALYSE THE IMPORT STATISTICS FOR THE WHOLE EEC TO DECIDE WHAT FORMAL REPRESENTATIONS SHOULD BE MADE TO THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO PRESS FOR A REVIEW OF THE HONG KONG-EEC TEXTILE AGREEMENT.

IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS FROM THE HON. FRANCIS TIEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR. JORDAN SAID THE 1978 IMPORT STATISTICS FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM TENDED TO PROVIDE THE CONFIRMATION SOUGHT BY MR. TIEN THAT CUT-BACKS ON EEC TEXTILE QUOTAS IMPOSED ON HONG KONG IN 1977 TO PROVIDE ACCESS FOR OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES HAD, IN FACT, BEEN TAKEN UP BY OTHER DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AND, IN FACT, BY OTHER MEMBER STATES OF THE EEC.

MR. JORDAN SAID THAT ACCORDING TO STATISTICS, BRITISH IMPORTS OF TEXTILES AND CLOTHING, WHICH HAD INCREASED BY ONLY 291 MILLION POUNDS STERLING IN 1977, INCREASED BY 490 MILLION POUNDS STERLING IN 1978, THE FIRST YEAR OF APPLICATION OF THE NEW POLICY.

+THE LION'S SHARE OF THAT INCREASE -- JUST UNDER 80 PER CENT OF IT -- WAS TAKEN UP BY OTHER DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AND THE MEDITERRANEAN ASSOCIATES OF THE EEC. THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES' SHARE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM IMPORT MARKET DROPPED FROM 33 PER CENT TO 30 PER CENT,+ HE SAID.

IN VALUE TERMS, MR. JORDAN ADDED, IMPORTS FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES INCREASED BY 16 PER CENT FROM 618 MILLION POUNDS STERLING TO 715 MILLION POUNDS STERLING BUT FROM THE OTHER DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AND THOSE MEDITERRANEAN ASSOCIATES IMPORTS INCREASED TWICE AS FAST, FROM 1,205 MILLION POUNDS STERLING TO 1,590 MILLION POUNDS STERLING.

+SEVENTY PER CENT OF THIS INCREASE CAME FROM OTHER MEMBER STATES OF THE EEC,+ HE SAID.

DURING THE SAME YEAR, THE UNITED KINGDOM PRODUCTION INDEXES FOR BOTH TEXTILES AND CLOTHING HARDLY MOVED.

+SO IT SEEMS FAIR TO SAY THAT, AT LEAST IN THIS FIRST YEAR, THE CUTBACKS ON HONG KONG HAVE NOT BENEFITTED THE UK INDUSTRY AND THAT THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AND THE MEDITERRANEAN ASSOCIATES ARE IN THE BRITISH MARKET THE PRINCIPAL BENEFICIARIES OF THE COMMUNITY'S TEXTILE POLICY,+ MR. JORDAN SAID.

MR. JORDAN SAID THAT WHEN HE WAS IN LONDON IN MARCH THIS YEAR HE TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO DRAW THESE FIGURES TO THE ATTENTION OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, OFFICIALS AND OTHERS. +I DREW THE CONCLUSION THAT THEY ALREADY JUSTIFIED A REVIEW,+ HE SAID.

/+HOWEVER, .....

+HOWEVER, OUR AGREEMENT IS WITH THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY. EVEN IF WE WERE TO SUCCEED IN CONVINCING HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT IN LONDON THAT A REVIEW IS NECESSARY, THEY WOULD STILL HAVE TO CONVINCe THEIR FELLOW-MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY,+ MR. JORDAN SAID.

+SO I THINK THE NEXT STEP IS FOR US TO ANALYSE THE IMPORT STATISTICS FOR THE WHOLE COMMUNITY.

+WHEN WE HAVE DONE THAT WE SHALL BE IN A POSITION TO DECIDE WHAT FORMAL REPRESENTATIONS SHOULD BE MADE,+ HE ADDED.

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RENT CONTROL DISCOURAGES  
PRODUCTION OF NEW HOUSING  
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RENT CONTROL IS NOT A LONG-TERM SOLUTION TO HOUSING PROBLEMS BECAUSE IT DISCOURAGES THE PRODUCTION OF NEW HOUSING.

THIS WAS SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON. DONALD LIAO, WHEN SPEAKING ON THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979, AND REPLYING TO POINTS MADE EARLIER IN THE DEBATE BY REV. THE HON. PATRICK MCGOVERN.

+ALTHOUGH RENT CONTROL MAY ACT AS A TEMPORARY PALLIATIVE FOR SITTING TENANTS, IT HAS NEVER, EITHER HERE OR ELSEWHERE, PROVED SUCCESSFUL AS A LONG-TERM SOLUTION TO HOUSING PROBLEMS,+ MR. LIAO SAID.

+ON THE CONTRARY, THIS MEASURE OFTEN EXACERBATES HOUSING SHORTAGES BY DISCOURAGING NEW BUILDING AND REDUCING THE STOCK OF PROPERTY AVAILABLE FOR RENT.+

MR. LIAO SAID THE BEST WAY TO STABILISE RENT WAS TO MAKE A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN THE SUPPLY OF HOUSING, AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT POLICY OF GRADUAL AND REGULATED DE-CONTROL OF RENTS, TOGETHER WITH THE EXCLUSION OF NEW PREMISES FROM CONTROL, HAD UNDOUBTEDLY DIRECTLY CONTRIBUTED TO THIS.

+THE RATING AND VALUATION PROPERTY REVIEW 1979 SHOWS THAT THE SUPPLY OF SMALL FLATS IS AT ITS HIGHEST EVER LEVEL,+ HE SAID.

THIS SHOWED THAT COMPLETIONS OF SMALL FLATS WERE ESTIMATED AT 27,470 THIS YEAR AND 28,450 NEXT YEAR, REPRESENTING 91 PER CENT OF OVERALL SUPPLY IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR FOR THOSE YEARS.

IN ADDITION, A RECORD TOTAL OF 70,000 PUBLIC HOUSING FLATS WOULD BE BUILT IN THE SAME PERIOD.

TURNING TO MEDIUM-SIZED FLATS, MR. LIAO SAID THE SUPPLY LAST YEAR HAD IMPROVED CONSIDERABLY TO 1,430 UNITS, WITH COMPLETIONS FOR THIS YEAR AND NEXT LIKELY TO BE 1,160 AND 615 UNITS RESPECTIVELY.

+HOWEVER,+ HE SAID, +THE SUPPLY PICTURE IN THIS CATEGORY COULD CHANGE SIGNIFICANTLY IF THE INITIATIVE TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT TO INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF LAND FOR MEDIUM AND LARGE FLATS, AS DESCRIBED BY THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS EARLIER THIS AFTERNOON, SHOWS ITS IMPACT.+

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MID-LEVELS TEMPORARY BUILDING BAN  
NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN SAFETY OF AREA  
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THE TEMPORARY RESTRICTION OF BUILDING DEVELOPMENT (MID-LEVELS) BILL 1979 HAD ITS SECOND READING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL WAS MOVED BY THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, THE HON. WILLIAM BELL.

MR. BELL SAID THE OBJECT OF THE BILL WAS TO INTRODUCE TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS ON CERTAIN BUILDING WORKS IN THE MID-LEVELS, THE RESTRICTIONS BEING NECESSARY +TO MAINTAIN THE PRESENT SAFETY OF THE AREA, AND TO ENABLE COMPREHENSIVE INVESTIGATIONS OF THE HILLSIDE SLOPES TO BE CARRIED OUT+.

+THE GOVERNMENT'S CONCERN IS NOT SO MUCH THE EFFECT OF A SINGLE DEVELOPMENT AT AN INDIVIDUAL SITE, BUT THE CUMULATIVE EFFECT OF A LARGE NUMBER OF SUCH DEVELOPMENTS,+ HE SAID.

THE DETAILED INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM THE INVESTIGATIONS, HE SAID, WOULD ALLOW AN ASSESSMENT AND PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT TO BE MADE AS TO WHETHER RESTRAINTS NEED BE PLACED ON FUTURE BUILDING WORKS.

MR. BELL SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THE NEED TO IMPOSE THESE RESTRICTIONS AT A TIME WHEN THE TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION WHICH MIGHT BE PRODUCED BY DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES IN THE AREA WAS IN EXCEPTIONALLY HIGH DEMAND AND SHORT SUPPLY.

+TO ALLEVIATE THE SHORTAGE, GOVERNMENT PLANS TO ACCELERATE THE PROVISION ON SALE OF SITES SUITABLE FOR HIGH CLASS DEVELOPMENT. SITES ARE ALREADY UNDER EXAMINATION TO DETERMINE THE MEASURES NECESSARY TO MAKE THEM AVAILABLE, AND EVERY EFFORT WILL BE MADE TO PUT THEM ON THE MARKET AT AN EARLY DATE,+ HE SAID.

THE SITES IN QUESTION ARE SITUATED IN A NUMBER OF LOCALITIES INCLUDING POK FU LAM, SHOUSON HILL, REPULSE BAY, RED HILL AND SHEK O ON HONG KONG ISLAND, AND LUNG CHEUNG ROAD, KOWLOON TSAI AND JATS INCLINE IN KOWLOON.

+THE ESTIMATED DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL IS OVER 2,000 LARGE FLATS, ALTHOUGH IT IS POSSIBLE THAT SUBSEQUENT INVESTIGATION MAY REDUCE THIS NUMBER,+ HE SAID.

MR. BELL ALSO SAID IT WAS PROPOSED TO LIFT THE RESTRICTIONS ON LEASE MODIFICATIONS AND NEW LAND SALES IN POK FU LAM.

+WHEN THESE RESTRICTIONS WERE INTRODUCED IN 1972 IT WAS EXPLAINED THAT THEY WOULD REMAIN IN FORCE UNTIL SUCH TIME AS WORKS PROCEEDED ON VARIOUS ROAD IMPROVEMENTS, INCLUDING THE ABERDEEN TUNNEL AND THE WATER STREET LINK (NOW THE HILL ROAD FLYOVER).

+SINCE BOTH THESE PROJECTS ARE NOW IN HAND THESE RESTRICTIONS MAY NOW BE LIFTED, RELEASING AN ESTIMATED POTENTIAL OF SOME 1,200 ADDITIONAL FLATS FROM REDEVELOPMENT SCHEMES ALONE,+ HE ADDED.

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6, 1979

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NEW TIMETABLE FOR KCR MODERNISATION  
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DELAY IN PLACING CERTAIN CONTRACTS, COUPLED WITH FINANCIAL STRINGENCY THIS YEAR, HAS MEANT THAT A NEW TIMETABLE FOR THE MODERNISATION AND ELECTRIFICATION OF THE HONG KONG SECTION OF THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY HAS HAD TO BE DRAWN UP, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. ALEX WU WHO ASKED WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT HAD CONSIDERED THE ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF DELAYING THE UPGRADING AND ELECTRIFICATION OF THE OUTER SUBURBAN PORTION OF THE KCR, BEARING IN MIND THE GROWING TRADE WITH CHINA, AND THE POPULATION BUILD-UP IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

+THE MOST PRESSING NEED IS FOR AN ELECTRIFIED SERVICE TO BE PROVIDED TO SHA TIN NEW TOWN, AS FAR AS FO TAN, AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE, TOGETHER WITH THE INTERCHANGE WITH THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY AT KOWLOON TONG,+ MR. JONES SAID.

+THIS INNER SUBURBAN SERVICE IS NOW PLANNED TO BE PROVIDED BY THE END OF 1981 OR EARLY 1982.

+THE OUTER SUBURBAN SERVICE, BEYOND FO TAN TO THE BORDER AT LOWU, WILL HOPEFULLY OPEN AT THE END OF 1982, OR 18 MONTHS AFTER THE ORIGINAL PLANNED DATE,+ HE POINTED OUT.

WHILE ACCEPTING THAT THE BREAKING OF THE PROGRAMME INTO TWO PARTS WOULD CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR TRAIN PASSENGERS, MR. JONES EMPHASISED THAT THE SERVICES WERE ALREADY STRETCHED AND DEMAND WAS CONTINUALLY INCREASING.

+FURTHERMORE, ONCE THE INNER SUBURBAN SERVICE IS OPERATING, PASSENGERS TRAVELLING TO OR FROM THE OUTER SECTION WILL NEED TO CHANGE FROM DIESEL TO ELECTRIC TRAINS AT FO TAN OR SHA TIN UNTIL THE WHOLE LINE IS ELECTRIFIED,+ HE SAID.

+THE SERVICE WILL, NEVERTHELESS, STILL BE MORE FREQUENT AND FASTER THAN BEFORE AND THE NEED TO CHANGE TRAINS SHOULD ONLY LAST FOR ABOUT 12 MONTHS,+ HE ADDED.

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6, 1979

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NO CAUSE TO SUSPEND DC-10'S OPERATING TO HK  
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THE DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION HAS CONTACTED ALL AIRLINES OPERATING SCHEDULED SERVICES INTO HONG KONG WITH DC-10 AIRCRAFT TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER THEY TOO WERE FOLLOWING THE DIRECTIVE ISSUED BY THE UNITED STATES FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION.

THIS WAS STATED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON. D.G. JEAFFRESON, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. S.L. CHEN.

MR. CHEN ASKED WHAT MEASURES, IF ANY, WERE BEING TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT TO TEMPORARILY SUSPEND DC-10 FLIGHTS OVER HONG KONG FOLLOWING THE RECENT AIRCRASH IN CHICAGO.

MR. JEAFFRESON SAID THAT IN ALL CASES THE DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION WAS TOLD THAT EITHER THE AIRCRAFT HAD BEEN GROUNDED FOR INSPECTION OR THEY HAD ALREADY BEEN INSPECTED AND RETURNED TO SERVICE.

BEFORE THE TRAGEDY, HE WENT ON, THE DIRECTOR HAD ISSUED A PERMIT TO ONE OPERATOR WHO PROPOSED TO USE DC-10 AIRCRAFT FOR NON-SCHEDULED FLIGHTS.

+THE DIRECTOR IMMEDIATELY CONTACTED THE OPERATOR WHO CONFIRMED THAT HE HAD FOLLOWED THE DIRECTIVE IN RESPECT OF THE AIRCRAFT CONCERNED,+ HE SAID.

+IN RESPECT OF FUTURE APPLICATIONS FOR NON-SCHEDULED FLIGHTS INVOLVING DC-10'S, THE DIRECTOR WILL NOT ISSUE A PERMIT UNTIL HE IS SATISFIED THAT THE OPERATOR HAS COMPLIED WITH THE FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION'S DIRECTIVE.

+IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION SEES NO CAUSE TO SUSPEND DC-10 AIRCRAFT OPERATING TO HONG KONG,+ HE ADDED.

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6, 1979

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GOVT TO HELP RE-ESTABLISH OYSTERS INDUSTRY  
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THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT HAS ALREADY HAD DISCUSSIONS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE OYSTER INDUSTRY AND MADE ADVICE AND EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE TO HELP RE-ESTABLISH THE INDUSTRY, THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WAS TOLD TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. HO KAM-FAI ON THE RECENT MASSIVE KILL OF OYSTERS IN DEEP BAY, THE DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES, THE HON. TED NICHOLS, SAID THE MAJOR LIMITING FACTOR GOVERNING THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INDUSTRY WOULD BE THE RECRUITMENT OF OYSTER SPAT FROM THE WILD.

+THE RECENT HIGH MORTALITY OF MATURE OYSTERS WILL SERIOUSLY AND ADVERSELY AFFECT THAT RECRUITMENT= AND I CAN ONLY PREDICT THAT RECOVERY WILL BE A SLOW PROCESS,+ MR. NICHOLS SAID.

+THE SITUATION IS EXACERBATED BY THE FACT THAT FOR SEVERAL YEARS NOW PRODUCTIVITY IN DEEP BAY HAS BEEN STEADILY DECLINING= AND THUS THE TIME PERIOD TO MORTALITY AND SPAT PRODUCTION HAS BEEN PROLONGED,+ HE SAID.

MR. NICHOLS NOTED THAT THE RECENT MASSIVE KILL OF OYSTERS IN DEEP BAY WAS FIRST REPORTED TO HIS DEPARTMENT ON MAY 16 THIS YEAR AND A SPECIALIST TEAM OF INVESTIGATORS FROM THE DEPARTMENT WAS SENT TO THE AREA THE FOLLOWING DAY.

MR. NICHOLS SAID INVESTIGATIONS AND MONITORING OF THE SITUATION CONTINUED TO DATE, BUT HAD NOT BEEN HELPED BY THE FACT THAT, APPARENTLY, THE FIRST SYMPTOMS OF THE KILL WERE NOTED BY OYSTER GROWERS IN FEBRUARY THIS YEAR AND NOT REPORTED.

+IT IS NOW KNOWN THAT THE EXTENSIVE LOSS OF OYSTERS IS DUE TO A PARASITIC PROTOZOAN. INFESTATION BY SIMILAR PARASITES HAS CAUSED EXTENSIVE OYSTER KILLS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD, NOTABLY IN THE U.S.A., BUT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THAT THE PARASITE HAS BEEN DETECTED IN LOCAL WATERS,+ MR. NICHOLS SAID.

+MORTALITIES VARY FROM 90 PER CENT IN THE OUTER BAY AREA TO NOT LESS THAN 50 PER CENT IN THE INNER PART OF THE BAY BETWEEN YUEN LONG CREEK AND THE SHUM CHUN RIVER,+ HE ADDED.

MR. NICHOLS SAID LITTLE WAS KNOWN ABOUT THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND CONDITIONS WHICH PREDISPOSED OYSTERS TO SUSCEPTIBILITY TO SUCH PARASITIC ATTACK AND EXTENSIVE WORK IN THE UNITED STATES HAD ONLY BEEN ABLE TO ATTRIBUTE SUSCEPTIBILITY TO THE EXPOSURE OF OYSTERS TO +ENVIRONMENTAL AND PHYSIOLOGICAL STRESSES.+

+IT MUST BE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT AS THIS PARASITE IS NOW PRESENT IN DEEP BAY IT IS LIKELY TO RECUR WHENEVER CONDITIONS ARE FAVOURABLE TO IT,+ HE SAID.

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CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN NT

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ADDITIONAL STAFF MAY BE PROVIDED TO CO-ORDINATE AND PRESENT CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES ONCE THE POLICY ON GOVERNMENT'S ROLE AND EXTENT OF INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROMOTION OF SUCH ACTIVITIES HAS BEEN CLARIFIED, THE SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, THE HON. DAVID AKERS-JONES SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. ALEX WU IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR. AKERS-JONES SAID THE DIRECTOR OF THE NEW TERRITORIES SERVICES HAD ASKED FOR ADDITIONAL STAFF, INCLUDING 10 POSTS FOR THE TSUEN WAN TOWN HALL, FOR THE ORGANISATION AND PRESENTATION OF CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

+CONSIDERATION OF THESE REQUESTS HAS BEEN HELD UP PENDING CLARIFICATION OF THE POLICY ON GOVERNMENT'S ROLE AND EXTENT OF INVOLVEMENT IN THE ACTIVE PROMOTION OF CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES,+ HE SAID.

ON PROVISION OF FUNDS, MR. AKERS-JONES NOTED THAT \$850,000 HAD BEEN INCLUDED IN THIS YEAR'S ESTIMATES TO ENABLE THE DIRECTOR OF THE NEW TERRITORIES SERVICES TO ORGANISE AND PROVIDE PUBLIC RECREATION ACTIVITIES WHICH INCLUDED CULTURAL PROGRAMMES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

+OUT OF THIS PROVISION, \$225,000 HAS BEEN EARMARKED FOR PRESENTATION OF CULTURAL PROGRAMMES FOR THE FIRST THREE MONTHS OF THE OPERATION OF THE TSUEN WAN TOWN HALL AFTER IT OPENS IN FEBRUARY NEXT YEAR.

+IN ADDITION, DISTRICT ADVISORY BOARDS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES HAVE ALSO BEEN PROVIDED WITH FUNDS FOR THE PROMOTION OF CULTURAL ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE DISTRICT,+ HE ADDED.

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MORE STAFF PROPOSED TO DEAL WITH  
PROBLEM OF UNAUTHORISED BUILDING WORKS

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THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT HAS SUBMITTED TO THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS FOR ADDITIONAL STAFF TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM OF UNAUTHORISED BUILDING WORKS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, THE HON. WILLIAM BELL, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. ANDREW SO IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

/+THE BUILDINGS.....

+THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE RECEIVES 300 TO 400 COMPLAINTS EVERY MONTH CONCERNING ILLEGAL BUILDING WORKS AND ALL OF THESE MUST BE INVESTIGATED TO SEE WHETHER THERE IS A POSSIBILITY OF DANGER,+ HE SAID.

+ALTOGETHER THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE IS CURRENTLY MAKING SOME 400 TO 500 INSPECTIONS EVERY MONTH, INCLUDING THE INSPECTION OF BUILDINGS COMPLETED SINCE AUGUST 1, 1975.+

HOWEVER, MR. BELL SAID THAT THIS PERFORMANCE FELL SUBSTANTIALLY SHORT OF MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE POLICY ON ILLEGAL STRUCTURES AS THE PACE OF DEVELOPMENT HAD OUT-STRIPPED THE ABILITY OF THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE TO CARRY OUT THE NECESSARY INSPECTIONS AND DEAL ADEQUATELY WITH THE PROBLEM.

HE POINTED OUT THAT BETWEEN AUGUST 1975 AND THE END OF APRIL THIS YEAR 2,355 NEW BUILDINGS COMPRISING OVER 105,000 INDIVIDUAL UNITS OF ACCOMMODATION HAD BEEN COMPLETED.

+THE BUILDING SURVEYORS WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INSPECTIONS OF BUILDINGS FOLLOWING COMPLAINTS AND THE PERIODIC INSPECTIONS OF BUILDINGS COMPLETED SINCE AUGUST 1975 HAVE, AS THEIR PRIMARY TASK, THE DUTY OF PROCESSING APPLICATIONS IN CONNECTION WITH NEW BUILDINGS INCLUDING THE APPROVAL OF PLANS, THE ISSUE OF CONSENTS TO COMMENCE WORK AND THE ISSUE OF OCCUPATION PERMITS, ALL OF WHICH ARE SUBJECT TO STATUTORY TIME LIMITS,+ MR. BELL SAID.

+ADDITIONALLY THEY ARE REQUIRED TO INSPECT NEW BUILDINGS UNDER CONSTRUCTION.+

SINCE ALL OF THESE DUTIES MUST TAKE PRECEDENCE, HE ADDED, THE LACK OF SUFFICIENT RESOURCES WAS FELT MOST NOTICEABLY IN THE AREA OF POST-OCCUPATION PERMIT INSPECTIONS.

+CLEARLY THIS IS AN UNSATISFACTORY SITUATION AND PROPOSAL FOR ADDITIONAL STAFF TO HELP TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM OF UNAUTHORISED WORK HAVE ALREADY BEEN SUBMITTED TO GOVERNMENT,+ MR. BELL SAID.

+ONLY WHEN THESE PROPOSALS HAVE BEEN APPROVED AND ADDITIONAL STAFF RECRUITED CAN AN IMPROVEMENT IN THE RATE OF INSPECTIONS, AND CONSEQUENTLY IN DEALING WITH THIS MASSIVE PROBLEM BE EXPECTED.+

MR. BELL SAID THAT IN ADDITION TO INSPECTIONS, A CAMPAIGN HAD BEEN LAUNCHED TO INFORM THOSE OCCUPYING NEW BUILDINGS OF THE DANGERS OF CARRYING OUT WORK ILLEGALLY, BY DISPLAYING IN THE BUILDINGS AND DISTRIBUTING TO THE PARTIES CONCERNED A SERIES OF POSTERS DEPICTING THE MOST COMMON TYPE OF UNAUTHORISED WORK.

THIS MEASURE, HE ADDED, APPEARED TO BE MEETING WITH SOME SUCCESS AS EVIDENT FROM THE CONTINUING DEMAND FOR THE POSTERS, AND DISPLAY BOARDS HAD BEEN SEEN IN THE ENTRANCES OF NEW BUILDINGS.

LAW AMENDMENT AND REFORM  
(CONSOLIDATION) (AMENDMENT) BILL  
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THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON. JOHN GRIFFITHS, INTRODUCED THE LAW AMENDMENT AND REFORM (CONSOLIDATION) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE BILL SEEKS TO ABOLISH AN OLD COMMON LAW RULE THAT A PROMISE CANNOT BE MADE TO SEVERAL PEOPLE BOTH JOINTLY AND SEVERALLY, AND BRING THE LAW IN HONG KONG INTO LINE WITH THAT IN ENGLAND.

THIS RULE HAD BEEN ABOLISHED IN ENGLAND BY A SECTION OF THE CONVEYANCING ACT 1881, AND THE ABOLITION WAS MAINTAINED BY SECTION 81 OF THE LAW OF PROPERTY ACT 1925. BUT THIS PROVISION HAS NEVER BEEN EXTENDED TO HONG KONG.

THE NEED FOR THIS AMENDMENT AROSE FROM A PROPOSAL BY THE EXCHANGE BANK'S ASSOCIATION FOLLOWING THE HONG KONG COURT OF APPEAL RULING IN 1977 THAT A JOINT ACCOUNT IN A BANK CANNOT BE DEBITED BY THE BANK IN RESPECT OF A CLAIM AGAINST ONE OF THE HOLDERS OF THE ACCOUNT ON HIS SEPARATE OBLIGATION TO THAT BANK.

MR. GRIFFITHS SAID THIS PROPOSAL HAD BEEN ACCEPTED AFTER CONSIDERATION BY THE GOVERNMENT MONETARY AFFAIRS BRANCH, THE REGISTRAR GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT AND THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT, AND FOLLOWING CONSULTATION WITH THE BAR ASSOCIATION AND THE LAW SOCIETY.

TO GIVE EFFECT TO IT, A CLAUSE IN THE BILL ADDS A NEW SECTION TO THE LAW AMENDMENT AND REFORM (CONSOLIDATION) ORDINANCE.

MR. GRIFFITHS SAID THE NEW SECTION FOLLOWS, WITH MINOR MODIFICATION, SECTION 81 OF THE LAW OF PROPERTY ACT 1925.

IN THIS CONTEXT IT PROVIDES THAT AN AGREEMENT IN WRITING, MADE WITH TWO OR MORE PEOPLE JOINTLY, TO PAY MONEY OR TO DO ANY OTHER ACT, SHALL BE CONSTRUED AS BEING ALSO MADE WITH EACH OF THOSE PEOPLE.

THE NEW SECTION WILL APPLY ONLY SO FAR AS A CONTRARY INTENTION IS NOT EXPRESSED IN THE AGREEMENT AND WILL HAVE EFFECT SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE AGREEMENT.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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BILLS PASSED  
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TWO BILLS WERE PASSED INTO LAW IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THEY WERE THE REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS AND ADOPTION (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL 1979 AND THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979.

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SEMINAR ON ALIGNED DOCUMENTS  
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WHEN THE TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEE HELD A SEMINAR LAST MONTH ON THE USE OF ALIGNED DOCUMENTS THEY HAD DESIGNED, SOME 700 PEOPLE ATTENDED -- BUT ABOUT 200 PEOPLE WERE UNABLE TO GAIN ADMISSION WHEN +HOUSE FULL+ SIGNS WENT UP.

OPENING THE SECOND SEMINAR AT THE HILTON HOTEL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) MR. WILLIAM DORWARD, COMMISSIONER OF INDUSTRY AND CUSTOMS, SAID THAT THE ATTENDANCE SHOWED THAT THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY HELD THE TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEE IN THE SAME REGARD AS DID THE TRADE INDUSTRY AND CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT.

+IT IS GOOD TO SEE THIS REPUTATION GROW AFTER YEARS OF QUIET, UNSPECTACULAR BUT CONSISTENTLY VALUABLE WORK, NOT MERELY IN THE FIELD OF ALIGNED DOCUMENTS WHICH ARE THE FOCUS OF ATTENTION TODAY, BUT ALSO IN RESPECT OF BANKING, INSURANCE AND DATA PROCESSING SYSTEMS,+ HE SAID.

+FOR OUR PART IN GOVERNMENT, WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THE INDUCEMENT AND ASSISTANCE THE COMMITTEE HAS GIVEN IN STREAMLINING OUR PROCEDURES IN RESPECT OF EXPORT LICENCES= AND MANY OF YOU WILL APPRECIATE THE EFFORT AND TIME SAVED BY THE ALIGNING OF CERTIFICATE OF ORIGIN APPLICATIONS, EXPORT LICENCES AND TRADE DECLARATIONS WITH THE MASTER SET OF COMMERCIAL DOCUMENTS.+

THE TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEE HAD AN IMPORTANT TASK STILL AHEAD OF IT, AND MR. DORWARD SAID HE HOPED IT WOULD SOON BE POSSIBLE TO REINFORCE ITS ORGANISATION, WHICH HAD SO FAR LARGELY DEPENDED ON THE VOLUNTARY EFFORTS AND ENTHUSIASM OF A FEW INDIVIDUALS AND A PART-TIME SECRETARIAT PROVIDED BY HIS DEPARTMENT.

+BUT WHATEVER THE ORGANISATION, IN THE LAST ANALYSIS THE SUCCESS OR OTHERWISE OF ITS WORK WILL DEPEND ON HOW YOU AND YOUR COLLEAGUES IN THE BUSINESS WORLD TAKE AND APPLY THE PRODUCT OF THE TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEE'S WORK,+ SAID MR. DORWARD.

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NEW SECONDARY SCHOOL FOR SAI KUNG  
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A NEW \$8 MILLION SECONDARY SCHOOL, FINANCED BY GOVERNMENT AID AND PRIVATE SPONSORSHIP, IS TO OPEN IN SAI KUNG IN SEPTEMBER TO KEEP PACE WITH THE POPULATION GROWTH IN THE DISTRICT.

THE SCHOOL -- THE SAI KUNG HANG HAU DISTRICT CHENG CHIK CHEE SECONDARY SCHOOL -- WILL INITIALLY CATER FOR 240 STUDENTS BUT WILL HAVE THE CAPACITY FOR 1,400 SCHOOL CHILDREN WHEN IT IS IN FULL OPERATION IN THE EARLY 80'S.

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WITH THE OPENING ONLY THREE MONTHS AWAY, THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT HAS ALREADY RECRUITED EIGHT CERTIFICATED AND GRADUATED MASTERS TO TAKE CHARGE OF THE CLASSES, AND THE MASTERS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) SIGNED CONTRACTS OF EMPLOYMENT AT AN OFFICIAL CEREMONY AT THE SAI KUNG DISTRICT OFFICE.

PRESENT WERE THE SAI KUNG DISTRICT OFFICER, MR. COLIN BOSHER, THE SCHOOL'S SUPERVISOR, MR. YAU KEI, WHO IS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE HANG HAU RURAL COMMITTEE, AND SIR RUN RUN SHAW, ONE OF THE SCHOOL'S DIRECTORS.

THE SCHOOL HAS BEEN NAMED AFTER A PROMINENT COMMUNITY LEADER, MR. CHENG CHIK-CHEE, WHO DONATED \$1.12 MILLION TOWARDS THE COST OF ITS CONSTRUCTION.

IT IS AT THE JUNCTION OF HIRAM'S HIGHWAY AND CLEARWATER BAY ROAD, ON A 8,260-SQUARE METRE SITE GRANTED FREE BY THE GOVERNMENT.

MR. BOSHER SAID TODAY THE NEW SCHOOL -- THE FIRST GOVERNMENT AIDED SECONDARY SCHOOL IN SAI KUNG -- WOULD AUGMENT THE EXISTING TWO GOVERNMENT-SUBSIDISED SCHOOLS IN THE DISTRICT.

HE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD MET 84 PER CENT OF THE COSTS OF BUILDING THE SCHOOL, AS WELL AS PROVIDING THE LAND.

+I AM SURE THE NEW SCHOOL WILL BE WELCOMED BY THE LOCAL COMMUNITY WHO HAVE BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO AN EXPANSION OF LOCAL EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES,+ HE ADDED.

+WE HAVE BEEN VERY FORTUNATE IN ACQUIRING THE SERVICES OF A YOUNG AND ENERGETIC PRINCIPAL AND A COMPETENT TEACHING STAFF.

+IT AUGURS WELL FOR A HAPPY SCHOOL IN A VERY PLEASANT ENVIRONMENT.+

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#### TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT KWUN TONG ROAD, FROM ITS JUNCTION WITH HONG TAK ROAD TO ITS JUNCTION WITH ELEGANCE ROAD WILL BE CLOSED TO ALL VEHICULAR TRAFFIC FROM FRIDAY TO NEXT MONDAY (JUNE 11) BETWEEN 1.30 A.M. AND 5.30 A.M. FOR THE DISMANTLING OF A TEMPORARY STRUCTURE.

DURING THE CLOSURE, NORTHBOUND TRAFFIC WILL BE DIVERTED TO NGAU TAU KOK ROAD VIA ELEGANCE ROAD OR TO WAI YIP STREET VIA LAI YIP STREET. SOUTHBOUND TRAFFIC WILL BE DIVERTED TO NGAU TAU KOK ROAD.

APPROPRIATE TRAFFIC SIGNS WILL BE SET UP TO GUIDE MOTORISTS.

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