



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES
BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, HONG KONG. TEL: 5-233191

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 1982

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URBAN COUNCIL'S SHARE OF RATES DOUBLED

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PASSED A RESOLUTION INCREASING THE URBAN COUNCIL'S SHARE OF RATES FROM FOUR PER CENT TO EIGHT PER CENT, AND DECREASING THE GENERAL RATES FOR URBAN AREAS FROM 7.5 PER CENT TO 3.5 PER CENT.

IN MOVING THE MOTION, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY THE HON JOHN BREMRIDGE SAID THIS WOULD RESULT IN INCREASES IN YIELD IN URBAN COUNCIL RATES AT AN ESTIMATED \$460 MILLION FOR 1982-83 AND \$500 MILLION FOR 1983-84.

+TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE URBAN COUNCIL'S BUDGETED DEFICITS FOR THESE TWO FISCAL YEARS, IT IS LIKELY THAT THE COUNCIL WILL BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE A MODEST SURPLUS OF \$56 MILLION BY APRIL 1, 1984,+ HE SAID.

THIS IS ABOUT HALF OF THE COUNCIL'S AVERAGE MONTHLY GROSS EXPENDITURE OF \$105 MILLION.

MR BREMRIDGE SAID THE INCREASE WAS SUBJECT TO THE CONDITION THAT NO FURTHER INCREASES WOULD BE AGREED EARLIER THAN APRIL 1, 1984 AFTER WHICH A REVALUATION WOULD PROBABLY TAKE PLACE.

AT THE SAME TIME, HE SAID, THE PERCENTAGE FOR THE COMPUTATION OF GENERAL RATES IN THE URBAN AREAS WILL BE REDUCED FROM 7.5 PER CENT TO THREE AND A HALF PER CENT SO THAT THE COMBINED PERCENTAGE FOR RATEPAYERS IN THE URBAN AREAS WILL REMAIN UNCHANGED AT 11.5 PER CENT.

MR BREMRIDGE SAID THE EXISTING PERCENTAGES OF GENERAL RATES OF 7.5 PER CENT FOR THE URBAN AREAS AND 11 PER CENT FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, AND FOUR PER CENT IN RESPECT OF URBAN COUNCIL RATES HAD BEEN IN EFFECT SINCE APRIL 1, 1977.

+THUS THE YIELD FROM RATES HAS REMAINED FAIRLY STATIC SINCE 1977, APART FROM INCREASES RESULTING FROM INTERIM VALUATION OF NEW PROPERTIES.

+THIS HAS PRESENTED NO PARTICULAR PROBLEM FOR THE GOVERNMENT BECAUSE THE YIELD FROM OTHER SOURCES OF REVENUE HAS INCREASED. FOR THE URBAN COUNCIL, HOWEVER, THERE IS A PROBLEM IN THAT ITS INCOME, BEING LARGELY DERIVED FROM URBAN COUNCIL RATES, HAS FAILED TO KEEP UP WITH INCREASED EXPENDITURE ARISING NOT ONLY FROM EXPANDED SERVICES BUT ALSO FROM PRICE INCREASES.+

MR BREMRIDGE SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT URBAN COUNCIL EXPENDITURE SHOULD BE KEPT WITHIN THE INCOME AVAILABLE, BUT THIS WAS MEANINGFUL ONLY IF THE INCOME WAS REALISTIC.

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PLAN TO PROTECT TRAVELLING PUBLIC FROM FRAUD
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THE GOVERNMENT IS CONSIDERING INTRODUCING MEASURES TO PROTECT THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC AGAINST UNSCRUPULOUS TRAVEL AGENTS, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON PETER C. WONG, MR JEAFFRESON SAID HE WAS CONVINCED THAT, IF PRACTICABLE, MEMBERS OF THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC OUGHT TO BE AFFORDED SOME MEASURES OF PROTECTION AGAINST FRAUD.

HE HAD REACHED THIS CONCLUSION FOR THREE REASONS, HE SAID.

+FIRST, THE NATURE OF THE BUSINESS IS SUCH THAT ANYONE CAN AT PRESENT SET UP A TRAVEL AGENCY SIMPLY BY OBTAINING A BUSINESS REGISTRATION LICENCE. THUS IT IS VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC TO FIND OUT FOR THEMSELVES WHETHER A COMPANY IS LIKELY TO ABSCOND WITH THEIR MONEY.

+SECOND, UNLIKE BUYING MERCHANDISE FROM A SHOP, THE NATURE OF THE TRAVEL BUSINESS IS SUCH THAT PEOPLE PAY IN ADVANCE FOR SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED LATER. THERE IS THUS AN ELEMENT OF TRUST AND RISK INVOLVED.

+THIRD, THE EVIDENCE BEFORE ME SUGGESTS THAT SOME AGENTS ARE NOT HONOURING THIS TRUST AND POTENTIAL TRAVELLERS ARE NOT BEING SUFFICIENTLY CAREFUL IN SELECTING THE AGENTS, DESPITE REPEATED WARNINGS BY THE CONSUMER COUNCIL AND BY THE MEDIA TO EXERCISE CAUTION IN THEIR CHOICE OF TRAVEL AGENTS.

+IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, WE ARE NOW CONSIDERING WHAT MEASURES WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO INTRODUCE, IN ORDER TO AFFORD MEMBERS OF THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC A REASONABLE DEGREE OF PROTECTION AGAINST FRAUD IN GENERAL AND ABSCONDING IN PARTICULAR.+

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONSULTING THE CONSUMER COUNCIL AND THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY ON THE MATTER.

MR JEAFFRESON SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S GENERAL POLICY ON CONSUMER PROTECTION IS BASED ON THE VIEW THAT THE BEST PROTECTION FOR CONSUMERS IS FOR CONSUMERS THEMSELVES TO TAKE CARE OVER THEIR PURCHASES.

HE FELT THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD INTERVENE ONLY TO PROTECT CONSUMERS WHEN THEY CANNOT, BECAUSE OF THE NATURE OF THE GOODS AND SERVICES BEING PROVIDED, BE EXPECTED TO PROTECT THEMSELVES.

+I CAN SEE NO GROUNDS FOR REVISING THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ON CONSUMER PROTECTION GENERALLY,+ HE SAID.

/+THAT IS TO

+THAT IS TO SAY,+ HE NOTED, +I AM NOT CONVINCED THAT IT IS EITHER NECESSARY, DESIRABLE OR PRACTICABLE FOR MEMBERS OF THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC TO BE AFFORDED PROTECTION IN RESPECT OF THE QUALITY OF SERVICES ACTUALLY RENDERED, FOR THESE MATTERS MUST ESSENTIALLY BE LEFT TO INDIVIDUAL SELECTION AND JUDGEMENT.+

MR JEAFFRESON SAID THE ECONOMIC SERVICES BRANCH HAD BEEN CLOSELY MONITORING THE INCIDENCE AND NATURE OF THE COMPLAINTS MADE BY MEMBERS OF THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC AGAINST TRAVEL AGENTS.

BROADLY SPEAKING, HE SAID, THESE COMPLAINTS FALL INTO TWO MAIN CATEGORIES: FIRST, THOSE BASICALLY DIRECTED AT THE QUALITY OF SERVICES RENDERED THROUGH THE TRAVEL AGENTS AND SECOND, THOSE BASED ON FAILURE BY THE TRAVEL AGENTS TO PRODUCE THE SERVICES PAID FOR IN ADVANCE, POSSIBLY EVEN WITH CRIMINAL INTENT TO DEFRAUD.

MR JEAFFRESON SAID THAT SINCE 1979, THERE HAD BEEN A TOTAL OF SEVEN CASES IN THE SECOND CATEGORY, ALL OF THEM INVOLVING THE CLOSURE OR DISAPPEARANCE OF THE TRAVEL AGENTS FOLLOWING THEIR RECEIPT OF SUBSTANTIAL DEPOSITS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

IN 1979, THERE WERE TWO SUCH CASES AFFECTING 344 PERSONS AND INVOLVING OVER \$700 000.

LAST YEAR, THERE WAS ONE SUCH CASE AFFECTING SOME 2 500 PERSONS WHO HAD PAID UPWARDS OF \$4.5 MILLION TO AN AGENCY THAT HAD BEEN SET UP IN BUSINESS FOR MORE THAN TWO YEARS.

THIS YEAR, FOUR AGENTS, ALL OF WHOM HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED NO EARLIER THAN NOVEMBER 1981, ABSCONDED WITH OVER \$4 MILLION PAID BY 3 278 PERSONS.

FURTHER AND MORE DETAILED INVESTIGATION INTO ALL THESE CASES IS PROCEEDING.

+SOME OF THESE CASES MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE RESULT OF THE AGENCIES INVOLVED GETTING INTO SERIOUS CASH FLOW DIFFICULTIES,+ MR JEAFFRESON SAID.

+CHARGES HAVE BEEN BROUGHT IN ONE OF THE RECENT CASES AND IT WOULD BE IMPROPER FOR ME TO COMMENT, AT THIS STAGE, UPON THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND THE MOTIVES OF THOSE INVOLVED,+ HE ADDED.

AUTOMATIC MACHINES ISSUE UNDER STUDY
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THE GOVERNMENT IS CONSIDERING WHETHER IT IS NECESSARY TO INTRODUCE FURTHER AMENDMENTS TO EXISTING LEGISLATION TO ENSURE THAT AUTOMATIC MACHINES WHICH DO NOT SHOW A SCORE ARE LICENSABLE UNDER THE MISCELLANEOUS LICENCES ORDINANCE.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON DENIS BRAY, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON F.K. HU IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MR BRAY SAID BOTH THE POLICE AND LEGAL DEPARTMENT WERE LOOKING INTO THIS.

+IT SEEMS PROBABLE IT CAN ONLY BE ANSWERED IN THE COURTS,+ HE SAID.

+IT DOES HOWEVER SEEM TO A LAYMAN THAT IF A MACHINE DOES NOT REGISTER ANY SCORE OR COMBINATION IN ANY MANNER AND IF IT DOES NOT HAVE ANY OTHER OF THE FUNCTIONS WHICH BRINGS IT WITHIN THE DEFINITION OF THE ORDINANCE, THEN THAT MACHINE IS NOT LICENSABLE,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID THE COMMISSIONER FOR TELEVISION AND ENTERTAINMENT LICENSING IS NOT AWARE OF ANY COMMERCIALY MANUFACTURED AUTOMATIC OR VIDEO GAME MACHINE WHICH DOES NOT SHOW A SCORE OF SOME SORT.

+IF SUCH MACHINES EXIST THEY WILL PROBABLY BE MACHINES FROM WHICH THE SCORE MECHANISM HAVE BEEN DELIBERATELY REMOVED,+ HE SAID.

REPORTS HAD BEEN RECEIVED THAT SOME UNLICENSED ESTABLISHMENTS WERE STILL OPERATING WITH NEUTERED MACHINES OF THIS KIND.

+IF WE ARE ADVISED THAT THE MACHINES IN QUESTION ARE BEYOND LICENSING CONTROL, AND IF HONG KONG SEES A RASH OF UNLICENSED ESTABLISHMENTS OPENING UP TO USE THEM, AND ESPECIALLY IF SUCH MACHINES BEGIN TO BE COMMERCIALY MANUFACTURED IN THIS FORM, THEN THE GOVERNMENT WILL MAKE PROPOSALS FOR FRESH LEGISLATION TO ENSURE THAT SUCH GAMES CENTRES ARE BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL.

+I SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT, HOWEVER, THAT IT WOULD BE MORE SENSIBLE FOR OPERATORS TO APPLY FOR A LICENCE SO THAT EVERY MACHINE IN THEIR ESTABLISHMENT WAS FULLY FUNCTIONING RATHER THAN RESORT TO THIS TORTUOUS CIRCUMVENTION,+ HE ADDED.

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NO ULTERIOR MOTIVE SEEN BEHIND SQUATTER FIRES
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THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO IDENTIFY ANY ULTERIOR MOTIVES BEHIND THE RECENT SPATE OF SQUATTER FIRES.

THIS WAS DISCLOSED BY THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON LEWIS DAVIES, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY WHEN HE ANSWERED A QUESTION RAISED BY THE HON ANDREW SO.

HE SAID THAT EVEN THOUGH THE NATURE OF THESE FIRES MADE INVESTIGATION DIFFICULT, A SPECIAL POLICE TEAM HAD BEEN DEPLOYED TO GATHER INTELLIGENCE ON THE CAUSES OF THE FIRES AND THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE TO SHOW THAT THE MAJORITY OF THESE FIRES WERE NOT ACCIDENTAL.

THE POLICE HAD LOOKED INTO NUMEROUS MOTIVES, INCLUDING SUGGESTIONS THAT CRIMINAL ELEMENTS BUILDING HUTS HAD CAUSED THEM TO BE BURNED DOWN, SO AS TO GET FURTHER PROFITS, AND THAT SQUATTERS BURNED THEIR OWN PREMISES TO SPEED UP THEIR APPLICATIONS FOR HOUSING.

+NUMEROUS FAMILIES HAVE BEEN INTERVIEWED BUT THESE MOTIVES WERE NOT SUGGESTED BY THEM AND IT APPEARS THAT REPORTS WERE PURELY SPECULATIVE,+ HE SAID.

A FURTHER RUMOURED POSSIBILITY WAS THAT SOME OF THE FIRES OCCURRED AS A RESULT OF A PERSON BEING BLACKMAILED AND HIS FAILURE TO YIELD TO THE THREAT TO SET FIRE TO A HUT.

HOWEVER, MR DAVIES SAID, NONE OF THOSE INTERVIEWED MADE SUCH A STATEMENT.

TWO CASES HAD BEEN CLASSIFIED AS ARSON -- ONE THE APPARENT RESULT OF A SUICIDE, AND THE OTHER OCCURRING ON A CONSTRUCTION SITE INVOLVING NO LOSS OF HUTS.

HE ADVISED PEOPLE LIVING IN SQUATTER AREAS TO BE CONSTANTLY ON THE ALERT TO AVOID FIRES AND TO REPORT ANY PERSON BEHAVING SUSPICIOUSLY TO THE POLICE.

DURING THE LAST THREE MONTHS LAST YEAR, THERE WERE 46 SQUATTER FIRES INVOLVING 3 969 HUTS AND 15 288 PEOPLE.

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SQUATTER CONTROL IN EAST KOWLOON GREATLY IMPROVED

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CONTROL OF SQUATTING IN EAST KOWLOON GENERALLY HAS BEEN SUBSTANTIALLY IMPROVED AND NO UNAUTHORISED REBUILDING WILL BE PERMITTED ON ANY OF THE SQUATTER FIRE SITES.

THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, MR DONALD LIAO, SAID THIS TODAY IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS RAISED BY MR WONG LAM.

MR LIAO SAID THOSE FIRE SITES, PARTICULARLY THE SMALLER ONES, NOT CAPABLE OF REDEVELOPMENT WOULD BE CLEARED AND, IF NECESSARY, FENCED TO PREVENT NEW SQUATTING.

HE SAID SOME OF THE LARGER SITES WOULD BE USED FOR PERMANENT DEVELOPMENT, AS FAR AS WAS PRACTICABLE BY REVISING LAYOUTS AND RESCHEDULING PROGRAMMES.

+FOR EXAMPLE, IT IS PROPOSED TO TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY AT LAM TIN TO ADVANCE PUBLIC RENTAL AND HOME OWNERSHIP PROJECTS, WHILE THE SITES AT SAU MAU PING WILL ALSO PROVIDE AN EXTENSION TO THE NEIGHBOURING PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES,+ HE SAID.

ON THE QUESTION OF CLEARING DEBRIS FROM SQUATTER FIRE SITES, MR LIAO SAID WORKS ORDERS WERE BEING ISSUED AND THE WORK WOULD BE COMPLETED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

THE WORK WAS NORMALLY DONE BY THE CROWN LANDS AND SURVEY OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, AND BECAUSE OF THE LARGE NUMBER OF SITES REQUIRING CLEARANCE, 32 AT PRESENT, ADDITIONAL STAFF WERE BEING DEPLOYED FOR THIS PURPOSE, HE ADDED.

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HOSPITAL ADMISSION PROCEDURES

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PATIENTS WERE ADMITTED TO HOSPITAL THROUGH CASUALTY WARDS, PRIMARILY ON THEIR MEDICAL CONDITIONS, IRRESPECTIVE OF ORIGIN, RACE, COLOUR OR CREED, THE DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES, DR THE HON K.L. THONG, SAID TODAY.

+CONCOMITANT PROCEDURES, SUCH AS PROOF OF IDENTITY AND REGISTRATION ARE OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE,+ HE TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING THIS AFTERNOON.

DR THONG WAS ANSWERING A QUESTION BY AN UNOFFICIAL MEMBER, MR ANDREW SO, WHO ENQUIRED ABOUT THE ADMISSION PROCEDURE TO CASUALTY WARDS IN GOVERNMENT AND SUBVENTED HOSPITALS, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO PROOF OF IDENTITY.

/HE EXPLAINED

HE EXPLAINED THAT THE NORMAL PROCEDURE FOR ADMISSION THROUGH CASUALTY DEPARTMENTS OF GOVERNMENT AND SUBVENTED HOSPITALS INVOLVED MEDICAL EXAMINATION FIRST, AND THEN REGISTRATION OF PATIENTS, WHICH INCLUDES PROOF OF IDENTITY.

DR THONG SAID FOR EXAMPLE, THAT WHEN A NUMBER OF ILLEGAL-IMMIGRANT MOTHERS WENT RECENTLY FOR DELIVERY SERVICES IN PUBLIC HOSPITALS, THEY WERE IMMEDIATELY GIVEN TREATMENT.

+THEIR ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT STATUS AND PROOF OF IDENTITIES WERE REGARDED AS ENTIRELY DIFFERENT MATTERS AND WERE DEALT WITH SEPARATELY,+ HE ADDED.

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CAPITAL WORKS RESERVE FUND APPROVED
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A CAPITAL WORKS RESERVE FUND WILL BE ESTABLISHED FROM APRIL 1, 1982 TO FINANCE EXPENDITURE ON THE PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME AND ON LAND ACQUISITION.

IT WILL BE ADMINISTERED BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY AND FUNDED BY TRANSFERS FROM GENERAL REVENUE.

IN MOVING A MOTION FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FUND, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON JOHN BREMRIDGE, SAID THIS WOULD OVERCOME PROBLEMS IN THE EXISTING ARRANGEMENT WHEREBY FUNDS FOR CARRYING OUT THE PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME AND FOR LAND ACQUISITION WERE DIRECTLY VOTED IN THE ANNUAL ESTIMATES.

MR BREMRIDGE SAID THE ARRANGEMENT CREATED PROBLEMS BECAUSE, UNLIKE MOST OTHER GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE, CAPITAL WORKS USUALLY EXTEND OVER SEVERAL YEARS.

IT WAS DIFFICULT TO ESTIMATE ACCURATELY THE PROVISION REQUIRED FOR ANY PARTICULAR YEAR DUE TO THE VAGARIES OF THE WEATHER, THE SUBMISSION OF BILLS, OR A CONTRACTOR'S CAPACITY TO COMPLETE THE WORK.

+FURTHERMORE, IN THE PAST THE TOTAL APPROVED PROVISION IN ANY YEAR FOR CAPITAL WORKS HAS BEEN TAKEN AS THE GOVERNMENT'S DECLARED INTENTION TO SPEND THE FULL AMOUNT, AND STEPS HAVE THUS BEEN TAKEN TO COUNTER ANY SHORTFALL IN EXPENDITURE BY INJECTING NEW PROJECTS INTO THE PROGRAMME TO TAKE UP THE SLACK.

+THIS PROCEDURE HAS HELPED TO ENSURE THAT THE TOTAL FUNDS VOTED HAVE BEEN FULLY EXPENDED, BUT IT HAS ALSO LED TO AN INCREASE IN THE CARRY FORWARD COMMITMENT FOR FUTURE YEARS THEREBY REDUCING THE OPPORTUNITY TO INTRODUCE NEW ITEMS INTO THE PROGRAMME.

+FINALLY BECAUSE OF THE SUM INVOLVED, OVER OR UNDER-SPENDING ON THE NON-RECURRENT HEADS OF EXPENDITURE CAN MATERIALLY AFFECT THE GOVERNMENT'S TOTAL SURPLUS OR DEFICIT FOR A GIVEN YEAR.+

/MR BREMRIDGE

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MR BREMRIDGE SAID THIS COULD BE MISLEADING IF VIEWED IN ISOLATION, AND NOT SEEN IN RELATION TO THE SIZE OF THE OUTSTANDING COMMITMENT IN RESPECT OF CAPITAL WORKS.

AT THE END OF MARCH 1982, FOR INSTANCE, THE OVERHANG WOULD BE MORE THAN \$22 000 MILLIONS, COVERING WORKS THAT WOULD TAKE MORE THAN FOUR YEARS TO COMPLETE, HE SAID.

WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CAPITAL WORKS RESERVE FUND, HOWEVER, EXPENDITURE ON THE PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME AND ON LAND ACQUISITION WOULD BE REMOVED FROM THE ANNUAL ESTIMATES.

THE AMOUNT TO BE TRANSFERRED FROM GENERAL REVENUE TO THE FUND EACH YEAR WOULD BE CONSIDERED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE BUDGET FOR THAT YEAR, MR BREMRIDGE SAID, STARTING WITH HIS BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 1982/83, AND APPROPRIATION WOULD BE SOUGHT FROM THE COUNCIL IN THE NORMAL WAY.

+THE EXISTING PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME PROCEDURES WILL CONTINUE TO APPLY, AND FINANCE COMMITTEE'S CONTROL OF EXPENDITURE ON CAPITAL WORKS WILL REMAIN UNCHANGED,+ HE SAID.

MR BREMRIDGE DREW PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO CLAUSE (F) OF THE MOTION WHICH PROVIDES THAT THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY MAY FROM TIME TO TIME TRANSFER FROM THE FUND TO GENERAL REVENUE ANY BALANCE IN THE FUND.

+THE PURPOSE OF THIS CLAUSE IS TO ALLOW ANY ACCUMULATED SURPLUS IN THE FUND IN EXCESS OF REQUIREMENTS TO BE CREDITED BACK TO GENERAL REVENUE SHOULD THE NEED AT ANY TIME ARISE.

+I HOPE THAT THE NEED WILL INDEED NEVER ARISE. BUT IT IS NOT THE INTENTION OF THE PROPOSED ARRANGEMENT TO HYPOTHECATE REVENUE: THIS CLAUSE IS THUS NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT FUNDS ARE NOT STERILISED IN THE CAPITAL WORKS REVENUE FUND SHOULD (FOR REASONS THAT CANNOT BE ANTICIPATED) THE RECURRENT BUDGET RUN INTO DIFFICULTIES.+

+I HOPE MOREOVER THAT THE PUBLIC WILL VIEW THE SUMS APPROPRIATED FOR THIS RESERVE, MOST OF WHICH WILL COME FROM LAND SALES, AS EVIDENCE THAT WE ARE RETURNING TO INVESTMENT IN HONG KONG THE SURPLUSES THAT ARISE FROM LAND SALES WHICH ARE OFTEN LUMPY AND UNPREDICTABLE.+

MR BREMRIDGE ALSO SAID THAT THERE WAS A RIDICULOUS SUSPICION THAT GENERAL REVENUE ACCOUNT SURPLUSES HELD IN OUR RESERVES WERE NOT REALLY INTENDED FOR HONG KONG ENDS.

+I HOPE THAT THE CREATION OF THIS RESERVE FUND WILL TELL THE TRUE STORY AND LEAD TO A MORE BUSINESSLIKE PROCEDURE WITH REGARD TO THE HUGE PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME,+ HE ADDED.

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NEED TO PROTECT PUBLIC RECOGNISED

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THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONSCIOUS OF THE NEED TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC FROM CRIMINAL COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES AND HONG KONG'S INTERNATIONAL STANDING AS A FINANCIAL AND BUSINESS CENTRE.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JOHN GRIFFITHS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHARLES YEUNG, WHO ASKED WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WAS SATISFIED THAT THE PRESENT LEVEL OF EXPERTISE AND MANPOWER DEPLOYED TO COMBAT COMMERCIAL CRIMES WAS ADEQUATE TO DEAL WITH THE INCREASING COMPLEXITY AND INGENUITY OF SUCH CASES.

+GOVERNMENT IS SATISFIED THAT THE LEVEL OF EXPERTISE HAS BEEN IMPROVED OVER THE PAST YEAR OR SO, AND THAT IT IS COMPARABLE WITH THE STANDARDS OBTAINING IN OTHER MERCANTILE COMMUNITIES,+ MR GRIFFITHS SAID.

BEARING IN MIND COMPETING CLAIMS UPON POLICE AND LEGAL SOURCES, THE LEVEL OF MANPOWER NOW WAS ADEQUATE, HE SAID, +THOUGH SOME PROBLEMS, SUCH AS THE AVAILABILITY OF TRAINED ACCOUNTANTS REMAINED TO BE RESOLVED.+

IN THE POLICE FORCE, COMMERCIAL CRIMES WERE INVESTIGATED BY THE COMMERCIAL CRIMES BUREAU, AT PRESENT CONSISTING OF 111 OFFICERS SPECIALLY SELECTED FOR THEIR APTITUDE FOR SUCH WORK. MANY OVERSEAS STUDY COURSES AND TRAINING SCHEMES CONCERNED WITH VARIOUS ASPECTS OF COMMERCIAL CRIME WERE AVAILABLE TO THE BUREAU.

+THE DECISION HAS RECENTLY BEEN TAKEN TO INCREASE THE BUREAU'S STRENGTH BY A FURTHER 36 OFFICERS.

+IT IS HOPED THAT BY MID-MARCH THE BUREAU WILL BE AS NEAR AS PRACTICABLE TO ITS ESTABLISHMENT,+ HE SAID.

MR GRIFFITHS SAID COMMERCIAL CRIMES WERE PROSECUTED BY A SPECIALIST COMMERCIAL CRIMES UNIT IN HIS CHAMBERS REPORTING TO THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTION, HEADED BY A DEPUTY CROWN PROSECUTOR AND CONSISTING OF 10 LAWYERS.

+THESE COUNSEL ALSO WERE SPECIALLY SELECTED AND WORK ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ON COMMERCIAL CRIMES. SOME MEMBERS OF THIS UNIT HAVE BEEN UPON VARIOUS COURSES TO LEARN HOW THE PROBLEM OF PROSECUTING COMMERCIAL CRIMES ARE DEALT WITH IN OTHER COUNTRIES, AS WELL AS ON VISITS TO VARIOUS EXCHANGES AND BUSINESSES IN HONG KONG TO LEARN IN PRACTICE HOW THEY FUNCTION.+

NO MATTER HOW WELL COMMERCIAL CRIMES WERE INVESTIGATED AND PROSECUTED, THE ILLEGAL PROFITS WERE SUCH THAT PEOPLE WOULD CONTINUE TO COMMIT THEM, HE SAID.

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DRUG OFFENCES INVOLVING PERSONS UNDER 21

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SIX-HUNDRED-AND-NINETY-THREE PERSONS UNDER 21 YEARS OF AGE WERE PROSECUTED FOR DRUG OFFENCES, MAKING UP NINE PER CENT OF THE TOTAL DRUG CASES LAST YEAR, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON LEWIS DAVIES, SAID AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

IN 1980, THE FIGURES WERE 304 YOUNG PEOPLE OUT OF 5 609 CASES, SHOWING AN INCREASE OF 389 CASES BETWEEN THE TWO YEARS, HE SAID.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON HO KAM-FAI, MR DAVIES SAID ALSO THAT THE ANTI-NARCOTICS EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY ACTIVITIES ARE CO-ORDINATED AT THE POLICY LEVEL BY A 'SUB-COMMITTEE FOR PREVENTIVE EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY OF THE ACTION COMMITTEE AGAINST NARCOTICS', OR ACAN FOR SHORT.

THE PUBLICITY PROGRAMME EMBRACES A WIDE RANGE OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROJECTS AND PUBLICITY, THROUGH THE MASS MEDIA, AS WELL AS DISTRICT CAMPAIGNS, YOUTH PROGRAMMES, DISCUSSION GROUPS, SCHOOL COMPETITIONS, AND CONCERTS, HE SAID.

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GREATER PARTICIPATION SEEN

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY APPROVED THE CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES (AMENDMENT) BILL AND THE URBAN COUNCIL AND DISTRICT BOARDS (ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS OF MEMBERS) (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL.

SPEAKING AT THE SECOND READING DEBATE OF THE BILLS, MR CHEUNG YAN-LUNG BELIEVED THEY WOULD ENCOURAGE GREATER PARTICIPATION IN DISTRICT BOARDS ELECTIONS BY NEW TERRITORIES RESIDENTS.

HOWEVER, HE EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE ELECTION EXPENSES LIMIT OF \$10 000 WAS NOT ENOUGH FOR A CANDIDATE TO MEET THE EXPENSES FOR TRANSPORTING VOTERS TO AND FROM A POLLING STATION AND ORGANISE HIS CAMPAIGN WITH ADEQUATE PUBLICITY.

+ I AM AFRAID THAT THE ENTHUSIASM OF THE VOTERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN WILL BE AFFECTED AS A RESULT, + HE SAID.

MR CHEUNG WELCOMED THE PROVISION WHICH ENABLED URBAN RESIDENTS TO BE ELECTED OR APPOINTED TO THE NEW TERRITORIES DISTRICT BOARDS.

HE SAID ABOUT ONE IN FIVE OF THE 1.3 NEW TERRITORIES POPULATION WERE INDIGENOUS RESIDENTS AND THE MAJORITY OF NEW RESIDENTS WERE FORMERLY URBAN RESIDENTS.

HE BELIEVED THAT THE URBAN LIVING EXPERIENCE WOULD BENEFIT THE NEW TERRITORIES IN THE LONG RUN.

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FURTHER ACTION PLANNED AGAINST FUTURES HAWKING
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THE GOVERNMENT IS CONSIDERING AMENDING THE ORDINANCE PROHIBITING HAWKING OF FUTURES CONTRACTS TO MAKE IT MORE EFFECTIVE, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, MR JOHN GRIFFITHS, DISCLOSED TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR GRIFFITHS WAS SPEAKING AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION FROM MR CHARLES YEUNG.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO PROSECUTIONS UNDER THE SAID ORDINANCE SINCE IT WAS AMENDED DUE TO TWO REASONS:

+FIRST, COMPLAINTS OF ILLEGAL HAWKING ARE NEVER MADE ALONE BUT ARE INVARIABLY COMBINED WITH A MORE SERIOUS ALLEGATION AGAINST THE COMMODITIES TRADER NORMALLY THAT THE COMPLAINANT HAS BEEN DEFRAUDED.

+SECONDLY, BY THE TIME THE COMPLAINANT HAS LOST HIS MONEY AND MADE A REPORT TO THE POLICE, THE TIME LIMIT OF SIX MONTHS PRESCRIBED BY SECTION 26 OF THE MAGISTRATES' ORDINANCE FOR NON-INDICTABLE OFFENCES (WHICH CATEGORY INCLUDES ILLEGAL HAWKING OF COMMODITIES FUTURES CONTRACTS) HAS OFTEN ELAPSED,+ MR GRIFFITHS EXPLAINED.

+WHEREAS ILLEGAL HAWKING IS A COMPARATIVELY MINOR ASPECT OF COMMODITIES TRADING MALPRACTICE, IT WOULD, BUT FOR THE DIFFICULTIES I HAVE MENTIONED, BE A FAIRLY SIMPLE CHARGE TO PROVE IN COURT AND THUS DEAL EASILY AND QUICKLY WITH A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF PERSONS TRADING IMPROPERLY IN COMMODITIES FUTURES, BECAUSE ALMOST ALL THE COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY THE POLICE HAVE INCLUDED AN ALLEGATION THAT THE FUTURE CONTRACTS WERE ORIGINALLY HAWKED,+ HE SAID.

THE GOVERNMENT WAS, HOWEVER, CONSIDERING AMENDING THE CONCERNED SECTION OF THE ORDINANCE IN TWO WAYS: +FIRST, TO BROADEN THE DEFINITION OF 'HAWKING' AND SECONDLY TO CONSIDER TAKING THE OFFENCE OUTSIDE THE AMBIT OF SECTION 26 OF THE MAGISTRATES' ORDINANCE.+

MR GRIFFITHS SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS ALSO NOT SATISFIED WITH THE PRESENT LEVEL OF PENALTIES FOR UNREGISTERED COMMODITIES TRADING, NOR WITH THE FACT THAT TRADING IN FUTURES CONTRACTS BETWEEN BROKER AND CLIENT WITHOUT PASSING THE TRANSACTION THROUGH A RECOGNISED EXCHANGE REMAINED LEGAL IN HONG KONG.

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REGISTRATION LIMIT ON TAXIS EXTENDED

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THE PERIOD LIMITING THE NUMBER OF MOTOR VEHICLES WHICH MAY BE REGISTERED AS URBAN OR NEW TERRITORIES TAXIS HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO JULY 31, 1982.

SEEKING LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL APPROVAL FOR THE EXTENSION, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON ALAN SCOTT SAID THIS WOULD PERMIT URBAN TAXI LICENCES TO CONTINUE TO BE ISSUED AT THE RATE OF 100 PER MONTH AND NEW TERRITORIES TAXI LICENCES AT THE RATE OF 50 A MONTH.

THE CURRENT SPECIFIED MAXIMUM NUMBER FOR URBAN TAXIS IS 12 000, AND 3 000 FOR NEW TERRITORIES TAXIS.

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CROWN LAND AUCTIONS

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THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, MR D.W. MCDONALD, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY THAT WHEN CROWN LAND ATTRACTED NO BIDS AT AUCTION, THE NORMAL PRACTICE WAS TO WITHDRAW IT, REFER IT TO THE LAND AGENTS FOR REASSESSMENT, AND PUT IT UP FOR SALE AGAIN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON MARIA TAM ABOUT RESERVE PRICES FOR CROWN LAND, FOLLOWING THE WITHDRAWAL OF FOUR PIECES OF LAND FROM A RECENT PUBLIC AUCTION.

MR MCDONALD SAID THAT TO DETERMINE THE RESERVE PRICE -- OR STARTING PRICE -- THE LAND AGENTS FIRST ASSESSED THE CURRENT MARKET VALUE OF THE SITE, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT RECENT SALES OF COMPARABLE SITES BY THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND GENERAL TRENDS IN THE LAND MARKET.

+THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS IS, OF COURSE, MUCH SIMPLER IN A RISING OR STEADY MARKET THAN IT IS WHEN THE MARKET IS FALLING, PARTICULARLY IF IT IS FALLING UNEVENLY OR ERATICALLY,+ HE SAID.

FOR RECENT SALES, STARTING PRICES HAD BEEN SET SOME 10 TO 30 PER CENT BELOW ESTIMATED LAND VALUES. IN THE CASE OF THE NEW TERRITORIES AUCTIONS MISS TAM HAD REFERRED TO, WHEN FOUR OUT OF SEVEN LOTS ATTRACTED NO BIDS, THE REDUCTIONS HAD BEEN 30 TO 40 PER CENT.

+THE RESULTS OF THOSE AUCTIONS SUGGEST A CURRENT LACK OF INTEREST IN INDUSTRIAL LAND IN THE NEW TERRITORIES AND IN THE MORE REMOTE RESIDENTIAL SITES, ALTHOUGH IT IS PERHAPS SIGNIFICANT THAT FIVE PARTIES HAVE SUBSEQUENTLY SHOWN INTEREST IN PURCHASING ONE OF THE WITHDRAWN RESIDENTIAL SITES,+ MR MCDONALD SAID.

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GOOD CHANCE FOR DEGREE COURSES AT POLYTECHNIC
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A REVIEW PANEL OF THE COUNCIL FOR NATIONAL ACADEMIC AWARDS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM VISITED THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC LAST NOVEMBER TO ASSESS THE POLYTECHNIC'S PROPOSALS FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF FIVE NEW DEGREE-COURSES, THE HON S.L. CHEN TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

ALTHOUGH ITS VERDICT WAS STILL AWAITED, HE HAD IT ON GOOD AUTHORITY THAT THE PROGNOSIS WAS GOOD, HE SAID.

SPEAKING AT THE TABLING OF THE NINTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC FOR THE YEAR ENDED JULY 31, 1981, MR CHEN SAID THE PROPOSED DEGREE-COURSES WERE SUBMITTED, BY INVITATION, THROUGH THE UNIVERSITY AND POLYTECHNIC GRANTS COMMITTEE. THESE WERE IN THE AREAS OF APPLIED SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICAL STUDIES, COMPUTING STUDIES, ELECTRONIC ENGINEERING, MECHANICAL ENGINEERING, AND SOCIAL WORK.

+BUT WHATEVER THE OUTCOME, IT REFLECTS I THINK GREAT CREDIT UPON THE STAFF OF THE POLYTECHNIC THAT WITHIN THE FIRST DECADE OF THE INSTITUTION'S EXISTENCE AND DESPITE THE PRESSURES UPON THEM TO EXPAND IN QUANTITATIVE TERMS AT A PHENOMENAL SPEED, THEY HAVE NOT ONLY MAINTAINED ACADEMIC STANDARDS BUT IN MANY AREAS HAVE MANAGED TO IMPROVE THEM TO A LEVEL AT WHICH DEGREE-AWARDS ARE A DISTINCTLY VIABLE PROPOSITION,+ HE SAID.

MR CHEN REPORTED THAT DURING THE YEAR UNDER REVIEW, THE FULL-TIME STUDENT POPULATION OF THE POLYTECHNIC INCREASED BY NINE PER CENT TO 7 400.

THIS IS HIGHER THAN THE PREVIOUS YEAR'S FIVE PER CENT BUT SMALL IN COMPARISON WITH THE EARLIER YEARS WHEN STUDENT INTAKES DOUBLED AND REDOUBLED WITH ALMOST MONOTONOUS FREQUENCY.

HOWEVER, HE POINTED OUT, THE CONSTRAINT OF SPACE AT THE HUNG HOM SITE NOW PREVENTS FURTHER EXPANSION TO ANY SIGNIFICANT EXTENT.

MR CHEN NOTED THAT OVER 76 PER CENT OF LAST YEAR'S 2 409 GRADUATES HAD FOUND SUITABLE EMPLOYMENT, 19 PER CENT HAD UNDERTAKEN FURTHER STUDIES AND ONLY 4.8 PER CENT HAD NOT STARTED WORK ON OCTOBER 31, 1981, THOUGH MANY WERE JUST ABOUT TO DO SO.

+MOST ENCOURAGING IS AN ANALYSIS OF THE STARTING SALARIES OF POLYTECHNIC GRADUATES, WHICH SHOWS THAT THE ANNUAL INCREASE IS RISING FASTER THAN INFLATION,+ HE SAID.

+THIS CLEARLY INDICATES THE INCREASING VALUE TO THE COMMUNITY, IN REAL TERMS, OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING WHICH THE POLYTECHNIC OFFERS.+

/MR CHEN

MR CHEN ALSO REVEALED THAT THE POLYTECHNIC IS NOW IN ITS TENTH YEAR AND PLANS ARE IN HAND TO MARK THE OCCASION WITH APPROPRIATE EVENTS.

+I CAN SAY WITH CONFIDENCE, SIR, THAT THE POLYTECHNIC HAS NOW COME OF AGE, AND CAN COPE WITH THE INCREASING COMPLEXITIES OF FUTURE DECADES FROM A WELL-FOUNDED BASE OF EXPERIENCE AND MATURITY,+ MR CHEN SAID.

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THREE BILLS PASSED
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THREE BILLS WERE PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THEY ARE THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC (AMENDMENT) BILL 1982, THE CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1982 AND THE URBAN COUNCIL AND DISTRICT BOARDS (ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS OF MEMBERS) (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL 1982.

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BILL TO EXTEND TERM OF OFFICE OF KUK MEMBERS
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THE REGIONAL SECRETARY NEW TERRITORIES, MR IAN MACPHERSON, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) MOVED THE SECOND READING OF THE HEUNG YEE KUK (AMENDMENT) BILL 1982 SEEKING TO EXTEND THE TERM OF OFFICE OF KUK MEMBERS TO THREE YEARS.

+THE CHAIRMEN OF RURAL COMMITTEES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES ARE EX-OFFICIO COUNCILLORS OF THE HEUNG YEE KUK AND HAVE SEATS PROVIDED FOR THEM ON THE DISTRICT BOARDS,+ MR MACPHERSON SAID.

+THE TERM OF OFFICE OF DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS UNDER THE DISTRICT BOARDS ORDINANCE IS THREE YEARS, WHEREAS THAT OF RURAL COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN AND HEUNG YEE KUK COUNCILLORS IS TWO YEARS.

+BOTH THE RURAL COMMITTEES AND THE HEUNG YEE KUK HAVE AGREED TO EXTEND THE TERM OF OFFICE OF THEIR OFFICE BEARERS AND MEMBERS RESPECTIVELY TO THREE YEARS TO CORRESPOND WITH THAT OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS, BUT IN THE LATTER CASE AN AMENDMENT TO SECTION 5 (2) OF THE HEUNG YEE KUK ORDINANCE IS REQUIRED,+ HE SAID.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 1982

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PROPERTY TAX

THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1982 WHICH SEEKS MAINLY TO ENSURE THAT NO PROPERTY OWNER WILL BE REQUIRED TO PAY PROPERTY TAX ON ASSESSABLE VALUES EXCEEDING THE ACTUAL RENT WAS INTRODUCED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON JOHN BREMRIDGE SAID THE BILL PROVIDES THAT WHERE THE ASSESSABLE VALUE EXCEEDS THE ANNUAL RENT, THE ASSESSABLE VALUE SHALL BE REDUCED TO THE ANNUAL RENT.

MR BREMRIDGE SAID THE BILL ALSO PROVIDES FOR A +SECOND HOME+ WHICH IS OCCUPIED BY THE OWNER AND NOT PRODUCING RENTAL INCOME ALSO TO BE RELIEVED FROM PROPERTY TAX.

EXEMPTION FROM PROPERTY TAX ON THE GROUNDS OF OWNER OCCUPATION FOR RESIDENTIAL PURPOSES WAS PREVIOUSLY RESTRICTED TO ONE PROPERTY ONLY, HE SAID.

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HOLIDAY MAIL

ALL POST OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED ON SUNDAY, MONDAY AND WEDNESDAY (JANUARY 24, 25 AND 27) DURING THE LUNAR NEW YEAR HOLIDAYS, THE POSTMASTER GENERAL ANNOUNCED TODAY.

ON TUESDAY (JANUARY 26) 33 POST OFFICES, INCLUDING THE GENERAL POST OFFICE ON HONG KONG ISLAND, KOWLOON CENTRAL AND TSIM SHA TSUI IN KOWLOON, AND TSUEN WAN AND TAI PO POST OFFICES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, WILL BE OPEN FROM 9 AM TO 12 NOON.

THERE WILL BE ONE DELIVERY OF MAIL ON SUNDAY AND ON TUESDAY.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 1982

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RED PACKETS FOR NEEDY

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LOCAL PHILANTHROPIST SIR SHIU-KIN TANG - HELPED BY FILM STAR FUNG PO PO - TODAY (WEDNESDAY) DISTRIBUTED \$100 LUNAR NEW YEAR RED PACKETS TO NEARLY 300 WIDOWS OR WIDOWERS WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN AND ON PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AT A CEREMONY AT PO LEUNG KUK.

THE CEREMONY MARKED THE START OF A SERIES OF DISTRIBUTION OF +LAI SEE+ TO 2034 WIDOWS OR WIDOWERS WHO HAVE DEPENDENT CHILDREN AND ARE RECEIVING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND 4 654 RESIDENTS OF HOMES AND HOSTELS FOR THE ELDERLY.

MORE THAN 300 ELDERLY PATIENTS OF FIVE HOSPITALS BELONGING TO THE TUNG WAH GROUP WHO HAVE NO CLOSE FAMILY MEMBERS OR NO HOMES TO RETURN TO WILL ALSO RECEIVE THE RED PACKETS.

ABOUT \$700 000 HAS BEEN ALLOCATED FROM THE TANG SHIU-KIN HO TIM CHARITABLE FUND, ADMINISTERED BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT, FOR THIS PURPOSE.

ACCOMPANYING SIR SHIU-KIN TODAY WERE MEMBERS OF THE FUND'S MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE.

IN A SPEECH AT THE CEREMONY TODAY, MR CHARLES C.K. LUI, ADVISER TO THE FUND, PAID TRIBUTE TO SIR SHIU-KIN AND MR HO TIM, CO-FOUNDERS OF THE FUND, FOR THEIR GENEROSITY.

+THERE IS A LARGE MEASURE OF FLEXIBILITY IN THE OPERATION OF THE FUND,+ MR LUI SAID. +BECAUSE OF THIS, THE FUND CAN COMPLEMENT THE VARIOUS ASSISTANCE SCHEMES RUN BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT IN MEETING PRACTICAL NEEDS.+

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KWUN TONG URBAN CLEARWAY

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A SECTION OF NGAU TAU KOK ROAD NEAR ITS JUNCTION WITH CHOI WAN ROAD IN KWUN TONG WILL BE DESIGNATED AS AN URBAN CLEARWAY FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY (JANUARY 22).

WITHIN THE CLEARWAY, ALL VEHICLES EXCEPT FRANCHISED BUSES WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO STOP FOR PASSENGERS AND GOODS FROM 7 AM TO 7 PM DAILY.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 1982

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OPENING OF NEW CHEUNG CHAU PUBLIC LIBRARY
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THE CULTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT'S NEW CHEUNG CHAU PUBLIC LIBRARY WAS OFFICIALLY OPENED TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE OPENING CEREMONY WAS OFFICIATED BY DIRECTOR OF URBAN SERVICES, MR B.D. WILSON- CHAIRMAN OF THE CHEUNG CHAU RURAL COMMITTEE, MR FUNG PAK-TAI- VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE CHEUNG CHAU RURAL COMMITTEE, MR CHENG CHUEN-KWAI AND MR HO YUN-LAM.

THE LIBRARY IS LOCATED ON THE GROUND FLOOR OF THE CHEUNG CHAU RURAL COMMITTEE BUILDING IN CHURCH ROAD AND HAS A BOOK COLLECTION OF ABOUT 8 000 VOLUMES.

THE LIBRARY CONSISTS OF AN ADULT LENDING LIBRARY, A JUNIOR LENDING LIBRARY, ADULT AND JUNIOR REFERENCE COLLECTIONS AND A NEWSPAPERS/PERIODICALS SECTION.

THE NEW LIBRARY OPENS EVERY MONDAY TO FRIDAY (EXCEPT THURSDAY) FROM 10 AM TO 1 PM AND FROM 2 PM TO 6 PM.

IT IS ALSO OPEN ON SATURDAYS FROM 9 AM TO 1 PM AND FROM 2 PM TO 5 PM- AS WELL AS FROM 9 AM TO 1 PM ON SUNDAYS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS.

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PRIMARY SCHOOLS GARDENING CONTEST HELD
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LI CHENG UK GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOL (AM) WON THE OVERALL CHAMPIONSHIP IN THIS YEAR'S URBAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS VEGETABLE-GARDENING COMPETITION ORGANISED BY THE PRIMARY SCIENCE SECTION OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

MORE THAN 70 SCHOOLS TOOK PART IN THE COMPETITION AND THE STUDENTS HAVE GROWN TOMATO, BUSH BEAN, CABBAGE AND BROCCOLI IN POTS UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF THEIR TEACHERS.

JUDGING TOOK PLACE THIS (WEDNESDAY) MORNING AT THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S TEACHING CENTRE IN NORTH POINT.

APART FROM THE OVERALL CHAMPIONSHIP, THE FIRST PRIZES FOR THE INDIVIDUAL GROUP OF VEGETABLES GROWN WENT TO LI CHENG UK GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOL (AM), FIVE DISTRICT YAN KAU PRIMARY SCHOOL, AND CANTON ROAD GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOL (AM).

AN EXHIBITION OF THE ENTRIES WILL BE HELD TOMORROW AT THE TEACHING CENTRE AT 4 PAK FUK ROAD, NORTH POINT, AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 1982

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PLB PROHIBITED ZONE
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KA WO STREET IN ABERDEEN WILL BE DESIGNATED AS A PUBLIC LIGHT BUS PROHIBITED ZONE FROM 10 AM ON SATURDAY (JANUARY 23).

ALL PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES WILL BE PROHIBITED FROM ENTERING THIS AREA.

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TIN WAN TRAFFIC PLAN
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NEW TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE INTRODUCED IN TIN WAN FROM 10 AM ON SATURDAY (JANUARY 23) TO IMPROVE TRAFFIC FLOW.

THEY ARE:

- * KA WO STREET AND HING WO STREET WILL BE RE-ROUTED ONE-WAY FROM TIN WAN STREET TO SHEK PAI WAN ROAD,
- * TANG FUNG STREET WILL BE PROHIBITED TO ALL VEHICLES EXCEPT THOSE REQUIRING ACCESS,
- * THE EXISTING PLB +MAXICAB+ STAND FOR MAXICAB ROUTE 11 IN HING WO STREET WILL BE RESITED TO KA WO STREET.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 1982

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BUSES ONLY ZONE
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THE CHAI WAN KOK WEST BUS TERMINUS IN TSUEN WAN WILL BE DESIGNATED AS A PROHIBITED ZONE FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY (JANUARY 22).

ALL VEHICLES EXCEPT FRANCHISED BUSES WILL BE PROHIBITED FROM ENTERING THE AREA.

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US-HK TEXTILE NEGOTIATIONS

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NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE RENEWAL OF THE US-HONG KONG BILATERAL TEXTILE AGREEMENT WILL COMMENCE IN WASHINGTON ON FEBRUARY 8, THE TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE CURRENT FIVE-YEAR AGREEMENT EXPIRES AT THE END OF 1982, AND WILL HAVE TO BE REPLACED BY NEW AGREEMENTS NEGOTIATED UNDER THE TERMS OF THE RECENTLY-EXTENDED MFA.

THE HONG KONG DELEGATION WILL BE LED BY THE COMMISSIONER OF TRADE, MR L.W.R. MILLS.

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