



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1975

<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
NEW RATES OF DUTY ON LIQUORS AND TOBACCO AND REVISED REGISTRATION TAX FOR CARS EFFECTIVE TODAY .....	1
FULL REVIEW OF TEXTILES EXPORT CONTROL SYSTEM UNDERWAY	5
NO NEED FOR SECRETARY FOR YOUTH .....	7
COMPENSATION FOR WORKMEN SUFFERING FROM SILICOSIS .....	8
COMMUNITY SERVICE - KEYNOTE OF MORAL EDUCATION .....	9
SPEEDY ANALYSES OF SUSPECT FOOD AND BEVERAGES .....	10
MORE STAFF FOR INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT .....	11
GO-AHEAD FOR LEVY TO FINANCE TRAINING FOR CLOTHING INDUSTRY .....	12
BILLS PASSED .....	13
HONG KONG PEOPLE HEALTHIER THAN EVER, SAYS DR. CHOA ....	14
WATER CUT IN TSUEN WAN .....	16

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1975

- 1 -

NEW RATES OF DUTY ON LIQUORS AND TOBACCO  
REVISED REGISTRATION TAX FOR CARS EFFECTIVE TODAY  
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NEW RATES OF FIRST REGISTRATION TAX FOR MOTOR VEHICLES AND OF DUTIES ON SPIRITUOUS LIQUORS AND MANUFACTURED TOBACCO FROM COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES WERE ANNOUNCED BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE NEW RATES OF FIRST REGISTRATION TAX WILL COME INTO EFFECT FROM 6 P.M. TODAY. THE NEW RATES OF DUTY, MADE IN AN ORDER UNDER THE PUBLIC REVENUE PROTECTION ORDINANCE AND SIGNED BY THE ACTING GOVERNOR THIS MORNING, CAME INTO EFFECT AT 3 P.M. TODAY.

IN MAKING THE ANNOUNCEMENT, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTION WAS TAKEN +TO HONOUR THE UNDERTAKING GIVEN TO THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT SHOULD HONG KONG BE DESIGNATED AS A BENEFICIARY OF THE U.S. GENERALISED SCHEME OF PREFERENCES.+

THE UNDERTAKING, GIVEN IN MAY THIS YEAR, WAS +THAT THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE, BEFORE JANUARY 1, 1976, BEING THE STARTING DATE FOR THE SCHEME, THE NECESSARY LEGISLATIVE STEPS TO ELIMINATE ALL TAX OR DUTY PREFERENCES IN FAVOUR OF DEVELOPED COUNTRIES.+

HE NOTED THAT SOME 25 PER CENT OF HONG KONG'S EXPORTS TO THE UNITED STATES, ON THE PRESENT PATTERN OF TRADE, WOULD QUALIFY FOR PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT.

+SO HAD WE BEEN LEFT OUT OF THE SCHEME WE WOULD HAVE BEEN QUITE SERIOUSLY DISCRIMINATED AGAINST IN FAVOUR OF OUR COMPETITORS,+ HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THE ECONOMIES OF OUR COMPETITORS WOULD HAVE BENEFITED FURTHER AT OUR EXPENSE TO THE EXTENT THAT THE PREFERENCES AVAILABLE UNDER THE SCHEME ASSISTED IN THE DIVERSIFICATION OF THEIR INDUSTRIAL INVESTMENT.

/THE NEW SCHEDULE .....

THE NEW SCHEDULE TO THE MOTOR VEHICLES (FIRST REGISTRATION TAX) ORDINANCE WILL PROVIDE FOR TAX TO BE LEVIED ON AN AD VALOREM BASIS AS FOLLOWS:

ENFRANCHISED PUBLIC BUSES	NIL (AS NOW)
ALL OTHER BUSES (I.E. NON-ENFRANCHISED PUBLIC BUSES, PRIVATE BUSES, PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES AND PRIVATE LIGHT BUSES)	15% (COMPARED WITH 15% ON NON-COMMONWEALTH VEHICLES ONLY)
GOODS VEHICLES	15% (COMPARED WITH 15% ON NON-COMMONWEALTH VEHICLES ONLY)
TAXIS AND ENFRANCHISED PUBLIC CARS	15% (COMPARED WITH 15% ON NON-COMMONWEALTH VEHICLES ONLY)
NON-ENFRANCHISED PUBLIC CARS	30% (COMPARED WITH 15% ON COMMONWEALTH VEHICLES AND 30% ON NON-COMMONWEALTH VEHICLES)
PRIVATE CARS	30% (COMPARED WITH 15% ON COMMONWEALTH VEHICLES AND 30% ON NON-COMMONWEALTH VEHICLES)
MOTOR CYCLES AND TRICYCLES	30% (COMPARED WITH 15% ON COMMONWEALTH VEHICLES AND 30% ON NON-COMMONWEALTH VEHICLES)

/AS REGARDS .....

AS REGARDS IMPORTS OF SPIRITUOUS LIQUORS AND MANUFACTURED TOBACCO FROM COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY PROPOSED TO ELIMINATE THE PREFERENCE MARGINS BY RAISING THE RATES TO THE LEVEL OF THE RATES APPLICABLE TO IMPORTS FROM NON-COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES.

IN ADDITION, HE PROPOSED TO RAISE THE GENERAL RATES ON MOST PRODUCTS TO LEVELS WHICH WILL YIELD PART OF THE EXTRA REVENUE NEEDED IN 1976-77.

+THE NEW RATES,+ HE SAID, +MAY SLIGHTLY DISCOURAGE SALES, BUT I AM CONFIDENT THAT THERE WILL BE NO QUESTION OF DIMINISHING RETURNS.+ HE ADDED THAT THE EFFECT ON THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX WOULD BE +MINIMAL+.

SOME EXAMPLES OF THE NEW RATES IN TERMS OF DUTY PAID PER BOTTLE (ROUNDING OFF VERY SLIGHTLY FOR SIMPLICITY'S SAKE) ARE AS FOLLOWS:

BRANDY	\$19 (\$18.94 COMPARED WITH \$14.63 ON COMMONWEALTH ORIGIN, AND \$15.86 ON NON-COMMONWEALTH ORIGIN, IMPORTS)
OTHER EUROPEAN TYPE SPIRITS	\$16 (\$15.95 COMPARED WITH \$14.61)
CHAMPAGNE AND SPARKLING WINES	\$12 (\$12.00 COMPARED WITH \$10.22)
STILL WINES ABOVE 15%	\$6 (\$6.01 COMPARED WITH \$5.08)
STILL WINES BELOW 15%	\$5 (\$5.01 COMPARED WITH \$4.24)
BEER, IMPORTED, SMALL BOTTLE	\$0.25 (\$0.25 COMPARED WITH \$0.23)
BEER, LOCAL, SMALL BOTTLE	\$0.20 (\$0.20 COMPARED WITH \$0.175)
CHINESE TYPE SPIRITS, IMPORTED	\$1.65 (\$1.65 COMPARED WITH \$1.51)

ON TOBACCO, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID THE NEW RATE OF DUTY OF MANUFACTURED TOBACCO HAVE BEEN INCREASED BY ABOUT 15 PER CENT TO \$19.80 PER POUND FOR CIGARS, TO \$18.50 PER POUND FOR CIGARETTES, TO \$3.70 PER POUND FOR CHINESE PREPARED TOBACCO. AND TO \$14.90 PER POUND FOR UNMANUFACTURED TOBACCO.

THE NEW RATE OF DUTY PAID PER PACKET OF 20 IMPORTED CIGARETTES WILL BE BETWEEN \$0.75 AND \$0.85.

/TURNING TO .....

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 1975

- 4 -

TURNING TO THE EFFECT OF THE INCREASES IN DUTIES ON THE COST OF LIVING, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID IN TERMS OF PRICES PARTICULAR PRODUCTS IN THE SHOPS, THIS WILL DEPEND ON THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE INCREASES ARE ABSORBED WITHIN THE PROFIT MARGINS OF IMPORTERS AND MANUFACTURERS, ON THE ONE HAND, AND RETAILERS, ON THE OTHER, AS OPPOSED TO BEING PASSED ON TO CUSTOMERS.

ON A STANDARD BOTTLE OF (NON-COMMONWEALTH) BRANDY, THE INCREASE IS \$3 AND ON A STANDARD BOTTLE OF COMMONWEALTH WHISKY, \$1.35.

THE INCREASE ON A SMALL BOTTLE OF BEER IS ONLY \$0.02 (AND ON A LARGE BOTTLE \$0.04).

ON A PACKET OF 20 CIGARETTES, THE DUTY INCREASE IS RATHER MORE OR RATHER LESS THAN \$0.10, DEPENDING ON WEIGHT AND TO AN INSIGNIFICANT EXTENT, ON ORIGIN.

ON THE EFFECT ON THE OVERALL COST OF LIVING AS MEASURED BY THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID THE EFFECT WOULD NOT EXCEED 0.1 PER CENT.

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1975

- 5 -

FULL REVIEW OF TEXTILES EXPORT CONTROL SYSTEM UNDERWAY

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THE DIRECTOR OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, THE HON. DAVID JORDAN REITERATED TODAY THAT THE D.C. AND I. WAS CONDUCTING A THOROUGH REVIEW OF THE TEXTILES EXPORT CONTROL SYSTEM.

HE SAID THAT THE DEPARTMENT HAD THROUGH THE PRESS AND THROUGH WRITTEN INVITATIONS ASKED THOSE INTERESTED TO PUT THEIR VIEWS TO THE D.C. AND I. AS TO WHETHER ANY CHANGES WERE REQUIRED TO THE EXISTING SYSTEM AND, IF SO, WHAT THOSE CHANGES SHOULD BE.

A NUMBER OF PROPOSALS, HE ADDED, HAVE ALREADY BEEN RECEIVED AND WERE BEING CONSIDERED.

MR. JORDAN WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION PUT BY THE HON. ALEX WU IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS AFTERNOON.

MR. JORDAN POINTED OUT THAT THE BASIC PRINCIPLE OF THE PRESENT SYSTEM WAS THAT ALLOCATION OF TEXTILE QUOTA WAS BASED ON PAST PERFORMANCE.

HOWEVER, HE ADDED, NON-QUOTA HOLDERS COULD TAKE PART IN +FREE-QUOTA+ SCHEMES OPERATED FROM TIME TO TIME BY THE DEPARTMENT, AND COMPANIES THAT WERE ABLE TO UTILIZE FULLY THE YARDAGE OBTAINED IN THIS MANNER WERE ELEGIBLE FOR A QUOTA ALLOCATION IN THE NEXT TEXTILE YEAR, THAT IS TO SAY, THEY BECOME QUOTA-HOLDERS THEMSELVES.

MR. JORDAN ADDED: +AT THIS STAGE, WHILE OUR REVIEW IS IN PROGRESS, I SHOULD NOT LIKE TO COMMIT MYSELF AS TO HOW FAR WE SHOULD GO IN FURTHER OPENING UP THE SYSTEM TO NON-QUOTA-HOLDERS, BUT I CAN ASSURE MY HONOURABLE FRIEND THAT WE ARE ALL AWARE OF THE DESIRABILITY OF DOING SO --- SO LONG AS WE CAN ENSURE THAT THE INTERESTS OF EXISTING QUOTA-HOLDERS ARE GIVEN REASONABLE PROTECTION AND THAT THE INTERESTS OF THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE ARE SERVED BY A SYSTEM THAT MAXIMISES THE USE OF THE LIMITED EXPORT OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO US UNDER THE RESTRICTIVE AGREEMENTS THAT WE ARE OBLIGED TO IMPLEMENT.+

IN REPLY TO THE HON. FRANCIS TIEN WHO ASKED ABOUT THE EEC DECISION TO CONTINUE EXCLUDING HONG KONG'S TEXTILE EXPORTS FROM THE COMMUNITY'S GENERALISED SCHEME OF PREFERENCES, MR. JORDAN EXPLAINED THAT THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY HAD ORIGINALLY PROPOSED THE INCLUSION OF A LIMITED NUMBER OF +NON-SENSITIVE+ HONG KONG TEXTILE PRODUCTS IN THE EEC-GSP FOR 1976.

/+BUT THE COUNCIL .....

+BUT THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS FELT UNABLE TO ACCEPT THESE PROPOSALS, AND INSTEAD, IT DECIDED THAT THE CONSIDERATION OF THE INCLUSION OF TEXTILES FROM HONG KONG WOULD HAVE TO BE DEFERRED AGAIN TO 1976, WHEN THE SCHEME FOR 1977 WOULD BE DRAWN UP,+ MR. JORDAN SAID.

THE FACT THAT THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS FELT UNABLE TO ACCEPT THIS VERY MODEST PROPOSAL WAS AN INDICATION OF THE VERY HEAVY PRESSURE THAT THE TEXTILE AND CLOTHING INDUSTRIES IN EUROPE WERE EXERTING AGAINST IMPORTS, MR. JORDAN SAID.

HE ADDED: +WE ARE NATURALLY DISAPPOINTED BY THE COUNCIL'S DECISION AND WE SHALL, IN 1976, CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS TO PERSUADE THE COMMUNITY AND OTHER DONOR COUNTRIES TO REMOVE THE DISCRIMINATION AGAINST HONG KONG IN THEIR PREFERENCES SCHEMES+.

MR. TIEN ALSO ASKED WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WOULD RECONSIDER THE DESIRABILITY OF INVITING SOME EEC OFFICIALS TO VISIT HONG KONG WITH A VIEW TO ACQUAINTING THEM WITH THE REAL STATE OF HONG KONG'S TEXTILE INDUSTRY.

MR. JORDAN REPLIED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS STILL IN TOUCH WITH THE EEC COMMISSION ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF ARRANGING FURTHER VISITS BY EEC OFFICIALS.

-HE ADDED: +I HOPE THAT WE SHALL BE ABLE TO ARRANGE A VISIT BY COMMISSION AND MEMBER STATE OFFICIALS EARLY IN 1976+.

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/7 .....

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1975

- 7 -

NO NEED FOR SECRETARY FOR YOUTH

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THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON. DENIS BRAY, SAID TODAY HE DID NOT BELIEVE THERE WAS A NEED FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF A SECRETARY FOR YOUTH IN HONG KONG.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, HE SAID THAT SUCH AN APPOINTMENT WAS NOT NECESSARILY +THE BEST WAY TO SERVE YOUNG PEOPLE.+

ALL THE SOCIAL SERVICES, FOR YOUTH AND OTHERS, ARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES. +I THINK WE ARE ALREADY DOING EVERYTHING A SECRETARY FOR YOUTH COULD DO,+ MR. BRAY SAID.

HE NOTED THE INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON SERVICES FOR YOUTH WAS APPOINTED IN 1973 TO MAKE SURE THAT NO REASONABLE SUPPORT FOR YOUTH WAS MISSED OUT, AND THAT THERE WAS NO PROBLEM WHICH SEEMED TO BE NOBODY'S RESPONSIBILITY.

THE COMMITTEE, CHAIRED BY MR. BRAY, INCLUDES ALL THE SECRETARIES AND HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS DEALING WITH MATTERS CONCERNING YOUTH. +IT IS A USEFUL FORUM FOR DISCUSSION OF APPROACHES TO YOUTH PROBLEMS,+ MR. BRAY ADDED.

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/8 .....

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1975.

- 8 -

COMPENSATION FOR WORKMEN  
SUFFERING FROM SILICOSIS

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THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON. IAN PRICE, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) OUTLINES THE MAIN DIFFICULTY INVOLVED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A COMPENSATION SCHEME FOR WORKERS SUFFERING FROM SILICOSIS.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. OSWALD CHEUNG ON WHAT PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE IN THE INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION FOR SUCH A SPECIAL COMPENSATION SCHEME.

+THE MAIN DIFFICULTY YET TO BE RESOLVED,+ MR. PRICE POINTED OUT, +ARISES FROM THE LONG PERIOD WHICH USUALLY ELAPSES AFTER SILICOSIS HAS BEEN CONTRACTED AND BEFORE IT BECOMES EVIDENT - AND DURING THIS PERIOD THE WORKMAN MAY HAVE BEEN ENGAGED BY A NUMBER OF EMPLOYERS.+

HOWEVER, HE SAID HE WAS STILL HOPEFUL THAT WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF THE ACCIDENT INSURANCE ASSOCIATION OF HONG KONG, HE WOULD BE ABLE TO RESOLVE THE MAIN PROBLEMS OF HOW LIABILITY FOR THE PAYMENT OF WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION COULD BE APPORTIONED BETWEEN A NUMBER OF EMPLOYERS.

WHATEVER SCHEME WAS EVENTUALLY PRODUCED, MR. PRICE WARNED, CONSIDERABLE GOVERNMENT FUNDS WOULD BE INVOLVED AND TO OBTAIN SUCH MONEY, THE SCHEME WOULD HAVE TO +TAKE ITS PLACE IN THE QUEUE WITH REQUESTS FOR MONEY FOR OTHER HIGHLY DESIRABLE PROJECTS.+

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## KEYNOTE OF MORAL EDUCATION: COMMUNITY SERVICE

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COMMUNITY SERVICE IS THE KEYNOTE OF MORAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS, THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, THE HON. KENNETH TOPLEY, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS AFTERNOON.

HE WAS REPLYING TO THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN WHO WANTED TO KNOW TO WHAT EXTENT AND IN WHAT MANNER MORAL TRAINING WAS GIVEN TO STUDENTS IN SCHOOLS SO THAT THEY ACQUIRED A SENSE OF COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY, SELF-DISCIPLINE AND A HEALTHY RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY.

MR. TOPLEY SAID THE MAIN EMPHASIS MUST BE LAID ON EXAMPLE AND PRACTICE RATHER THAN ON PREACHING.

HE SAID: +MOST SCHOOLS NOWADAYS INCLUDE IN THEIR EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AT LEAST ONE WHICH IS BASED ON COMMUNITY SERVICE, SUCH AS SCOUTS, GUIDES, RED CROSS, ST. JOHN AMBULANCE, ROAD SAFETY PATROLS AND BLOOD DONATION. MANY CLUBS TOO, ARE ORGANISED WITHIN INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS TO RENDER SERVICE TO THE DISADVANTAGED.

+THESE ACTIVITIES ARE IMPORTANT BECAUSE THEY ENCOURAGE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MAKE YOUNG PEOPLE MORE AWARE OF THEIR COMMUNITY AND ITS PROBLEMS.+

THERE WAS OF COURSE A CASE FOR A MORE FORMAL APPROACH TO SOCIAL AND MORAL EDUCATION ON APPROPRIATE OCCASIONS.

+MANY PRIMARY SCHOOLS HAVE WEEKLY ASSEMBLIES IN WHICH THE HEAD TEACHERS TALK TO THE CHILDREN ON SIMPLE SOCIAL AND MORAL THEMES (FOR EXAMPLE, KINDLINESS, HONESTY, GOOD MANNERS, TOLERANCE AND A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY). THESE THEMES ALSO APPEAR IN THE SYLLABUSES BOTH FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS,+ MR. TOPLEY SAID.

POINTING OUT THAT MORALITY WAS NOT A SCHOOL SUBJECT IN THE SAME SENSE AS MATHEMATICS, MR. TOPLEY SAID: +IT IS RATHER A VITALLY IMPORTANT ELEMENT WHICH SHOULD PERMEATE THE WHOLE LIFE OF A SCHOOL.+

ONE BROAD AIM OF EDUCATION WAS TO PREPARE CHILDREN TO TAKE THEIR PLACES IN SOCIETY AS CITIZENS, WORKERS AND PARENTS. SO EDUCATION MUST TRY TO DEVELOP SOCIAL AND MORAL QUALITIES IN THE INDIVIDUAL.

IN CONCLUSION, THE DIRECTOR SAID: +NATURALLY, THERE IS NO ROOM FOR COMPLACENCY AND I PROPOSE TO CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE SCHOOLS TO GIVE CHILDREN EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP MORAL AND SOCIAL ATTRIBUTES THROUGH THE ORGANISATION OF THEIR OWN ACTIVITIES: THIS TO MY MIND IS THE SUREST METHOD OF CHARACTER FORMATION IN THE YOUNG.+

SPEEDY ANALYSES OF SUSPECT FOOD AND BEVERAGES

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ARRANGEMENTS ALREADY EXIST FOR THE EFFICIENT AND SPEEDY CHEMICAL ANALYSES OF FOOD AND BEVERAGES SUSPECTED TO CONTAIN POISONOUS OR HARMFUL SUBSTANCES, DR. THE HON. GERALD CHOA, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HE WAS REPLYING TO DR. THE HON. HARRY FANG WHO HAD ASKED WHETHER A SEPARATE UNIT WOULD BE ESTABLISHED TO CARRY OUT SUCH ANALYSES.

+NORMALLY, SAMPLES OF SUSPECTED FOOD AND BEVERAGES ITEMS ARE TAKEN BY STAFF OF THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT UNDER THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND URBAN SERVICES ORDINANCE AND FORWARDED TO THE GOVERNMENT LABORATORY FOR ANALYSES,+ DR. CHOA CONTINUED.

THE GENERAL DIVISION OF THE LABORATORY THEN UNDERTOOK TO EXAMINE SUCH SAMPLES FOR THE USD AS PART OF THEIR SERVICE FOR THE VARIOUS "CLIENT" DEPARTMENTS, HE ADDED.

DR. FANG ALSO ASKED WHETHER IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO CONVERT THE VERANDAH AND LOBBY ON THE GROUND FLOOR OF THE PHYSIOTHERAPY TRAINING SCHOOL IN QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL TO PROVIDE MORE SPACE FOR THE SCHOOL.

IN REPLY, DR. CHOA SAID THE QUESTION WAS RAISED A YEAR AGO DURING A UMELCO VISIT TO THE HOSPITAL.

IT WAS THEN CONSIDERED INADVISABLE AND UNECONOMICAL TO GO AHEAD WITH PIECEMEAL ALTERATIONS AND CONVERSIONS OF EXISTING FACILITIES.

A PROGRAMME FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF REHABILITATION SERVICES IN HONG KONG WAS AT THAT TIME BEING PREPARED BY THE GOVERNMENT, WHICH WOULD BE A COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN TO COVER ALL ASPECTS OF REHABILITATION FOR THE NEXT DECADE, DR. CHOA EXPLAINED.

BESIDES BEING CONSIDERED INADVISABLE AND UNECONOMICAL, THE SUGGESTED CONVERSIONS WOULD LIKELY BE A COSTLY UNDERTAKING WHICH COULD NOT BE SUPPORTED AT THAT TIME, HE SAID.

+THE SITUATION REMAINS THE SAME TO DATE,+ HE ADDED.

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1975

- 11 -

MORE STAFF FOR INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT  
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THE INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN PROVIDED WITH ADDITIONAL STAFF THIS YEAR FOR COMMITMENTS ARISING FROM THE BUDGET PROPOSALS AND FROM INCREASED WORKLOAD.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. Q.W. LEE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS AFTERNOON.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID THAT THE INCREASED WORKLOAD WAS MAINLY IN THE SALARY TAX SECTION WHERE THERE HAD BEEN A 55 PER CENT INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF TAX FILES= IN THE BUSINESS REGISTRATION SECTION FOLLOWING AN INCREASE IN THE BUSINESS REGISTRATION FEE= AND ALSO IN THE INSPECTORATE.

+FOR THESE PURPOSES,+ THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID, +THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THIS COUNCIL HAS APPROVED A FURTHER 55 POSTS FOR THE DEPARTMENT THIS YEAR.

+AND THE STRENGTH OF THE DEPARTMENT HAS INCREASED BY 100 OFFICERS SINCE APRIL 1, NOTWITHSTANDING THE FACT THAT THIS HAS MEANT AN INCREASE OVER THE NET GROWTH OF 1,600 PLANNED FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE THIS YEAR.+

ON STAFFING PROPOSALS FOR THE NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR, MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID THAT IT WOULD BE CONSIDERED IN THE NORMAL WAY AS THE COMMISSIONER OF INLAND REVENUE SUBMITTED THEM.

REFERRING TO PLANS FOR CENTRALISED ACCOMMODATION FOR THE DEPARTMENT, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID THAT A SEARCH WAS NOW BEING MADE TO LOCATE A SUITABLE BUILDING AND THAT THE DEPARTMENT +SHOULD BE HOUSED UNDER ONE ROOF BY EARLY 1977.+

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GO-AHEAD FOR LEVY TO FINANCE TRAINING FOR CLOTHING INDUSTRY  
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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY APPROVED A RECOMMENDATION BY THE CLOTHING INDUSTRY TRAINING AUTHORITY THAT A RATE OF LEVY OF 0.03 PER CENT BE IMPOSED ON THE F.O.B. (FREE ON BOARD) VALUE OF CLOTHING ITEMS EXPORTED TO FINANCE TRAINING FOR HONG KONG'S CLOTHING INDUSTRY.

IN MOVING A MOTION TO SET THE LEVEL OF LEVY AT 0.03 PER CENT, THE HON. FRANCIS TIEN, CHAIRMAN OF THE TRAINING AUTHORITY, SAID THAT ACCORDING TO THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT, THE TOTAL F.O.B. VALUE OF CLOTHING ITEMS EXPORTED IN 1974 WAS \$8,752 MILLION. BASED ON THIS FIGURE, LEVYING AT THE RATE OF 0.03 PER CENT WILL THEREFORE YIELD A SUM OF ABOUT \$2.6 MILLION.

AFTER PAYING THE COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY DEPARTMENT THE COST OF COLLECTING THE LEVY ON THE AUTHORITY'S BEHALF, THE ACTUAL INCOME FROM THE LEVY WILL BE ABOUT \$2.4 MILLION.

IN THE SAME CALENDAR YEAR, THE AUTHORITY'S TOTAL EXPENDITURE HAS BEEN ESTIMATED AT \$4.65 MILLION. OF THIS, MR. TIEN NOTED, CAPITAL EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTED FOR ABOUT \$4.15 MILLION AND RECURRENT EXPENDITURE AMOUNTED TO \$0.35 MILLION. THE REMAINING \$0.15 MILLION WAS THE ESTIMATED PAYMENT TO THE GOVERNMENT ON PART OF A LOAN OF \$4 MILLION FROM THE DEVELOPMENT LOAN FUND.

MR. TIEN SAID THE AUTHORITY HAD DECIDED THAT THE LOAN +WILL ONLY BE USED TO COVER THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INCOME FROM THE LEVY AND EXPENDITURE AND WILL BE DRAWN UPON ONLY WHEN INCOME LAGS BEHIND CAPITAL PAYMENT DEMANDS.+

MR. TIEN SAID THAT IT WAS HOPED THAT BY THE END OF 1976, THE AUTHORITY WOULD BE IN A POSITION TO INFORM THE GOVERNMENT THAT A PART OF THE LOAN WOULD NO LONGER BE REQUIRED.

+BY SO DOING, NOT ONLY WILL THE INTEREST PAYMENT BE KEPT TO A MINIMUM, BUT WILL ALSO ENABLE THE AUTHORITY TO BE SOLVENT AND SELF-SUPPORTING AND GOVERNMENT TO RELEASE THE COMMITTED LOAN FOR SOME OTHER PURPOSE AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE,+ HE SAID.

MR. TIEN SAID THE TRAINING CENTRE WAS SCHEDULED FOR COMPLETION IN JANUARY 1977 IN VIEW OF THE URGENT NEED TO GET TRAINING STARTED.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1975

- 13 -

BILLS PASSED

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NINE BILLS COMPLETED THEIR PASSAGE THROUGH THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY TO BECOME LAW.

THEY WERE :- THE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) (NO. 4) BILL, THE POST OFFICE (AMENDMENT) BILL, THE RATING (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL, THE SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION (1974-75) BILL, THE BANKING (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL, THE ARBITRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL, THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG (AMENDMENT) BILL, THE EMPLOYMENT (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL AND THE COMMONWEALTH PREFERENCE (MOTOR VEHICLES) (REPEAL) BILL.

AN UNOFFICIAL MEMBER'S BILL, THE HONG KONG INSTITUTION OF ENGINEERS BILL, ALSO COMPLETED ITS COMMITTEE STAGE AND THIRD READING.

IN ADDITION, THE MOTION SETTING A RATE OF LEVY OF 0.03 PER CENT ON THE F.O.B. VALUE OF THE CLOTHING ITEMS EXPORTED WAS PASSED.

THREE OTHER BILLS WERE TABLED FOR FIRST READING. THESE WERE THE TRUSTEE (AMENDMENT AND VALIDATION) BILL, THE MERCHANT SHIPPING (RECRUITING OF SEAMEN) (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL AND THE CHEERO CLUB INCORPORATION (REPEAL) BILL.

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1975

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1975 - 14 -

HONG KONG PEOPLE HEALTHIER THAN EVER, SAYS DR. CHOA

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THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG ARE MUCH HEALTHIER THAN BEFORE IN PRACTICALLY ALL ASPECTS DUE TO THE AVAILABILITY OF FREE MATERNAL AND CHILD, CHEST AND SOCIAL HYGIENE SERVICES.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES, DR. GERALD CHOA, IN HIS ADDRESS TO THE ROTARY CLUB OF KWUN TONG THIS AFTERNOON.

HE SAID IN THE LAST TWO DECADES THERE HAVE BEEN MARKED REDUCTIONS IN INFANT AND MATERNAL DEATHS AND IN THE INCIDENCE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES, PARTICULARLY POLIO, SMALLPOX, DIPHTHERIA AND TUBERCULOSIS.

HE SAID THERE WERE MANY FACTORS WHICH ACCOUNTED FOR THE IMPROVEMENT IN PEOPLE'S HEALTH. +THERE HAS BEEN IMPROVEMENT IN ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE, PEOPLE ARE MUCH BETTER NOURISHED, THEY ARE NOW BETTER EDUCATED IN HEALTH MATTERS, AND THEY HAVE DISCARDED MOST OF THEIR BELIEFS IN TRADITIONAL PRACTICES,+ HE SAID.

BUT THE AVAILABILITY OF FREE HEALTH SERVICES WAS ALSO AN ESSENTIAL FACTOR, HE ADDED.

IN THE MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH SERVICE, DR. CHOA SAID, THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT'S 37 MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH CLINICS PROVIDED A COMPREHENSIVE RANGE OF SERVICES TO BOTH THE MOTHER AND THE CHILD FREE OF CHARGE.

AS A RESULT, THE INFANT MORTALITY RATE HAS DROPPED FROM 99.6 PER 1,000 LIVE BIRTHS IN 1950 TO 17.4 IN 1974 WHICH IS HIGHER THAN JAPAN'S 11.7 BUT LOWER THAN SINGAPORE'S 19.3 AND THAILAND'S 22.5.

FREE VACCINES ARE GIVEN TO CHILDREN AGAINST SUCH DISEASES AS TUBERCULOSIS, SMALLPOX, POLIOMYELITIS, DIPHTHERIA AND MEASLES.

DR. CHOA SAID EFFORTS TO COMBAT TUBERCULOSIS, WHICH HAD BEEN REGARDED AS THE PRINCIPAL KILLER OF MANKIND, WERE MOST ENCOURAGING.

THE DEATH RATE OF THIS DISEASE PER 100,000 POPULATION HAD DROPPED FROM 120 IN 1955 TO ONLY 22.9 LAST YEAR, HE SAID.

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1975

- 15 -

FROM THE NUMBER 1 SPOT IN THE LIST OF COMMON CAUSES OF DEATH IN HONG KONG FOR MANY YEARS, TUBERCULOSIS HAS NOW RECEDED TO THE SIXTH.

+IT IS EVIDENT THAT FEWER NEW CASES HAVE NOW BEEN REPORTED, LESS PEOPLE HAVE DIED OF TUBERCULOSIS, AND THOSE WHO DIE ARE NO LONGER VERY YOUNG CHILDREN, IN FACT, THE AVERAGE AGE OF TUBERCULOSIS PATIENTS IS NOW ABOUT 30 YEARS,+ SAID DR. CHOA.

AS FOR OTHER INFECTIOUS DISEASES, DR. CHOA SAID THE INCIDENCE OF DIPHTHERIA WHICH REACHED ITS PEAK IN 1959 WITH 2,087 CASES AND 116 DEATHS HAD BEEN REDUCED TO ONE AND TWO CASES IN 1973 AND 1974 RESPECTIVELY, WITH NO DEATHS.

POLIO, WHICH CLAIMED 52 DEATHS IN 1962 HAS NOW BEEN ELIMINATED WITH NO CASES REPORTED LAST YEAR.

IN SOCIAL HYGIENE SERVICE, THE DIRECTOR SAID IT WAS MORE DIFFICULT TO QUANTIFY SUCCESS IN TREATING VENEREAL DISEASES AGAINST WHICH THERE IS AS YET NO VACCINE.

HOWEVER, TREATMENT FOR ALL TYPES OF VENEREAL DISEASES IS FREELY AVAILABLE IN THE DEPARTMENT'S SPECIAL CLINICS WHERE ROUTINE EXAMINATION IS ALSO CONDUCTED FOR THOSE WHO ARE REQUIRED TO COMPLY.

ON THE WHOLE, SAID DR. CHOA, THE INCIDENCE OF ALL VENEREAL DISEASES, WITH SYPHILIS AND GONORRHOEA BEING THE TWO COMMONEST, HAS BEEN ON THE DECLINE, DROPPING FROM 19,257 CASES IN 1955 TO 9,543 LAST YEAR.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

COPIES OF THE FULL TEXT OF DR. CHOA'S SPEECH ARE AVAILABLE AT THE GIS PRESS BOX FOR COLLECTION.

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/16 .....

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1975

- 16 -

WATER CUT  
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WATER SUPPLY TO A NUMBER OF PREMISES IN TSUEN WAN WILL BE INTERRUPTED BETWEEN 1 A.M. AND 6 A.M. ON FRIDAY (DECEMBER 5) TO ALLOW A LEAKAGE TEST TO BE CARRIED OUT.

THE AREA AFFECTED IS BOUNDED BY SHA TSUI ROAD BETWEEN HAM TIN STREET AND TEXACO ROAD AND PART OF LUEN YAN STREET, YEUNG UK ROAD, HAM TIN STREET AND SHA TSUI ROAD.

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