



## DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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

WEDNESDAY, MAY 19, 1982

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SIX BILLS PASSED

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SIX BILLS WERE PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THEY ARE THE HONG KONG ASSOCIATION OF BANKS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1982, THE OFFENCES AGAINST THE PERSON (AMENDMENT) BILL 1982, THE SIR MURRAY MACLEHOSE TRUST FUND BILL 1982, THE FIRE SERVICES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1982, THE PENSIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1982, AND THE EMPLOYMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1982.

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SIR MURRAY MACLEHOSE TRUST FUND SET UP

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THE SIR MURRAY MACLEHOSE TRUST FUND BILL 1982, WHICH PROVIDES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TRUST FUND TO COMMEMORATE SIR MURRAY'S DISTINGUISHED GOVERNORSHIP, WAS PASSED INTO LAW TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON DENIS BRAY SAID THE FUND WOULD BE A PERPETUAL ONE, ESTABLISHED BY PUBLIC DONATION AND UNDER THE TRUST OF THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS INCORPORATED.

HE NOTED THAT THE FUND DID NOT REFER TO ANY SPECIFIC SOCIAL AREA BECAUSE ALL SOCIAL SERVICES WERE ALREADY SO COMPREHENSIVELY COVERED BY GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMES THAT A CHARITABLE FUND OF THAT KIND COULD NOT FINANCE A SIGNIFICANT ADDITIONAL SERVICE.

+INSTEAD, SIR MURRAY THOUGHT IT WOULD HAVE THE GREATEST IMPACT IF IT COULD ASSIST WORTHY PROJECTS OR ACTIVITIES WHICH COULD NOT BE FINANCED IN ANY OTHER WAY.

+THE OBJECT OF THE FUND IS THEREFORE STATED IN THE BROADEST TERMS -- TO BE USED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG AS THE GOVERNOR OF THE DAY MAY PERSONALLY DECIDE,+ HE SAID.

THE FUND WAS A CHARITABLE TRUST UNDER THE INLAND REVENUE ORDINANCE AND WAS THEREFORE EXEMPTED FROM TAX, AND DONATIONS WERE TAX DEDUCTIBLE, HE SAID.

MR BRAY SAID THAT SIR MURRAY APPRECIATED THIS KIND GESTURE AND HAD AGREED TO THE USE OF HIS NAME IN THE TITLE.

A TOTAL OF \$21.5 MILLION HAD SO FAR BEEN PLEDGED, HE SAID.

SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE BILL ON BEHALF OF ALL THE UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS, MR ROGER LOBO SAID HE BELIEVED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SUCH A PERMANENT FUND WAS A MOST APPROPRIATE WAY TO COMMEMORATE SIR MURRAY'S DISTINGUISHED TERM OF OFFICE.

+WHILST UMELCO WAS PRIVILEGED TO LAUNCH THE IDEA, I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE GENEROUS SUPPORT GIVEN TO THE FUND BY ITS DISTINGUISHED FUND RAISING COMMITTEE AND BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC AT LARGE,+ HE SAID.

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ASSISTANCE FOR INSURANCE POLICY HOLDERS  
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THE GOVERNMENT HAS ACCEPTED THAT HOLDERS OF INSURANCE POLICIES FALL INTO THE CATEGORY OF THOSE CONSUMERS WHO BECAUSE OF CIRCUMSTANCES CLEARLY CANNOT PROTECT THEMSELVES AND NEED GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION TO ASSIST THEM, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE INSURANCE COMPANIES BILL 1982, MR JEAFFRESON EXPLAINED THAT UNLIKE MOST CONSUMERS, POLICY HOLDERS WERE NOT BUYING SOMETHING TANGIBLE FOR IMMEDIATE DELIVERY.

+THEY ARE PAYING FOR AN ADVANTAGE INVISIBLE AT THE TIME OF PURCHASE AND FOR DELIVERY AT SOME TIME IN THE FUTURE, IN SOME INSTANCES BEYOND THEIR OWN LIFE TIME. WHAT ARE FOR THEM FAIRLY LARGE SUMS OF MONEY MAY BE INVOLVED. THEY NEED TO BE ABLE TO SATISFY THEMSELVES THAT THE COMPANIES WITH WHICH THEY INSURE ARE LIKELY TO BE IN A POSITION TO DELIVER WHEN THE TIME COMES,+ HE SAID.

MR JEAFFRESON SAID ANOTHER REASON FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S MOVE TO REGULATE THE INDUSTRY WAS A RECOMMENDATION BY THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON DIVERSIFICATION.

THE COMMITTEE HAD NOTED THAT A CERTAIN LEVEL OF PRUDENTIAL SUPERVISION WAS NECESSARY AND FEARED THAT UNSCRUPULOUS FINANCIAL OPERATORS MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO MOVE INTO THE INSURANCE FIELD AS PRUDENTIAL REGULATION IN THE FIELD OF BANKING, DEPOSIT-TAKING AND THE STOCK MARKET HAD INCREASED.

MR JEAFFRESON LISTED THE PURPOSES OF THE BILL WHICH WERE:

- \* TO RESTRICT THE CARRYING ON OF INSURANCE BUSINESS TO AUTHORISED COMPANIES, LLOYD'S, AND CERTAIN UNDERWRITERS APPROVED BY THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL;
- \* TO FIX THE MINIMUM FINANCIAL STANDARDS REQUIRED OF INSURANCE COMPANIES BEFORE THEY CAN BE CONSIDERED FOR AUTHORISATION;
- \* TO IMPROVE THE SECURITY OF LONG TERM POLICY HOLDERS - PRINCIPALLY LIFE POLICY HOLDERS;
- \* TO REQUIRE ALL INSURANCE COMPANIES TO SUBMIT FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION TO THE INSURANCE AUTHORITY ON AN ANNUAL BASIS;
- \* TO EMPOWER THE INSURANCE AUTHORITY TO INTERVENE IN THE CONDUCT OF THE BUSINESS OF INSURANCE COMPANIES IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES; AND
- \* TO PROVIDE THAT ANY PERSON WHO THE INSURANCE AUTHORITY CONSIDERS NOT TO BE A FIT AND PROPER PERSON TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH AN AUTHORISED INSURANCE COMPANY, WILL NOT ACQUIRE A POSITION OF INFLUENCE IN RELATION TO SUCH A COMPANY.

ON THE REQUIREMENT FOR REPORTING OF FINANCIAL INFORMATION WHICH WAS OPPOSED BY A MINORITY WITHIN THE INDUSTRY, MR JEAFFRESON SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD IN RESPONSE GONE AS FAR AS IT THOUGHT IT COULD TO REDUCE THE BURDEN WITHOUT SERIOUSLY AFFECTING THE ABILITY OF THE INSURANCE AUTHORITY TO CARRY OUT HIS CONTINUOUS SUPERVISION.

THE REQUIREMENT FOR PRODUCTION OF A COPY OF THE COMPANY'S ACCOUNTS TO BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC EXISTS IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS AND INDIVIDUAL COMPANIES IN NO WAY APPEARED TO HAVE SUFFERED, HE ADDED.

REPLYING TO THE CRITICISM THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD DEALT WITH THE POWER OF INTERVENTION OF THE INSURANCE AUTHORITY IN TOO MUCH DETAIL, MR JEAFFRESON SAID, +OUR ANSWER IS THAT, SO THAT ALL CONCERNED KNOW WHERE THEY STAND, POWERS OF INTERVENTION AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH THEY CAN BE USED, NEED TO BE CLEARLY SPELT OUT.+

CONCERN HAS BEEN EXPRESSED ABOUT THE TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS WHICH SUBJECT COMPANIES ALREADY WRITING BUSINESS TO A SECOND AUTHORISATION PROCESS WITHIN 18 MONTHS.

+THIS IS SO. BUT IT WILL NOT BE ONEROUS,+ MR JEAFFRESON SAID.

AS TO THE CRITICISM THAT THE BILL DOES NOT DEAL WITH BROKERS, MR JEAFFRESON ACKNOWLEDGED THAT IT WAS VALID, BUT EXPLAINED THAT THE BILL TACKLED ONLY THE BASIC PROBLEM OF THE INSURANCE MARKET, THE FINANCIAL STRENGTH OF THE INSURERS THEMSELVES, AND DID NOT DIRECTLY REGULATE BROKERS OR INTERMEDIARIES, THE PROBLEM OF WHICH WILL BE DEALT WITH SEPARATELY.

THE BILL HOWEVER DOES AT LEAST PROVIDE THAT IT IS AN OFFENCE FOR ANYONE TO MAKE MISLEADING OR DECEPTIVE STATEMENTS TO POTENTIAL POLICY HOLDERS.

+PROBABLY THIS DOES NOT GO FAR ENOUGH TO KEEP BROKERS UNDER CONTROL. BUT A SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE LAW REFORM COMMITTEE IS LOOKING INTO THE WHOLE QUESTION OF BROKERS. WE AWAIT THE OUTCOME OF THEIR DELIBERATIONS,+ HE SAID.

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UNIVERSITIES CONSIDERING  
WAYS TO IMPROVE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS  
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THE UNIVERSITIES RECOGNISE PUBLIC CONCERN ABOUT EXAMINATION ARRANGEMENTS FOR ENTRY TO THEIR INSTITUTIONS AND ARE CONSIDERING HOW MATTERS MIGHT BE IMPROVED, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION, THE HON K.W.J. TOPLEY, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE REV THE HON JOYCE BENNETT, WHO ASKED WHETHER GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE STEPS TO UNIFY THE SYLLABUSES AT FORM SIX AND RATIONALISE ENTRY TO THE UNIVERSITIES TO HELP THE SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS AND TO SAVE PUBLIC MONEYS.

MR TOPLEY SAID COMPETITION TO ENTER BOTH OF THE UNIVERSITIES AND THE POLYTECHNIC WAS KEEN AND HE AGREED THAT UNIFIED ARRANGEMENTS AT THE SIXTH FORM LEVEL COULD RELIEVE PRESSURE ON STUDENTS.

+ANY SCHEME OF UNIFICATION, HOWEVER, WOULD HAVE SUBSTANTIAL REPERCUSSIONS ON SECONDARY SCHOOLS AS WELL AS ON THE TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS THEMSELVES,+ MR TOPLEY SAID.

HE EXPLAINED THAT THE THREE INSTITUTIONS WERE AUTONOMOUS BODIES AND DETERMINED THEIR OWN ENTRY REQUIREMENTS, AND CHANGES TO PUBLIC EXAMINATION ARRANGEMENTS WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE IN CONSULTATION WITH THEM.

MR TOPLEY ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT THIS MATTER WAS ALSO EXAMINED BY THE PANEL OF VISITORS CONDUCTING THE OVERALL REVIEW OF EDUCATION IN HONG KONG AND SAID: +IT WOULD SEEM WISE, THEREFORE, TO CONSIDER ANY FRESH PROPOSALS IN THIS FIELD IN THE LIGHT OF THE PANEL'S FINAL REPORT WHICH IS EXPECTED TOWARDS THE END OF THIS YEAR.+

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ICAC NEEDS PEOPLE'S SUPPORT, LOBO SAYS  
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THE SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION'S EFFORT, MR ROGER LOBO SAID TODAY.

SPEAKING AT THE TABLING OF THE ICAC ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1981 AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR LOBO SAID ABOUT TWO-THIRDS OF ALL THE PEOPLE WHO REPORTED CORRUPTION DURING THE YEAR GAVE THEIR NAMES AND ADDRESSES.

+IT TAKES COURAGE TO MAKE REPORTS ABOUT CORRUPTION AND THE COMMISSIONER OF ICAC FEELS THAT THIS WILLINGNESS IS A SIGNIFICANT DEMONSTRATION OF PUBLIC CONFIDENCE,+ HE SAID.

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HE SAID THE MAJORITY OF HONG KONG PEOPLE DID NOT HAVE TO ACCEPT CORRUPTION AS A DAY-TO-DAY OCCURRENCE. +BUT CORRUPTION IS STILL MUCH IN EVIDENCE AS SHOWN BY THE RECORD NUMBER OF REPORTS ABOUT CORRUPTION RECEIVED DURING 1981,+ HE SAID.

THE NUMBER OF PERSONS PROSECUTED AND PERSONS CONVICTED FOR CORRUPTION OR ALLIED OFFENCES - AT 509 AND 358 RESPECTIVELY - WERE ALSO THE HIGHEST FIGURES RECORDED SINCE THE COMMISSION WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1976.

+ALTHOUGH IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT STATISTICS DO NOT PROVIDE A TRUE INDEX OF THE STATE OF CORRUPTION, AND OF THE SUCCESS OF THE FORCES COMBATING IT, THE FEEDBACK OBTAINED FROM THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG DURING NEARLY 10 000 MEETINGS AND DISCUSSIONS ORGANISED BY THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS DEPARTMENT WAS CERTAINLY REASSURING,+ HE ADDED.

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#### TWO NEW KCR STATIONS

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TWO NEW STATIONS TO SERVE COMMUNITIES IN TAI WAI AND FO TAN IN ADDITION TO THE SHA TIN STATION, ARE INCLUDED IN THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY MODERNISATION/ELECTRIFICATION PROGRAMME, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON ALAN SCOTT, SAID TODAY AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

+CONSTRUCTION WORK ON THE PERMANENT TAI WAI STATION WILL BEGIN IN JULY NEXT YEAR, AFTER COMPLETION OF A TEMPORARY ALIGNMENT FOR RAILWAY TRAFFIC, WHICH IS NECESSARY SO THAT BUILDING CAN BE CARRIED OUT WITHOUT INTERFERENCE TO SERVICES,+ HE SAID, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHEUNG YAN-LUNG.

IT WILL TAKE TWO YEARS TO COMPLETE.

HOWEVER, IT WAS ALSO INTENDED THAT A TEMPORARY STATION BE BUILT AT TAI WAI TO COPE WITH THE POPULATION GROWTH AND THE INTRODUCTION OF THE FULL ELECTRIFIED SERVICE TO LO WU IN MID-1983.

A PROPOSAL AND REQUEST FOR FUNDS WOULD SHORTLY BE SUBMITTED TO THE FINANCE COMMITTEE, AND IT WAS HOPED THE STATION COULD BE READY FOR USE BY THE BEGINNING OF NEXT YEAR, HE SAID.

WORK ON THE FO TAN STATION IS DUE TO START IN JANUARY NEXT YEAR AND BE COMPLETED BY JULY 1984 AND WILL NOT INTERRUPT SERVICES.

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MOVE TO CONTROL TRIAD INFILTRATION

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THE SOCIETIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1982, IF PASSED INTO LAW, WILL GIVE THE REGISTRAR OF SOCIETIES AN EFFECTIVE MEANS OF CONTROLLING AN UNDESIRABLE TREND OF INFILTRATION OF MARTIAL ARTS ASSOCIATIONS BY TRIAD SOCIETIES, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JOHN GRIFFITHS SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, MR GRIFFITHS EXPLAINED THAT THE BILL AROSE FROM CONTINUED AND INCREASING CONCERN THAT TRIAD SOCIETIES HAD FOUND A CONVENIENT FRONT IN SOME MARTIAL ARTS SOCIETIES FOR THE PROMOTION OF ORGANISED CRIME.

HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT MARTIAL ARTS ARE AN ACCEPTABLE RECREATIONAL AND SPORTING ACTIVITY, BUT SAID THE INSTRUCTORS OR THE ORGANISERS OF A SUBSTANTIAL PROPORTION OF MARTIAL ARTS ASSOCIATIONS HAD CONNECTIONS WITH TRIAD-RELATED OFFENCES.

THE PRESENT SOCIETIES ORDINANCE, ALTHOUGH GENERALLY EFFECTIVE, WAS DEFICIENT IN CERTAIN AREAS AND SOME MARTIAL ARTS SOCIETIES COULD EVADE CONTROLS BY REGISTERING AS +BUSINESS+ UNDER THE BUSINESS REGISTRATION ORDINANCE, HE SAID.

+NO SUCH LEGISLATION EXISTS WITH RESPECT TO A MARTIAL ARTS ASSOCIATION OF NOT MORE THAN 20 PERSONS WHICH REGISTERS UNDER THE BUSINESS REGISTRATION ORDINANCE (CHAPTER 310) AS A REGISTERED BUSINESS,+ HE SAID.

+ACCORDINGLY, IT IS STILL POSSIBLE FOR A SMALL TRIAD-CONNECTED MARTIAL ARTS ASSOCIATION TO EXEMPT ITSELF FROM CONTROL UNDER THE SOCIETIES ORDINANCE.+

CITING FROM A POLICE SURVEY IN 1980, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL POINTED OUT THAT OF THE 625 KNOWN MARTIAL ARTS ASSOCIATIONS, 95 WERE REGISTERED AS BUSINESSES UNDER THE BUSINESS REGISTRATION ORDINANCE.

+THIS BILL WILL REMOVE THAT AVOIDANCE TECHNIQUE,+ HE SAID.

THE BILL ALSO GIVES THE REGISTRAR OF SOCIETIES NEW POWERS SO THAT HE MAY CONTROL THOSE SOCIETIES WHERE UNDESIRABLE CRIMINAL ELEMENTS ARE OFFICE-BEARERS OR MEMBERS.

+HE IS ALSO EMPOWERED EITHER TO REFUSE TO REGISTER, TO REFUSE TO EXEMPT FROM REGISTRATION, OR, IN AN APPROPRIATE CASE, TO DE-REGISTER A SOCIETY IF HE FINDS AN OFFICE-BEARER HAS BEEN CONVICTED OF AN OFFENCE OF SUCH SERIOUSNESS AS TO RENDER HIM UNFIT TO HOLD OFFICE,+ MR GRIFFITHS SAID.

HOWEVER, HE ASSURED REPUTABLE SOCIETIES THAT THEY HAD NOTHING TO FEAR AND THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE LEGISLATION WAS TO CONTROL AND REGULATE SOCIETIES ONLY WHERE THERE WAS EVIDENCE OF UNDESIRABLE OR CRIMINAL INFLUENCES.

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EVALUATION OF TRUCKING INDUSTRY PLANNED  
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THE CONTINUED RATE OF INCREASE OF GOODS VEHICLES AT MORE THAN 11 PER CENT ANNUALLY COULD NOT BE UNCRITICALLY ACCEPTED, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON ALAN SCOTT, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

+THE TIME HAS COME FOR AN EVALUATION OF THE TRUCKING INDUSTRY TO ENSURE OPTIMUM EFFICIENCY BOTH AS REGARDS THEIR USE OF ROADS AND THE NEEDS OF INDUSTRY,+ HE ADDED.

MR SCOTT WAS SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN REPLY TO THE HON STEPHEN CHEONG WHO ASKED HOW THE NEEDS OF INDUSTRY WOULD BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION IN THE CONTEXT OF DEVELOPING AN OVERALL TRANSPORT POLICY ESPECIALLY WITH REGARD TO MOVEMENT OF FREIGHT BY ROAD.

MR SCOTT SAID GOVERNMENT'S OVERALL TRANSPORT POLICY WAS BASED ON THE 1979 WHITE PAPER — +KEEPING HONG KONG MOVING+ — WHICH RECOGNISED THAT GOODS VEHICLES PLAYED A CRUCIAL ECONOMIC ROLE, BUT WHICH ALSO FORESAW THE PROBABILITY THAT THEIR RATE OF GROWTH WOULD HAVE TO BE REDUCED BECAUSE OF THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO ROAD CONGESTION.

THERE WERE NOW ABOUT 65 000 GOODS VEHICLES IN HONG KONG, ONE-FIFTH OF ALL VEHICLES ON THE ROADS.

+THIS IS A VERY HIGH PROPORTION BY INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS, BUT THERE ARE GOOD REASONS WHY HONG KONG SHOULD BE UNUSUAL IN THIS RESPECT,+ HE SAID.

+THE RATE OF INCREASE HAS EXCEEDED 11 PER CENT ANNUALLY DURING THE LAST FIVE YEARS, COMPARED WITH OVER 13 PER CENT FOR PRIVATE VEHICLES. THIS CAN, I THINK, BE TAKEN TO MEAN THAT THE INDUSTRY IS THRIVING.+

MR SCOTT SAID THERE WERE SEVERAL WAYS IN WHICH THE NEEDS OF INDUSTRY WERE ASCERTAINED OR MADE KNOWN TO GOVERNMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT HAD REGULAR MEETINGS WITH THE GOODS VEHICLE FLEET OWNERS ASSOCIATION, AND THE FEDERATION OF HONG KONG INDUSTRIES.

THERE WERE ALSO THE CONTAINER PORT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, AND THE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

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SECURITY IN SQUATTER AREAS

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EXPERIMENTAL MEASURES WERE BEING ADOPTED TO PROVIDE FOR SHORT-TERM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS IN SQUATTER AREAS, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON LEWIS DAVIES SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

THE PROVISION OF UTILITIES, STREET LIGHTING AND ADEQUATE ACCESS ROUTES SHOULD IMPROVE THE GENERAL SECURITY AND ORDERLINESS OF THESE AREAS AND IN TURN GIVE THEIR RESIDENTS A BETTER SENSE OF PHYSICAL SECURITY, HE SAID.

MR DAVIES WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHARLES YEUNG ON THE RECENT INCIDENT INVOLVING POLICE OFFICERS AND A GROUP OF VILLAGERS AT NGAU CHI WAN VILLAGE.

ON MAY 3, POLICE OFFICERS ARRESTED A SUSPECTED ROBBER IN THE AREA IN RESPONSE TO A HUE AND CRY. SUBSEQUENTLY THEY HAD TO PROTECT THE SUSPECT FROM A HOSTILE CROWD OF VILLAGERS.

MR DAVIES SAID POLICE INVESTIGATIONS INDICATED THAT THE ARRESTED SUSPECT WAS PROBABLY KNOWN TO SOME OF THE VILLAGERS AS A PERSON CHARGED AND RELEASED ON BAIL ON THE SAME DAY IN CONNECTION WITH ANOTHER CHARGE OF BURGLARY.

+THIS KNOWLEDGE MAY HAVE SPARKED OFF THE INCIDENT,+ HE SAID.

THE UNDERLYING REASONS, HE ADDED, MIGHT HAVE BEEN A HIGH LOCAL CRIME RATE IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF 1981-82 AND INCREASED LOCAL POPULATION AS A RESULT OF RECENT SQUATTER DEVELOPMENT AROUND THE VILLAGE WHICH MIGHT HAVE PROVIDED ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES.

MR DAVIES SAID NEWLY-ARRIVED RESIDENTS OF THESE SQUATTER AREAS LACKING UNDERSTANDING OF HONG KONG'S LAW AND SYSTEM OF JUSTICE, OR LONGER TERM RESIDENTS EXASPERATED AT THE INCIDENCE OF LOCAL CRIME MIGHT HAVE SPONTANEOUSLY SOUGHT TO TAKE THE LAW INTO THEIR OWN HANDS.

STEPS ARE NOW BEING TAKEN TO DISCOURAGE THE RECURRENCE OF SUCH DISORDERLY INCIDENTS BY MAINTAINING POLICE BEAT PATROLS IN THE AREA OVER A FULL 24 HOURS PERIOD, AUGMENTED BY CID, PTU AND AUXILIARY POLICE PATROLS WHENEVER OPERATIONAL COMMITMENTS PERMIT.

+GOOD RELATIONS ARE MAINTAINED BETWEEN VARIOUS MUTUAL AID AND VILLAGE COMMITTEES, THE POLICE COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICE AND THE CITY DISTRICT OFFICE OF WONG TAI SIN, AND EFFORTS TO FOSTER IMPROVED UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN RESIDENTS AND THE POLICE WILL CONTINUE THROUGH THESE ESTABLISHED CHANNELS,+ HE SAID.

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GOOD SUPPLY OF HOUSING AUTHORITY FLATTED-FACTORY UNITS  
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THERE WILL BE A GOOD SUPPLY FROM THIS YEAR ONWARDS OF HOUSING AUTHORITY FLATTED-FACTORY UNITS IN KOWLOON AND THE MAJOR NEW TOWNS.

AND THREE OF THE FOUR EXISTING TEMPORARY INDUSTRIAL AREAS WILL BE CLEARED THIS YEAR, WITH THE FACTORIES BEING RE-ACCOMMODATED IN NEWLY-BUILT FLATTED-FACTORY BUILDINGS NEARBY.

THIS WAS SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY BY THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, MR DONALD LIAO, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY MR WONG PO-YAN ABOUT THE CURRENT SITUATION AND THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY CONCERNING TEMPORARY INDUSTRIAL AREAS.

MR LIAO SAID THESE AREAS WERE ESTABLISHED ABOUT THREE YEARS AGO FOR THE REPROVISIONING OF FACTORIES DISPLACED BY DEVELOPMENT CLEARANCES AS AN INTERIM MEASURE PENDING THE BUILDING BY THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF ADDITIONAL FLATTED-FACTORIES.

AT PRESENT, HE SAID, THERE WERE 181 SEPARATE INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS IN FOUR SUCH AREAS, THEIR AVERAGE SIZE BEING ABOUT 63 SQUARE METRES.

HE ADDED: +THE ONLY ANTICIPATED DEMAND FOR TEMPORARY INDUSTRIAL AREA SPACE IS IN ABERDEEN WHERE IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO REPROVISION IN THE PO CHONG WAN TEMPORARY INDUSTRIAL AREA SOME 25 MARINE ENGINE REPAIR WORKSHOPS, WHICH PROVIDE AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE TO THE PORT, AND WHICH HAVE TO BE CLEARED FOR THE ABERDEEN HARBOUR RECLAMATION PROJECT.

+THESE WORKSHOPS WILL EVENTUALLY MOVE TO A NEW FLATTED-FACTORY WHICH IS TO BE BUILT ON AP LEI CHAU, AND WHICH WILL INCLUDE ACCOMMODATION ESPECIALLY DESIGNED FOR THESE SPECIALISED WORKSHOPS, IN EARLY 1986.+

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MONITORING PROGRESS OF PUBLIC WORKS  
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IT HAS FOR LONG BEEN THE GOVERNMENT'S PRACTICE TO MONITOR THE PROGRESS OF WORK ON PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS BY REFERENCE TO CONTRACT COMPLETION DATES, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON HENRY CHING SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON WONG LAM ON HOW MANY OF THE PROJECTS COSTING \$50 MILLION OR MORE FAILED TO MEET THEIR TARGET COMPLETION DATES, MR CHING EXPLAINED THAT THE CONTRACT COMPLETION DATE WAS, IN EFFECT, NO MORE THAN A REFERENCE POINT FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPLICATION OF THE TERMS OF THE CONTRACT.

+IT TAKES NO ACCOUNT OF UNFORESEEN OR UNFORESEEABLE FACTORS, SUCH AS ADVERSE GEOTECHNICAL CONDITIONS OR INCLEMENT WEATHER,+ HE SAID.

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+EXTENSIONS OF TIME ARE PROPERLY GRANTED WITHIN THE TERMS OF A CONTRACT WHERE VALID REASONS EXIST. NOT SURPRISINGLY, THE LARGER THE VALUE OF THE CONTRACT, AND THE LONGER THE CONTRACT PERIOD, THE GREATER THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE ORIGINAL CONTRACT COMPLETION DATE WILL NOT BE MET.+

MR CHING POINTED OUT THAT A COMPLETION DATE FOR A PROJECT AS A WHOLE HAD SELDOM BEEN PRE-DETERMINED WITH ANY PRECISION.

+IT HAS BEEN THE PRACTICE TO ESTABLISH SUCH A DATE ONLY WHERE IT HAS BEEN IMPERATIVE TO ENSURE THE COMPLETION OF A PROJECT BY A GIVEN DEADLINE,+ HE ADDED.

HE SAID THE NEED TO MONITOR THE PROGRESS OF PROJECTS, AS DISTINCT FROM CONTRACTS, MORE CLOSELY HAD BEEN RECOGNISED.

+THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A SYSTEM FOR IMPROVED PROJECT MANAGEMENT IS ONE OF THE SPECIFIC TASKS IDENTIFIED FOR THE NEWLY ESTABLISHED LANDS AND WORKS BRANCH, AND SUCH A SYSTEM IS NOW BEING SET UP.+

MR CHING SAID 56 CONTRACTS WERE DUE FOR COMPLETION IN 1980-81 RELATING TO 34 LARGE PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS. ONLY TWO OF THESE 56 CONTRACTS HAD A VALUE IN EXCESS OF \$50 MILLION EACH, AND NEITHER WAS COMPLETED BY THE CONTRACT COMPLETION DATE.

IN 1981-82, 58 CONTRACTS WERE DUE FOR COMPLETION RELATING TO 39 LARGE PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS. OF THESE 58 CONTRACTS, FIVE HAD A VALUE IN EXCESS OF \$50 MILLION EACH AND ALL FIVE HAD NOT BEEN COMPLETED BY THEIR CONTRACT COMPLETION DATES.

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## AIRPORT TUNNEL

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THE OPENING OF THE FIRST TUBE OF THE AIRPORT TUNNEL TO TWO-WAY TRAFFIC SHOULD BE POSSIBLE BY THE END OF NEXT MONTH, THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON DAVID MCDONALD SAID TODAY.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY REV THE HON JOYCE BENNETT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, HE SAID THAT THE OPENING OF THE SECOND TUBE OF THE TUNNEL WAS STILL SCHEDULED FOR THE END OF THIS YEAR.

MR MCDONALD RECALLED THAT IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION BY MISS BENNETT IN MAY LAST YEAR, IT WAS SAID THAT ONE TUBE OF THE TUNNEL WOULD BE OPENED TO TWO-WAY TRAFFIC AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS YEAR AND THE OPENING OF THE SECOND TUBE WAS EXPECTED TO BE AT THE END OF THIS YEAR.

HOWEVER, HE SAID, IT WAS POINTED OUT AT THAT TIME THAT THE MOST CRITICAL PROBLEM WHICH COULD AFFECT THE TUNNEL OPENING DATE WAS THE SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF THE SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM.

HE ADDED, +AS IT TURNED OUT POOR PROGRESS BY THE OVERSEAS MANUFACTURER OF THE TRAFFIC CONTROL AND SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM DID CAUSE DELAY.+

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FIRE SERVICES (AMENDMENT) BILL

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A BILL WHICH SEEKS TO INCREASE THE PENALTIES THAT MAY BE IMPOSED ON THOSE WHO IGNORE FIRE HAZARD ABATEMENT NOTICES AND ORDERS WAS PASSED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WITH AN AMENDMENT TODAY.

THE AMENDMENT INVOLVED THE DELETION OF A CLAUSE WHICH EMPOWERED A MAGISTRATE, AFTER HEARING A COMPLAINT BY THE DIRECTOR OF FIRE SERVICES, TO MAKE A CLOSING ORDER ON PREMISES WHERE A FIRE HAZARD HAD ARISEN.

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE FIRE SERVICES (AMENDMENT) BILL, MR S.L. CHEN, CONVENOR OF A GROUP OF UNOFFICIALS SET UP TO STUDY THE BILL, EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT IF THIS CLAUSE WERE ENACTED, IT COULD LEAD TO THE MISUSE OF SUCH AUTHORITY.

SAID MR CHEN: +THIS CLOSING ORDER WHICH PROHIBITS SUCH USE OF PREMISES AS IS SPECIFIED IN THE ORDER, IS THE SEVEREST FORM OF FIRE HAZARD ORDER WHICH CAN BE IMPOSED UNDER THE ORDINANCE.

+IT WAS, FURTHERMORE, APPARENT FROM THE DISCUSSIONS THAT WHERE THE DIRECTOR OF FIRE SERVICES BELIEVES THAT, IN ORDER TO PROTECT LIFE AND PROPERTY, CLOSURE OF PREMISES FOR A PARTICULAR USE IS VITAL ON GROUNDS NOT COVERED BY THE EXISTING PROVISIONS OF THE ORDINANCE, OTHER AVENUES OF ACTION ARE AVAILABLE TO HIM.+

HOWEVER, HE ADDED, SUBSECTION 9(6) OF THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE WHICH CURRENTLY LIMITS THE POWER TO ISSUE A CLOSING ORDER TO CERTAIN CLEARLY DEFINED CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD BE RETAINED.

MR CHEN ALSO MADE A PLEA ON BEHALF OF FACTORY OWNERS AND OPERATORS THAT THE GOVERNMENT, WHEN PROPOSING REGULATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE SEVERAL ORDINANCES WHICH AFFECT INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITIES, SHOULD HAVE SOME REGARD FOR THE CUMULATIVE EFFECT OF SUCH REQUIREMENTS.

THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON LEWIS DAVIES, AGREED TO DELETE THE CLAUSE FOR THE TIME BEING AND SAID THE SITUATION WOULD BE MONITORED IN THE LIGHT OF EXPERIENCE WITH THE HIGHER LEVEL OF FINES.

HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT IF FUTURE CIRCUMSTANCES SHOW THAT SOME CHANGES TO THIS PROVISION ARE NEEDED, +WE SHALL HAVE TO CONSIDER THIS IN THE LIGHT OF THE SITUATION THEN OBTAINING.+

HE EXPLAINED THAT THE CLAUSE HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN PUT IN BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDERED THAT IN THE INTERESTS OF PUBLIC SAFETY THERE WAS A CASE FOR EXTENDING THE RESTRICTION SO THAT IN CONSIDERING THE ISSUE OF A CLOSING ORDER, A MAGISTRATE WOULD NOT BE LIMITED TO THE STRUCTURAL CHARACTER OR THE LOCATION OF THE PREMISES ALONE.

NEW TRUNK ROAD TO LINK NEW TOWNS  
\* \* \* \*

THE NEW TOWNS OF TAI PO AND FANLING/SHEK WU HUI WILL BE LINKED TO SHA TIN IN THE SOUTH AND YUEN LONG IN THE WEST BY A SIX-LANE TRUNK ROAD, PART OF THE NEW TERRITORIES CIRCULAR ROAD.

THE REGIONAL SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, THE HON IAN MACPHERSON, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY IN REPLY TO THE HON CHEUNG YAN-LUNG, WHO ASKED ABOUT THE PLANNING AND PROVISION OF TRANSPORT FACILITIES IN THE TWO AREAS IN VIEW OF THE PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH.

MR MACPHERSON SAID WORK ON THE SECTION BETWEEN SHA TIN AND TAI PO HAD ALREADY BEGUN AND WORK ON THE REMAINING SECTION WOULD START LATER THIS YEAR.

+THE WHOLE ROAD IS EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED BY THE END OF 1984. THE TRUNK ROAD IS COMPLEMENTED BY A SERIES OF SECONDARY DISTRIBUTOR ROADS IN THE AREA.+

TOUCHING ON ELECTRIC TRAIN SERVICES, HE SAID WORK ON THE DOUBLE-TRACKING AND ELECTRIFICATION OF THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY WAS CONTINUING.

HE EXPECTED THAT ELECTRIFIED TRAIN SERVICES WOULD BE EXTENDED TO TAI PO IN SPRING 1983 AND TO FANLING/SHEK WU HUI A FEW MONTHS LATER.

+TRAIN FREQUENCIES WILL BE FOUR PER HOUR OFF PEAK AND EIGHT PER HOUR DURING BUSY PERIODS. THE TRAINS WILL BE ABLE TO ACCOMMODATE SOME 20 000 PEOPLE PER HOUR AND CAPACITY CAN BE INCREASED TO DOUBLE THIS.

+THE RAILWAY WILL OPERATE FOR 16 HOURS A DAY, THAT IS, 320 000 PEOPLE CAN MAKE USE OF THE SERVICES EACH DAY.+

MR MACPHERSON SAID THAT NEW TOWN DEVELOPMENT PLANS MADE PROVISION FOR ROADS, BUS TERMINI AND DEPOTS TO ALLOW FOR THE EFFICIENT OPERATION OF PUBLIC BUS SERVICES.

THE PROPOSALS REGARDING BUS ROUTES IN THE AREAS WERE CONTAINED IN THE ROUTE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME WHICH THE DISTRICT BOARDS WOULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THERE WERE 59 DOUBLE-DECK AND 34 SINGLE-DECK BUSES OPERATING IN THE EXISTING 11 ROUTES SERVING THESE AREAS. THE LATTER WERE BEING REPLACED BY DOUBLE-DECKERS AND THE FREQUENCIES WERE BEING INCREASED.

FIFTY-SIX ADDITIONAL DOUBLE-DECKERS WOULD BE ALLOCATED DURING THE SECOND HALF OF THIS YEAR, A FURTHER 15 IN 1983 AND 13 IN 1984.

A PROGRAMME TO PROVIDE SHELTERS AT BUS STOPS, BOTH EXISTING AND PLANNED, HAD BEEN AGREED ON, HE SAID.

EXPORT CREDIT INSURANCE CORPN GETS SUPPORT  
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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) APPROVED A MOTION TO INCREASE THE MAXIMUM CONTINGENT LIABILITY OF THE EXPORT CREDIT INSURANCE CORPORATION FROM \$2 500 MILLION TO \$3 000 MILLION.

IN MOVING THE MOTION FOR APPROVAL, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON HENRY CHING, SAID THAT SINCE THE LAST INCREASE IN MAY 1980, THE CORPORATION'S LIABILITY UNDER CONTRACTS OF INSURANCE HAD RISEN BY \$424 MILLION, AND AT THE END OF APRIL 1982, IT STOOD AT \$2 358 MILLION.

MR CHING SAID THE CORPORATION'S CONTINGENT LIABILITIES WERE INCREASING AT THE RATE OF APPROXIMATELY \$50 MILLION PER QUARTER. +BUT THE RATE OF INCREASE COULD BE HIGHER IF, FOR EXAMPLE, THE CORPORATION ISSUES LARGE MEDIUM-TERM POLICIES,+ HE SAID.

IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, HE SAID, THE CORPORATION'S ADVISORY BOARD CONSIDERED THAT THE EXISTING STATUTORY LIMIT MIGHT BE REACHED SHORTLY AND HAD ADVISED THAT THE MAXIMUM CONTINGENT LIABILITY SHOULD BE INCREASED TO \$3 000 MILLION.

+FAILURE TO RAISE THE LIMIT COULD RESULT IN THE CORPORATION HAVING TO TURN AWAY FURTHER BUSINESS,+ MR CHING ADDED.

EARLIER, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON, IN TABLING THE CORPORATION'S REPORT FOR 1980-81, SAID THE CORPORATION HAD MADE STEADY PROGRESS DURING THE YEAR AND HAD ACHIEVED AN INSURED TURNOVER OF \$3 507 MILLION, A SLIGHT INCREASE OVER THE PREVIOUS YEAR.

PREMIUM INCOME INCREASED BY 12 PER CENT TO REACH \$18 MILLION AND THE SMALL UNDERWRITING DEFICIT FOR 1979-80 WAS TURNED INTO A SMALL SURPLUS. DURING THE YEAR, THE CORPORATION ALSO SERVICED 1 113 POLICIES AND THIS HAD SINCE INCREASED TO 1 209.

+WITH THIS INCREASE IN BUSINESS, LIABILITY NOW STANDS AT \$2 358 MILLION COMPARED WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S GUARANTEE OF \$2 500 MILLION,+ MR JEAFFRESON SAID.

THE CORPORATION'S INSURED EXPORTS FORMED ABOUT FIVE PER CENT OF HONG KONG'S TOTAL EXPORTS, COVERING MOSTLY TEXTILES.

ON THE RISKS SIDE, MR JEAFFRESON SAID FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS, THERE HAD BEEN INCREASING CLAIMS PAYABLE. IN 1980-81, CLOSE TO \$13 MILLION WAS REQUIRED TO MEET AND TO PROVIDE FOR CLAIMS. THIS REPRESENTED 75 PER CENT OF GROSS PREMIUM INCOME AND WAS AN IMPROVEMENT OVER 84 PER CENT FOR THE PREVIOUS YEAR.

IN HIS SPEECH, MR JEAFFRESON ALSO PAID TRIBUTE TO THE COMMISSIONER AND STAFF OF THE CORPORATION. HE SAID THE VALUE OF EXPORTS INSURED BY THE CORPORATION SINCE 1975-76 HAD INCREASED BY 120 PER CENT.

+THE CORPORATION HAS NOW ACCUMULATED AN UNDERWRITING SURPLUS OF \$6.1 MILLION. THE SIZE OF THIS SURPLUS INDICATES THAT THE CORPORATION HAS BEEN ABLE TO STRIKE A PRUDENT BALANCE BETWEEN EXPANSION OF BUSINESS AND EXPOSURE TO RISKS,+ HE SAID.

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## MAINTENANCE WORKS DONE DURING OFF-PEAK HOURS

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HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE WORKS HAD LARGELY BEEN RE-SCHEDULED TO OFF-PEAK HOURS TO AVOID CONFLICT WITH TRAFFIC, THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON DAVID MCDONALD, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON ANDREW SO, MR MCDONALD SAID THAT NIGHT WORKING WAS ALSO UNDERTAKEN ON SOME TRUNK ROADS WHERE TRAFFIC CONGESTION WAS PREVALENT THROUGHOUT NORMAL WORKING HOURS AND WHERE NO RESIDENTIAL AREAS WOULD BE DISTURBED BY THE NOISE OF THE OPERATIONS.

IN ADDITION, HE SAID, THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW PLANT SUCH AS ROAD PLANERS AND ASPHALT PAVERS HAD ALLOWED A HIGHER DEGREE OF MECHANISATION AND HAD SPEEDED UP THE PROCESS OF RE-SURFACING AND OTHER PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE.

+REQUESTS FOR ROAD OPENINGS FOR THE LAYING AND SERVICING OF UNDERGROUND CABLES AND PIPES ARE PROCESSED AT MONTHLY MEETINGS HELD IN THE THREE HIGHWAYS OFFICE DISTRICTS OF HONG KONG, KOWLOON AND THE NEW TERRITORIES,+ MR MCDONALD SAID.

+WHENEVER POSSIBLE THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE VARIOUS UTILITY ORGANISATIONS ARE CO-ORDINATED TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF OPENINGS TO A MINIMUM AND TO DETERMINE THE CONDITIONS FOR TRAFFIC DIVERSIONS AND THE WORKING PROGRAMMES FOR TRENCH WORKS.+

REPLYING TO ANOTHER QUESTION FROM THE HON K.C. CHAN ABOUT THE RULES GOVERNING THE USE OF PUBLIC PAVEMENTS BY BUILDING AND PUBLIC UTILITY CONTRACTORS, MR MCDONALD SAID THAT REQUESTS FOR PERMISSION TO ERECT HOARDINGS AND COVERED WALKWAYS ON PUBLIC PAVEMENTS WERE SUBMITTED TOGETHER WITH PLANS TO THE BUILDINGS AUTHORITY.

HE SAID, +IF THE BUILDING AUTHORITY IS SATISFIED THAT THE PROPOSALS ARE ADEQUATE TO ENSURE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AND CONVENIENCE A PERMIT IS ISSUED.

+REGISTERED CONTRACTORS ARE REQUIRED TO ERECT SUCH HOARDINGS IN STRICT ACCORDANCE WITH THE APPROVED PLANS AND TO MAINTAIN THEM IN GOOD REPAIR.

+SPOT CHECKS ARE MADE BY BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE STAFF TO ENSURE THAT THE HOARDINGS ARE PROPERLY MAINTAINED.+

MR MCDONALD POINTED OUT THAT FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH ANY REQUIREMENT WOULD RESULT IN THE BUILDING AUTHORITY CARRYING OUT THE NECESSARY WORK AND RECOVERING THE COST FROM THE DEFAULTER.

AS TO THE REQUESTS BY PUBLIC UTILITY COMPANIES FOR PERMISSION TO LAY SERVICE CABLES AND PIPES IN TRENCHES EXCAVATED IN PUBLIC PAVEMENTS AND FOOTPATHS, HE SAID, THESE REQUESTS WERE SUBMITTED TO THE HIGHWAYS OFFICE GIVING DETAILS OF THE NATURE AND LIKELY DURATION OF THE WORKS.

/+EACH PERMIT .....

+EACH PERMIT ISSUED BY THE HIGHWAYS OFFICE CONTAINS STRINGENT CONDITIONS COVERING THE METHOD OF EXCAVATION, PROPER GUARDING AND LIGHTING, NECESSARY PEDESTRIAN AND VEHICULAR TRAFFIC DIVERSIONS AND THE REINSTATEMENT OF PAVEMENT SURFACES.+ HE SAID.

+ALL SUCH EXCAVATION WORKS ARE INSPECTED ON A WEEKLY BASIS BY HIGHWAYS OFFICE TECHNICAL STAFF AND CONTRAVENTION OF THE STATED CONDITIONS WOULD RESULT IN CANCELLATION OF THE PERMIT AND POSSIBLE PROSECUTION.+

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BUILDINGS (AMENDMENT) BILL  
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THE BUILDINGS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1982, DESIGNED TO IMPROVE CONTROL OF THE BUILDING OPERATIONS IN THE MID-LEVELS AREA TO SAFEGUARD THE STABILITY OF SLOPES, HAD ITS SECOND READING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, MR DAVID MCDONALD SAID, +BUILDING DEVELOPMENT IN MID-LEVELS AREA IS AT PRESENT RESTRICTED BY VIRTUE OF THE TEMPORARY RESTRICTION OF BUILDING DEVELOPMENT (MID-LEVELS) ORDINANCE ENACTED IN MAY 1979.

HE SAID THAT THIS STATUTORY MORATORIUM WAS ENACTED FOR A PERIOD UP TO DECEMBER 31, 1981 FOR A DETAILED GEOTECHNICAL STUDY TO BE CARRIED OUT TO ESTABLISH WHAT RESTRICTIONS AND CONTROLS WERE NEEDED FOR FUTURE BUILDING WORKS IN THE AREA.

IT WAS SUBSEQUENTLY EXTENDED UNTIL JULY 31, 1982, TO ENABLE THE PRESENT BILL TO BE PREPARED, TOGETHER WITH SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION.

MR MCDONALD POINTED OUT THAT GROUNDWATER CONDITIONS HAD A MOST IMPORTANT EFFECT ON THE STABILITY OF A SLOPE AND CLAUSE 8 OF THE BILL CONCERNED GROUNDWATER DRAINAGE WORKS.

HE SAID, +THE BUILDING AUTHORITY SHOULD THEREFORE BE ABLE TO REQUIRE THAT FOR ANY NEW CONSTRUCTION ADEQUATE DRAINAGE IS PROVIDED TO ENSURE THAT THE SLOPES CONCERNED HAVE AN ADEQUATE MARGIN OF SAFETY.

+IN SOME CIRCUMSTANCES AND IN THE INTERESTS OF THE STABILITY OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD THE DRAINAGE WORKS MAY NEED TO EXTEND INTO ADJOINING LAND, FOR EXAMPLE, BY DRILLING SOME SMALL DIAMETER HORIZONTAL DRAINS BENEATH THE ADJOINING PROPERTY.+

/IN ORDER .....

IN ORDER TO SAFEGUARD THE INTERESTS OF OWNERS OF ADJOINING PROPERTY INTO WHICH SUCH DRAINAGE WORKS ENCROACH, MR MCDONALD ADDED, THE CLAUSE PROVIDED FOR GIVING THEM NOTICE, FOR THE MAKING OF OBJECTIONS AND FOR COMPENSATION FOR LOSS OR DAMAGE.

MR MCDONALD SAID THAT UNRESTRICTED BULK EXCAVATION FOR BASEMENTS AND CUTTINGS GENERALLY LED TO AN EXCESSIVE REDUCTION IN THE SUPPORT OF A SLOPE.

SO, TO MINIMISE THE CUMULATIVE ADVERSE EFFECTS IN A SERIES OF ADJOINING SITES ON THE STABILITY OF A HILLSIDE, HE ADDED, A LIMIT WOULD BE IMPOSED ON THE PERMITTED DEPTH OF BULK EXCAVATION.

HE SAID, +THIS WILL BE DONE BY AMENDING THE BUILDING (CONSTRUCTION) REGULATIONS TO PROVIDE THAT BULK EXCAVATION IS NOT TO BE CARRIED OUT IN THE MID-LEVELS AREA BELOW LEVELS TO BE DETERMINED BY THE BUILDING AUTHORITY.

+DEMOLITION AND EXCAVATION WORKS IN THE MID-LEVELS WHICH MAY IMPAIR STABILITY WILL NEED TO BE DESIGNED BY ENGINEERS, AND DETAILED PLANS FOR SUCH WORKS WILL HAVE TO BE SUBMITTED BY THE AUTHORISED PERSON TO THE BUILDING AUTHORITY FOR APPROVAL.

+FOR THIS PURPOSE A DEMOLITION WORKS PLAN WILL BE PRESCRIBED UNDER THE BUILDING (ADMINISTRATION) REGULATIONS.+

MR MCDONALD SAID THAT OWNERS OF LOTS WITHIN THE SCHEDULED AREA UNDER THE BILL BUT OUTSIDE THE AREA OF THE STATUTORY MORATORIUM WOULD BE SUBJECT TO THE NEW GEOTECHNICAL CONTROLS PROVIDED FOR IN THE BILL AND REGULATIONS.

HE ADDED THAT UNDER CLAUSE 13 OF THE BILL PLANS FOR BUILDING WORKS IN THE SCHEDULED AREA SUBMITTED BUT NOT APPROVED BEFORE THE ORDINANCE CAME INTO FORCE, EVEN IF SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL BEFORE THEN, WERE NOT TO BE APPROVED UNLESS THEY COMPLIED WITH THE NEW REQUIREMENTS.

HE SAID, +AS THE BILL AND THE AMENDING REGULATIONS WILL CONSTITUTE THE WHOLE PACKAGE OF LEGISLATION TO ENABLE THE BUILDING AUTHORITY TO IMPLEMENT THE PROPOSED CONTROLS, IT IS INTENDED THAT THE REGULATIONS SHOULD COME INTO FORCE AT THE SAME TIME AS THE BILL.

+AND AT THE SAME TIME AS THE BILL COMES INTO FORCE, THE STATUTORY MORATORIUM WILL BE REPEALED.+

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

PROPOSALS TO REVAMP SPECIAL AND RESOURCE CLASSES

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A COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY CONDUCTED LAST YEAR HAS RESULTED IN A NUMBER OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REORGANISING SPECIAL AND RESOURCE CLASSES IN SCHOOLS, THE HON COLVYN HAYE, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION SAID TODAY IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING.

+A PAPER ON THIS SUBJECT WILL BE PRESENTED TO THE REHABILITATION DEVELOPMENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE AT ITS NEXT MEETING ON JUNE 7,+ HE SAID.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON K.C. CHAN AS TO HOW MANY VACANCIES THERE WERE IN SPECIAL CLASSES IN AIDED SCHOOLS AND WHAT ACTION WAS BEING TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT TO FILL THESE VACANCIES.

THERE WERE 1 460 VACANCIES IN SPECIAL CLASSES IN AIDED SCHOOLS AND THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT HAD TAKEN A NUMBER OF POSITIVE STEPS TO FILL THEM, HE SAID.

A GROUP TESTING PROGRAMME CONDUCTED ANNUALLY IDENTIFIED CHILDREN REQUIRING SPECIAL EDUCATION PROVISION, AND THESE CHILDREN WERE REFERRED TO SCHOOLS WITH VACANCIES IN SPECIAL CLASSES, MR HAYE SAID.

MEETINGS WERE HELD WITH HEADS OF ORDINARY SCHOOLS TO LET THEM KNOW WHICH SCHOOLS IN THEIR IMMEDIATE VICINITY HAD VACANCIES IN SPECIAL CLASSES FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS, HE SAID.

+PARENTS OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN ARE GIVEN INDIVIDUAL COUNSELLING TO HELP THEM UNDERSTAND THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF THEIR CHILDREN,+ HE SAID.

THERE WAS ALSO REGULAR PUBLICITY ON THIS SERVICE IN THE FORM OF PAMPHLETS AND LEAFLETS DISTRIBUTED FROM DISTRICT OFFICES, OTHER GOVERNMENT OFFICES, AND SPECIAL EDUCATION CENTRES EXPLAINING THE SPECIAL FACILITIES AVAILABLE FOR CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES.

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WAGE CEILING RAISED FROM \$6 000 TO \$7 500

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THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE WILL NOW APPLY TO NON-MANUAL EMPLOYEES EARNING NOT MORE THAN \$7 500 A MONTH INSTEAD OF \$6 000.

A RESOLUTION TO RAISE THE WAGE CEILING TO \$7 500 WAS APPROVED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN MOVING THE RESOLUTION MADE UNDER THE ORDINANCE, THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON J.N. HENDERSON, RECALLED THAT AT THE LAST REVISION OF THE WAGE CEILING IN JANUARY 1981, HE INFORMED THE COUNCIL THAT THE LABOUR ADVISORY BOARD HAD ADVISED THAT THE CEILING SHOULD BE REVIEWED ANNUALLY AND THAT ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN TO REVISE IT IF THERE WAS A CLEAR NEED.

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A REVIEW MADE IN FEBRUARY 1982 INDICATED THAT THE MONTHLY WAGE LEVEL OF \$6 000 IN SEPTEMBER 1980 WOULD BE EQUIVALENT TO AROUND \$7 500 IN MARCH 1982. IT WAS THEREFORE PROPOSED TO RAISE THE WAGE CEILING FOR NON-MANUAL EMPLOYEES COVERED BY THE ORDINANCE FROM \$6 000 TO \$7 500.

MR HENDERSON ADDED THAT IT WAS ESTIMATED THAT AFTER THE REVISION ABOUT 40 300 EMPLOYEES, AMOUNTING TO ABOUT TWO PER CENT OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES, WOULD REMAIN OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF THE ORDINANCE - SIMILAR TO THE POSITION WHEN THE CEILING WAS LAST REVISED.

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### ROBBERIES WITH FIREARMS

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IN THE 12-MONTH PERIOD ENDING APRIL 30, THERE WERE 280 REPORTED CASES OF ROBBERIES INVOLVING REAL OR IMITATION FIREARMS IN 1982, COMPARED WITH 212 SUCH CASES IN 1981, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON LEWIS DAVIES SAID TODAY IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

OF THESE CASES, 29 IN 1982 AND 30 IN 1981 WERE KNOWN TO HAVE INVOLVED THE USE OF REAL FIREARMS, EITHER BECAUSE THE WEAPON WAS SEIZED OR BECAUSE THERE WAS EVIDENCE THAT A BULLET OR PROJECTILE HAD BEEN DISCHARGED, HE SAID.

IN HIS REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HO KAM-FAI, MR DAVIES ALSO SAID THAT IN THE YEAR ENDING APRIL 30, 27 CASES OF ROBBERIES INVOLVING REAL OR IMITATION FIREARMS WERE DETECTED BY THE POLICE (A DETECTION RATE OF 9.6 PER CENT) BUT OF THESE, 11 CASES WERE DETECTED IN WHICH REAL FIREARMS WERE USED (A RATE OF 40 PER CENT).

FOR THE PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS, THE COMPARABLE FIGURES WERE 35 DETECTED CASES INVOLVING REAL OR IMITATION FIREARMS (A RATE OF 16.5 PER CENT) OF WHICH 12 WERE REAL FIREARMS (A RATE OF 40 PER CENT).

DURING THE YEAR 1980/81, THE SENTENCES IMPOSED BY THE HIGH COURT UPON THOSE CONVICTED OF ARMED ROBBERY AVERAGED BETWEEN SEVEN AND EIGHT YEARS' IMPRISONMENT. THIS WAS INCREASED TO A LEVEL OF 10 YEARS' IMPRISONMENT OR MORE DURING 1981/82.

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ALTERNATIVE PASSENGER MOVING SYSTEMS

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THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO APPOINT CONSULTANTS IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO INVESTIGATE THE FEASIBILITY OF ALTERNATIVE PASSENGER MOVING SYSTEMS TO CONNECT THE MID-LEVELS AREAS WITH THE CENTRAL DISTRICT, THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON DAVID MCDONALD, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MR MCDONALD WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON STEPHEN CHEONG.

HE POINTED OUT THAT AN ITEM FOR THE ENGAGEMENT OF CONSULTANTS HAD BEEN INCLUDED IN THE PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME AND THE POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES WOULD INCLUDE A MOVING BELT SYSTEM.

THE INVESTIGATION IS EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED BY SEPTEMBER NEXT YEAR, HE SAID.

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REVIEW OF OPEN CAMPS MANAGEMENT

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THE DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITIES IN OPEN CAMPS FOR VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IS BEING EXAMINED WITH A VIEW TO REDEFINING THEM WHERE NECESSARY SO AS TO ENSURE THAT ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR IS MAINTAINED AND LAW AND ORDER PRESERVED.

DISCLOSING THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON LEWIS DAVIES, SAID HE HOPED THAT AGREEMENT COULD BE REACHED QUICKLY ON REVISED ARRANGEMENTS.

INDEPENDENT OF THIS, BUT COINCIDENTALLY, A FEASIBILITY STUDY HAD ALSO BEEN PUT IN HAND TO DETERMINE WHETHER CLOSED CAMPS FOR VIETNAMESE REFUGEES WAS A PRACTICAL PROPOSITION. HE HOPED THAT THIS STUDY WOULD BE COMPLETED IN TIME FOR A DECISION ON POLICY TO BE TAKEN IN ABOUT THREE TO FOUR WEEKS.

ON THE MANAGEMENT OF OPEN CAMPS, MR DAVIES EXPLAINED THAT IN 1979 IT HAD BEEN AGREED WITH THE UNHCR THAT THE HIGH COMMISSIONER WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR FOUR OPEN CAMPS. UNHCR HAD ARRANGED FOR THESE TO BE MANAGED BY VOLUNTARY AGENCIES.

ONLY ONE SUCH CAMP REMAINED IN FULL OPERATION TODAY AND A SECOND WAS IN THE PROCESS OF CLOSURE. THREE OTHER CAMPS ARE OPERATED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

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MAINTENANCE OF BUILDINGS

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THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON DENIS BRAY, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT IT WAS NOT APPROPRIATE TO USE STATUTORY POWERS TO DEAL WITH EXTERNAL PAINT WORK OF DOMESTIC BUILDINGS.

HOWEVER, HE SAID, STATUTORY POWERS CONTAINED IN THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND URBAN SERVICES ORDINANCE EXISTED AND HAD BEEN USED IN THE INTERESTS OF PUBLIC HYGIENE TO CLEAR CHOKED DRAINS, REPAIR WALL AND FLOOR SURFACES, CLEAN AND LIMEWASH INTERNAL PARTS OF THE BUILDINGS.

MR BRAY WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ANDREW SO WHO ASKED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WHETHER GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER REQUIRING THE LANDLORDS OR TENANTS OF +THE OLDER DEGENERATED BUILDINGS TO UNDERTAKE REPAINTING AND BASIC MAINTENANCE WORKS TO ENSURE MINIMUM STANDARDS OF CLEANLINESS AND PUBLIC HYGIENE.+

MR BRAY ALSO SAID THAT IF THE URBAN COUNCIL IN THE URBAN AREA, OR THE DIRECTOR OF URBAN SERVICES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, CONSIDERED ANY PREMISES CONSTITUTED A NUISANCE, OR POSED A DANGER TO HEALTH, OR DETRACTED FROM THE AMENITIES OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD, THEY COULD REQUIRE THE OWNER OR OCCUPIER TO LIMEWASH, PAINT OR CLEAN THEM.

THE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITY MIGHT ALSO REQUIRE THE OWNER OR OCCUPIER TO REPAIR DRAINS OR OTHER PARTS OF THE BUILDING IN THE INTERESTS OF GENERAL SANITATION AND CLEANLINESS.

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PERMITTED RENTS OF PREWAR PREMISES RAISED

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY PASSED A RESOLUTION REVISING THE PERMITTED RENTS PAYABLE FOR PREWAR PREMISES WHICH ARE SUBJECT TO RENT CONTROLS UNDER PART I OF THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) ORDINANCE.

FOR PREWAR DOMESTIC PREMISES, THE PERMITTED RENTS WILL BE RAISED FROM THE EXISTING LEVEL OF EIGHT TIMES THE STANDARD RENT (THAT IS THE RENT PASSING IN 1941) TO 12 TIMES, AND THAT OF PREWAR BUSINESS PREMISES FROM 18 TO 27 TIMES THE STANDARD RENT, PROVIDED THAT THE PERMITTED RENT DOES NOT EXCEED THE FAIR MARKET RENT FOR THE PREMISES.

MOVING THE RESOLUTION IN COUNCIL, THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON DONALD LIAO SAID THE RELAXATION WOULD RESULT IN AN INCREASE OF ABOUT \$170 PER MONTH FOR A TYPICAL UPPER FLOOR DOMESTIC TENEMENT UNIT, BRINGING THE RENT TO ABOUT \$500, OR 26 PER CENT OF ITS MARKET RENT. ABOUT 3 500 DOMESTIC UNITS IN PREWAR BUILDINGS ARE LIKELY TO BE AFFECTED.

FOR A TYPICAL COMMERCIAL GROUND TENEMENT FLOOR, MR LIAO SAID, THE INCREASE WOULD BE ABOUT \$700 PER MONTH, BRINGING THE RENT TO ABOUT \$2 100, OR 40 PER CENT OF ITS FAIR MARKET RENT. ABOUT 1 500 BUSINESS UNITS ARE LIKELY TO BE AFFECTED.

UNDER THE RESOLUTION, LANDLORDS WILL BE REQUIRED TO SERVE AT LEAST ONE MONTH'S NOTICE OF THE INCREASED RENTS TO THEIR TENANTS. IN THE CASE OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS, ANY INCREASE WOULD BE OFFSET BY INCREASES IN RENT ALLOWANCES UP TO THE PERMITTED MAXIMA.

MR LIAO SAID THE INCREASES WERE SMALL IN CASH TERMS BUT REPRESENTED ANOTHER STEP IN THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY OF LOOSENING THESE RIGID AND OUTDATED CONTROLS WHICH HAVE BEEN IN FORCE FOR OVER 30 YEARS.

HE RECALLED THAT IN NOVEMBER 1978, THE GOVERNMENT AGREED TO PURSUE A POLICY ALLOWING ANNUAL INCREASES IN THE PERMITTED RENTS OF PREWAR PREMISES IN ORDER TO MITIGATE THE RESTRICTIVE NATURE OF THESE STATIC RENT CONTROLS.

+IN PARTICULAR, IT IS THE DECLARED POLICY OF THIS COUNCIL TO DECONTROL PREWAR BUSINESS PREMISES ON JULY 1, 1984,+ HE SAID, ADDING +THIS IS ALREADY PROVIDED UNDER PART I OF THE ORDINANCE.+

DESPITE REPEATED INCREASES, HE SAID, AVERAGE PERMITTED RENTS OF BUSINESS PREMISES SUBJECT TO CONTROLS STILL STOOD AT ONLY ABOUT 26 PER CENT OF FAIR MARKET RENTS, AND THOSE OF DOMESTIC PREMISES AT ABOUT 18 PER CENT OF FAIR MARKET RENTS.

+THIS IS DUE TO THE VERY LOW BASE ON WHICH RENT INCREASES ARE CALCULATED AND TO SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASED MARKET RENTAL LEVELS OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS.

+UNLESS FURTHER INCREASES ARE ALLOWED, THE GAP BETWEEN CONTROLLED RENTS AND MARKET RENTS WILL WIDEN,+ MR LIAO SAID.

MR LIAO SAID THERE WERE ABOUT 9 000 UNITS IN PREWAR BUILDINGS, 55 PER CENT (OR 5 000 UNITS) OF WHICH ARE EFFECTIVELY SUBJECT TO RENT CONTROL. THE BALANCE (4 000 UNITS) WERE EITHER OCCUPIED BY OWNERS, SPECIFICALLY EXCLUDED FROM CONTROLS OR LET AT RENTS AT OR APPROACHING MARKET LEVELS.

THE RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY COUNCIL WILL HAVE LITTLE EFFECT ON THE RENTS PAYABLE BY TENANTS OF PREMISES WHICH ARE NOT EFFECTIVELY SUBJECT TO CONTROLS.

DUTIABLE COMMODITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1982 MOVED

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THE PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE DUTIABLE COMMODITIES ORDINANCE (CHAPTER 109) WAS CONSISTENT WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S DECLARED POLICY OF PROMOTING USE OF THE METRIC SYSTEM OF WEIGHTS AND MEASURES, THE DIRECTOR OF TRADE INDUSTRY AND CUSTOMS, MR BILL DORWARD SAID IN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE DUTIABLE COMMODITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1982 AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE SAID THE MAJORITY OF THE AMENDMENTS REQUIRED RELATE TO THE CONVERSION OF NON-METRIC TO BROADLY EQUIVALENT METRIC UNITS AND MAY BE EFFECTED BY THE GOVERNOR BY AN ORDER UNDER SECTION 3(1) OF THE METRICATION ORDINANCE (CHAPTER 214).

+THIS BILL RELATES TO AMENDMENTS WHICH FALL OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE METRICATION ORDINANCE. IT PROPOSES THE REPLACEMENT OF THE ARCHAIC SIKES PROOF SYSTEM OF DETERMINING ALCOHOLIC STRENGTH WITH THAT RECOMMENDED BY THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION OF LEGAL METROLOGY (OIML).

+THE OIML SYSTEM, WHICH IS MORE PRECISE THAN THE SIKES SYSTEM, EXPRESSES ALCOHOLIC STRENGTH IN TERMS OF VOLUME OF THE ALCOHOL IN PERCENTAGE PROPORTION TO THE VOLUME OF THE ALCOHOLIC MIXTURE AT A STANDARD TEMPERATURE OF 20 DEGREES CELSIUS.

+THE SYSTEM HAS BEEN ADOPTED BY MANY OF OUR TRADING PARTNERS, INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE EEC COUNTRIES.+

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MTR LOAN GUARANTEE APPROVED

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY APPROVED A GOVERNMENT GUARANTEE TO COVER REPAYMENT OF A \$719 MILLION LOAN INCURRED BY THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION.

THE SUM BORROWED UNDER THIS GUARANTEE WILL BE USED TO FINANCE THE ISLAND LINE CONTRACTS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TUNNELS FROM SHEUNG WAN TO ADMIRALTY AND FROM SAI WAN HO TO ALDRICH BAY- THE STATIONS AT SHAU KEI WAN AND SAI WAN HO- AND THE CONCOURSES OF WAN CHAI, CAUSEWAY BAY EAST, TIN HAU AND SAI WAN HO STATIONS.

THIS BRINGS THE GOVERNMENT'S TOTAL GUARANTEE COMMITMENT IN RESPECT OF OUTSTANDING LOANS AVAILABLE TO THE MTRC TO \$8 037 MILLION.

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 19, 1982

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CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING SOCIETIES  
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NINETY-THREE OUT OF 238 GOVERNMENT CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING SOCIETIES HAD FULLY REPAID THEIR LOANS, THE SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, THE HON MARTIN ROWLANDS SAID TODAY.

MR ROWLANDS WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ANDREW SO, WHO ASKED HOW MANY CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING SOCIETIES FORMED BY CIVIL SERVANTS HAD FULLY REPAID THEIR GOVERNMENT LOANS AND WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER ALLOWING SUCH SOCIETIES TO SELL OR REDEVELOP THEIR PROPERTIES.

+AS REGARDS THE SECOND PART OF THE QUESTION, I AM AT THIS MOMENT CONSIDERING WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ALLOW THESE SOCIETIES TO ASSIGN OR REDEVELOP THEIR PROPERTIES, AND IF SO ON WHAT BASIS,+ MR ROWLANDS SAID.

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COMPUTER COMPONENTS ARE BIG EXPORT ITEMS  
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THE MANUFACTURE OF COMPONENTS AND PARTS FOR COMPUTERS HAS BECOME AN IMPORTANT SECTOR OF HONG KONG'S ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY SAID THE COMMISSIONER OF INDUSTRY, MR PETER TSAO TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HONG KONG'S EXPORTS OF COMPONENTS AND PARTS FOR COMPUTERS LAST YEAR AMOUNTED TO \$2 126 MILLION, WHICH WAS SOME 23 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL EXPORT VALUE OF OUR ELECTRONICS PRODUCTS, HE SAID.

THE MAJOR COMPONENTS AND PARTS PRODUCED INCLUDE INTEGRATED CIRCUIT BOARDS, AND COMPUTER MEMORY SYSTEMS INCLUDING CORES AND PLANES.

MR TSAO WAS ADDRESSING THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE COMPUTER HONG KONG '82 EXHIBITION SPONSORED BY THE HONG KONG COMPUTER SOCIETY.

HE NOTED THAT TO MAINTAIN ITS COMPETITIVENESS, HONG KONG'S MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY WAS ENDEAVOURING TO MOVE UP-MARKET BY DIVERSIFYING ITS PRODUCT GROUP AND RANGE, AND BY ADOPTING AND ADAPTING MORE ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES.

+WITH THIS TREND, THE DEMAND FOR COMPUTERS TO HANDLE MODERN TRADING AND MANUFACTURING OPERATIONS IS EXPECTED TO GROW. THERE IS THEREFORE THE NEED FOR HONG KONG TO KEEP ABREAST WITH THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN THE COMPUTER INDUSTRY,+ MR TSAO SAID.

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SOUTHERN DISTRICT BOARD TO HOLD 5TH MEETING  
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THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT BOARD WILL HOLD ITS FIFTH MEETING ON FRIDAY (MAY 21) AT 2.30 PM AT CHAN PAK SHA SCHOOL IN WONG CHUK HANG.

AMONG THE TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED WILL BE THE PUBLICITY PROGRAMME FOR THE URBAN DISTRICT BOARD ELECTION TO BE HELD ON SEPTEMBER 23 INCLUDING PUBLISHING A DISTRICT HANDBOOK AND LAUNCHING PUBLICITY ON THE DISTRICT LOGO.

A 'MEET THE PUBLIC' SESSION AIMED AT PROVIDING THE PUBLIC A CHANCE TO MEET THE DISTRICT BOARD UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS AND TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON DISTRICT PROBLEMS WILL BE INTRODUCED IN JUNE.

BOARD MEMBERS WILL ALSO DISCUSS ORGANISING A SERIES OF SEMINARS ON DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION FOR SUCH SELECTED TARGET GROUPS AS SOCIAL WORKERS, SCHOOL PRINCIPALS, INDUSTRIALISTS AND STUDENTS IN THE DISTRICT.

THREE DRAFT CHAPTERS ON POPULATION PROFILE- TRANSPORT, TRAFFIC AND PARKING- AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES OF THE DISTRICT ANATOMY REPORT WILL ALSO BE TABLED.

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