



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11, 1979

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RE-INTRODUCTION OF 1973-74 FUEL-SAVING
MEASURES BEING STUDIED

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AS PART OF ITS CAMPAIGN TO SAVE FUEL, THE GOVERNMENT IS LOOKING INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF RE-INTRODUCING SOME OF THE MEASURES ADOPTED DURING THE 1973-74 ENERGY CRISIS.

+WE HAD AT THAT TIME A BAN ON DISPLAY -- ADVERTISING, LIGHTS, NEON LIGHTS AND THAT SORT OF THING WITHIN CERTAIN STIPULATED HOURS,+ SAID MR. A.L. PURVES, THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF INDUSTRY WHEN HE APPEARED ON RTHK'S VIEWPOINT TELEVISION PROGRAMME THIS (WEDNESDAY) EVENING.

WITH HIM ON THE PROGRAMME WERE MR. S.J. OSMOND, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF SHELL COMPANY OF HONG KONG LTD. AND A MEMBER OF THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT'S OIL POLICY COMMITTEE AND MR. ALAN ARMITAGE, A REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE CONSUMERS.

MR. PURVES SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS ALSO THINKING OF REQUIRING THERMOSTATS IN THE AIR-CONDITIONING SYSTEMS IN COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS TO BE SET AT 26 DEGREES CELSIUS WHICH, HE SAID, WOULD NOT BE AN UNCOMFORTABLE TEMPERATURE.

THE ELECTRICITY GENERATING STATIONS, HE NOTED, WILL BE CUTTING BACK THEIR SPINNING RESERVES BY A LITTLE AND, THROUGH THESE MEASURES AND ALSO PERHAPS DAYLIGHT SAVING, A CUT BACK OF FIVE PER CENT WOULD BE ACHIEVED WHICH IS WHAT THE INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY IS ASKING OTHER COUNTRIES TO DO.

MR. PURVES ALSO SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S OIL POLICY COMMITTEE, OF WHICH HE AND MR. OSMOND ARE MEMBERS, ARE MEETING DAILY TO REVIEW THE OIL SITUATION.

+WE'VE STARTED A PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN, THE INTENTION OF WHICH IS TO ASK PEOPLE TO SAVE ELECTRICITY VOLUNTARILY AND THROUGH THAT TO SAVE FUEL OIL BECAUSE FUEL OIL IS THE ONE OIL WHICH WE THINK WE COULD DO WITH CUTTING BACK ON CONSUMPTION,+ MR. PURVES SAID.

EARLIER, MR. OSMOND SAID THE OIL SITUATION IN HONG KONG WAS TIGHT BUT NOT SERIOUS.

+FOR MOST PRODUCTS, I THINK IT IS QUITE MANAGEABLE AT PRESENT. BUT SHORTAGES ARE BEGINNING TO APPEAR -- MAINLY IN THE AREAS OF FUEL OIL FOR SHIPS AND ELECTRICITY AND PARTIALLY FOR INDUSTRY,+ HE SAID.

THERE WAS ALSO A SHORTAGE OF NAPHTHA AND SOME SHORTAGES IN PETROCHEMICAL PRODUCTS.

IN SPITE OF THIS, MR. OSMOND SAID HE DID NOT THINK THAT HONG KONG WOULD BE IN A POSITION WHERE PEOPLE WOULD BE TOLD: +SORRY, THE PUMPS ARE EMPTY AND THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT IT.+

+BUT RIGHT NOW, WE ARE HAVING GREAT DIFFICULTY IN MEETING DEMANDS FROM NEW USERS — NEW COMMERCIAL USERS,+ MR. OSMOND STRESSED.

AT THIS POINT, MR. PURVES EMPHASISED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD INSISTED ALL ALONG +AND WILL CONTINUE TO INSIST THAT THE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY MUST BE GIVEN THE OIL IT NEEDS IN ORDER TO KEEP EXPORTS GOING BECAUSE EXPORTS ARE OUR LIFE-BLOOD.+

HE SAID THE OIL COMPANIES WERE WELL AWARE OF THIS. +THEY WERE AWARE OF IT IN 1973-74. THEY ARE AWARE OF IT NOW AND WE WILL DO EVERYTHING WE CAN TO ENSURE THAT THIS POLICY IS FIRMLY MAINTAINED,+ HE ADDED.

MR. ARMITAGE ADVOCATED DAYLIGHT SAVING WHICH HE FELT WOULD BE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTOR TO SAVING FUEL OIL IN HONG KONG.

BUT MR. PURVES POINTED OUT THAT THE LATEST FIGURES AVAILABLE SHOWED THAT DAYLIGHT SAVING WOULD BE ABOUT ONE PER CENT.

DAYLIGHT SAVING WAS AN IMPORTANT PART IN THE SAVE FUEL CAMPAIGN, MR. PURVES SAID, +BUT NOT THE MOST IMPORTANT PART.+

+THERE ARE OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER WITH RESPECT TO DAYLIGHT SAVING -- IT HAS TO BE ONE OF SEVERAL ITEMS WHICH CALLS FOR CONSIDERATION AND THAT IS WHAT WE ARE DOING AT THE MOMENT. WE ARE CONSIDERING SEVERAL PARTS OF WHAT IS QUITE A BIG EQUATION,+ MR. PURVES SAID.

+OVERALL, AT THE MOMENT THERE IS NO PANIC, THERE IS NO NEED TO GET TOO EXCITED,+ HE SAID.

EVERYTHING, MR. PURVES SAID, IS UNDER CONTROL AND GOING QUITE WELL.

+BUT WE'RE NOT BEING COMPLACENT,+ HE ADDED.

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TIMELY MOVE TO ADAPT TO FLOATING
EXCHANGE RATE REGIME
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THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) MOVED THE SECOND READING OF THREE AMENDMENT BILLS RELATING TO THE HONG KONG DOLLAR BALANCES AND BANKS' MINIMUM LIQUIDITY RATIOS.

THEY ARE THE EXCHANGE FUND (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979, THE BANKING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979 AND THE DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979.

THE FIRST BILL SEEKS TO LIMIT THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE GOVERNMENT'S HONG KONG DOLLAR BALANCES CAN FORM A BASE FOR THE CREATION OF CREDIT TO THE ECONOMY.

/IT WILL, ...

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IT WILL, EXPLAINED MR. HADDON-CAVE, REQUIRE BANKS HOLDING BALANCES FROM THE EXCHANGE FUND ON DEMAND, AT CALL AND AT SHORT NOTICE TO HOLD SPECIFIED LIQUID ASSETS EQUIVALENT TO 100 PER CENT OF THOSE BALANCES.

AT PRESENT, LIQUID ASSETS HAVE TO BE HELD AGAINST THESE BALANCES TO A MINIMUM OF ONLY 25 PER CENT: UP TO 75 PER CENT IS, THEREFORE, AVAILABLE TO BE LENT TO THE NON-BANK PUBLIC, OR TO BE INVESTED WITH NO LIQUIDITY RESTRAINT.

+IN OTHER WORDS, THIS BILL WILL IMPOSE A CERTAIN ADDITIONAL CONSTRAINT ON THE BANKS CONCERNED,+ HE NOTED.

AGAINST TIME DEPOSITS IN THE NAME OF THE EXCHANGE FUND THE MINIMUM LIQUIDITY REQUIREMENT WILL REMAIN AT ITS PRESENT LEVEL OF 25 PER CENT.

MR. HADDON-CAVE THEN REFERRED TO REMARKS BY THE HON. CHARLES YEUNG THAT THE BILL WOULD NOT ACHIEVE ITS PURPOSE.

HE SAID HE DID NOT BELIEVE MR. YEUNG WAS RIGHT FOR TWO REASONS.

+FIRST, AND MOST IMPORTANT, I HAVE A HIGH REGARD FOR THE BANKS WITH WHOM THE EXCHANGE FUND HOLDS ITS BALANCES. THEY KNOW AND UNDERSTAND EXACTLY WHAT THE PURPOSE OF THIS MEASURE IS, AND I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THEY WILL BEHAVE IN ANY WAY WHICH MIGHT FRUSTRATE ITS PURPOSE.

+SECONDLY, THERE IS NO APPARENT NEED FOR THE BANKING SYSTEM AS A WHOLE TO TAKE STEPS TO CIRCUMVENT THE NEW REQUIREMENT IN THE WAY SUGGESTED BY MR. YEUNG,+ HE ADDED.

MR. HADDON-CAVE ALSO DID NOT AGREE WITH ANOTHER COMMENT BY MR. YEUNG THAT FOREIGN BANKS IN HONG KONG WOULD ENTER INTO +WINDOW-DRESSING+ TRANSACTIONS WITH THEIR HEAD OFFICES OVERSEAS.

+IN RELATION TO COMPANY BALANCE SHEETS THE PHRASE 'WINDOW-DRESSING' MEANS TO ME OPERATIONS WHICH ARE DESIGNED TO MAKE A COMPANY'S POSITION SEEM MUCH BETTER THAN IT REALLY IS. SO ALL THE OPERATIONS AND DEVICES USED FOR THAT PURPOSE ARE COMPLETELY ARTIFICIAL, AND VERY WELL HIDDEN.

+BUT IN THE HONG KONG BANKING SYSTEM, THE HOLDING OF LIQUIDITY IN THE FORM OF A DEPOSIT WITH A BANK OVERSEAS IS A NORMAL AND QUITE LEGITIMATE PROCEDURE.

+THE AMOUNT OF SUCH LIQUIDITY, AND IN PARTICULAR THE AMOUNT OF ANY DEPOSITS AT THE HEAD OFFICE OVERSEAS OF A FOREIGN BANK IN HONG KONG, IS REPORTED EACH MONTH TO THE COMMISSIONER OF BANKING,+ SAID MR. HADDON-CAVE.

IN CONCLUSION, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID THE BILL +IS, I BELIEVE, ANOTHER TIMELY MOVE TO ADAPT OURSELVES+ TO THE FLOATING EXCHANGE RATE REGIME.

THE BANKING (AMENDMENT) BILL IS DESIGNED TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY MAY, FOR MONETARY POLICY PURPOSES, VARY THE MINIMUM LIQUIDITY RATIOS WHICH BANKS IN HONG KONG MUST OBSERVE IN RESPECT OF THE DEPOSITS THEY HOLD FROM THE NON-BANK PUBLIC.

THE MINIMUM LIQUIDITY RATIOS CURRENTLY SET BY SECTIONS 18(2) AND 18(3) OF THE BANKING ORDINANCE, WHICH HAVE BEEN UNCHANGED SINCE 1964, ARE 25 PER CENT IN RESPECT OF +LIQUID ASSETS,+ THREE-FIFTHS OF WHICH (15 PER CENT) MUST BE KEPT IN WHAT ARE TERMED +SUPER LIQUID ASSETS.+

MR. HADDON-CAVE BELIEVED THAT AN INCREASE IN THE RATIOS COULD BE, IN APPROPRIATE CIRCUMSTANCES, A HELPFUL MEASURE TO DEPLOY.

+IN THE MEANTIME, LET ME ASSURE HONOURABLE MEMBERS THAT WE ARE CONTINUING TO EXAMINE OTHER MEASURES TO INFLUENCE THE GROWTH OF THE MONEY SUPPLY AND BANK CREDIT.

+BUT WE WOULD BE AT FAULT IF WE HAD NO CONTINGENCY MEASURE IMMEDIATELY TO HAND. THE PURPOSE OF THIS BILL IS TO PROVIDE US WITH SUCH A MEASURE, NO MORE AND NO LESS,+ HE SAID.

CLAUSE 3 OF THE BILL ADDS A NEW SECTION (SECTION 18A) TO THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE, TO PERMIT THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO RAISE OR REDUCE THE MINIMUM LIQUIDITY RATIOS WHICH ALL BANKS HAVE TO MAINTAIN UNDER SECTIONS 18(2) AND 18(3) OF THE ORDINANCE.

+IF EVER I WERE TO MAKE USE OF THIS POWER, I WOULD GIVE THE BANKING COMMUNITY A REASONABLE PERIOD OF NOTICE, SO THAT THEY COULD TAKE THE NECESSARY STEPS TO ADJUST THEIR ASSET STRUCTURE,+ SAID MR. HADDON-CAVE.

THE DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) BILL COMPLEMENTS THE BANKING (AMENDMENT) BILL AND IS DESIGNED TO ENABLE THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO VARY, FOR THE PURPOSES OF MONETARY POLICY, THE MINIMUM LIQUIDITY RATIOS TO BE OBSERVED BY DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES.

MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID CLAUSE 1 OF THE BILL STATES THAT IT SHALL COME INTO OPERATION ON THE SAME DAY AS SECTION 9 OF THE DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE 1978. THIS IS BECAUSE MINIMUM LIQUIDITY RATIOS HAVE NOT YET BEEN SET FOR THESE COMPANIES.

SECTION 24A OF THE DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES ORDINANCE, GOVERNING LIQUIDITY RATIOS, WILL BE BROUGHT INTO OPERATION ON A DAY TO BE APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL.

MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID THAT AS SOON AS SECTION 9 IS BROUGHT INTO OPERATION, WHICH HE HOPED WILL BE NO LATER THAN THIS SUMMER, HE SHALL SPECIFY THE MINIMUM RATIOS WHICH ARE TO BE OBSERVED BY DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES.

DEBATE ON THE THREE BILLS WAS ADJOURNED.

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TRANSPORT WHITE PAPER TO BE PRESENTED NEXT MONTH
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THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. D.J.C. JONES, SAID AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT HE WOULD PRESENT A WHITE PAPER ON INTERNAL TRANSPORT TO THE COUNCIL NEXT MONTH.

HE SAID THIS WHILE REFERRING TO CERTAIN POINTS MADE BY THE HON. J.H. BREMRIDGE ABOUT TRANSPORT.

ON MR. BREMRIDGE'S PROPOSAL THAT CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO A NEW CROSS-HARBOUR TUNNEL ON THE WESTERN SIDE OF THE HARBOUR, MR. JONES SAID:

+THE GOVERNMENT IS NOW, AS PART OF ITS ON-GOING LONG-TERM PLANNING ON TRANSPORT, CONSIDERING A STUDY ON ALL POSSIBILITIES OF FURTHER FIXED HARBOUR CROSSINGS, INCLUDING ADDITIONS TO THE EXISTING TUNNEL.

+I KNOW THAT THE CROSS HARBOUR TUNNEL COMPANY IS ALSO CONDUCTING ITS OWN INVESTIGATIONS AND ANY PROPOSALS IT PUTS FORWARD WILL BE CONSIDERED SYMPATHETICALLY BY THE GOVERNMENT.+

ON BUS SERVICES, MR. JONES SAID THE FRANCHISES OF BOTH THE KOWLOON AND CHINA MOTOR BUS COMPANIES WILL BE UP FOR REVIEW AND POSSIBLE ROLL-OVER THIS AUTUMN.

+THIS WILL PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A THOROUGH REVIEW OF THE COMPANIES' PERFORMANCES AND THE NEED FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS IN SERVICES WILL BE CONSIDERED THEN, + HE ADDED.

ON ANOTHER POINT BY MR. BREMRIDGE, MR. JONES SAID NEGOTIATIONS ARE STARTING ON NEW FERRY FRANCHISES AND A NEW FERRIES ORDINANCE AND ONE OF THE MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WILL BE THE RENTS TO BE CHARGED FOR GOVERNMENT OWNED FERRY PIERS.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE HONG KONG AND YAUMATI FERRY COMPANY ARE ALREADY SHARING IN THE CONSTRUCTION COSTS OF SOME PIERS, AND OTHER PROJECTS ARE BEING CONSIDERED.

EARLIER, MR. JONES SAID THE GOVERNMENT IS NOW DOING FAR MORE IN LAND PRODUCTION AND SALES THAN EVER BEFORE.

AND DURING THE COMING MONTHS THE POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER AMENDMENT OF TERMS RELATING TO PREMIUM FOR ALL TYPES OF LAND, INCLUDING INDUSTRIAL LAND, WILL BE CONSIDERED TOGETHER WITH THE QUESTION OF WHETHER INTEREST RATES ON INSTALMENT PAYMENTS SHOULD BE MORE CLOSELY RELATED TO MARKET RATES, HE SAID.

IT HAD NEVER BEEN GOVERNMENT POLICY TO MANIPULATE LAND SALES SO AS TO MAXIMISE REVENUE, BUT TO ENSURE THAT IT IS USED IN THE MOST PRODUCTIVE WAY FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE COMMUNITY, MR. JONES STRESSED.

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+IN THE SALE OF LAND MARKET FORCES HAVE BEEN USED AS AN ALLOCATIVE PROCESS WHICH IS NORMALLY SUPERIOR TO ANY ALTERNATIVE,+ HE SAID.

RAPID EXPANSION IN THE DEMAND FOR LAND AND PROPERTY ACCOMPANIED BY CONSIDERABLE SPECULATIVE ACTIVITY HAD LED TO SIGNIFICANT INCREASES IN LAND PRICES.

+IN THE MARKET SITUATION WE HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCING RECENTLY, WHERE DEVELOPERS CAN PRE-SELL ACCOMMODATION AND THIS CAN THEN BE RESOLD AGAIN, PERHAPS SEVERAL TIMES, BEFORE THE BUILDING IS COMPLETED, THE AUCTION SYSTEM CAN RESULT IN A STRONG SPECULATIVE ELEMENT BEING INTRODUCED INTO THE LAND MARKET.

+I WOULD EMPHASISE, HOWEVER, THAT WHAT IS UNUSUAL IN THIS SITUATION IS NOT THE SUPPLY OF LAND BUT THE MASSIVE INCREASE IN DEMAND FUELLED BY THE BOOM AND THE EASY AVAILABILITY OF CREDIT.

+LAST SUMMER THE DOWN-PAYMENT FOR VALUABLE SITES WAS EFFECTIVELY INCREASED FROM ABOUT 15 PER CENT TO 30 PER CENT OF THE PREMIUM PAYABLE.

+THE GOVERNMENT WILL, DURING THE COMING MONTHS, BE CONSIDERING THE POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER AMENDMENT OF TERMS RELATING TO PREMIUM FOR ALL TYPES OF LAND, INCLUDING INDUSTRIAL LAND.

+WE WILL ALSO BE CONSIDERING WHETHER INTEREST RATES ON INSTALMENT PAYMENTS SHOULD BE MORE CLOSELY RELATED TO MARKET RATES,+ SAID MR. JONES.

ALTHOUGH THE SUPPLY OF LAND FOR UTILITIES, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC HOUSING MAY WELL APPEAR LARGE, MR. JONES CONTINUED, THE SUPPLY TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR WAS ALSO VERY CONSIDERABLE AND WAS CONTINUING TO RISE.

+HOWEVER, I INTEND TO REVIEW RESERVATIONS FOR PUBLIC SECTOR ACTIVITIES TO SEE IF ANY OF THESE CAN BE RELEASED FOR SALE TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR.+

THERE WAS A SUBSTANTIAL NEED FOR LAND FOR GOVERNMENT FACILITIES INCLUDING PUBLIC UTILITIES, EDUCATION, SOCIAL SERVICES, RECREATION AND AMENITY, PUBLIC HOUSING, ROADS AND OTHER ESSENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS.

+THIS MEANS THAT, INEVITABLY, A HIGH PROPORTION OF LAND MUST BE USED FOR THESE DEVELOPMENTS, SOME OF WHICH, SUCH AS COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC UTILITIES ARE ESSENTIAL TO SUPPORT PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT,+ MR. JONES SAID.

+EXPERIENCE IN THE PAST HAD SHOWN THAT TO A LARGE EXTENT PUBLIC HOUSING COMPLEMENTS AND BACKS UP INDUSTRY BY HELPING TO OBTAIN AN ADEQUATE LABOUR FORCE IN NEW AREAS,+ HE ADDED.

THE PROPORTION OF ABOUT 30 PER CENT OF THE LAND PRODUCED WHICH CAN BE DISPOSED OF TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR WAS NOW VERY SUBSTANTIAL INDEED COMPARED WITH PAST PERFORMANCE.

+IN 1978 THE GOVERNMENT SOLD A TOTAL OF 23.2 HECTARES OF LAND, WHICH IS ABOUT DOUBLE THE AMOUNT SOLD IN THE TWO PREVIOUS YEARS,+ SAID MR. JONES.

+THE 1979 SALES PROGRAMME WILL DISPOSE OF ABOUT 54 HECTARES, MUCH MORE THAN TWICE THE 1978 FIGURE.

+THESE FIGURES DO NOT INCLUDE LAND FOR, FOR INSTANCE, THE TWO NEW POWER STATIONS AT TAP SHEK KOK AND LAMMA ISLAND, NOR DOES IT INCLUDE THE INDUSTRIAL ESTATES.+

THE POTENTIAL INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT WHICH COULD BE PRODUCED FROM THIS LAND WAS ABOUT 1.3 MILLION SQUARE METRES OF FLOOR SPACE OR ABOUT 17.5 PER CENT OF THE EXISTING STOCK OF INDUSTRIAL FLOOR SPACE.

+I WOULD THEREFORE RISK THE PREDICTION THAT THE LEVEL OF SUPPLY, WHICH IS CAPABLE OF BEING NOT ONLY MAINTAINED BUT CONSIDERABLY INCREASED OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, SHOULD GO A LONG WAY TO MEET DEMANDS AND HELP TO BRING ABOUT A MORE RATIONAL MARKET THAN WE HAVE EXPERIENCED IN THE PAST TWO YEARS,+ SAID MR. JONES.

THE GOVERNMENT NOW HAD A MASTER PLAN FOR LAND PRODUCTION AND A STRATEGIC LAND PLANNING UNIT WAS BEING SET UP IN THE ENVIRONMENT BRANCH.

ALTHOUGH LAND PRODUCTION IN OTHER AREAS WAS FAR FROM BEING NEGLIGIBLE, THE BIGGEST CONTRIBUTION TO THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT LAND PROGRAMME CAME FROM THE NEW TOWNS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES.

+I DO NOT THINK IT IS PROPERLY UNDERSTOOD WHAT A VAST EFFORT THESE PROGRAMMES ENTAIL,+ SAID MR. JONES.

+PROGRAMMED LAND DEVELOPMENT IN THE SIX NEW TOWNS AND OTHER TOWNSHIPS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES DURING THE PERIOD 1978-79 TO 1988-89 AMOUNTS TO SOME 2,000 HECTARES, THAT IS ABOUT 5,000 ACRES, AT AN ESTIMATED COST OF ABOUT \$7,300 MILLION.+

THE GEARING UP OF LAND PRODUCTION FROM THESE AREAS HAD NOT BEEN EASY INVOLVING RESUMPTIONS AND CLEARANCES NOT PREVIOUSLY TACKLED IN SIMILAR PERIODS, AS WELL AS VAST RECLAMATIONS.

IN THE EARLY STAGES OF EACH NEW DEVELOPMENT AREA MUCH OF THE EFFORT AND LAND PRODUCED HAD TO BE PUT INTO THE PROVISION OF ACCOMMODATION IN PUBLIC HOUSING AND SUPPORTING FACILITIES SO THAT SQUATTERS COULD BE CLEARED BEFORE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT COULD PROCEED.

+THE RESULTS ARE NOW BEING CLEARLY SEEN IN THE LAND PRODUCTION PROGRAMME WHICH PRODUCES FAIRLY IMPRESSIVE FIGURES OF TOTAL PRODUCTION,+ MR. JONES SAID.

MR. JONES SAID THAT HE DID NOT THINK THE SCOPE FOR PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES TO SUPPLEMENT GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMES WAS PARTICULARLY LARGE.

/+THIS IS

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+THIS IS PARTLY BECAUSE OF THE RELATIVELY FEW OPPORTUNITIES REMAINING FOR OBVIOUS SIMPLE LAND PRODUCTION SCHEMES OUTSIDE THE MAIN DEVELOPMENT AREAS.

+BUT IT IS ALSO BECAUSE OF THE CURRENT STRAIN ON THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY AND, INDEED, THE ECONOMY AS A WHOLE OF THE MAJOR DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES WHICH BOTH GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR ARE UNDERTAKING ALREADY.+

FINALLY, MR. JONES SAID THAT DURING 1979 HE HOPED TO PRESENT FIVE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION BILLS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

+WE WILL ALSO BE EXPANDING THE STAFF OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION UNIT,+ HE SAID.

MR. JONES PAID TRIBUTE TO THOSE IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR WHO HAD ASSISTED IN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION.

+WITH THEIR ASSISTANCE WE HOPE IN THE YEARS TO COME TO MAKE HONG KONG A CLEANER, LESS NOISY AND BETTER PLACE IN WHICH TO LIVE.+

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SOCIAL WELFARE WHITE PAPER EXPECTED
TO BE PUBLISHED BEFORE END OF MONTH
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SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, THE HON. E.P. HO, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE SOCIAL WELFARE WHITE PAPER IS EXPECTED TO BE PUBLISHED BEFORE THE END OF THIS MONTH.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON THE APPROPRIATION BILL, MR. HO SAID THE PROPOSALS ON RETIREMENT BENEFIT CONTAINED IN THE 1977 GREEN PAPER HAD STIMULATED A LIVELY DEBATE. APART FROM THE CONTRIBUTORY SCHEME, ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF ACHIEVING ITS AIMS OF PROVIDING COVER AGAINST THE RISKS OF EXTENDED PERIODS OF SICKNESS OR INJURY, DEATH AND RETIREMENT WERE ALSO DISCUSSED.

+THE GOVERNMENT RECOGNISES THE DESIRABILITY OF PROVIDING SOME FORM OF COVER FOR THESE RISKS, BUT HAS NOT YET REACHED A CONCLUSION ON THE BEST WAY OF DOING SO,+ MR. HO SAID.

HE SAID ONE OF THE MAJOR PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH INTRODUCING ANY FORM OF CONTRIBUTORY SYSTEM WOULD BE THE NEED TO ENSURE THAT IT WAS COMPATIBLE WITH THE EXISTING SCHEMES OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND SPECIAL NEEDS ALLOWANCE.

+ANOTHER RELEVANT FACTOR IS THE APPARENT LACK OF PUBLIC INTEREST IN INSURANCE+ HE SAID.

/HE SAID

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HE SAID A JOINT SURVEY BY THE HOME AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT AND THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG IN DECEMBER 1977 AND JANUARY 1978 HAD SHOWN THAT OUT OF 2,089 EMPLOYEES ONLY 4.2 PER CENT HAD LIFE INSURANCE POLICIES, 1.5 PER CENT BOUGHT MEDICAL INSURANCE AND ONE PER CENT SICKNESS INSURANCE.

+SO IT MUST BE A MATTER FOR CONJECTURE AS TO THE DEGREE OF ACTUAL SUPPORT ANY CONTRIBUTORY SCHEME WOULD RECEIVE, THOUGH IT WOULD APPEAR THAT SUCH SUPPORT WOULD BE DEPENDENT ON THE BENEFITS LIKELY TO BE AVAILABLE AND ON THE INFORMATION ABOUT IT GETTING THROUGH TO THE WORKER,+ MR. HO POINTED OUT.

+NEVERTHELESS, I HOPE THAT IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO MAKE SOME ANNOUNCEMENT OF GOVERNMENT'S INTENTIONS LATER THIS YEAR,+ HE ADDED.

REFERRING TO THE PRESSURE ON HOSPITAL BEDS, MR. HO SAID THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT THIS MONTH WILL BE RUNNING A COMMUNITY NURSING SERVICE IN ADDITION TO THAT OPERATED BY THE SIX VOLUNTARY AGENCIES AT PRESENT.

THREE TRAINING COURSES WILL BE RUN EACH YEAR AND IT IS ENVISAGED THAT 350 MORE NURSES WILL BE TAKING THEIR PLACES IN THE COMMUNITY NURSING SERVICE OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS. ALREADY THERE ARE 33 COMMUNITY NURSES IN POST.

FURTHER RELIEF OF THE PRESSURE ON HOSPITAL BEDS WILL ALSO RESULT FROM THE PROVISION OF CARE AND ATTENTION HOMES FOR THE ELDERLY, MANY OF WHOM AT PRESENT HAVE TO STAY IN HOSPITAL BECAUSE THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE CARE AVAILABLE.

PROPOSALS ARE INCLUDED IN THE SOCIAL WELFARE WHITE PAPER TO PROVIDE FOR 1,400 ADDITIONAL PLACES IN CARE AND ATTENTION HOMES BY 1982-83, AND AN EVENTUAL TARGET OF FOUR PLACES FOR EVERY 1,000 POPULATION OVER 60 YEARS OLD.

MR. HO ALSO SPOKE ABOUT:

- * PROPOSALS FOR COMPLETE AIR-CONDITIONING OF HOSPITALS UNDER CONSTRUCTION AND IN FUTURE ONES.
- * A NEW SYSTEM OF SUBVENTION TO VOLUNTARY WELFARE AGENCIES BEING DISCUSSED, AND
- * THE DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLED MANPOWER, A REPORT ON IT BY THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON DIVERSIFICATION SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY AUTUMN.

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NO MORE IN-SERVICE TRAINING COURSES FOR
UNTRAINED PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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IN-SERVICE TRAINING COURSES FOR UNTRAINED PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS WILL NO LONGER BE HELD, THE HON. KENNETH TOPLEY, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS (WEDNESDAY) AFTERNOON.

THE REASON, HE ADDED, WAS THAT THE WHOLE OF THE TEACHING FORCE IN PUBLIC-SECTOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS WAS NOW FULLY QUALIFIED AND THERE WAS NO LONGER SUCH A NEED.

+IN THE LIGHT OF THE WHITE PAPER PLANS FOR SYSTEMATIC RETRAINING PROGRAMMES AS WELL AS THE LENGTHENING OF FULL-TIME AND IN-SERVICE (SECONDARY) COURSES --- AND THESE ARE HIGHLY DESIRABLE MEASURES TO BRING ABOUT REAL IMPROVEMENTS IN THE QUALITY OF THE TEACHING FORCE --- THE DEPARTMENT'S FOREMOST COMMITMENT IN TEACHER TRAINING IS TO THE PUBLIC SECTOR,+ THE DIRECTOR SAID.

MR. TOPLEY WAS REPLYING TO THE REV. THE HON. JOYCE BENNETT WHO HAD EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT NOTWITHSTANDING FREE AND COMPULSORY EDUCATION, SOME 74,000 CHILDREN WERE STUDYING IN 178 PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS WHICH EMPLOYED 1,828 UNTRAINED TEACHERS.

THE DIRECTOR SAID THE FACT THAT SO MANY CHILDREN ATTENDED THESE SCHOOLS WAS A REFLECTION OF PARENTAL PREFERENCE.

+THERE ARE IN FACT MORE THAN ENOUGH PLACES IN GOVERNMENT AND AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOLS TO CATER FOR THESE CHILDREN IF THEIR PARENTS WANT THEM TO LEAVE THE PRIVATE SECTOR,+ MR. TOPLEY SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THERE WOULD BE UNTRAINED TEACHERS IN PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS SO LONG AS THESE SCHOOLS EXISTED SINCE MOST WERE NOT IN A POSITION TO PAY THE SALARIES DEMANDED BY TRAINED TEACHERS.

+THIS MAY BE REGARDED AS UNSATISFACTORY BUT THE RESOLUTION OF THIS SITUATION IS IN THE HANDS OF THE SCHOOLS AND THE PARENTS WHO SUPPORT THEM.

+I SHOULD ADD, HOWEVER, THAT SHOULD FUTURE CIRCUMSTANCES WARRANT A REVIVAL OF THE IN-SERVICE (PRIMARY) COURSES FOR ANY REASON, THEN THEY WILL ONCE AGAIN BE MADE AVAILABLE IN ACCORDANCE TO NEED,+ THE DIRECTOR SAID.

MISS BENNETT HAD ALSO EARLIER QUERIED ABOUT THE CAPACITY OF THE DEPARTMENT'S ADVISORY INSPECTORATE TO COPE WITH THE INCREASED WORKLOAD AS A RESULT OF BRINGING THE CAPUT GRANT SCHOOLS ONTO FULL AID.

/MR. TOPLEY

MR. TOPLEY REPLIED THAT THERE MIGHT BE AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF INSPECTORATE POSTS BUT A FIRM DECISION WOULD BE TAKEN ONLY AFTER A RE-EXAMINATION OF THE STAFF REQUIREMENTS OF ALL THE SECTIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT KEEPING IN MIND THE NEED TO ENSURE THAT THERE WAS NO UNNECESSARY EXPANSION OF THE CIVIL SERVICE.

TURNING TO THE EDUCATION OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING CHILDREN, MR. TOPLEY SAID:

+I KNOW OF THE PROBLEM FACED BY THIS SECTOR OF THE COMMUNITY --- BUT I DO NOT ACCEPT THAT THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUAL SUBSIDY SHOULD BE FURTHER REVIEWED.

+THE GOVERNMENT IS, HOWEVER, AWARE OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PARENTS OF THE HIGHER FEE LEVELS WHICH ARISE FROM THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PARITY OF SUBSIDY POLICY.

+THE PRESENT INTENTION SUBJECT TO THE AGREEMENT OF FINANCE COMMITTEE IS TO CONTINUE TO OPERATE THE CURRENT FEE REMISSION SCHEME FOR THE ENGLISH SCHOOLS TO BE PAID FROM PUBLIC FUNDS AS HERETOFORE FOR THOSE PUPILS ALREADY WITHIN THE SYSTEM AND FOR THOSE NEW PUPILS FOR WHOM NO OTHER SUITABLE EDUCATION IS AVAILABLE.

+PARENTS WHO CANNOT AFFORD THE HIGHER LEVEL OF FEES MAY CONTINUE TO APPLY FOR REMISSION SO THAT ALL CASES OF REAL HARDSHIP SHOULD BE MET.+

OF CHINESE CHILDREN WHO RETURNED TO HONG KONG AFTER STARTING PRIMARY EDUCATION OVERSEAS, MR. TOPLEY SAID THERE WAS PROBABLY A NEED TO PROVIDE MORE SCHOOLS FOR SUCH CHILDREN WHOSE CHINESE WAS INSUFFICIENT TO SURVIVE COMFORTABLY IN THE ANGLO-CHINESE SYSTEM AND ALTERNATIVES WERE NOW BEING STUDIED.

+NEVERTHELESS AT PRESENT IN ANGLO-CHINESE SCHOOLS FRENCH OR ANOTHER FOREIGN LANGUAGE IS PROVIDED FOR THOSE PUPILS WHO CANNOT COPE WITH CHINESE. A QUICK SURVEY SHOWS THAT THERE ARE 411 AND 396 SUCH CHILDREN, MAINLY CHINESE, STUDYING IN 21 AIDED SECONDARY AND 15 AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOLS,+ THE DIRECTOR SAID.

ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION, MR. TOPLEY REFERRED TO THE RECENTLY PUBLISHED WHITE PAPER ON EDUCATION AND SAID THERE WOULD BE SUBSIDISED PLACES IN SCHOOLS, TECHNICAL INSTITUTES, ADULT EDUCATION CENTRES AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FOR VIRTUALLY EVERY YOUNG PERSON IN THE 15-16 AGE GROUP BY THE MID-1980'S.

+THE NUMBER OF TECHNICAL INSTITUTES TO BE PROVIDED IS BASED ON MANPOWER SURVEYS CONDUCTED BY THE HONG KONG TRAINING COUNCIL. AT PRESENT, A SIXTH TECHNICAL INSTITUTE IS PLANNED WHICH WILL BE SITUATED IN TUEN MUN. THIS WILL I HOPE BE COMPLETED IN 1984.

+THERE IS ALREADY ONE TECHNICAL INSTITUTE IN THE NEW TERRITORIES NAMELY AT KWAI CHUNG. IT IS ALSO COMPARATIVELY EASY FOR RESIDENTS OF SHA TIN AND THE SURROUNDING AREAS TO COMMUTE THROUGH THE LION ROCK TUNNEL TO THE LEE WAI LEE TECHNICAL INSTITUTE IN KOWLOON TONG WHICH SHOULD BE FULLY COMPLETED IN MARCH 1980,+ MR. TOPLEY SAID.

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AMENDMENTS TO CRIMINAL PROCEDURE ORDINANCE PROPOSED

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AS THE LAW STANDS THE ATTORNEY GENERAL MAY NOT SEEK A REVIEW OF SENTENCE WHERE A DEFENDANT IS PUT ON PROBATION WITHOUT THE RECORDING OF A CONVICTION, THE HON. JOHN HOBLEY SAID AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

+THIS IS AN ANOMALOUS EXCEPTION FROM THE CASES IN WHICH A REVIEW OF SENTENCE MAY NOW BE SOUGHT,+ THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAID AT THE SECOND READING OF THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1979.

BUT TWO CLAUSES IN THE BILL WILL MAKE THE NECESSARY CHANGES AND THEIR EFFECT +IS THAT 'SENTENCE' IN THE CONTEXT OF REVIEWS OF SENTENCE WILL IN FUTURE INCLUDE ANY ORDER WHATSOEVER MADE BY A COURT IN DEALING WITH AN OFFENDER.+

A NEW SUB-SECTION, HE SAID, WILL SET OUT THE SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS WHICH WILL BE REQUIRED IN FUTURE.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ALSO PROPOSED TO EXTEND FROM 14 TO 21 DAYS THE PERIOD AFTER A SENTENCE IS PASSED WITHIN WHICH HE MUST APPLY FOR A REVIEW OF SENTENCE, BECAUSE TWO WEEKS IS +AN UNREASONABLY SHORT TIME LIMIT.+

ANOTHER AMENDMENT TO THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE ORDINANCE INTRODUCES A NEW SUB-SECTION SO AS TO SPECIFY CASES IN WHICH THE COURT OF APPEAL MAY HEAR AN APPLICATION FOR A REVIEW OF SENTENCE NOTWITHSTANDING THE ABSENCE OF THE RESPONDENT.

+THESE ARE WHERE THE RESPONDENT HAS BEEN SERVED WITH NOTICE OF THE PROCEEDINGS BUT DOES NOT APPEAR AND WHERE HE HAS NOT BEEN SERVED WITH SUCH NOTICE BECAUSE HE CANNOT BE FOUND OR IS OUTSIDE HONG KONG,+ MR. HOBLEY EXPLAINED.

MR. HOBLEY ALSO PROPOSED THAT AN APPEAL AGAINST CONVICTION SHOULD BAR A REVIEW OF SENTENCE ONLY WHILE THE APPEAL IS STILL PENDING.

THIS WILL ENABLE THE COURT OF APPEAL TO HEAR AN APPLICATION FOR A REVIEW OF SENTENCE IN FUTURE ONCE AN APPEAL AGAINST CONVICTION IS WITHDRAWN OR DISPOSED OF BY DISMISSAL.

MR. HOBLEY ALSO EXPLAINED THAT IN FUTURE, IF A CONVICTED MAN APPEALS AGAINST SENTENCE AND THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SEEKS A REVIEW OF THE SENTENCE, THE TWO APPLICATIONS WILL BE HEARD TOGETHER.

THE INTRODUCTION OF ANOTHER CLAUSE WILL ENABLE A SINGLE JUDGE OF THE COURT OF APPEAL TO REMAND A CONVICTED MAN IN CUSTODY PENDING THE HEARING FOR AN APPLICATION FOR A REVIEW OF SENTENCE.

MR. HOBLEY SAID THAT ANOTHER MAIN CHANGE PROPOSED BY THE BILL WAS A PROVISION ENABLING THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO REFER TO THE COURT OF APPEAL A POINT OF LAW WHICH ARISES DURING THE TRIAL, BEFORE THE HIGH COURT OR THE DISTRICT COURT, OF A MAN WHO IS ACQUITTED.

/HE SAID

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HE SAID IT WAS NOT PROPOSED THAT THE OUTCOME OF THE PROCEEDINGS ON SUCH A REFERENCE SHOULD AFFECT THE ACQUITTAL BUT THAT +FROM TIME TO TIME AN INCORRECT RULING ON A POINT OF LAW IN A CASE WHERE THE DEFENDANT IS ACQUITTED MAY ACQUIRE AN AUTHORITY WHICH IT DOES NOT DESERVE, AND MAY BE FOLLOWED IN FURTHER CASES, SIMPLY BECAUSE THERE IS NO WAY AT PRESENT IN WHICH IT CAN BE TESTED.+

THE FINAL PURPOSE OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE ORDINANCE IS THE INTRODUCTION OF THE PROVISION FOR THE MAKING OF CRIMINAL BANKRUPTCY ORDERS.

THE PROPOSAL IS BASED ON A SIMILAR LAW IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND IS DESIGNED TO ENSURE THAT CRIMINALS WHO COMMIT LARGE-SCALE CRIMES, ESPECIALLY FRAUD, SHOULD NOT BE ABLE TO BENEFIT FROM THE FRUITS OF THEIR CRIMINAL ACTIVITY.

A MINIMUM AMOUNT OF LOSS OR DAMAGE IS PROPOSED -- NAMELY \$150,000 -- BEFORE A COURT MAY MAKE A CRIMINAL BANKRUPTCY ORDER.

LATER, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL INTRODUCED THE BANKRUPTCY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979 AND IT WAS READ THE SECOND TIME.

DEBATE ON THE TWO BILLS WAS ADJOURNED.

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INCREASE IN MAXIMUM PENALTIES PROPOSED FOR
CONTRAVENTIONS OF BUILDINGS ORDINANCE
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THE BUILDINGS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979, AIMED AT INCREASING THE MAXIMUM PENALTIES FOR CONTRAVENTIONS OF THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OR REGULATIONS MADE UNDER THE ORDINANCE, WAS TABLED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE HON. DAVID MCDONALD, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, SAID THE MAXIMUM PENALTY IN RESPECT OF SIX OF THE MOST SERIOUS OFFENCES WERE INCREASED TO A FINE OF \$250,000 AND IMPRISONMENT FOR THREE YEARS.

THESE OFFENCES, HE ADDED, COVERED SITUATIONS WHERE SUBSTANTIAL BUILDING WORKS WERE DELIBERATELY CARRIED OUT IN DEFIANCE OF THE LAW AND WHICH COULD RESULT IN DANGER TO LIFE OR PROPERTY.

+A SUBSTANTIAL FINE OF \$100,000 AND TWO YEARS' IMPRISONMENT WITH A CONTINUING DAILY FINE OF \$5,000 MAY BE IMPOSED WHERE BUILDING WORKS ARE COMMENCED WITHOUT NOTICE TO AND CONSENT FROM THE BUILDING AUTHORITY OR WHERE A BUILDING IS OCCUPIED WITHOUT A PERMIT,+ MR. MCDONALD SAID.

/+A FURTHER

+A FURTHER GROUP OF OFFENCES WHICH WOULD STEM FROM FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH ORDERS MADE BY THE BUILDING AUTHORITY UNDER VARIOUS SECTIONS OF THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE, WITH POSSIBLE ILL EFFECTS ON THE SAFETY, HEALTH OR ENVIRONMENT OF OTHER PEOPLE, COULD RESULT IN A FINE OF \$50,000 AND ONE YEAR'S IMPRISONMENT WITH A DAILY FINE OF \$5,000 IN RESPECT OF CONTINUING FAILURE, WITH A SIMILAR MAXIMUM FINE AND CUSTODIAL SENTENCE FOR INTERFERENCE WITH SHORING OR OBSTRUCTING ENTRY BY AN AUTHORISED PERSON IN CONNECTION WITH SHORING WORKS.+

UNDER THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION, TWO OTHER GROUPS OF LESSER OFFENCES ALSO HAVE THEIR PENALTIES INCREASED TO \$10,000 AND SIX MONTHS' IMPRISONMENT AND \$5,000 AND SIX MONTHS RESPECTIVELY.

THE BILL ALSO MAKES IT AN OFFENCE FOR ANY PERSON, AND NOT ONLY FOR AN AUTHORISED PERSON, A REGISTERED STRUCTURAL ENGINEER OR A REGISTERED CONTRACTOR AS AT PRESENT, TO PERMIT OR CARRY OUT BUILDING WORKS WHICH RESULT OR COULD RESULT IN AN INJURY TO ANY PERSON OR DAMAGE TO ANY PROPERTY.

THE DEBATE WAS ADJOURNED.

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BILL TO EXTEND PROTECTION OF EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE
TO MORE NON-MANUAL WORKERS
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AN AMENDMENT BILL PROPOSING TO EXTEND THE PROTECTION OF THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE TO MORE NON-MANUAL WORKERS BY RAISING THE QUALIFYING WAGE CEILING FROM THE PRESENT \$2,000 TO \$3,500 WAS INTRODUCED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE EMPLOYMENT (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL, 1979, THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, MR. NEIL HENDERSON, RECALLED THAT WHEN THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE WAS ENACTED IN SEPTEMBER 1968, IT APPLIED TO ALL MANUAL WORKERS AND THOSE EMPLOYED IN NON-MANUAL WORK WHOSE WAGES DID NOT EXCEED \$1,500 A MONTH.

THE WAGE CEILING WAS LATER RAISED IN MARCH 1974 TO \$2,000 BECAUSE BOTH WAGES AND THE COST OF LIVING HAD INCREASED SUBSTANTIALLY.

+FOR THE SAME REASONS A REVISION OF THE WAGE CEILING IS NOW CONSIDERABLY OVERDUE,+ HE SAID.

COMPARING THE SEPTEMBER 1973 NOMINAL WAGE INDEX FIGURE, ON WHICH THE CHANGES IN 1974 WERE BASED, AND THE SEPTEMBER 1978 FIGURE, MR. HENDERSON SAID THE NOMINAL INDUSTRIAL WAGE INDEX HAD RISEN FROM 99 TO 156, AN INCREASE OF JUST UNDER 60 PER CENT, AND THE WAGE INDEX, INCLUDING FRINGE BENEFITS, ROSE SLIGHTLY MORE.

THERE WAS NO SEPARATE WAGE INDEX REFLECTING CHANGES IN NON-INDUSTRIAL WAGES.

/+IT WOULD, ...

+IT WOULD, HOWEVER, BE REASONABLE TO ASSUME THAT WITH THE STRONG SURGE IN WAGES OVER THE LAST TWO TO THREE YEARS, THE FACT THAT WAGES HAVE REFLECTED VERY MUCH MORE THAN THE COST OF LIVING INCREASES OVER THE PERIOD, THAT AN INCREASE IN THE CEILING FOR NON-MANUAL WORKERS WOULD NEED TO BE ABOUT 60 PER CENT IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT BROADLY THE CATEGORY OF NON-MANUAL WORKERS PROTECTED BY THE ORDINANCE IN 1974 WERE COVERED BY IT AGAIN IN 1979,+ HE SAID.

MR. HENDERSON WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE HAD HOPED TO BRING RATHER WIDER PROPOSALS TO THE COUNCIL INCLUDING POSSIBLY THE REMOVAL OF THE CEILING FOR NON-MANUAL WORKERS FOR MOST OF, IF NOT ALL, PARTS OF THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE.

HOWEVER, AFTER CONSULTING EXTENSIVELY THE LABOUR ADVISORY BOARD ON A NUMBER OF ALTERNATIVE POSSIBILITIES IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE AFTER CONSIDERABLE EFFORTS BY THE BOARD TO REACH AGREEMENT ON THE MATTER.

+I WOULD THEREFORE REGARD THE PRESENT PROPOSAL AS SOMETHING OF AN INTERIM ARRANGEMENT TO PREVENT FURTHER EROSION OF THE POSITION OF LOWER PAID NON-MANUAL WORKERS. ABOUT A 60 PER CENT INCREASE ON THE PRESENT FIGURE WOULD SUGGEST A CEILING OF THE ORDER OF \$3,200 PER MONTH,+ HE SAID.

+HOWEVER, IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT WE ARE ONLY DEALING WITH SEPTEMBER 1978 FIGURES AND THAT IT WILL PERHAPS BE A YEAR TO 18 MONTHS BEFORE I CAN BRING MORE DEFINITIVE CHANGES FORWARD, I AM SUGGESTING THE FIGURE OF \$3,500 PER MONTH TO HOLD THE POSITION FOR THE TIME NEEDED FOR FURTHER REVIEW AND CONSULTATION,+ HE ADDED.

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BILL TO GIVE PROTECTION OF ANONYMITY TO VICTIMS OF INDECENT ASSAULT CASES

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THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON. JOHN HOBLEY, INTRODUCED THE CRIMES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE BILL PROPOSES TO GIVE COMPLAINANTS OF INDECENT ASSAULT CASES THE SAME PROTECTION OF ANONYMITY AND RESTRICTION FROM CROSS-EXAMINATION ABOUT PREVIOUS SEXUAL HISTORY AS AFFORDED TO COMPLAINANTS IN RAPE CASES.

MR. HOBLEY SAID IT WAS PUT FORWARD BECAUSE OF REPRESENTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY.

+THE STEP NOW PROPOSED WAS NOT TAKEN IN 1978 (WHEN AMENDMENTS WERE MADE TO THE CRIMES ORDINANCE) SIMPLY BECAUSE WE FOLLOWED THE CORRESPONDING ENGLISH PROVISIONS WHICH ARE LIMITED TO RAPE OFFENCES,+ MR. HOBLEY SAID.

+I NOW CONSIDER THAT THERE IS NO SOUND REASON FOR DISTINGUISHING IN THIS RESPECT BETWEEN RAPE AND THE LESSER SEXUAL OFFENCE OF INDECENT ASSAULT.+

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISION FOR THE SECOND QUARTER
OF LAST FINANCIAL YEAR

THE SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISION FOR THE SECOND QUARTER OF THE LAST FINANCIAL YEAR (JULY 1 TO SEPTEMBER 30) AMOUNTS TO \$391 MILLION, SAID THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE IN TODAY'S (WEDNESDAY) LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING.

MOVING THE SCHEDULE OF SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISION, MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID OF THE SUM, PUBLIC WORKS NON-RECURRENT ACCOUNTED FOR ALMOST \$368 MILLION AND WAS REQUIRED MAINLY AS A RESULT OF MORE RAPID PROGRESS ON A NUMBER OF EXISTING PROJECTS AND THE UPGRADING OF 15 PROJECTS TO CATEGORY A OF THE PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME.

THE SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISION COVERED BY THE SCHEDULE WILL NOT, HE SAID, RESULT IN A NET INCREASE OF EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR, AS OFFSETTING SAVINGS HAVE BEEN FOUND UNDER OTHER SUBHEADS OF EXPENDITURE, OR BY THE FREEZING OF FUNDS UNDER HEAD 52 MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES SUBHEAD 100 ADDITIONAL COMMITMENTS.

THE MOTION WAS APPROVED.

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TRIBUTE TO AUXILIARY SERVICES

THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON. LEWIS DAVIES, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PAID TRIBUTE TO THE AUXILIARY SERVICES WHEN HE INTRODUCED THE AUXILIARY FORCES PAY AND ALLOWANCES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

THE BILL SEEKS TO FACILITATE ADMINISTRATIVELY THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FUTURE ADJUSTMENTS IN PAY AND ALLOWANCES IN THE AUXILIARY FORCES.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, MR. DAVIES SAID:
+ALTHOUGH WE HAVE ONE HONORARY COLONEL, A COMMISSIONER AND A UNIT CONTROLLER IN OUR MIDST WE DEVOTE VERY LITTLE TIME TO THE AFFAIRS OF THE ROYAL HONG KONG REGIMENT (THE VOLUNTEERS), THE ROYAL HONG KONG AUXILIARY POLICE FORCE, THE ROYAL HONG KONG AUXILIARY AIR FORCE, THE AUXILIARY MEDICAL SERVICES AND THE CIVIL AID SERVICES.+

MR. DAVIES SAID THESE SERVICES ARE STAFFED ALMOST ENTIRELY BY VOLUNTEERS FROM THE COMMUNITY. THEY COMPRISE ABOUT 13,000 OFFICERS, WOMEN AND MEN WHO GIVE PART OF THEIR LEISURE TO PERFORM SERVICES TO THE COMMUNITY.

POINTING OUT THAT THEIR DUTIES ARE MULTIFARIOUS, MR. DAVIES SAID: +THEY EXTEND FROM MOUNTAIN RESCUE TO STAFFING REFUGEE CAMPS- FROM ASSISTING IN METHADONE MAINTENANCE CLINICS TO PATROLLING ON THE BORDER AND IN THE STREETS- TO CARRYING VIPS AND PIGS.

/+IT SO

+IT SO HAPPENS THAT THIS YEAR IS THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RAISING OF THE REGIMENT. THE AUXILIARY POLICE HAVE BEEN ON THE BEAT FOR MANY YEARS. THIS YEAR HAS ALSO SEEN THE PRESENTATION OF A STANDARD TO THE AUXILIARY AIR FORCE BY HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES FOR ITS DISTINGUISHED RECORD, WHILST THE AUXILIARY MEDICAL SERVICE IS 29 YEARS OLD AND THE CIVIL AID SERVICE IS IN ITS 27TH YEAR OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY.

+THESE FORCES HAVE CONTRIBUTED MUCH TO THE CAPACITY OF THE ADMINISTRATION TO RESPOND IN TIMES OF WAR AND PEACE, TO DISASTER AND TO THE RELIEF OF SUFFERING.+

HE STRESSED THAT IN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, HE WAS GIVING PUBLIC RECOGNITION TO THEM.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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PWD TECHNICAL AUDIT SYSTEM IN OPERATION FOR SEVERAL YEARS
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A TECHNICAL AUDIT SYSTEM HAS BEEN IN OPERATION IN THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT FOR SEVERAL YEARS, THE HON. DAVID MCDONALD, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE WAS REPLYING TO POINTS RAISED BY THE UNOFFICIALS DURING THE RESUMED BUDGET DEBATE LAST MONTH.

REFERRING TO THE TECHNICAL AUDIT SYSTEM, MR. MCDONALD SAID:
+ORIGINALLY CONCEIVED AND ESTABLISHED AS A UNIT IN PWD HEADQUARTERS IT WAS SUBSEQUENTLY REPLACED, WITH THE AGREEMENT OF THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT, BY A MANAGEMENT SERVICES UNIT LOCATED IN HEADQUARTERS AND BY CONTRACT ADVISERS OPERATING IN INDIVIDUAL OFFICES IN ADVISORY AND TECHNICAL AUDIT ROLES.+

HE ADDED THAT ALTHOUGH THESE OFFICERS COULD NOT BY THEIR FUNCTIONS OVERCOME THE PROBLEM OF ANTICIPATING COST ESCALATION, THEY COULD AND DID CONTRIBUTE MATERIALLY IN IMPROVING THE OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY OF THE DEPARTMENT.

ON ANOTHER POINT RAISED BY THE HON. S.L. CHEN ON PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT ESTIMATES, MR. MCDONALD AGREED THAT IN MANY CASES THE FINAL COSTS WERE SUBSTANTIALLY IN EXCESS OF THE ORIGINAL ESTIMATE.

HOWEVER, HE POINTED OUT THAT THE UNOFFICIAL WAS WELL AWARE THAT IN PREPARING PROJECT ESTIMATES NO ALLOWANCE FOR COST ESCALATION WAS MADE.

HE FURTHER EMPHASISED THAT THE RISES IN COSTS OF LABOUR AND MATERIALS WERE NOT THE ONLY FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO INCREASED PROJECT COSTS.

/+DURING PERIODS

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+DURING PERIODS OF INTENSE ACTIVITY IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY SUCH AS WE ARE NOW EXPERIENCING, CONTRACTORS CAN AFFORD TO BE SELECTIVE IN THE CONTRACTS THEY TAKE ON AND IT IS NOT UNCOMMON FOR THEM TO REFLECT IN TENDER PRICES THEIR LIMITED INTEREST IN WORKS WHICH THEY CONSIDER ARE TECHNICALLY COMPLEX, ARE AWKWARDLY LOCATED, HAVE VERY TIGHT OR VERY LONG CONTRACT PERIODS OR REQUIRE VERY LARGE OR SPECIALISED LABOUR FORCES,+ HE SAID.

+CONTRACTORS ALSO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE FACT THAT MUCH OF THE LABOUR ATTRACTED TO THE INDUSTRY BY HIGHER WAGES IS RELATIVELY UNSKILLED AND LESS EFFICIENT AND THEY MUST THEREFORE ALLOW FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF LARGER NUMBERS OF WORKERS, INCURRING EVEN GREATER COSTS, MERELY TO MAINTAIN THEIR FORMER STANDARDS OF OUTPUT.+

MR. MCDONALD ALSO REFERRED TO A PROPOSAL BY THE HON. ALEX WU, A SUPPORTER OF REDUCTIONS IN PUBLIC EXPENDITURE, THAT ANY PERIOD OF POSTPONEMENT IN THE LETTING OF PUBLIC WORKS CONTRACTS BE USED TO BUILD UP A RESERVE OF PROJECTS WHICH CAN BE READY TO PUT OUT TO TENDER WHEN CIRCUMSTANCES PERMIT.

HE ASSURED MR. WU THAT THE VARIOUS PWD OFFICES WOULD CONTINUE TO PROCESS PROJECTS WITHIN THE AGREED PRIORITIES AND DEVELOP THEM THROUGH TO THE TENDER STAGE.

BUT HE WARNED THAT DURING ANY PERIOD OF DEFERMENT CIRCUMSTANCES COULD, IN EXCEPTIONAL CASES, CHANGE TO SUCH AN EXTENT THAT CLIENT DEPARTMENTS MIGHT HAVE TO REVISE THEIR REQUIREMENTS THEREBY RENDERING MUCH OF THE PREPARED DRAWING AND DOCUMENT WORKS ABORTIVE WITH CONSEQUENT FURTHER DELAYS IN CONTRACT COMMENCEMENT DATES.

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FOUR BILLS PASSED

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FOUR BILLS WERE PASSED INTO LAW AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THEY ARE THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT)(NO. 3) BILL 1979, LEGAL OFFICERS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979, MAGISTRATES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979 AND THE PUBLIC SERVICES COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979.

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MAJOR CONTRACT FOR TUEN MUN SIGNED

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THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT TODAY (WEDNESDAY) AWARDED A \$102 MILLION CONTRACT TO LEIGHTON CONTRACTORS PTY. LIMITED FOR A MAJOR RECLAMATION AND LAND FORMATION PROJECT IN THE SOUTH WESTERN PART OF TUEN MUN NEW TOWN.

THE CONTRACT IS THE BIGGEST ONE LET FOR TUEN MUN SO FAR UNDER THE NEW TOWN'S MASSIVE \$3,500 MILLION DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME.

IT WAS FORMALLY SIGNED THIS MORNING BY MR. STAN BARDEN, PROJECT MANAGER (TUEN MUN), AND MR. H. CHARITON OF THE COMPANY.

UNDER THE CONTRACT, 43 HECTARES OF LAND WILL BE PROVIDED FOR PUBLIC HOUSING, INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND OPEN SPACE.

THE PROJECT REQUIRES THE RECLAMATION OF ABOUT 27 HECTARES OF LAND NEAR PAK KOK IN THE WESTERN PART OF CASTLE PEAK BAY, THE FORMATION OF 16 HECTARES IN VARIOUS AREAS OF THE TOWN AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF ROADS AND DRAINAGE.

IN ADDITION, A 400-METRE-LONG BREAKWATER HAS TO BE BUILT IN THE CENTRE OF CASTLE PEAK BAY TO PROTECT THE NEW TYPHOON SHELTER.

THIS BREAKWATER TOGETHER WITH THE RECLAMATION WILL FORM PART OF THE NEW TYPHOON SHELTER WHICH WOULD PROVIDE ON COMPLETION 55 HECTARES OF TYPHOON ANCHORAGE.

MR. BARDEN SAID: +THE ENGINEERING WORKS, WHICH FORM PART OF THE NEW TOWN STAGE IIA DEVELOPMENT, INVOLVE THE CONSTRUCTION OF 760 METRES OF SEAWALL AND RIVERWALL AND THE PLACING OF ABOUT 1.6 MILLION CUBIC METRES OF FILLING MATERIAL IN THE RECLAMATION.

+FILL MATERIAL WILL COME FROM NEARBY BORROW AREAS ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE CASTLE PEAK RANGE AND FROM THE SEABED NEAR CHEK LAP KOK.+

HE ADDED THAT PLATFORMS WOULD BE FORMED IN THE BORROW AREAS AND SOME OF THEM WOULD BE USED FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF STEEL TOWERS FOR THE TRANSMISSION LINE TO THE NEW POWER STATION AT TAP SHEK KOK.

IN ADDITION, ABOUT 145 METRES OF TWIN BOX CULVERT AND 650 METRES OF ACCESS ROADS WOULD HAVE TO BE BUILT TO SERVE THE INDUSTRIAL AREA.

MR. BARDEN POINTED OUT: +THE MAIN RECLAMATION WILL PROVIDE 7.6 HECTARES OF LAND FOR PUBLIC HOUSING WHICH WILL EVENTUALLY ACCOMMODATE 60,000 PEOPLE.

+A FURTHER NINE HECTARES OF LAND WILL BE RECLAIMED FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ADJACENT TO THE HOUSING ESTATE.+

WORK ON THE CONTRACT WILL BEGIN LATER THIS MONTH AND WILL TAKE ABOUT 24 MONTHS TO COMPLETE.

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ROOF STRUCTURE LIABLE TO BECOME DANGEROUS

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THE BUILDING AUTHORITY TODAY (WEDNESDAY) DECLARED A STRUCTURE ON THE ROOF OF NOS. 27-29 SHING ON STREET, HONG KONG, LIABLE TO BECOME DANGEROUS DUE TO LACK OF ADEQUATE MEANS OF ESCAPE IN CASE OF FIRE.

+THE UNAUTHORISED STRUCTURE WHICH HAS BEEN ERECTED ON THE ROOF OF THE BUILDING NOT ONLY LACKS ADEQUATE MEANS OF ESCAPE FOR THE OCCUPANTS, BUT ALSO ADVERSELY AFFECTS THE MEANS OF ESCAPE FROM THE MAIN BUILDING FOR ITS OCCUPANTS IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE OCCURRING, + A SPOKESMAN FOR THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE SAID.

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO APPLY FOR A CLOSURE ORDER IN THE DISTRICT COURT AT 9.30 A.M. ON MAY 3 WAS POSTED TODAY.

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RESULTS OF LATEST TENDER FOR 300 URBAN TAXI LICENCES

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT HAS COMPLETED PROCESSING THE LATEST TENDERS FOR 300 HONG KONG AND KOWLOON TAXI LICENCES.

A TOTAL OF 627 INDIVIDUAL TENDERS WAS RECEIVED WHEN THE OFFER CLOSED ON MARCH 23. THE HIGHEST TENDER WAS \$253,000 AND THE LOWEST WAS \$5,328.

DETAILS OF SUCCESSFUL TENDERERS AND THE AMOUNTS OFFERED WILL BE PUBLISHED IN TOMORROW'S (THURSDAY) GOVERNMENT GAZETTE.

A TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THE AVERAGE PREMIUM IN THE LATEST TENDER EXERCISE WAS \$208,572 COMPARED WITH THE AVERAGE PREMIUM OF \$258,538 IN THE PREVIOUS TENDER IN DECEMBER, 1978.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID LETTERS WOULD BE GOING OUT ON FRIDAY, APRIL 20, TO SUCCESSFUL TENDERERS AND THAT THE FIRST OF THE 300 TAXIS WOULD BE INSPECTED ON MAY 29. ALL 300 TAXIS SHOULD BE ON THE ROAD BY THE END OF AUGUST.

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11, 1979

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MASCULINE NAMES FOR TROPICAL CYCLONES

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BEGINNING THIS YEAR, TROPICAL CYCLONES IN THE CENTRAL AND WESTERN NORTH PACIFIC WILL BE GIVEN MALE AND FEMALE NAMES ALTERNATELY BY THE U.S. JOINT TYPHOON WARNING CENTRE AT GUAM. PREVIOUSLY ONLY GIRLS' NAMES WERE USED.

MR. GORDON BELL, DIRECTOR OF THE ROYAL OBSERVATORY, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THIS CHANGE BY GUAM IS A DIRECT RESULT OF THE WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT IN THE U.S.A.

SINCE 1952 HONG KONG HAS BEEN FOLLOWING GUAM'S SYSTEM FOR NAMING TROPICAL CYCLONES, AND THE ROYAL OBSERVATORY HAS DECIDED TO ADOPT THE NEW SYSTEM WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT.

"CECIL" WILL BE THE FIRST MASCULINE NAME TO BE GIVEN TO A 1979 TROPICAL CYCLONE IN THIS REGION.

OTHER COUNTRIES HAVE ALREADY STARTED USING ALTERNATE MALE AND FEMALE NAMES FOR NAMING TROPICAL CYCLONES. AUSTRALIA, FOR EXAMPLE, BEGAN DOING SO IN 1975 AND THE U.S.A. IN 1978 FOR HURRICANES IN THE EASTERN NORTH PACIFIC.

THE NEW SYSTEM FOR NAMING TROPICAL CYCLONES IN THE CENTRAL AND WESTERN NORTH PACIFIC WILL CONSIST OF FOUR ALPHABETICAL LISTS. DETAILS ARE :

LIST 1: ANDY, BESS, CECIL, DOT, ELLIS, FAYE, GORDON, HOPE, IRVING, JUDY, KEN, LOLA, MAC, NANCY, OWEN, PAMELA, ROGER, SARAH, TIP, VERA AND WAYNE.

LIST 2: ABBY, BEN, CARMEN, DOM, ELLEN, FORREST, GEORGIA, HERBERT, IDA, JOE, KIM, LEX, MARGE, NORRIS, ORCHID, PERCY, RUTH, SPERRY, THELMA, VERNON AND WYNNE.

LIST 3: ALEX, BETTY, CARY, DINAH, ED, FRED, GERALD, HOLLY, IKE, JUNE, KELLY, LYNN, MAURY, NINA, OGDEN, PHYLLIS, ROY, SUSAN, THAD, VANESSA AND WARREN.

LIST 4: AGNES, BILL, CLARA, DOYLE, ELSIE, FABIAN, GAY, HAZEN, IRMA, JEFF, KIT, LEE, MAMIE, NELSON, ODESSA, PAT, RUBY, SKIP, TESS, VAL AND WINONA.

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11, 1979

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THREE CONTAINERS OF MAIL LOST OVERBOARD

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THREE CONTAINERS OF MAIL ON BOARD THE SS AMERICAN LEGION WHICH SAILED FOR OAKLAND, U.S.A. ON MARCH 25 HAVE BEEN LOST OVERBOARD BECAUSE OF HEAVY SEAS AND WEATHER WHICH THE SHIP ENCOUNTERED DURING THE VOYAGE, A SPOKESMAN FOR THE POST OFFICE SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE CONTAINERS HELD MAIL FOR THE U.S.A. POSTED BETWEEN MARCH 15-21= FOR GUYANA POSTED BETWEEN MARCH 13-21= FOR MEXICO AND NICARAGUA POSTED BETWEEN MARCH 15-21= FOR PERU, CHILE AND HAWAII POSTED BETWEEN MARCH 17-21= AND FOR JAMAICA POSTED BETWEEN MARCH 18-21.

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GLOUCESTER ROAD FLYOVER WILL BE A RESTRICTED ZONE

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT WITH EFFECT FROM 10 A.M. NEXT WEDNESDAY (APRIL 18) GLOUCESTER ROAD FLYOVER WILL BE DESIGNATED A 24-HOUR RESTRICTED ZONE WITHIN WHICH ALL MOTOR VEHICLES WILL BE PROHIBITED FROM STOPPING FOR PASSENGERS OR GOODS.

TRAFFIC SIGNS WILL BE SET UP TO INDICATE THE RESTRICTED ZONE.

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