



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

WEDNESDAY, MAY 9, 1979

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 9, 1979

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TRANSPORT WHITE PAPER TABLED

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THE GOVERNMENT'S CENTRAL OBJECTIVE IN ITS TRANSPORT POLICY IS TO MAINTAIN AND, WHERE POSSIBLE, IMPROVE THE MOBILITY OF PEOPLE AND GOODS.

THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES SAID THIS AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN TABLING THE WHITE PAPER ON INTERNAL TRANSPORT POLICY.

+THE WHITE PAPER SETS OUT THREE BASIC WAYS OF KEEPING BOTH PEOPLE AND GOODS MOVING IN OUR TRANSPORT SYSTEM,+ MR. JONES SAID.

HE SAID THAT THESE WERE :

- * EXPANSION AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE ROAD NETWORK=
- * PROVISION OF MORE AND BETTER QUALITY PUBLIC TRANSPORT= AND
- * MEASURES TO ENSURE THE MORE ECONOMIC USE OF THE ROADS.

TO ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES, MR. JONES SAID THAT OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS UP TO \$7,000 MILLION COULD BE SPENT ON ROAD PROJECTS ALREADY UNDERWAY, OR WOULD BE COMMITTED TO PROJECTS LIKELY TO START DURING THAT PERIOD.

+BY THE END OF THE '80'S WE SHOULD HAVE A GREATLY EXPANDED AND IMPROVED NETWORK OF ROADS, TUNNELS AND FLYOVERS, PLUS A MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.

+BETTER FACILITIES WILL ALSO BE PROVIDED FOR PEDESTRIANS AND FURTHER STEPS WILL BE TAKEN TO IMPROVE SAFETY ON THE ROADS,+ HE SAID.

ON UPGRADING AND EXPANSION OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT, MR. JONES SAID THIS WOULD BE THE +KEY TO ALL OUR EFFORTS+ TO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE FOR THE GROWING NUMBER OF JOURNEYS THAT PEOPLE WOULD WISH TO MAKE.

OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS, MR. JONES SAID THAT A QUANTUM JUMP IN BOTH THE QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT WAS EXPECTED.

HE GAVE FIVE EXAMPLES :

- * THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY, WHICH WILL OPEN ITS FIRST SECTION FROM KWUN TONG TO SHEK KIP MEI IN OCTOBER THIS YEAR, WILL BE CARRYING ALMOST TWO MILLION PASSENGERS A DAY WHEN THE TSUEN WAN EXTENSION OPENS IN 1982.
- * THE KCR SHOULD BE DOUBLE-TRACKED AND ELECTRIFIED TO THE BORDER BY THE END OF 1982 AND THE INTERCHANGE STATION WITH THE MTR AT KOWLOON TONG WILL EFFECTIVELY INTEGRATE THE TWO RAILWAYS INTO ONE SYSTEM.

/* IT IS

- * IT IS POSSIBLE THAT A LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT FACILITY WILL BE BUILT ON THE NORTH SHORE OF HONG KONG ISLAND, LINKED UNDERGROUND TO THE MTR IN CENTRAL AT ADMIRALTY AND CHATER/PEDDER STATIONS, THUS EFFECTIVELY TURNING THIS FACILITY INTO A FURTHER EXTENSION OF THE MTR. A MAJOR STUDY IS BEING UNDERTAKEN ON THE DETAILED FEASIBILITY OF A LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT LINE.
- * STEPS WILL BE TAKEN TO MODERNISE THE BUS FLEETS AND TO IMPROVE SERVICES. THE EXPANDED AND UPGRADED ROAD SYSTEM WILL PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPRESS BUS SERVICES TO OPERATE ON MANY ROUTES, BOTH IN THE URBAN AREAS AND THE NEW TERRITORIES AND THESE WILL HELP TO IMPROVE JOURNEY TIMES.
- * VERY GOOD FACILITIES WILL BE PROVIDED AT A NUMBER OF STATIONS FOR PASSENGERS TO INTERCHANGE WITH BUSES. THE MORE IMPORTANT EXAMPLES WILL BE ADMIRALTY STATION IN HONG KONG, THE MTR TERMINAL AT TSUEN WAN, AND HUNG HOM STATION AND THE THREE NEW SHA TIN STATIONS AS REGARDS THE KCR.

THESE WILL ADD FURTHER TO THE SPEED AND CONVENIENCE OF JOURNEY TIMES FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT PASSENGERS.

ADDITIONALLY, THE ELECTRIFICATION OF THE KCR MAIN LINE WILL MEAN A LARGE INCREASE IN THE FREIGHT CARRYING CAPACITY OF THE RAILWAY AND THIS SHOULD, IN TURN, HELP TO TAKE PRESSURE OFF THE ROADS.

ON THE MORE EFFICIENT USE OF THE ROADS, MR. JONES STRESSED THAT, AS TIME WENT ON, SOME DEGREE OF CONSTRAINT WOULD NEED TO BE APPLIED TO PRIVATE TRAVEL.

+GIVEN THE SMALL SIZE OF HONG KONG AND OUR CROWDED TRAFFIC CONDITION, THERE IS BOUND TO BE A LIMIT TO THE NUMBER OF PRIVATE CARS, TAXIS AND HIRE CARS THAT CAN BE ACCOMMODATED, NO MATTER HOW MANY MORE ROADS WE ACTUALLY BUILD,+ HE SAID.

THERE ARE NOW ABOUT 145,000 PRIVATE CARS, PLUS TAXIS WHOSE USAGE IS EQUIVALENT TO AT LEAST ANOTHER 100,000 PRIVATE CARS.

THE WHITE PAPER POINTED OUT THAT, IF NO CONSTRAINTS WERE APPLIED, THE NUMBER OF PRIVATE CARS COULD GROW TO OVER 400,000 BY 1991.

+EVEN WITH THE MUCH IMPROVED ROAD SYSTEM, 400,000 OR MORE CARS WOULD LEAD TO UNACCEPTABLE CONGESTION ON CONSIDERABLE STRETCHES OF OUR ROAD SYSTEM,+ MR. JONES SAID.

HE ADDED THAT A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR SITUATION AROSE IN THE CASE OF LIGHT GOODS VEHICLES, WHOSE NUMBERS HAVE BEEN INCREASING VERY RAPIDLY IN THE PAST FEW YEARS, AND OF PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES IN THE MORE HEAVILY UTILISED URBAN CORRIDORS.

AND, AMONG OTHER THINGS, TWO FURTHER ASPECTS WHICH WERE NOT COVERED IN DETAIL IN THE WHITE PAPER, NAMELY PARKING POLICY AND FUTURE POLICY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES AND MAXICABS, WERE ALSO UNDER EXAMINATION, MR. JONES SAID.

MR. JONES EXPLAINED THAT THE THINKING BEHIND THE WHITE PAPER WAS DISTILLED FROM THE RESULTS OF A WHOLE SERIES OF STUDIES OF HONG KONG'S TRANSPORT SYSTEM, STARTING IN THE MID-1960'S AND CULMINATING IN THE COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORT STUDY PUBLISHED AT THE END OF 1976. WORK WAS CONTINUING TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND ON THESE STUDIES.

+THE GOVERNMENT BELIEVES THAT ITS TRANSPORT POLICIES ARE ON THE RIGHT LINES AND ARE APPROPRIATE TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HONG KONG.

+IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THERE WILL BE SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENTS IN THE ROAD NETWORK AND IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT.

+BUT, WITH AN EXPANDING ECONOMY AND GROWING POPULATION, THIS IS A GAME IN WHICH ONE HAS TO RUN HARD TO STAY IN THE SAME PLACE. SO WE WILL NEED TO KEEP A CLOSE WATCH ON THE GROWTH OF TRAFFIC ON THE ROADS, TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION WHERE POSSIBLE BY MORE SOPHISTICATED TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT MEASURES BUT, IN THE LAST RESORT, TO PLACE THE APPROPRIATE CONSTRAINTS ON THE LESS EFFICIENT USERS OF ROAD SPACE.

+TO MAINTAIN THE EASE OF MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE AND GOODS IN HONG KONG WILL INVOLVE A CONTINUING BATTLE, BUT IT IS A BATTLE THAT MUST BE WON TO HELP SUSTAIN THE STRENGTH OF OUR ECONOMY AND OUR QUALITY OF LIFE,+ MR. JONES CONCLUDED.

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FUEL SAVING MEASURES APPROVED
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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) APPROVED AS PART OF A MAJOR EFFORT TO SAVE FUEL, THE OIL (CONSERVATION AND CONTROL) BILL 1979, WHICH RESTRICTS THE USE OF ELECTRIC LIGHT FOR ADVERTISING, DISPLAY OR FLOODLIGHTING.

THE COUNCIL ALSO APPROVED THE RE-INTRODUCTION OF DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME (GMT PLUS NINE) FOR FIVE MONTHS.

SPEAKING IN THE COUNCIL, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON. DAVID JEAFFRESON, SAID THE SELECTIVE BAN ON THE USE OF ELECTRIC LIGHT FOR ADVERTISING, DISPLAY AND FLOODLIGHTING, EXCEPT BETWEEN 8 P.M. AND 11.30 P.M., WOULD COME INTO FORCE ON SUNDAY (MAY 13), TOGETHER WITH THE CHANGE TO DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME.

A PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN IN SUPPORT OF THESE MEASURES WOULD BE STEPPED UP TO EXHORT ALL SECTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY TO SAVE FUEL THROUGH SAVING ELECTRICITY AND, IN PARTICULAR, TO SET AIR-CONDITIONING THERMOSTATS AT NO LOWER THAN 26 DEGREES CELSIUS.

IN ADDITION POWER COMPANIES WOULD BE ASKED TO REDUCE THEIR SPINNING RESERVES.

MR. JEAFFRESON POINTED OUT THAT A GREAT DEAL OF THOUGHT HAD GONE INTO THE WAY IN WHICH THE PRESENT MEASURES SHOULD BE APPLIED. AS A RESULT IT WAS CONSIDERED THAT ARCADES, WHERE EVEN DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS THE LIGHTING IS MOSTLY PROVIDED BY THE DISPLAY LIGHTS IN THE SHOP WINDOWS, SHOULD BE EXCLUDED FROM THE BAN.

SIMILAR EXCEPTIONS WOULD BE MADE IN OTHER CASES WHERE THE DIRECTOR OF OIL SUPPLIES, WHO IS CONCURRENTLY THE DIRECTOR OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND CUSTOMS, CONSIDERED THAT THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE BAN WOULD NOT BE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST.

+THE PUMPING OF WATER DURING OFF-PEAK HOURS IS A MATTER FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO ARRANGE, AND THE DIRECTOR OF WATER SUPPLIES IS CONSIDERING WITH THE POWER COMPANIES HOW THIS MIGHT BE DONE,+ MR. JEAFFRESON SAID.

ILLUMINATED SIGNS INDICATING THE LOCATIONS OF HOSPITALS, REGISTERED DOCTORS, DENTISTS OR PHARMACISTS AND THE USE OF ELECTRIC LIGHT FOR TELEVISION OR CINEMA ADVERTISEMENTS WOULD BE EXEMPTED FROM THE BAN.

MR. JEAFFRESON SAID THE GOVERNMENT HOPED THAT THE COMBINED PACKAGE OF FUEL SAVING MEASURES WOULD REDUCE OIL CONSUMPTION IN HONG KONG BY ABOUT FIVE PER CENT OVER THE REMAINING EIGHT MONTHS OF THIS YEAR -- IN LINE WITH THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY.

MR. JEAFFRESON ADDED THAT GOVERNMENT WAS DOING EVERYTHING IN ITS POWER, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE MAJOR OIL COMPANIES, TO MONITOR THE SUPPLY OF OIL TO HONG KONG.

HE STRESSED THAT ALL FUEL SAVING MEASURES, INCLUDING THE ADOPTION OF DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME, WOULD BE DISCONTINUED AS SOON AS THE PRESENT OIL SHORTAGE ENDED.

THE GOVERNMENT IS ITSELF TAKING THE LEAD IN ATTEMPTING TO BRING ABOUT FUEL ECONOMIES BY TURNING UP AIR-CONDITIONING SYSTEM THERMOSTATS IN GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS TO 26 DEGREES CELSIUS, BY EXHORTING ALL STAFF TO AVOID THE UNNECESSARY USE OF ELECTRICITY, AND BY MONITORING THE USE OF ELECTRICITY IN ALL GOVERNMENT OFFICES.

MR. JEAFFRESON SAID THAT IT IS IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST THAT INDUSTRY SHOULD NOT HAVE TO CURTAIL PRODUCTION AND HE EMPHASISED THAT UNLESS REAL SAVINGS ARE ACHIEVED THROUGH THE FIRST SET OF ECONOMY MEASURES MORE DRASTIC MANDATORY MEASURES MIGHT HAVE TO BE TAKEN IN THE FUTURE TO ENSURE THAT THE ECONOMY IS NOT AFFECTED.

THE OIL (CONSERVATION AND CONTROL) BILL 1979 DEALS WITH OIL CRISIS GENERALLY, NOT JUST THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PRESENT SHORTAGE OF SUPPLY. IT CONFERS UPON THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL POWERS TO REGULATE THE STORAGE, SUPPLY, ACQUISITION, DISPOSAL AND CONSUMPTION OF OIL AND THE SUPPLY AND CONSUMPTION OF ELECTRICITY AND GAS.

IT ALSO EMPOWERS THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL TO REGULATE THE USE OF VEHICLES ON ROADS AND THE USE OF AIRCRAFT, VESSELS, TRAINS AND TRAMS.

THE GOVERNOR WILL ALSO BE ENABLED TO APPOINT A DIRECTOR OF OIL SUPPLIES TO GIVE DIRECTIONS TO SUPPLIERS AND DEALERS AS TO THE STORAGE, SUPPLY USE AND DISPOSAL OF OIL AND TO GIVE SIMILAR DIRECTIONS TO ELECTRICITY AND GAS SUPPLY COMPANIES.

MR. JEAFFRESON STRESSED THAT UNDER THE BILL ONLY SUCH POWERS AS ARE STRICTLY NECESSARY FOR ANY PARTICULAR SET OF CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD BE USED.

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SUPPORT FOR SAVE FUEL BILL
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REV. THE HON. PATRICK MCGOVERN SUPPORTED THE OIL (CONSERVATION AND CONTROL) BILL 1979, BUT REMINDED THE GOVERNMENT OF THE ADVICE IT DID NOT TAKE FOUR YEARS AGO TO INCREASE THE CAPACITY OF OUR OIL RESERVES.

SPEAKING AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) HE SAID, HE HOPED THAT IN A TIME OF UNCERTAINTY LIKE THE PRESENT, THE POWER COMPANIES WILL NOT BE TEMPTED TO DIG INTO OUR STRATEGIC RESERVES.

+IT WOULD SEEM TO ME TO BE GOOD HOUSEKEEPING PRACTICE TO KEEP OUR RESERVES AT THE MAXIMUM AS A CUSHION AGAINST THE DAY WHEN THE SITUATION MAY DETERIORATE FURTHER,+ HE SAID.

ANOTHER WORRY, EXPRESSED BY SOME UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS, RAISES A VERY IMPORTANT POINT, FR. MCGOVERN CONTINUED. THE WORRY IS WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT HAS THE OIL SUPPLIERS' GUARANTEE THAT THEY WILL BE WILLING AND ABLE TO SUPPLY US WITH 95 PER CENT OF OUR NEEDS, IF THE PUBLIC DOES ITS PART AND VOLUNTARILY CUTS CONSUMPTION BY FIVE PER CENT.

HE SAID THE ONLY THING THAT CAN BE GUARANTEED AS FAR AS THE PUBLIC CAN SEE, +IS A PROMPT AND POSITIVE ANNOUNCEMENT OF A RISE IN PRICES, TIMED IN PERFECT UNISON, AND IN THE CASE OF PETROL, BY THE EXACT SAME AMOUNT OF MONEY.+

WHILE HE DID NOT INTEND TO GET INVOLVED IN THE CONTROVERSY AS TO WHETHER OPEC OR +THE SEVEN SISTERS AND THEIR RELATIVES ARE GREATER VILLAINS BECAUSE THEY ARE ALLEGEDLY PROFITEERING AT EVERY STEP OF THE PROCESS FROM THE BARREL OF CRUDE TO THE PETROL PUMP,+ HE WAS HAPPY TO SEE THAT THE DIRECTOR OF OIL SUPPLIES WILL HAVE POWERS TO EXAMINE THEIR BOOKS.

HE HOPED THAT THE DIRECTOR WILL DEMAND CONVINCING REASONS FOR EVERY CENT OF ANY FUTURE RISE IN PRICES.

FR. MCGOVERN POINTED OUT THAT TO CONSERVE FUEL, THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS NOT THE POWERS AND PENALTIES PROVIDED BY THE BILL, BUT VOLUNTARY PUBLIC EFFORT TO REDUCE CONSUMPTION OF ELECTRICITY.

HE SAID THERE HAS BEEN INCREASING EVIDENCE IN RECENT MONTHS THAT THE REAL INCOMES OF MANY HOUSEHOLDS ARE LOSING AGAINST INFLATION AND ONE WAY TO HELP TURN THE TIDE IS TO CUT DOWN ON THE UNNECESSARY USE OF ELECTRICITY THROUGH CARELESS OR THOUGHTLESS HABITS.

HE SAID THERE WAS AT FIRST SOME CONFUSION OVER THE EXACT REASON FOR INTRODUCING OIL CONSERVATION MEASURES, WHETHER THERE WAS TALK OF ACTUAL PHYSICAL SHORTAGE OF OIL REACHING HONG KONG OR WHETHER WE WERE TO SAVE MONEY TO BUY OIL AT VERY EXPENSIVE SPOT PRICES.

+TO ME, FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF OUR BALANCE OF TRADE AND ITS EFFECT ON INFLATION, IT WOULD NOT MATTER MUCH WHICH WAS THE REAL REASON. EITHER WOULD BE GOOD ENOUGH TO JUSTIFY THIS LEGISLATION,+ HE SAID.

THE HON. JAMES WU ALSO SPOKE IN SUPPORT OF THE BILL AND ASKED THAT THE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY BE GIVEN PRIORITY SHOULD IT EVER BECOME NECESSARY TO ALLOCATE OIL RESOURCES.

HE FURTHER URGED THAT THE SAME PRIORITY BE GIVEN IN THE USE OF VEHICLES, FOR THE TRANSPORT OF MATERIALS AND PRODUCTS.

PRODUCTION ACTIVITIES WHICH ARE SO ESSENTIAL FOR ECONOMIC STABILITY IN HONG KONG WILL THUS NOT BE JEOPARDISED, HE SAID.

MR. WU ALSO SUGGESTED THAT AN ADVISORY MACHINERY WITH POSSIBLE INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES COULD BE SET UP TO GIVE ADVICE AND SUGGESTIONS TO THE DIRECTOR OF OIL SUPPLIES IN HIS DUTIES TO CONSERVE OIL CONSUMPTION.

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CHANGES IN RENT CONTROL MEASURES PROPOSED

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THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON. ALAN SCOTT TODAY (WEDNESDAY) INTRODUCED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979, WHICH PROPOSES CERTAIN CHANGES IN THE RENT CONTROL MEASURES AFFECTING PRIVATE SECTOR TENANCIES.

THESE PROPOSALS INCLUDE:

- * EXTENDING RENT CONTROL ON POSTWAR DOMESTIC PREMISES OCCUPIED BEFORE DECEMBER 14, 1973, FOR A FURTHER THREE YEARS-
- * REDUCING THE FACTOR REGULATING RENT INCREASES FROM '3' TO '2'-

- * DECONTROLLING PREWAR BUSINESS PREMISES-
- * INCREASING CURRENT RENTS IN PREWAR BUILDINGS OF FROM THREE TIMES AND SIX TIMES THE 1941 STANDARD RENT IN DOMESTIC AND BUSINESS PREMISES TO FOUR TIMES AND EIGHT TIMES RESPECTIVELY, AND
- * EXTENDING THE PERIOD OF SERVING NOTICE OF TENANCY TERMINATION FROM SIX TO 12 MONTHS.

MR. SCOTT SAID THE EXTENSION OF RENT CONTROL ON POSTWAR DOMESTIC PREMISES WOULD MEAN TENANTS WOULD ENJOY SECURITY OF TENURE UNTIL DECEMBER 14, 1982.

HE SAID GENERALLY, RENT CONTROLS ON THESE PREMISES HAD WORKED SATISFACTORILY IN MAINTAINING A REASONABLE BALANCE BETWEEN THE INEVITABLE POLARISED INTERESTS OF LANDLORDS AND TENANTS. ABOUT 150,000 TENANCIES IN POSTWAR PREMISES --- ABOUT 80 PER CENT OF POSTWAR HOUSING STOCK AVAILABLE FOR LETTING --- ARE STILL SUBJECT TO THESE CONTROLS.

+AT PRESENT, RENTS OF THE MAJORITY OF CONTROLLED PREMISES STAND AROUND 70-75 PER CENT OF FAIR MARKET RENTS,+ HE SAID.

COMMENTING ON THE REDUCTION OF THE FACTOR FROM '3' TO '2' WHICH REGULATES RENT INCREASES, MR. SCOTT SAID THIS WOULD CONTINUE THE PROCESS OF GRADUALLY REDUCING THE DIFFERENTIAL BETWEEN REGULATED AND MARKET LEVEL RENTS.

HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT THE 21 PER CENT CEILING FOR RENT INCREASES OVER A PERIOD OF TWO YEARS WOULD CONTINUE TO BE APPLIED, EXCEPT FOR A FEW VERY LARGE FLATS, AS WAS THE CASE AT PRESENT.

ON PREWAR BUSINESS PREMISES, THE BILL PROPOSES TO REMOVE RESTRICTIONS ON THEM FROM JULY 1, 1984, BUT WHERE RESIDENCE WAS ALREADY ESTABLISHED IN THESE PREMISES, THE TENANT, AFTER JULY 1, 1984, WOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO APPLY TO THE LANDS TRIBUNAL FOR AN EXTENSION OF HIS TENANCY NOT EXCEEDING ONE YEAR AT ANY ONE TIME.

THE RENT FOR SUCH A TENANCY WOULD ALSO BE FIXED BY THE LANDS TRIBUNAL AT FAIR MARKET RENT OR ONE-THIRD MORE THAN THE RENT THEN PREVAILING, WHICHEVER IS THE LESS.

MR. SCOTT SAID THERE WERE NOW LESS THAN 5,000 PREWAR BUILDINGS CONTAINING UNDER 14,500 UNITS. THESE WERE ORIGINALLY SUBJECT TO RESTRICTIVE CONTROLS, MITIGATED TO SOME EXTENT BY PROVISIONS UNDER THE ORDINANCE FOR REDEVELOPMENT, EXCLUSION AND RECOVERY FOR OWNER-OCCUPATION.

+AS A RESULT, 8,820 UNITS ONLY ARE NOW EFFECTIVELY CONTROLLED --- 60 PER CENT ARE USED FOR DOMESTIC PURPOSES AND 40 PER CENT FOR BUSINESS PURPOSES,+ MR. SCOTT REVEALED.

+THE LARGE MAJORITY OF THE UNITS EFFECTIVELY UNDER CONTROL CONSIST OF TENEMENT FLOORS CHARACTERISED BY FRAGMENTED OWNERSHIP, SUBTENANCIES, MIXED USES, AND POOR MAINTENANCE AND ENVIRONMENT. THE AVERAGE RENT PASSING FOR DOMESTIC UPPER FLOORS IS JUST OVER ONE-QUARTER OF FAIR MARKET RENT, AND FOR BUSINESS GROUND FLOORS IT IS LESS THAN ONE-HALF THE FAIR MARKET RENT,+ HE SAID.

REFERRING TO THE RENT INCREASES IN PREWAR BUILDINGS FROM THE CURRENT LEVEL OF THREE TIMES AND SIX TIMES THE 1941 STANDARD RENT IN DOMESTIC AND NON-DOMESTIC PREMISES TO FOUR TIMES AND EIGHT TIMES RESPECTIVELY, MR. SCOTT SAID THERE WAS A SAFEGUARD PROVIDED IN THAT A TENANT SHOULD NOT BE REQUIRED TO PAY MORE THAN THE FAIR MARKET RENT.

A CLAUSE ALSO ENABLED A TENANT, ON RECEIPT OF A NOTICE OF INCREASE OF RENT, TO SEEK FROM THE COMMISSIONER OF RATING AND VALUATION, A CERTIFICATE OF FAIR MARKET RENT.

ON THE PROPOSAL TO INCREASE THE PERIOD OF SERVING THE NOTICE OF TERMINATION FROM SIX MONTHS TO 12 MONTHS, MR. SCOTT SAID IT WAS RECOGNISED THAT TENANTS IN POSTWAR DOMESTIC PREMISES WHOSE TENANCIES WERE ABOUT TO EXPIRE MIGHT NEED A LONGER PERIOD TO DISCUSS TERMS OF RENEWAL WITH THEIR LANDLORDS OR TO MAKE OTHER ARRANGEMENTS.

THIS PROPOSAL TOOK EFFECT FROM THE DATE OF GAZETTING OF THE BILL ON MAY 4.

COMMENTING ON THESE PROPOSALS, MR. SCOTT SAID A CAREFUL INVESTIGATION OF THE SUPPLY OF AND DEMAND FOR PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING, THE TREND TOWARDS INCREASING HOME OWNERSHIP, THE ACCELERATING PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAMME AND THE LEVEL OF RENTS ON RENEWAL OF LEASES WAS CARRIED OUT.

THERE HAD CLEARLY BEEN SOME CASES OF SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN RENT FOR LARGE FLATS AND LUXURY HOUSES, DUE MAINLY TO THE GROWING NUMBER OF OVERSEAS COMPANIES AND BUSINESS EXPANDING OR SETTING UP OFFICES IN HONG KONG, MR. SCOTT EXPLAINED.

BUT, HE STRESSED, THE REVIEW SHOWED THAT THE GENERAL LEVEL OF INCREASES FOR SMALL FLATS --- THE GREAT MAJORITY OF UNCONTROLLED PREMISES BUILT AFTER 1973 --- WAS NOT SIGNIFICANTLY ABOVE THE LEVEL PERMITTED UNDER RENT CONTROL LEGISLATION, NOR WAS IT SIGNIFICANTLY OUT OF LINE WITH OTHER PRICE INCREASES.

THERE ARE ABOUT 37,300 TENANCIES IN POSTWAR PRIVATE PREMISES WHICH ARE NOT SUBJECT TO RENT OR TENANCY CONTROLS.

MR. SCOTT ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE REVIEW HIGHLIGHTED THE VERY SUBSTANTIAL PRODUCTION OF BOTH PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR HOUSING OF 65,000 UNITS A YEAR FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS --- AN INCREASE OF NEARLY EIGHT PER CENT A YEAR TO THE TOTAL HOUSING STOCK IN HONG KONG.

FURTHERMORE HE ADDED, THE GOVERNMENT WAS ACTIVELY PURSUING WAYS OF INCREASING THE QUANTITY OF LAND TO BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR BUILDING FLATS, IN PARTICULAR MEDIUM AND LARGE FLATS AND OF REDEVELOPING MORE INTENSIVELY GOVERNMENT'S EXISTING RESIDENTIAL SITES.

+ I DO NOT CONSIDER THAT FURTHER EXTENSION OF RENT CONTROL IS NECESSARY BEYOND THE MEASURES I HAVE OUTLINED, BUT I SHALL CONTINUE TO KEEP A CLOSE WATCH ON HOUSING PRODUCTION AND RENT LEVELS AND IF NECESSARY, FURTHER MEASURES WILL BE PROPOSED TO THIS COUNCIL,+ HE SAID.

COMPULSORY EDUCATION -- HINDRANCES MUST BE OVERCOME
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REV. THE HON. JOYCE BENNETT SUPPORTED THE INTENTION OF THE EDUCATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979 TO EXTEND COMPULSORY EDUCATION TO FORM III BUT POINTED OUT PROBLEMS IN IMPLEMENTING SUCH EDUCATION IN HONG KONG.

SHE SAID THERE ARE HINDRANCES -- INSUFFICIENT SCHOOLS FOR THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED, AND INSUFFICIENT FACILITIES TO GET ALL THE CHILDREN LIVING IN RURAL AREAS OR ON BOATS -- WHICH MUST BE OVERCOME AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

+OUR COMMUNITY CANNOT AFFORD TO HAVE AN UNEDUCATED POPULATION IN 10 OR 20 YEARS TIME,+ SHE SAID AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SHE POINTED OUT, FURTHERMORE, THAT WHILE PARENTS ARE MORE WILLING TO INSIST ON THEIR CHILDREN REMAINING AT PRIMARY SCHOOL, THEY ARE MORE INDUCED TO HAVE THEIR SECONDARY SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN WORK TOWARDS CONTRIBUTING TO THE FAMILY BUDGET.

ALTHOUGH THE AGE OF EMPLOYMENT WILL BE RAISED AND THE RESTRICTIONS ON EMPLOYING CHILDREN WILL BE EXTENDED BEYOND FACTORIES, SHE HOPED THAT THE STAFFING OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT AND THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WILL BE INCREASED SUFFICIENTLY TO DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH PARENTS WHO DO NOT SEND THEIR CHILDREN TO ATTEND SCHOOL REGULARLY.

ANOTHER PROBLEM OF ENFORCING COMPULSORY EDUCATION IS THE REQUIREMENT FOR PARENTS TO BUY TEXTBOOKS AND STATIONERY, MISS BENNETT POINTED OUT.

THERE ARE NO PLANS TO PROVIDE GRANTS TO NEEDY STUDENTS AT SECONDARY LEVEL FOR THESE PURCHASES. ALTHOUGH THOSE FAMILIES RECEIVING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE CAN GET REFUNDS, THERE ARE OTHERS JUST OUTSIDE THE SOCIAL SECURITY NET WHICH IS DESIGNED TO CATCH ONLY THOSE IN REAL NEED, SHE SAID.

SHE POINTED OUT THAT SECONDARY SCHOOLS ARE ALREADY FEELING THE EFFECT OF THE ABOLITION OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS ENTRANCE EXAMINATION AND STUDENTS ARE COMING INTO FORM I LACKING DISCIPLINE AND THE TRADITIONAL CHINESE INCENTIVE TO STUDY HARD.

SHE QUERIED THE ADEQUACY OF HAVING ONE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER FOR 4,000 STUDENTS, AND THE ADEQUACY OF A RATIO OF 1.3 TEACHER FOR ONE CLASS OF 40 STUDENTS.

SHE FORESAW THAT THE BILL WILL PLACE AN INTOLERABLE STRAIN ON THE ALREADY OVERPRESSED SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS, AND CALLED FOR AN INCREASE IN THE RATIO WHICH SHE SAID WAS IMPOSED AS A TEMPORARY MEASURE IN 1965 AND HAS LASTED TOO LONG.

SHE REJECTED THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S COMMENT THAT SHE HAS EXPENSIVE IDEAS ON EDUCATION.

+I AM ASKING ONLY FOR NECESSARY IMPROVEMENTS IN OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM SO THAT OUR SCHOOLS WILL BE WORTH COMPELLING PARENTS TO SEND THEIR CHILDREN TO,+ SHE SAID.

ANOTHER UNOFFICIAL MEMBER, THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN SUPPORTED THE BILL BUT ASKED FOR A REALISTIC SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF PLACING FISHERFOLK CHILDREN IN SCHOOL.

HE AGREED THAT THERE IS A PROBLEM OF SOME FISHERFOLK MOVING FROM ONE TYPHOON SHELTER TO ANOTHER BUT ASKED WHY THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT PROVIDE HOSTEL ACCOMMODATION FOR THEIR CHILDREN TO GIVE THEM PRACTICAL ENCOURAGEMENT.

HE POINTED OUT THAT IT IS THE ROLE OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND OTHER INTERESTED GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS TO PROVIDE A REALISTIC SOLUTION WHERE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE WAS ESPECIALLY DIFFICULT BECAUSE OF FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES.

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TOPLEY EXPLAINS FLEXIBILITY OF EDUCATION BILL

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THE EDUCATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979 IS DRAWN IN THE WAY IT IS TO GIVE THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION DISCRETIONARY POWERS TO ISSUE AN ATTENDANCE ORDER RATHER THAN TO DESIGNATE NON-ATTENDANCE AS A CRIME, THE HON. KENNETH TOPLEY, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

HE WAS SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE SECOND READING OF THE EDUCATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979.

REFERRING TO THE ENFORCEMENT OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION FOR ALL CHILDREN AGED BETWEEN SIX AND 15, MR. TOPLEY SAID, "WE REALISED THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE ENTERPRISE AND THE NEED NOT TO BE TOO RIGID BUT RATHER TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF CIRCUMSTANCES."

"I DON'T KNOW OF ANY COUNTRY WHERE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IS ENFORCED TOTALLY IRRESPECTIVE OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES," HE SAID.

"I DO NOT WISH ANY MEMBER TO BE UNDER ANY ILLUSION THAT EVERY LAST CHILD WILL BE IN SCHOOL NEXT SEPTEMBER. EVEN WITH THE GREATEST IMAGINABLE RESOURCES THIS WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE. I ALSO ASSURE MEMBERS THAT WE WILL DO OUR LEVEL BEST WITH THE RESOURCES WE CAN REASONABLY COMMAND," MR. TOPLEY SAID.

IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN ON THE "CONCERTED APPROACH" TOWARDS THE PROBLEMS PRESENTED BY THE CHILDREN OF BOAT PEOPLE, HE SAID:

"THE COMPLEX OF PROBLEMS PRESENTED BY THE BOAT DWELLERS IS BEING CONSIDERED BY THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT, HOME AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT, MARINE DEPARTMENT, THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT, NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION, AND EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE RELEVANT SECRETARIAT BRANCHES."

THE NEEDS OF BOAT DWELLERS' CHILDREN WERE BEING CONSIDERED IN THE CONTEXT OF GENERAL PROBLEMS OF IMPLEMENTING COMPULSORY JUNIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN IN ISOLATED AREAS, MR. TOPLEY ADDED.

ON FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES, SUCH AS EXPENSES FOR TEXTBOOKS AND UNIFORMS, FACED BY POOR FAMILIES RAISED BY REV. THE HON. JOYCE BENNETT, HE SAID CASES OF HARDSHIP OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE COULD BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE FAMILY SERVICES DIVISION OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT.

+THIS CAN BE DONE ON THE INITIATIVE OF THE PARENTS OR OF THE SCHOOL.

+SUCH CASES CAN THEN BE CONSIDERED FOR ASSISTANCE FROM CERTAIN TRUST FUNDS SUCH AS THE LI PO CHUN CHARITABLE TRUST FUND AND THE TANG SHIU KIN/HO TIM CHARITABLE TRUST FUND,+ MR. TOPLEY SAID.

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GOVT REVIEWING PROVISIONS OF PUBLIC ORDER ORDINANCE
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THE GOVERNMENT IS REVIEWING THE PROVISIONS OF THE PUBLIC ORDER ORDINANCE IN THE LIGHT OF PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON. JOHN HOBLEY, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT HE THOUGHT THERE ARE POSSIBILITIES FOR CHANGE WHICH WOULD REMOVE MUCH OF THE CONCERN NOW BEING VOICED.

+WE SHALL PRESS ON AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE,+ HE SAID, +BUT WE DO NOT INTEND TO BE RUSHED BECAUSE WE ARE DEALING WITH A PART OF THE LAW AND ORDER FIELD WHICH NEEDS CAREFUL CONSIDERATION.+

MR. HOBLEY WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. PETER C. WONG WHO REFERRED TO THE RECENT DECISION OF THE HIGH COURT IN THE YAU MA TEI BOAT DWELLERS CASE AND PUBLIC CONCERN, AND ASKED WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT PLANNED TO AMEND THE ORDINANCE WITH RESPECT TO CONTROL OF MEETINGS AND PUBLIC GATHERINGS.

ON THE HIGH COURT'S DECISION, MR. HOBLEY SAID: +WITHOUT QUESTIONING THE DECISION ITSELF, I DO NOT ACQUIESCE IN SOME OF THE COURT'S GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AS TO WHAT THE POSITION IS IN OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH DID NOT ARISE FOR DETERMINATION IN THE CASE.+

REFERRING TO THE PUBLIC ORDER ORDINANCE, MR. HOBLEY SAID IT CAME INTO BEING IN RATHER DIFFERENT TIMES AND WAS NOT CONCEIVED IN THE CONTEXT OF ANY PARTICULAR SITUATION OF DISORDER.

+THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALWAYS BEEN MINDFUL OF THE CONSIDERABLE AUTHORITY VESTED IN IT BY THE PUBLIC ORDER ORDINANCE,+ HE SAID.

HE EMPHASISED THAT THE LAW HAD NOT BEEN APPLIED IN A REPRESSIVE WAY.

+IT HAS BEEN APPLIED IN A WAY WHICH IS AIMED AT AVOIDING INCONVENIENCE TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND ENSURING THAT THE POLICE FORCE IS AT ALL TIMES ABLE TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC ORDER.+

LICENCES FOR MEETINGS AND PROCESSIONS WERE RARELY REFUSED, HE POINTED OUT, AND THE GROUNDS FOR REFUSAL SPECIFIED IN THE ORDINANCE WERE THEMSELVES LIMITED.

+IN PARTICULAR, PROVIDED THAT THE PUBLIC IN GENERAL WILL NOT BE INCONVENIENCED, THE RIGHT OF PEOPLE TO PETITION THE GOVERNMENT IS ALWAYS RESPECTED.+

MR. HOBLEY SAID THE COMMUNITY HAD ALWAYS BEEN INTOLERANT OF DISORDER. +IT HAS BEEN THEREFORE BEEN A COMMUNITY WHICH HAS BEEN PREPARED TO TOLERATE SOME CONSTRAINTS ON FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION.+

IT HAD NEVER BEEN THE OBJECT OF GOVERNMENT POLICY TO IMPOSE CONSTRAINTS ON FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AS SUCH, HE SAID, NOR WAS THE ISSUE HERE FREEDOM OF SPEECH, BUT THE WAY IN WHICH THAT FREEDOM WAS EXERCISED.

THE GOVERNMENT'S AIM WAS TO ENSURE THAT IT COULD KEEP A PROPER BALANCE BETWEEN THE RIGHT OF PEOPLE TO MEET TOGETHER IN PUBLIC AND THE INTEREST OF THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE.

+THUS THE OBJECT HAS BEEN TO ENSURE THAT PEOPLE DO NOT GATHER AT A TIME OR IN A PLACE OR IN NUMBERS WHICH MAY CREATE PROBLEMS IN RELATION TO THE MAINTENANCE OF PEACE AND GOOD ORDER.+

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BILL TO RAISE CEILING OF TAX EXEMPTION RATE
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A BILL WHICH SEEKS TO RAISE FROM 7-1/2 PER CENT TO 7-3/4 PER CENT THE CEILING ON THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S AUTHORITY TO SPECIFY THE RATE OF EXEMPTION OF INTEREST PAYABLE BY THE GOVERNMENT, LICENSED BANKS AND CERTAIN SPECIFIED PUBLIC UTILITIES WAS READ THE SECOND TIME IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) (NO. 5) BILL 1979, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE SAID THE BILL WAS BROUGHT INTO FORCE ON APRIL 20 BY MEANS OF A REVENUE PROTECTION ORDER.

HE SAID THAT ON THE SAME DAY HE SIGNED A NOTICE SPECIFYING 7-3/4 PER CENT AS THE RATE OF EXEMPTION +FOR THE TIME BEING.+

THE BILL, HE SAID, DELIBERATELY DID NOT PROVIDE FOR A FRESH CEILING SUFFICIENTLY HIGH TO ACCOMMODATE ANY FURTHER INCREASE OR INCREASES IN THE RATE PAYABLE ON SAVINGS ACCOUNTS ABOVE THAT WHICH CAME INTO FORCE ON APRIL 20.

+TO DO SO WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY BE MISINTERPRETED, AND I DO NOT WISH TO BE THOUGHT TO BE TAKING ANY VIEW ABOUT THE FUTURE COURSE OF INTEREST RATES AT THIS TIME.

+THIS BILL, THEREFORE, SEEKS NO MORE THAN AN INCREASE IN THE CEILING SUFFICIENTLY LARGE TO ACCOMMODATE THE CURRENT RATE OF INTEREST ON SAVING ACCOUNTS OF 7-3/4 PER CENT.+

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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BILL TO STRENGTHEN DIRECTOR OF AUDIT'S INDEPENDENCE

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A BILL WHICH SEEKS TO STRENGTHEN THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE POST OF DIRECTOR OF AUDIT HAD ITS SECOND READING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE AUDIT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE SAID THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT HAS NOW ACQUIRED A SUFFICIENT DEGREE OF INDEPENDENCE FROM THE GOVERNMENT TO WARRANT HIS REMUNERATION BEING PROVIDED FOR STATUTORILY.

+AS THE POWER OF APPOINTMENT RESTS WITH THE GOVERNOR, UNDER SECTION 3 (1) OF THE ORDINANCE, IT IS PROPOSED THAT THE LEVEL OF REMUNERATION SHALL ALSO BE DETERMINED FROM TIME TO TIME BY THE GOVERNOR.

+THUS, THE POST OF DIRECTOR OF AUDIT WILL BE, IN FUTURE, IF THIS BILL IS PASSED, EXCLUDED FROM THE CIVIL SERVICE ESTABLISHMENT AND HIS SALARY WILL BE PROVIDED FOR IN THE ESTIMATES IN A MANNER SIMILAR TO THAT OF THE CHAIRMAN, PUBLIC SERVICES COMMISSION AND THE COMMISSIONER AGAINST CORRUPTION,+ MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID.

HE SAID THESE CHANGES WILL REFLECT THE FACT THAT THE DIRECTOR, IN THE PERFORMANCE OF HIS DUTIES AND IN THE EXERCISE OF HIS POWERS, +IS NOT SUBJECT TO THE DIRECTION OR CONTROL OF ANY OTHER PERSON OR AUTHORITY.+

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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NEW AIR POLLUTION CONTROL BILL TO BE INTRODUCED
AT LEGCO SOON

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THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES TODAY (WEDNESDAY) TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL HE HOPED TO PRESENT THE NEW AIR POLLUTION CONTROL BILL AT THE NEXT SESSION.

MR. JONES SAID THIS IN REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN ON THE SERIOUSNESS OF AIR POLLUTION CAUSED BY INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION IN KWAI CHUNG AND THE MEASURES TO CONTROL AND REDUCE THE PROBLEM.

HE SAID HE COULD ONLY ANSWER THE QUESTION DEFINITELY WHEN THE STAFF AND OTHER RESOURCES HE HAD ASKED FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION UNIT HAD BEEN PROVIDED.

+HOPEFULLY, THIS WILL NOT TAKE TOO LONG,+ MR. JONES SAID.

HE SAID HE BELIEVED AIR POLLUTION IN HONG KONG HAS NOT REACHED REALLY SERIOUS PROPORTIONS.

MR. JONES SAID THAT THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS OF AIR POLLUTION IN KWAI CHUNG DECREASED LAST YEAR COMPARED WITH 1977, DESPITE A STEADY INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF REGISTERED FACTORIES WITH FUEL BURNING INSTALLATIONS.

+FROM WHAT MEASUREMENTS WE HAVE, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT AIR POLLUTION IN KWAI CHUNG IS NO WORSE THAN IN ANY OTHER INDUSTRIALISED AREA IN HONG KONG,+ HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT SURVEILLANCE UNDER THE EXISTING CLEAN AIR ORDINANCE WAS BEING STEPPED UP AND THE AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DIVISION OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT WAS BEING STRENGTHENED.

IN 1978 THERE WERE 559 INSPECTIONS OF FUEL BURNING INSTALLATIONS IN KWAI CHUNG ALONE AND 33 APPLICATIONS FOR NEW CHIMNEY DESIGNS WERE PROCESSED.

HE SAID THE CLEAN AIR ORDINANCE ONLY DEALT WITH SMOKE, DUST AND GRIT EMISSIONS RESULTING FROM THE COMBUSTION OF FUEL AND IT PROVIDED NO SAFEGUARD AGAINST THE EMISSION OF OTHER TOXIC GASES TO THE ATMOSPHERE WHICH, BECAUSE THEY WERE OFTEN INVISIBLE, DID NOT GIVE RISE TO PUBLIC COMPLAINT.

+WHEN THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION UNIT IS PROPERLY OPERATING IT WILL PROVIDE A FULLY INSTRUMENTED AIR QUALITY MONITORING NETWORK,+ MR. JONES SAID.

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INCREASED DEPRECIATION ALLOWANCE
WILL BENEFIT MANUFACTURING SECTOR
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THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR WILL BENEFIT FROM A PROPOSAL WHICH SEEKS TO INCREASE THE DEPRECIATION ALLOWANCE, UNDER THE INLAND REVENUE ORDINANCE, BY FIVE PER CENT TO 25 PER CENT, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, SAID AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING A MOTION ON THE PROPOSAL, MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID THE BOARD OF INLAND REVENUE HAD MADE A REVISED TABLE INTRODUCING THE AMENDED RATES, TO BE APPLICABLE TO BOTH FINAL 1978-79 AND PROVISIONAL 1979-80 ASSESSMENTS.

THE PRINCIPAL BENEFICIARIES OF THIS PROPOSAL, HE SAID, WOULD BE IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR, COVERING ELECTRONIC DATA PROCESSING EQUIPMENT, ELECTRONICS MANUFACTURING MACHINERY AND PLANT, PLASTIC MANUFACTURING MACHINERY AND PLANT INCLUDING MOULDS, SILK, TEXTILE AND CLOTHING MANUFACTURING MACHINERY AND PLANT, AND WEAVING, SPINNING, KNITTING AND SEWING MACHINERY.

AS A RESULT OF THE INCREASE, HE ADDED, THE NUMBER OF HEADS ATTRACTING THE 25 PER CENT RATE WOULD THUS BECOME 15 OUT OF A TOTAL OF 33.

AFTER ALLOWING FOR THE TWO-INSTALMENT SYSTEM, THE COST TO THE REVENUE IN THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR WILL BE \$22.5 MILLION, SAID MR. HADDON-CAVE.

BUSINESS REGISTRATION FEE INCREASE EXPLAINED

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A MOTION TO AMEND THE SCHEDULE TO THE BUSINESS REGISTRATION ORDINANCE WAS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) MOVED BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE.

MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID THE ANNUAL BUSINESS REGISTRATION FEE WAS INCREASED FROM \$150 TO \$175 SINCE APRIL 1.

HE SAID THE FEE WAS LAST REVISED FROM \$50 TO \$150 FOUR YEARS AGO TO RESTORE, PARTIALLY, A CHARGE INTRODUCED IN 1952 AT \$200 A YEAR AND TO INTRODUCE A TAX-LOADING ELEMENT.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THIS ELEMENT, HE ADDED, WAS DESIGNED TO OBTAIN A CONTRIBUTION TO THE PUBLIC REVENUE FROM THE PROPRIETORS OF BUSINESSES NOT PAYING PROFITS TAX BECAUSE THEIR CHARGEABLE PROFITS WERE COVERED BY ALLOWANCES AVAILABLE UNDER PERSONAL ASSESSMENT.

+TO RESTORE THE TAX-LOADING WOULD REQUIRE AN INCREASE IN THE FEE OF ABOUT 20 PER CENT OR A FEE OF \$175,+ HE SAID.

THE ESTIMATED YIELD WOULD BE ABOUT \$6.5 MILLION IN THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR, HE SAID.

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GOVT GUARANTEES FOR MTR CREDIT FACILITIES

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) APPROVED GOVERNMENT GUARANTEES FOR SUPPLIERS' CREDIT FACILITIES FOR FIVE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CONTRACTS.

IN MOVING THE MOTION, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE SAID THE CONTRACTS, FOR THE EXTENSION OF THE MTR TO TSUEN WAN, WERE ON A FIXED PRICE BASIS.

+THREE OF THE SUPPLIERS' CREDIT FACILITIES,+ HE SAID, +ARE IN RESPECT OF CONTRACTS PLACED IN GERMANY FOR THE SUPPLY OF TELEPHONE EQUIPMENT, CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION AND PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM.

+THE FINANCE TO BE COVERED BY THE GUARANTEES AMOUNTS TO US\$8 MILLION.+

THE REMAINING SUPPLIERS CREDIT FACILITIES COVER TWO CONTRACTS PLACED IN JAPAN FOR THE SUPPLY OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL SYSTEM AND OF STATION AND TUNNEL AUXILIARY EQUIPMENT.

THESE CONTRACTS, WORTH \$138 MILLION, WERE AWARDED IN HONG KONG DOLLARS TO EXCLUDE ANY EXCHANGE RISK.

MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID THE INTEREST RATES INVOLVED WOULD BE COMPETITIVE AND AMOUNTS DUE IN RESPECT OF INTEREST WILL BE COVERED BY THE GUARANTEES.

HE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S TOTAL GUARANTEE COMMITMENT IN RESPECT OF THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION STOOD AT \$8,760 MILLION.

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 9, 1979

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MEASURES TO PREVENT FLOODING OUTLINED

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THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, THE HON. DAVID MCDONALD, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) OUTLINED THE PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES THE GOVERNMENT TAKES TO PREVENT FLOODING IN LOW-LYING URBAN AREAS ON THE APPROACH OF RAINY SEASON EACH YEAR.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. WONG LAM IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, HE SAID: +JUST PRIOR TO THE ONSET OF THE RAINY SEASON EACH YEAR AN INSPECTION AND CLEARANCE OPERATION IS CARRIED OUT ON ALL DRAINAGE INSTALLATIONS AND A STEPPED-UP CLEARANCE PROGRAMME IS MAINTAINED THROUGHOUT THE SEASON.+

HOWEVER, HE ADDED, EVEN WITH THESE PRECAUTIONS LOCAL FLOODING COULD STILL OCCUR UNDER HEAVY RAIN CONDITIONS IF BLOCKAGES WERE CREATED BY RUBBISH DEPOSITED IN ROADWAYS BETWEEN CLEARANCES.

SPECIALIST GANGS OPERATING ON A 24-HOUR STAND-BY WOULD DEAL PROMPTLY WITH ALL REPORTS OF FLOODING.

TURNING TO ANOTHER QUESTION ON THE SAFETY OF HILLSIDE SQUATTERS, MR. MCDONALD SAID: +AT THE START OF THE WET SEASON, THE GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES RELEASES TO THE MEDIA A STATEMENT EMPHASISING THE DANGERS BROUGHT BY HEAVY RAINS AND GIVING INFORMATION ON THE AVAILABILITY OF REFUGE CENTRES.

+WHEN A PERIOD OF EXCEPTIONALLY HEAVY AND PROLONGED RAINFALL IS FORECAST G.I.S. WILL ISSUE THE FORECAST INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC, WARNING OF THE INCREASED RISK OF LANDSLIDES AND ANNOUNCING THE OPENING OF THE REFUGE CENTRES.+

HE ADDED THAT DURING ROUTINE VISITS TO SQUATTER AREAS, CITY DISTRICT OFFICE AND HOUSING DEPARTMENT STAFF WOULD ENSURE THAT RESIDENTS OF THE AREAS WERE FULLY INFORMED AND FAMILIAR WITH THE ARRANGEMENTS AND THE LOCATION OF REFUGE CENTRES.

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ASSISTANCE OFFERED TO FISHERMEN INVOLVED IN SEA COLLISIONS

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THE MARINE DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN OFFERING ASSISTANCE TO LOCAL FISHERMEN WHOSE VESSELS WERE INVOLVED IN COLLISIONS WITH OCEAN-GOING VESSELS.

THE DEPARTMENT HAS ASSISTED THE FISHERMEN IN IDENTIFYING THE OCEAN-GOING VESSELS INVOLVED AND THE SHIPPING COMPANIES CONCERNED, AND IN APPLYING FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND PUBLIC HOUSING.

THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON. D.G. JEAFFRESON, SAID THIS AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. HO KAM-FAI.

MR. JEAFFRESON SAID RECORDS SHOWED THAT, OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS, THERE WERE FOUR COLLISIONS BETWEEN HONG KONG LICENSED FISHING VESSELS AND OCEAN-GOING VESSELS.

FIVE PERSONS WERE MISSING AND FIVE INJURED IN TWO COLLISIONS OUTSIDE HONG KONG WATERS, HE SAID.

THE FIRST COLLISION OCCURED IN MAY 1978 INSIDE HONG KONG WATERS AND THE MARINE DEPARTMENT HAD ASSISTED THE FISHERMEN TO IDENTIFY THE OCEAN-GOING VESSEL INVOLVED AND THE SHIPPING COMPANY CONCERNED.

THE COMPANY HAD REPORTED REACHING A SATISFACTORY SETTLEMENT WITH THE FISHERMEN, HE SAID.

THE SECOND COLLISION OCCURRED IN DECEMBER 1978, AGAIN INSIDE HONG KONG WATERS, WITH THE FISHING VESSEL SUFFERING ONLY MINOR DAMAGES TO THE HULL.

THE DEPARTMENT HAD ALSO ASSISTED THE FISHERMEN TO IDENTIFY THE OCEAN-GOING VESSEL AND THE SHIPPING COMPANY CONCERNED. BUT IN THIS CASE, THE COMPANY HAD REPORTED THAT THE FISHERMEN HAD NOT APPROACHED IT FOR COMPENSATION.

MR. JEAFFRESON SAID THE THIRD COLLISION HAPPENED ON MARCH 7 THIS YEAR OUTSIDE HONG KONG WATERS.

AFTER FAILING TO IDENTIFY THE OTHER VESSEL CONCERNED, THE FISHERMEN APPROACHED THE MARINE DEPARTMENT FOR HELP, BUT THE VESSEL COULD NOT BE IDENTIFIED.

SINCE MARCH 16, THE FISHERMEN HAVE BEEN RECEIVING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE. THEY HAVE BEEN OFFERED, BUT REFUSED, COMPASSIONATE TEMPORARY HOUSING.

THE FOURTH COLLISION OCCURRED EARLY LAST MONTH, ALSO OUTSIDE HONG KONG WATERS. AGAIN BOTH THE FISHERMEN AND THE MARINE DEPARTMENT FAILED TO IDENTIFY THE OCEAN-GOING VESSEL INVOLVED.

THE FISHERMEN HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND FOR COMPASSIONATE HOUSING BUT WERE FOUND TO BE INELIGIBLE.

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DEEP BAY OYSTERS BASICALLY NOT DANGEROUS FOR
HUMAN CONSUMPTION

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THE LEVEL OF CADMIUM AND OTHER TOXIC SUBSTANCES FOUND IN OYSTERS IN DEEP BAY IS BASICALLY NOT DANGEROUS FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN, MR. JONES SAID CADMIUM CAN BUILD UP IN THE HUMAN BODY OVER A PERIOD OF TIME AND, IN SEVERE CASES, THIS CAN RESULT IN DAMAGE TO THE KIDNEYS AND NERVOUS SYSTEM.

NO CASES OF THIS SORT HAVE BEEN REPORTED IN HONG KONG THAT CAN BE RELATED TO THE CONSUMPTION OF OYSTERS, EVEN THOUGH THE CADMIUM LEVEL OF SOME OYSTERS SOLD IN THE DEEP BAY AREA HAVE BEEN SOMEWHAT HIGHER THAN NORMAL.

+MANY FOODS CONTAIN SMALL QUANTITIES OF CADMIUM AND FURTHER SMALL AMOUNTS CAN ENTER THE BODY FROM THE AIR WE BREATHE AND BY, FOR INSTANCE, CIGARETTE SMOKING,+ HE SAID.

+WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THE TOTAL INTAKE, AND OYSTER CONSUMPTION WOULD NEED TO BE VERY HEAVY TO EFFECT THIS SIGNIFICANTLY,+ MR. JONES STRESSED.

HE ALSO SAID THAT THE RESULTS SO FAR OF A WORKING PARTY SET UP LAST YEAR TO INVESTIGATE, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF CADMIUM IN VARIOUS TYPES OF DIET COMMON IN HONG KONG HAVE GIVEN NO CAUSE FOR ALARM.

+AS REGARDS OTHER POSSIBLE TOXIC SUBSTANCES, WE HAVE NOT YET IDENTIFIED ANY SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS IN OYSTERS AT DEEP BAY OTHER THAN BACTERIA, AND THESE ARE MADE HARMLESS BY THOROUGH COOKING.+

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EXTRA BUS SERVICES TO BEACHES AND COUNTRY PARKS

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PRESSURE WILL BE TAKEN OFF THE FRANCHISED BUS COMPANIES IN SOME MAJOR URBAN CORRIDORS ONCE THE MODIFIED INITIAL SYSTEM OF THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY GOES INTO FULL OPERATION EARLY NEXT YEAR.

THIS WILL ENABLE THE COMPANIES TO FURTHER IMPROVE SERVICES TO BEACHES AND COUNTRY PARKS, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN, MR. JONES SAID THE BUS COMPANIES WERE ALREADY DEPLOYING EXTRA BUSES ON FINE WEATHER SUNDAYS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS TO MEET THE DEMAND FOR TRANSPORT TO POPULAR BEACHES AND COUNTRY PARKS.

/+EXTRA

WEDNESDAY, MAY 9, 1979

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+EXTRA FREQUENCIES ARE OPERATED ON FOUR KOWLOON MOTOR BUS ROUTES, FIVE CHINA MOTOR BUS ROUTES AND ON ALL LANTAU SERVICES,+ HE SAID.

MR. JONES SAID KMB OPERATED 10, AND CMB FIVE, RECREATIONAL ROUTES ON SUNDAYS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS. THESE ARRANGEMENTS WERE MONITORED BY THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT.

+THE DEPARTMENT CONSULTS WITH THE COMPANIES ON APPROPRIATE IMPROVEMENTS TO SERVICES WHERE THESE ARE NEEDED,+ HE SAID.

BUT MR. JONES SAID THAT DESPITE THE COMPANIES' EFFORTS IT WAS DIFFICULT TO MEET THE HIGH LEVEL OF DEMAND ON SUNDAYS WHICH WAS OFTEN GREATER THAN IN PEAK HOURS DURING WEEKDAYS.

+THE DEMAND IS ALSO CHANGEABLE, DEPENDING ON THE WEATHER, AND IT IS OFTEN DIFFICULT TO FIND ENOUGH DRIVERS PREPARED TO WORK AT WEEKENDS AND ON PUBLIC HOLIDAYS,+ MR. JONES ADDED.

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CENTRE TO RUN SENIOR SECONDARY FORMS FOR SEVERELY DISABLED
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THE JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTRE AT SANDY BAY IS EXPECTED TO BE ABLE TO START RUNNING SENIOR SECONDARY CLASSES FOR SEVERELY PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN IN 1981, THE HON. KENNETH TOPLEY, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM DR. THE HON. HARRY FANG AS TO WHEN THE SPECIAL SCHOOL WOULD BE READY TO TAKE IN STUDENTS.

MR. TOPLEY SAID THE CENTRE HAD SUBMITTED PLANS TO THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO BUILD AN EXTENSION TO RUN SENIOR SECONDARY FORMS, AND THAT THESE PROPOSALS WOULD BE SUBMITTED SHORTLY TO THE FINANCE COMMITTEE FOR CONSIDERATION.

+IF FUNDS ARE APPROVED FOR THE PROJECT TO COMMENCE THIS FINANCIAL YEAR, IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THE EXTENSION WILL BE COMPLETED IN EARLY 1981 AND THE SCHOOL WILL BE ABLE TO TAKE IN SENIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS,+ HE ADDED.

AT PRESENT THE JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTRE IS RUNNING PREPARATORY, PRIMARY AND JUNIOR SECONDARY CLASSES FOR SEVERELY PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN.

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TAP WATER SAFE TO DRINK

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THE PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY AS DELIVERED FROM THE WATERWORKS MAINS IS SAFE FOR DIRECT CONSUMPTION WITHOUT FURTHER TREATMENT AS IT CONFORMS TO STRINGENT INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS OF QUALITY RECOMMENDED BY THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, THE HON. DAVID MCDONALD, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR. THE HON. HARRY FANG AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

+IT SHOULD BE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT IN MULTI-STOREY BUILDINGS, THE WATER TO UPPER FLOORS IS GENERALLY SUPPLIED THROUGH ROOF TANKS AND CONSUMERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING THAT THEIR PRIVATE STORAGE TANKS, SERVICE PIPES AND FITTINGS ARE MAINTAINED IN A SATISFACTORY CONDITION SO AS TO PREVENT ANY LOCAL DETERIORATION IN QUALITY OF WATER DRAWN FROM TAPS,+ MR. MCDONALD SAID.

+PROVIDED THESE INSTALLATIONS ARE SO MAINTAINED WATER FROM TAPS SHOULD REMAIN SAFE FOR DIRECT CONSUMPTION.+

HE FURTHER POINTED OUT THAT DURING PERIODS OF WATER RESTRICTIONS THE PURITY OF THE TREATED WATER DELIVERED FROM MAINS MIGHT ALSO BE AFFECTED AND IT WAS THEREFORE ADVISABLE TO TAKE THE PRECAUTION OF BOILING DRINKING WATER DURING THESE PERIODS.

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SPEED LIMITS AIM TO CURB TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

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SPEED LIMITS ARE IMPOSED TO REDUCE THE NUMBER AND SEVERITY OF TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS AND SURVEYS ARE CARRIED OUT TO SET THE LIMITS.

THE SECRETARY FOR ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES SAID THIS IN REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE REV. THE HON. JOYCE M. BENNETT AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR. JONES SAID, THE LAW AUTOMATICALLY RESTRICTED THE SPEED LIMIT TO 30 MILES AN HOUR ON ANY SECTION OF ROAD WITH STREET LIGHTING UNLESS THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT STIPULATED OTHER SPEED LIMITS.

+THE SECTION OF POKFULAM ROAD FROM QUEEN MARY HOSPITAL TO THE BUS TERMINUS NEAR POKFIELD ROAD HAS ONLY RECENTLY BEEN REALIGNED AND WIDENED TO FOUR LANES.

+THIS SECTION OF ROAD IS UNRESTRICTED BUT THE BEHAVIOUR OF TRAFFIC ON IT IS BEING MONITORED TO SEE WHETHER A SPEED LIMIT IS REQUIRED,+ MR. JONES ADDED.

ON THE SPEED LIMIT ON THE MAIN ROAD FROM THE LION ROCK TUNNEL TO THE RACE COURSE AT SHA TIN, MR. JONES SAID IT WAS AT PRESENT 30 MILES AN HOUR.

+BUT THIS IS ALSO BEING REVIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF TRAFFIC CONDITIONS TO SEE WHETHER IT CAN BE RAISED.+

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 9, 1979

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WATER SUPPLY IN SAI KUNG
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IMPROVEMENTS TO THE WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM TO SAI KUNG ARE IN HAND AND WILL BE COMPLETED IN THREE MONTHS' TIME, THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, THE HON. DAVID MCDONALD SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, HE SAID THE SYSTEM WAS ORIGINALLY DESIGNED TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF SAI KUNG TOWN AND 15 VILLAGES AND OTHER USERS IN ITS IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENTS, TOGETHER WITH 21 VILLAGES AND OTHER DEVELOPMENTS ON THE ROUTE OF THE SUPPLY MAIN ALONG HIRAM'S HIGHWAYS AND PART OF CLEAR WATER BAY ROAD.

THE SYSTEM, HE ADDED, HAD ALREADY REACHED FULL CAPACITY AND WAS UNABLE TO COPE WITH ANY ADDITIONAL DEMAND PLACED ON IT BY NEW DEVELOPMENT.

+IMPROVEMENTS TO THE SYSTEM IN THE FORM OF DUPLICATION OF CRITICAL SECTIONS OF MAINS ARE IN HAND AND WILL BE COMPLETED IN THREE MONTHS' TIME,+ MR. MCDONALD SAID.

+NEW TENDERS FOR THE REMAINING WORKS UNDER THIS ITEM FOR FURTHER MAIN DUPLICATION AND THE ERECTION OF A STORAGE TANK AT TUI MIN HOI ARE ABOUT TO BE CALLED AND THESE WORKS ARE EXPECTED TO TAKE ABOUT 15 MONTHS TO COMPLETE.+

AFTER COMPLETION OF THE WORKS, HE ADDED, THE SYSTEM WOULD THEN HAVE REACHED THE LIMIT OF ECONOMIC EXPANSION BUT WOULD ONLY CATER FOR THE INCREASING DEMAND IN THE EXISTING SUPPLY AREAS UP TO 1981.

MR. MCDONALD SAID THAT THE PROBLEM OF MEETING DEMAND BEYOND 1981 COULD BEST BE SOLVED BY DRAWING WATER FROM THE HIGH ISLAND SCHEME AND PROCESSING IT AT A NEW TREATMENT WORKS IN THE SAI KUNG TOWN AREA.

HE POINTED OUT THAT INITIAL PLANNING FOR THIS LONGER TERM SOLUTION HAD BEEN COMPLETED AND A PAPER REQUESTING INCLUSION IN CATEGORY B OF THE PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME WOULD BE SUBMITTED TO THE PUBLIC WORKS SUB-COMMITTEE AT THE FIRST REVIEW OF 1979.

+IF AGREED THE INTENTION IS TO UPGRADE THE ITEM TO CATEGORY A AT THE SECOND REVIEW AND SUBJECT TO THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS, TO AIM FOR COMPLETION OF THE WORKS BY LATE 1981 OR EARLY 1982,+ HE SAID.

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 9, 1979

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GAS LEAKAGE -- FULL INVESTIGATION CARRIED OUT

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A FULL INVESTIGATION HAS BEEN MADE INTO THE LEAKAGE OF GAS WHICH AFFECTED THREE SCHOOLS IN TSUEN WAN, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. ANDREW SO, MR. JONES SAID THE FIRST INCIDENT WAS CAUSED WHEN SOME DRUMS CONTAINING RESIDUAL AMOUNTS OF CHEMICAL, ETHYL ACRYLATE, WERE CRUSHED DURING PROCESSING AT A SCRAP METAL YARD NEAR ONE OF THE SCHOOLS.

+THE GOVERNMENT CHEMIST ESTABLISHED THAT NO MORE THAN ABOUT 14 LITRES OF THE LIQUID WERE RELEASED, SOME OF WHICH THEN EVAPORATED INTO THE ATMOSPHERE AND WAS EVENTUALLY DISPERSED- BUT NOT BEFORE IT HAD GIVEN RISE TO THE ILL-EFFECTS AT THE SCHOOL,+ MR. JONES SAID.

FOLLOWING IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM, MR. JONES SAID, THE DRUMS WERE CLEANED THOROUGHLY WITH DETERGENT AND SAND BEFORE BEING BURIED.

THE SECOND INCIDENT WAS INVESTIGATED BY THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND IT WAS SO SIMILAR TO THE PREVIOUS ONE THAT +IT MAY ALSO HAVE BEEN DUE TO ETHYL ACRYLATE, WHICH IS QUITE WIDELY USED IN THE PLASTICS INDUSTRY.+

THE THIRD INCIDENT WAS, IN FACT, A SECOND COMPLAINT FROM THE FIRST SCHOOL AFFECTED AND NOTHING FURTHER WAS FOUND AFTER A FULL INVESTIGATION,+ MR. JONES ADDED.

MR. JONES TOLD THE COUNCIL THAT TO AVOID INCIDENTS OF THIS OR A MORE SERIOUS NATURE IN FUTURE,+ IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO TIGHTEN-UP ON THE PROVISIONS FOR THE DISPOSAL OF CHEMICALS LIKE ETHYL ACRYLATE AND TOXIC WASTES OF ALL KIND.

+IT IS WITH THIS NEED IN MIND THAT I AM PREPARING A NEW BILL, THE WASTE DISPOSAL BILL, WHICH I HOPE TO INTRODUCE TO THIS COUNCIL BEFORE LONG,+ MR. JONES SAID.

THIS NEW BILL, HE STRESSED, WILL PROVIDE, AMONG OTHER THINGS, FOR REGULATIONS TO BE MADE CONCERNING THE NOTIFICATION AND SAFE DISPOSAL OF TOXIC AND DIFFICULT WASTES, AND IT WILL BRING HONG KONG'S SAFETY MEASURES IN THIS AREA INTO LINE WITH THOSE IN ADVANCED INDUSTRIALISED COUNTRIES.

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

THEY WERE THE OIL (CONSERVATION AND CONTROL) BILL 1979, ESTATE DUTY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979, INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) (NO. 4) BILL 1979, MOTOR VEHICLES (FIRST REGISTRATION TAX) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979, ROAD TRAFFIC (REGISTRATION AND LICENSING OF VEHICLES) REGULATIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979, CRIMES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979, DETERMINATION OF AGE (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL 1979 AND EDUCATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979.

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SHORT TERM TENANCY TENDERS FOR TWO TUEN MUN SITES
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THE GOVERNMENT IS INVITING TENDERS FOR A TWO-YEAR TENANCY OF TWO SITES IN THE FAST GROWING INDUSTRIAL AREA OF TUEN MUN NEW TOWN TO PROVIDE TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION FOR VEHICLE REPAIR WORKSHOP OPERATORS WISHING TO START THEIR BUSINESS IN THE DISTRICT.

THE SITES FRONTING KIN TAI STREET AND PUI WING LANE ON TWO SIDES ARE ADJACENT LOTS OF 550 AND 570 SQUARE METRES RESPECTIVELY.

THE TENANCY CONDITIONS STIPULATE THAT STRUCTURES ERECTED SHOULD NOT EXCEED 4.5 METRES IN HEIGHT.

THE SENIOR ESTATE SURVEYOR OF THE TUEN MUN DISTRICT OFFICE, MR. VICTOR LEUNG SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) TUEN MUN HAD ALREADY ESTABLISHED ITSELF AS AN INDUSTRIAL TOWNSHIP IN THE NEW TERRITORIES WITH FACTORIES OF VARIOUS TYPES MUSHROOMING IN ITS VAST INDUSTRIAL AREA.

+HOWEVER, + HE SAID, +THE INDUSTRIAL BOOM HAS BROUGHT ABOUT A GREATER NEED FOR VEHICLE REPAIR SERVICES WHICH ARE ESSENTIAL FOR THE LOCAL INDUSTRY'S VEHICULAR FLEET.+

BY MAKING THE SITES AVAILABLE, HE SAID, IT WAS HOPED THAT THE BRISK DEMAND FOR CAR REPAIR WORKSHOP SPACE IN THE NEW TOWN COULD BE EASED.

MR. LEUNG SAID TENDERS FOR THE SHORT TERM TENANCY OF THE TWO SITES WILL CLOSE ON MAY 17.

APPLICATIONS SHOULD BE PLACED IN THE TENDER BOX IN THE RECEPTION LOBBY OF THE NTA HEADQUARTERS ON THE FIFTH FLOOR OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY HEADQUARTERS BUILDING, PRINCESS MARGARET ROAD, KOWLOON, BEFORE NOON ON THAT DAY.

TENDER FORMS, TENDER NOTICES AND AGREEMENTS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM, AND TENDER PLANS INSPECTED AT THE NTA HEADQUARTERS OR ANY OF ITS SEVEN DISTRICT OFFICES.

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 9, 1979

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CASH RELIEF FOR FAMILY OF VICTIM KILLED IN TRAFFIC ACCIDENT
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THE FAMILY OF A 17-YEAR-OLD FACTORY WORKER, WHO WAS KILLED IN A TRAFFIC ACCIDENT IN SHAM SHUI PO LAST THURSDAY, WAS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) GIVEN \$10,300 UNDER THE GOVERNMENT'S +NO-FAULT+ TRAFFIC ACCIDENT VICTIMS ASSISTANCE SCHEME.

THE FATHER OF THE MALE WORKER THIS AFTERNOON COLLECTED THE PAYMENT FROM THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT WHICH ADMINISTERS THE SCHEME.

THE PAYMENT COMPRISES \$1,100 AS BURIAL GRANT, \$6,800 AS DEATH GRANT AND \$2,400 TO HELP COMPENSATE LOSS OF INCOME.

MRS. DIANA LEE, HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT'S TRAFFIC ACCIDENT VICTIMS ASSISTANCE (TAVA) SECTION, SAID TODAY'S PAYMENT WAS THE SECOND MADE UNDER THE SCHEME SINCE ITS IMPLEMENTATION ON MAY 1.

SHE SAID THAT LAST FRIDAY THE FIRST BENEFICIARY OF THE SCHEME, A 13-YEAR-OLD SCHOOLGIRL, WAS GIVEN AN INJURY GRANT OF \$1,100.

MRS. LEE SAID THE DECEASED WORKER WAS ONE OF THE WAGE EARNERS IN A FAMILY OF SIX. HIS FATHER IS ALSO SUPPORTING THE FAMILY, SHE ADDED.

+THE ACCIDENT HAPPENED ON MAY 3 AND THE FATHER APPLIED FOR ASSISTANCE UNDER THE SCHEME THE FOLLOWING DAY,+ SHE SAID.

MRS. LEE SAID THAT AT PRESENT 18 OTHER APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE TAVA SECTION WERE BEING PROCESSED AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

THE NON-MEANS TESTED SCHEME AIMS AT PROVIDING QUICK CASH RELIEF FOR TRAFFIC ACCIDENT VICTIMS OR THEIR DEPENDANTS REGARDLESS OF WHO WAS AT FAULT IN CAUSING THE ACCIDENT.

ENQUIRIES ABOUT THE SCHEME CAN BE MADE AT THE TAVA SECTION ON THE THIRD FLOOR OF THE FIRE BRIGADE BUILDING, 46 CONNAUGHT ROAD CENTRAL (TEL. NOS. 5-222392 AND 5-223254).

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TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE
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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT THE KOWLOON-BOUND CARRIAGEWAY OF CASTLE PEAK ROAD FROM ITS JUNCTION WITH THE ACCESS ROAD LEADING TO KADOORIE BEACH TO ABOUT 150 METRES SOUTHWARD, WHICH HAS BEEN CLOSED SINCE FEBRUARY 19, WILL BE FURTHER CLOSED TO VEHICULAR TRAFFIC UNTIL MAY 20 FOR ROAD AND DRAINS CONSTRUCTION WORKS.

DURING THE CLOSURE, THE NEW TERRITORIES-BOUND CARRIAGEWAY OF THIS SECTION OF CASTLE PEAK ROAD WILL BE OPENED TO TRAFFIC FROM BOTH DIRECTIONS ALTERNATIVELY. TRAFFIC FLOW WILL BE REGULATED BY SIGNALS.

TRAFFIC SIGNS WILL BE SET UP TO GUIDE MOTORISTS.

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