



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
IMPLICATIONS OF LEGAL IMMIGRANTS	1
INDUSTRIAL ACTION -- VERY LITTLE EFFECT ON GOVERNMENT SERVICES	2
MORE SMALL COINS DELIVERED	4
TRAFFIC ACCIDENT VICTIMS ASSISTANCE SCHEME	5
BILL ON DEPENDENT PARENT ALLOWANCE PASSED	7
OLD AGE ALLOWANCE APPLICATIONS	9
POLICY ON PUBLIC ASSISTANCE FOR ELDERLY LIVING IN INSTITUTIONS	10
SQUATTER FACTORY PAY-OUT INCREASED TO \$10 MILLION	10
STAMP DUTY ON SHARE TRANSFERS	12
NO SHORTAGE OF DISPENSERS	12
SICK LEAVE FOR CIVIL SERVANTS	13
CANTONESE COURSES FOR OVERSEAS ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS ...	14
SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS APPROVED	15
STANDARDISING TRAFFIC SIGNS	16
SHA TIN RACE DAY TRAFFIC	16
ACAN ENDORSES ANTI-DRUG PROPOSAL	17
OVERSEAS STUDY ADVICE	17
SAFETY IN CONSTRUCTION SITES	18

/EXTENSION

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1978

EXTENSION OF POSTAL DELIVERY IN VILLAGES	19
COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF N.T. LIBRARY SERVICES	20
PROPOSED COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND TRAINING ...	21
NO INTENTION TO PROMOTE HUNTING	21
SUPPLIER CREDITS FOR MTRC	22
PARTITION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978	23
BILLS PASSED	24
CAUSEWAY BAY STAGE II TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS	24

IMPLICATIONS OF LEGAL IMMIGRANTS

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THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON. JACK CATER SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY), THAT IF THE LEGAL IMMIGRATION FROM CHINA WERE TO CONTINUE AT THE RATE EXPERIENCED IN THE FIRST 10 MONTHS OF THIS YEAR, THERE WOULD BE AN INCREASE OF 400,000 PEOPLE ON TOP OF THE PRESENT MEDIUM POPULATION PROJECTION OF 5.2 MILLION BY 1986.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. LYDIA DUNN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR. CATER SAID THE ADDITIONAL INCREASE OF 400,000 IMMIGRANTS WAS NOT THAT FAR SHORT OF THE PRESENT POPULATION OF TSUEN WAN.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT IN THE FIRST 10 MONTHS OF THIS YEAR, A TOTAL OF 72,429 LEGAL IMMIGRANTS ENTERED HONG KONG, INCLUDING 50,249 FROM CHINA.

CORRESPONDING FIGURES FOR THE FIRST 10 MONTHS OF THE THREE PREVIOUS YEARS WERE: 1975 -- 39,142 (21,883 FROM CHINA) - 1976 -- 37,563 (16,716 FROM CHINA) - AND 1977 -- 42,718 (20,972 FROM CHINA).

MR. CATER SAID IT WAS TOO EARLY TO SAY WHETHER A NEW TREND IN LEGAL IMMIGRATION FROM CHINA WAS BEING ESTABLISHED, AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE INCREASE FOR HEALTH, EDUCATION AND HOUSING PROGRAMMES WERE DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE BECAUSE, +WE DO NOT KNOW THE AGE AND SEX DISTRIBUTION OF THIS HOPEFULLY HYPOTHETICAL INCREASE IN OUR POPULATION.+

HOWEVER, HE SAID, TO ALLOW ON THIS BASIS FOR AN INCREASE OF 400,000 IN POPULATION WOULD INVOLVE ABOUT 2,400 BEDS OR TWO HOSPITALS THE SIZE OF THE PRINCESS MARGARET HOSPITAL.

ON THE IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION PROGRAMME, HE SAID THEY OBVIOUSLY DEPENDED ON THE NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS OF SCHOOL AGE ON ARRIVAL HERE AND ON HOW QUICKLY THE IMMIGRANTS, AS A WHOLE, STARTED PRODUCING CHILDREN.

+OUR SURPLUS OF PRIMARY PLACES SHOULD THEORETICALLY ENABLE US TO MEET THE EXTRA DEMAND.+

AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL UP TO THE AGE OF 15, MR. CATER SAID THERE WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY BE A NEED FOR MORE PLACES AS A RESULT OF THE INCREASED IMMIGRATION.

ON IMPLICATIONS FOR HOUSING, MR. CATER SAID IF THE IMMIGRANTS HAVE THE TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HONG KONG POPULATION ON AGE AND FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS AND ON THE PROPORTION ELIGIBLE FOR PUBLIC HOUSING +WE ESTIMATE 60,000 ADDITIONAL FLATS WOULD BE NEEDED FOR THEM BY 1986+.

+ON THE BASIS OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY'S 1979/80 RATE OF 40,000 NEW FLATS A YEAR, THIS IS A FURTHER ONE-AND-A-HALF YEARS' PRODUCTION.+

/MR. CATER.....

MR. CATER ALSO NOTED THAT THE DAILY AVERAGE OF LEGAL IMMIGRANTS FROM CHINA IN SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER WAS 254 A DAY AND FOR NOVEMBER SO FAR 329 A DAY.

+IF THIS RATE CONTINUES, THEN, THE FIGURES I HAVE GIVEN EARLIER WILL BE EVEN HIGHER AND OF COURSE OUR SOCIAL SERVICES WILL BE UNDER EVEN GREATER PRESSURE,+ HE ADDED.

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INDUSTRIAL ACTION -- VERY LITTLE EFFECT ON GOVERNMENT SERVICES

RECENT INDUSTRIAL ACTION BY A SMALL MINORITY OF CIVIL SERVANTS -- APART FROM THE GO-SLOW BY SOME POSTAL OFFICERS IN LATE OCTOBER -- HAS HAD VERY LITTLE EFFECT ON GOVERNMENT'S SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC, THE SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, THE HON. MARTIN ROWLANDS TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR. ROWLANDS SAID THIS IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. PETER C. WONG.

+IN ONLY THREE DEPARTMENTS OTHER THAN THE POST OFFICE HAS INDUSTRIAL ACTION HAD ANY EFFECT AT ALL,+ HE SAID, ADDING THAT THESE WERE:

- * THE GO-SLOW SINCE OCTOBER 27, 1978, BY SOME 75 PER CENT OF POLICE INTERPRETERS HAS TAKEN THE FORM OF REFUSING TO CARRY OUT SOME OF THEIR DUTIES SUCH AS THE TRANSLATION OF CAUTION STATEMENTS=

+THIS HAS DELAYED SOME COURT CASES,+ MR. ROWLANDS ADDED.

- * THE REFUSAL OF SOME ASSISTANT SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICERS TO APPROVE OLD AGE ALLOWANCE APPLICATIONS FROM PEOPLE AGED 70-74 HAS CAUSED SOME DELAY=

MR. ROWLANDS SAID HE WAS GLAD TO NOTE THE ASSISTANT SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICERS HAVE NOW RESUMED NORMAL WORKING.

- * THE DENTAL TECHNICIANS HAVE BEEN TAKING INDUSTRIAL ACTION SINCE NOVEMBER 13, AND THEIR OUTPUT OF DENTAL APPLIANCES HAS BEEN REDUCED BY ABOUT 75 PER CENT. URGENT WORK IS BEING DONE INSTEAD BY PRIVATE LABORATORIES.

FOR THE RECORD, HE SAID, HE WOULD LIKE TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT, CONTRARY TO THE IMPRESSION GIVEN BY SOME OF THE NEWS MEDIA, +THE GOVERNMENT NURSES HAVE NOT SO FAR RESORTED TO INDUSTRIAL ACTION.+

+THEIR PROTESTS HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN THEIR OWN TIME AND HAVE NOT AFFECTED PATIENTS AT ALL. I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE NURSES WILL CONTINUE TO DISPLAY THEIR TRADITIONAL SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY IN THESE MATTERS, IN THE SURE KNOWLEDGE THAT THEY WILL HAVE AMPLE OPPORTUNITY OF MAKING REPRESENTATIONS TO THE NEW STANDING REVIEW BODY WHICH I ANNOUNCED IN THIS COUNCIL ON NOVEMBER 16,+ MR. ROWLANDS SAID.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1978

- 3 -

THE NEW STANDING REVIEW BODY WOULD BE ASKED TO EXAMINE THE CAREER AND SALARY STRUCTURE OF ALL STAFF IN ALL DEPARTMENTS THROUGHOUT THE CIVIL SERVICE.

THIS WAS HIS MESSAGE TO THOSE STAFF NOW TAKING INDUSTRIAL ACTION, AND TO ANY OTHERS WHO MAY BE CONTEMPLATING INDUSTRIAL ACTION.

+NO GROUP OF STAFF NEED HAVE ANY FEAR THAT THEIR CLAIMS WILL NOT BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED,+ MR. ROWLANDS ADDED.

GIVEN THE DECISION TO APPOINT A STANDING REVIEW BODY, HE SAID HE DID NOT BELIEVE INDUSTRIAL ACTION OR THE THREAT OF IT WOULD WIN PUBLIC SYMPATHY FOR THE STAFF CONCERNED.

+NOR WILL SUCH ACTION SUCCEED IN INFLUENCING THE STANDING REVIEW BODY OR THE GOVERNMENT,+ HE ADDED.

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MORE SMALL COINS DELIVERED

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THE GOVERNMENT THIS YEAR HAD ORDERED 105 MILLION 20-CENT COINS AND 70 MILLION 10-CENT COINS, AND ABOUT HALF OF THESE HAD BEEN DELIVERED, THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WAS TOLD TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. LI FOOK-WO, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE SAID 54.5 MILLION 20-CENT COINS AND 33.3 MILLION 10-CENT COINS HAD BEEN DELIVERED.

+ALL THE COINS DELIVERED MAY NOT HAVE YET BEEN ISSUED AS 15.7 MILLION 10-CENT COINS AND 18.4 MILLION 20-CENT COINS ONLY ARRIVED IN THE LAST FEW DAYS,+ HE ADDED.

ANOTHER 20.5 MILLION 20-CENT COINS AND 16.2 MILLION 10-CENT COINS ARE EXPECTED DURING DECEMBER, AND 30 MILLION 20-CENT COINS AND 30 MILLION 10-CENT COINS EARLY IN THE NEW YEAR.

WHEN THE 1978 ORDERS HAD BEEN DELIVERED AND ISSUED, MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID, THERE WOULD BE 540 MILLION 10-CENT COINS AND 256 MILLION 20-CENT COINS IN CIRCULATION AND HE HOPED THAT, AS THE COINS ON ORDER WERE ISSUED, THE HOARDS OF SMALL COINS WOULD RUN DOWN.

MR. HADDON-CAVE BELIEVED THAT MANY PEOPLE TEND TO EMPTY THEIR POCKETS IN THE EVENINGS AND THROW THEIR SMALL COINS INTO A DRAWER AND LEAVE THEM THERE.

+IN ADDITION, TEMPORARY SHORTAGES IN SOME SMALL BUSINESS OPERATIONS HAVE BEEN PLAYED UP BY THE NEWS MEDIA TO A POINT WHICH HAS INDUCED SOME PEOPLE AND COMMERCIAL CONCERNS DELIBERATELY TO BUILD UP HOARDS OF COINS,+ HE SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT ONE REASON FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF 20-CENT COINS IN AUGUST 1975 WAS TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF 10-CENT COINS NEEDED IN TRANSACTIONS INVOLVING 10 CENT MULTIPLES, AND BY THAT TIME THERE WERE 460 MILLION 10-CENT COINS OUTSTANDING.

+WHEN THIS YEAR'S 10 AND 20-CENT COIN ORDERS HAVE BEEN DELIVERED, THERE WILL BE, IN 10 CENT UNIT TERMS, 1,052 MILLION UNITS AVAILABLE, AN INCREASE OVER AUGUST 1975 OF 129 PER CENT,+ HE SAID. +AN INCREASE OF THIS ORDER IS UNUSUALLY LARGE BY ANY STANDARDS.+

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1978

- 5 -

TRAFFIC ACCIDENT VICTIMS ASSISTANCE SCHEME
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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY APPROVED THE SETTING UP OF THE TRAFFIC ACCIDENT VICTIMS ASSISTANCE SCHEME TO PROVIDE IMMEDIATE FINANCIAL HELP TO ALL TRAFFIC ACCIDENT VICTIMS, OR THEIR DEPENDENTS.

AT THE SAME TIME A BILL SEEKING TO ESTABLISH A FUND FROM WHICH MONEY CAN BE PAID TO TRAFFIC ACCIDENT VICTIMS UNDER THE SCHEME AND TO IMPOSE LEVIES ON VEHICLES AND DRIVING LICENCES FOR THE PURPOSE OF FINANCING THE FUND WAS ALSO INTRODUCED INTO THE COUNCIL FOR FIRST AND SECOND READINGS.

THE LEVIES WILL INITIALLY BE \$25 PER ANNUM ON A DRIVING LICENCE AND \$75 PER ANNUM ON A VEHICLE LICENCE.

INTRODUCING THE PROPOSAL INTO THE COUNCIL, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES, SAID PAYMENTS UNDER THE SCHEME WOULD BE MADE REGARDLESS OF WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACCIDENT.

+THE ONLY LIMITATIONS ARE THAT THE ACCIDENT MUST HAVE BEEN REPORTED TO THE POLICE, THAT THE INJURIES SUSTAINED ARE SUFFICIENTLY GRAVE TO CAUSE LOSS OF 'AT LEAST SEVEN DAYS' EARNING CAPACITY AND THAT THE CLAIM SHOULD BE MADE WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF THE ACCIDENT. THESE ARE OBVIOUS PRECAUTIONS AGAINST FRAUDULENT OR TRIVIAL CLAIMS,+ MR. JONES SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THE SCHEME WOULD BE ADMINISTERED BY THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, AND CONSIDERATION WAS ALSO BEING GIVEN TO THE SETTING UP OF AN ADVISORY BOARD TO ASSIST HIM IN DISCHARGING THIS FUNCTION.

+THOSE WHO WISH TO CLAIM UNDER THE SCHEME WILL BE REQUIRED TO MAKE AN APPLICATION, BUT THE POLICE OFFICER INVESTIGATING A TRAFFIC ACCIDENT WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING THAT THOSE ELIGIBLE ARE INFORMED ABOUT THE SCHEME.

+PROCEDURES ARE PROVIDED FOR SUCH THINGS AS CHECKING MEDICAL EVIDENCE OF INJURY AND PROVIDING DISSATISFIED APPLICANTS WITH A MEANS OF APPEAL,+ MR. JONES SAID.

+ARRANGEMENTS WILL ALSO BE MADE TO ENSURE THAT THOSE BENEFICIARIES WHO SUBSEQUENTLY RECEIVE DAMAGES OR OTHER COMPENSATION IN RESPECT OF THE SAME ACCIDENT ARE REQUIRED TO MAKE REPAYMENTS TO THE FUND,+ HE ADDED.

MR. JONES SAID THAT ONCE THE FUND IS ESTABLISHED IT WAS HOPED THAT PAYMENTS FROM IT COULD START TO BE MADE TO VICTIMS OF TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS OCCURRING ON OR AFTER MAY 1 NEXT YEAR.

HE ADDED THAT HE HOPED THE SCHEME WOULD BE WELCOMED BY THE PUBLIC AT LARGE BECAUSE IT WAS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE A MODEST, BUT EARLY RELIEF TO EASE THE FINANCIAL POSITION OF VICTIMS OF TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS.

/CONCERNING.....

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1978

- 6 -

CONCERNING LEVY ON VEHICLES, MR. JONES SAID IT WAS INTENDED THAT DRIVING LICENCES SHOULD MAKE UP TWO-THIRDS OF THE TOTAL INCOME OF THE TRAFFIC ACCIDENT VICTIMS ASSISTANCE FUND AND THAT THE REMAINING ONE-THIRD WOULD BE A CONTRIBUTION FROM GENERAL REVENUE.

+THE INTENTION BEHIND THIS DIVISION IS THAT THE MOTORIST, WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MAJORITY OF TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS, SHOULD MAKE AN IDENTIFIABLE CONTRIBUTION,+ HE SAID.

+THE CONTRIBUTION FROM GENERAL REVENUE, HOWEVER, RECOGNISES THAT THE SCHEME IS A SOCIAL WELFARE MEASURE FOR WHICH THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE SHOULD HELP TO PAY AND ALSO THAT PEDESTRIAN CARELESSNESS CAUSES, VERY ROUGHLY, ONE-THIRD OF ALL ROAD ACCIDENTS,+ HE ADDED.

FINALLY, MR. JONES POINTED OUT THAT THE POSSIBILITY OF SETTING UP A MOTOR INSURERS BUREAU WAS A SEPARATE MATTER ON WHICH NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE ACCIDENT INSURERS' ASSOCIATION WERE CURRENTLY BEING UNDERTAKEN.

HE SAID THE MOTOR INSURERS BUREAU WAS IN CONTRAST WITH THE PRESENT TRAFFIC ACCIDENT VICTIMS ASSISTANCE SCHEME IN THAT THE FORMER AIMED TO ENSURE THAT AN ACCIDENT VICTIM, WHOSE INJURIES AROSE FROM A DRIVER'S NEGLIGENCE, MIGHT RECEIVE FULL COMPENSATION FROM INSURANCE COMPANIES IN CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE, AT PRESENT, ANOMALIES IN THE INSURANCE SYSTEM PREVENTED HIM FROM SO DOING.

DEBATE ON THE TRAFFIC ACCIDENT VICTIMS (ASSISTANCE FUND) BILL 1978 WAS ADJOURNED.

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BILL TO ENABLE RE-INTRODUCING DEPENDENT
PARENT ALLOWANCE PASSED

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THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) (NO. 5) BILL 1978 WHICH SEEKS TO ENABLE THE GOVERNMENT TO RE-INTRODUCE THE DEPENDENT PARENT ALLOWANCE WAS PASSED INTO LAW IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

AT THE RESUMED DEBATE OF THE BILL, TWO UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS, DR. THE HON. HARRY FANG AND THE HON. WONG LAM SPOKE IN SUPPORT OF RE-INTRODUCING THE ALLOWANCE.

BUT DR. FANG SAID IT WAS TOO HARSH TO REQUIRE A PERSON TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR A DISABILITY ALLOWANCE, IF HE WAS BELOW 60, IN ORDER TO QUALIFY FOR THE DEPENDENT PARENT ALLOWANCE AND THE CRITERION FOR DISABILITY ALLOWANCE WAS VERY TIGHTLY DRAWN AND INFLEXIBLE.

TO QUALIFY, THE DISABILITY MUST BE EQUIVALENT TO 100 PER CENT LOSS OF EARNING CAPACITY AS ASSESSED UNDER THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ORDINANCE.

+THIS CRITERION SEEMS TO ME TOO HARSH FOR THE PRESENT PURPOSE SINCE 100 PER CENT DISABILITY IS NOT NECESSARY FOR THERE TO BE A SUBSTANTIAL DEGREE OF FINANCIAL AND MATERIAL DEPENDENT ON SUPPORTING CHILDREN.

+SOME FORMS OF DISABILITY, PARTICULARLY IF PERMANENT, COULD BE A SUBSTANTIAL DRAIN ON FAMILY RESOURCES EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE NOT EQUIVALENT TO A 100 PER CENT LOSS OF EARNING CAPACITY,+ HE SAID.

DR. FANG AGREED WITH THE OTHER QUALIFICATIONS STIPULATED FOR THE ALLOWANCE AND THOUGHT ITS AMOUNT WAS ABOUT RIGHT. ALTHOUGH ON THE FACE OF IT \$4,000 MIGHT SEEM GENEROUS, THE ACTUAL MAXIMUM BENEFIT WOULD WORK OUT AT \$100 A MONTH, HE SAID.

THE HON. WONG LAM ALSO SPOKE IN SUPPORT OF THE RE-INTRODUCTION OF THE ALLOWANCE.

HE SAID THERE WAS A SAYING IN CHINESE THAT CHILDREN WERE BROUGHT UP AS A SAFEGUARD AGAINST THE INSECURITY OF OLD AGE AS GRAIN WAS STORED UP AS A PRECAUTION AGAINST FAMINE.

CHILDREN, HE SAID, WERE DUTY BOUND TO PRACTISE FILIAL PIETY AND SUPPORT THEIR PARENTS AND THOSE DEPRIVED OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO SO OFTEN HAVE MUCH TO REGRET.

+BY RE-INTRODUCING THE ALLOWANCE, THE GOVERNMENT WILL IN EFFECT RENDER GREAT ASSISTANCE TO THOSE WHO DESIRE TO SERVE THEIR PARENTS AND AT THE SAME TIME FURNISH A GOOD EXAMPLE OF ITS RESPECT FOR CHINESE TRADITION AND PUBLIC OPINION.+

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THE ALLOWANCE WAS ALSO IN LINE WITH GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS TO PROMOTE THE WELFARE OF OLD PEOPLE AS IT WOULD INDIRECTLY ENCOURAGE MORE PEOPLE TO LIVE WITH THEIR PARENTS, HE ADDED.

MR. WONG AGREED WITH THE AMOUNT OF THE ALLOWANCE WHICH, HE SAID, WAS NOT HIGH COMPARED WITH THE SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS OF OTHER COUNTRIES.

HE THOUGHT THE AGE LIMIT SHOULD BE 55 BECAUSE MANY PEOPLE, AND NOT ONLY CIVIL SERVANTS, RETIRED AT THIS AGE.

AS IT WAS A MATTER OF OPINION WHICH AGE WAS THE MOST APPROPRIATE, HE HAD NO OBJECTION TO THE GOVERNMENT SETTING IT AT 60.

IN REPLY, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE SAID THAT TO TAKE THE CONCESSION FOR THE DEPENDENT PARENT ALLOWANCE ANY FURTHER WOULD OPEN IT UP, ON THE ONE HAND, TO ABUSE AND, ON THE OTHER, TO UNCERTAINTY AS TO WHO IS OR IS NOT DISABLED.

HE SAID: +TO EXTEND THAT CONCESSION TO PARENTS WHO ARE PARTIALLY, BUT NOT SEVERLY, DISABLED WITHOUT RESORT TO A MEANS TEST WOULD BE TO GO TOO FAR - AND TO INTRODUCE A MEANS TEST FOR THE PARTIALLY DISABLED WOULD BE TO BREACH THE UNDERLYING CONCEPT OF THE ALLOWANCE.+

BESIDES THE INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT WOULD BE OBLIGED TO +INITIATE INQUISITIONS INTO FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES AND, AT THE END OF THE DAY, THERE WOULD BE PLACED ON THE COMMISSIONER THE INTOLERABLE BURDEN OF DECIDING WHAT IS, OR IS NOT, DISABLEMENT.+

HE SAID THE PROPER COURSE WOULD BE TO RELATE THIS ALLOWANCE TO ALREADY ESTABLISHED AND READILY IDENTIFIABLE CRITERIA. HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE 100 PER CENT LOSS OF EARNING CAPACITY WAS NOT THE ONLY QUALIFICATION FOR DISABILITY ALLOWANCE.

+THUS THE CRITERION IS SEVERE, NOT TOTAL DISABLEMENT - AND IT IS THAT CRITERION WHICH HAS BEEN IMPORTED INTO THE BILL FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE DEPENDENT PARENT ALLOWANCE.+

+FURTHERMORE,+ MR. HADDON-CAVE POINTED OUT,+ IN VIEW OF THE SIMPLICITY OF OUR TAX SYSTEM, THE LIMITATION OF THE CHARGE, AND THE LOW EFFECTIVE TAX RATES, WE CANNOT AFFORD ANY SCHEME OF CONCESSION WHICH WOULD BE COMPLICATED AND ADMINISTRATIVELY EXPENSIVE TO OPERATE.

+FOR IT IS IMPERATIVE TO RECOGNISE THAT IN TAX MATTERS, THERE IS NO EQUITY IN THAT WHICH IS NOT REASONABLY CAPABLE OF BEING PUT INTO PRACTICAL OPERATION,+ HE SAID.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1978

- 9 -

OLD AGE ALLOWANCE APPLICATIONS

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THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, THE HON. THOMAS LEE, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) HIS DEPARTMENT HAD MADE ARRANGEMENTS, INCLUDING WORKING OVERTIME BY SOME OF THE STAFF, TO CLEAR THE BACKLOG OF APPLICATIONS FOR OLD AGE ALLOWANCES.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR. LEE SAID THE BACKLOG WAS DUE TO THE INITIAL INFLUX OF NEW APPLICATIONS SINCE THE LOWERING OF THE QUALIFYING AGE FOR OLD AGE ALLOWANCES FROM 75 TO 70 YEARS ON OCTOBER 1.

HE SAID SOME OF THE STAFF HAD STARTED WORKING OVERTIME, ALL NEW WELFARE ASSISTANTS WERE ASSIGNED TO PROCESS THESE APPLICATIONS EXCLUSIVELY, AND ANOTHER RECRUITMENT EXERCISE WAS BEING CARRIED OUT TO PROVIDE THE ADDITIONAL MANPOWER REQUIRED.

+IT IS HOPED THAT THE PRESENT OUTSTANDING CASES WOULD BE DEALT WITH IN ABOUT 10 TO 12 WEEKS,+ HE SAID.

SINCE OCTOBER 1, MR. LEE SAID ABOUT 54,000 PEOPLE HAD APPLIED FOR OLD AGE ALLOWANCES, AND SO FAR 14,000 APPLICATIONS HAD BEEN INVESTIGATED.

OF THESE 14,000, HE SAID, ABOUT 8,000 CASES HAVE BEEN ASSESSED REGARDING THEIR ELIGIBILITY AND ENTITLEMENT, AND ABOUT 7,000 PAYMENTS HAVE BEEN AUTHORISED.

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POLICY ON PUBLIC ASSISTANCE FOR ELDERLY LIVING IN INSTITUTIONS

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THE REQUIREMENTS OF AN OLD PERSON LIVING IN AN INSTITUTION WHO IS ON PUBLIC ASSISTANCE ARE FULLY COVERED BY PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND OLD AGE ALLOWANCES, THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, THE HON. THOMAS LEE, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE REV. THE HON. JOYCE BENNETT, MR. LEE SAID THE MAXIMUM MONTHLY AMOUNT WHICH AN OLD PERSON IN NEED MIGHT GET THROUGH SOCIAL SECURITY WAS ABOUT \$384.

+THIS AMOUNT COMPRISES, SUBJECT TO ELIGIBILITY, PUBLIC ASSISTANCE OF UP TO \$200 A MONTH, AN OLD AGE ALLOWANCE OR AN OLD AGE SUPPLEMENT OF \$100 A MONTH, A LONG-TERM SUPPLEMENT OF \$250 A YEAR, AND WHERE APPROPRIATE, A RENT ALLOWANCE OF UP TO \$63 A MONTH,+ HE SAID.

WHERE AN OLD PEOPLE'S HOME CHARGED A FEE UP TO \$200 A MONTH, HE SAID, THIS WOULD BE PAID FOR THROUGH PUBLIC ASSISTANCE IN THE INDIVIDUAL CASES WHERE THE NEED FOR ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED.

+IN A HOSTEL FOR THE ELDERLY, AN OLD PERSON MAY BE ASKED TO CONTRIBUTE \$63 AS RENT WHICH CAN AGAIN BE MET BY THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RENT ALLOWANCE,+ HE SAID.

ON THE PROBLEMS MENTIONED BY MISS BENNETT OF VOLUNTARY BODIES FINANCING THEIR OLD PEOPLE'S HOMES, MR. LEE SAID THERE MIGHT BE INDIVIDUAL PROBLEMS ARISING FROM TIME TO TIME.

HOWEVER, HE SAID HE WAS NOT AWARE OF ANY GENERAL PROBLEMS OF FINANCING THAT WERE NOT COVERED BY FEES, GOVERNMENT SUBVENTION AND THE AGENCIES' OTHER RESOURCES INCLUDING COMMUNITY CHEST ALLOCATIONS.

+WHAT IS NEEDED IS A RECONCILIATION OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFIT AVAILABLE TO THE ELDERLY, THE FEES WHICH VOLUNTARY AGENCIES SHOULD CHARGE AND THE AMOUNT OF SUBVENTION PAYABLE BY GOVERNMENT TOWARDS THE PROVISION OF SERVICES BY THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES.

+GUIDELINES ON THESE RELATED MATTERS ARE NOW BEING FORMULATED AND I SHALL SHORTLY BE CONSULTING THE SOCIAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR ITS VIEWS,+ HE SAID.

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SQUATTER FACTORY PAY-OUT INCREASED TO \$10 MILLION

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS INCREASED TO NEARLY \$10 MILLION THE AMOUNT OF ALLOWANCES IT IS PREPARED TO PAY THE OWNERS AND OPERATORS OF 22 TSUEN WAN NORTH SQUATTER FACTORIES WHO ARE REQUIRED TO VACATE LAND TO BE USED FOR DEVELOPMENT.

THIS FOLLOWS A DECISION TO INCREASE FURTHER, BY AN ARBITRARY 10 PER CENT, EX-GRATIA ALLOWANCES PAYABLE TO OWNERS AND OPERATORS OF SQUATTER FACTORIES WHICH CANNOT BE RELOCATED IN HOUSING AUTHORITY FLATTED FACTORIES BECAUSE OF THEIR TRADE OR SIZE.

THE DECISION MEANS THAT THE OWNERS AND OPERATORS OF SUCH INADMISSIBLE FACTORIES INCLUDED IN THE 1976 SQUATTER CONTROL SURVEY WILL NOW RECEIVE \$7,000 FOR COVERED WORKSHOPS OCCUPYING AN AREA OF BETWEEN 50 AND 200 SQUARE FEET, PLUS \$38 FOR EACH ADDITIONAL SQUARE FOOT INSTEAD OF \$34. THE EX-GRATIA ALLOWANCE FOR OPEN WORKING AREAS REMAINS UNCHANGED AT \$7 A SQUARE FOOT UP TO A MAXIMUM OF \$50,000.

ANNOUNCING THE INCREASE TODAY (WEDNESDAY), A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THE NEW RATE WAS AIMED AT FURTHER EASING PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH CLEARANCES BROUGHT ABOUT BY PUBLIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.

HE SAID THE 22 LARGE SQUATTER FACTORIES IN TSUEN WAN NORTH FACING CLEARANCE TO MAKE WAY FOR THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH TSUEN WAN AND FOR THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY WOULD BE THE FIRST TO BENEFIT FROM THE INCREASE, WHICH WAS THE SECOND IN THREE MONTHS.

IN AUGUST LAST, FOLLOWING REPRESENTATIONS BY THE OWNERS AND OPERATORS OF THE 22 FACTORIES, THE RATE FOR EACH SQUARE FOOT OF COVERED WORKSHOP OVER 200 SQUARE FEET WAS INCREASED BY 70 PER CENT FROM \$20 TO \$34 AND THE \$100,000 CEILING ABOLISHED TO HELP THEM RELOCATE OR MEET SEVERANCE PAY COMMITMENTS IF THEY CLOSED.

+THESE FACTORIES GAIN HANDSOMELY FROM THE TWO INCREASES,+ THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

+UNDER THE OLD \$20-A-SQUARE-FOOT RATE, AND THE \$100,000 CEILING THEY WERE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE ONLY ABOUT \$2 MILLION IN EX-GRATIA ALLOWANCES. NOW THEY STAND TO GET ABOUT \$7.3 MILLION MORE.+

THE SPOKESMAN DESCRIBED THE GOVERNMENT DECISION TO MAKE A FURTHER INCREASE TO THE ALLOWANCES AS GENEROUS. THE FACTORIES HAD BEEN OPERATING ON CROWN OR AGRICULTURAL LAND WITH MINIMUM OVERHEADS FOR MANY YEARS.

THE SPOKESMAN RULED OUT ANY POSSIBILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT ALLOWING THE OWNERS AND OPERATORS OF THE 22 FACTORIES TO RELOCATE THEMSELVES IN OTHER PARTS OF THE NEW TERRITORIES.

+MOST OF THE FACTORIES ARE ENGAGED IN DYEING AND BLEACHING, TANNING, ENAMEL-WARE AND SIMILAR TRADES, AND SUCH A MOVE WOULD ONLY AGGRAVATE SERIOUS POLLUTION PROBLEMS CONFRONTING RURAL AREAS,+ HE SAID.

+BECAUSE OF THIS VERY REAL HAZARD, THE OWNERS AND OPERATORS HAVE THE CHOICE OF ACCEPTING THE GREATLY INCREASED ALLOWANCES AND EITHER RELOCATING THEMSELVES IN THE URBAN AREA= TAKING UP A SUBSTANTIALLY LESS-POLLUTING TRADE= OR CLOSING DOWN.

+IF THEY CHOOSE TO CLOSE DOWN, THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT WILL HELP WORKERS WHO LOSE THEIR JOBS TO FIND ALTERNATIVE EMPLOYMENT IN THE MANY TRADES FACING A MANPOWER SHORTAGE, ESPECIALLY IN TSUEN WAN,+ HE SAID.

STAMP DUTY ON SHARE TRANSFERS

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THE ACTING COLLECTOR OF STAMP REVENUE, MR. V.A. LADD, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) REMINDED COMPANY SECRETARIES AND REGISTERING OFFICERS NOT TO REGISTER ANY TRANSFERS OF SHARES OR MARKETABLE SECURITIES UNLESS THEY ARE DULY STAMPED.

A NOTICE TO THIS EFFECT HAS BEEN SENT OUT TO COMPANY SECRETARIES AND REGISTERING OFFICERS.

UNDER THE STAMP ORDINANCE, TRANSFERS OF SHARES OR MARKETABLE SECURITIES ARE NOT TO BE REGARDED AS DULY STAMPED UNLESS THEY BEAR THE NECESSARY ENDORSEMENTS.

THEY HAD TO BE:

* ENDORSED BY THE COLLECTOR OF STAMP REVENUE TO THE EFFECT EITHER THAT AD VALOREM DUTY HAS BEEN PAID THEREON OR THAT NO AD VALOREM DUTY IS PAYABLE THEREON- OR

* ENDORSED BY THE COLLECTOR OR SOMEONE AUTHORISED BY HIM TO THE EFFECT THAT AD VALOREM DUTY HAS BEEN PAID ON BOTH A SOLD CONTRACT NOTE AND A BOUGHT CONTRACT NOTE, THAT IS, TWO ENDORSEMENTS ARE REQUIRED, EACH FOR THE SELLER AND THE BUYER.

AT PRESENT THE COLLECTOR HAS AUTHORISED ONLY FOUR GROUPS OF PEOPLE TO MAKE THESE ENDORSEMENTS -- MEMBERS OF THE HONG KONG STOCK EXCHANGE LIMITED, THE FAR EAST EXCHANGE LIMITED, THE KAM NGAN STOCK EXCHANGE LIMITED AND THE KOWLOON STOCK EXCHANGE LIMITED.

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NO SHORTAGE OF DISPENSERS

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THE DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES, DR. THE HON. K.L. THONG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THE GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNMENT SUBSIDISED HOSPITALS HAVE NOT EXPERIENCED A SHORTAGE OF DISPENSERS.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. LEUNG TAT-SHING, DR. THONG SAID THE ESTABLISHMENTS FOR THE DISPENSER GRADE ARE UP TO FULL STRENGTH IN THESE HOSPITALS.

+THERE ARE CURRENTLY 15 VACANCIES IN THE DISPENSER GRADE IN THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE, AND THESE ARE IN THE PROCESS OF BEING FILLED FOLLOWING A RECENT RECRUITMENT EXERCISE WHICH WILL BE COMPLETED BY THE END OF THE YEAR,+ DR. THONG POINTED OUT.

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1978

- 13 -

SICK LEAVE FOR CIVIL SERVANTS

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THE SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, THE HON. MARTIN ROWLANDS, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THE GOVERNMENT WOULD REVIEW THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS IN REGARD TO THE GRANTING OF ADDITIONAL SICK LEAVE TO CIVIL SERVANTS SUFFERING FROM TUBERCULOSIS AND LEPROSY.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM DR. THE HON. HARRY FANG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR. ROWLANDS SAID THE CIVIL SERVICE REGULATIONS WHICH SINGLE OUT TUBERCULOSIS AND LEPROSY FOR THE GRANTING OF FURTHER SICK LEAVE ON FULL AND HALF PAY DATED BACK TO 1956 AND 1965 RESPECTIVELY.

MR. ROWLANDS POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT THE ARGUMENTS FOR RESTRICTING SUCH LEAVE +APPEAR NOW TO LACK A CERTAIN LOGIC.+ HE SAID HE WOULD BE HAPPY TO REVIEW THE WHOLE QUESTION.

MR. ROWLANDS ADDED THAT HE WOULD BEAR IN MIND DR. FANG'S SUGGESTIONS THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT OTHER CHRONIC DISEASES WHICH ALSO REQUIRE LONG PERIOD OF CONVALESCENCE.

+ONE THOUGHT WHICH OCCURS TO ME IS THAT RATHER THAN ATTEMPT TO SPECIFY PARTICULAR DISEASES WE SHOULD BE GUIDED MORE BY THE OPINION OF A MEDICAL BOARD AS TO WHETHER THE OFFICER IS LIKELY TO RETURN EVENTUALLY TO WORK,+ HE SAID.

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/14

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1978

- 14 -

CANTONESE COURSES FOR OVERSEAS ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS

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IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY THAT ALL OVERSEAS ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS, EXCEPT THOSE APPOINTED OVER THE AGE OF 40, SHOULD ATTEND FULL-TIME CANTONESE COURSES AND SIT AT LEAST TWO EXAMINATIONS, SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, THE HON. MARTIN ROWLANDS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

FOR PENSIONABLE OFFICERS, A PASS AT THE INTERMEDIATE LEVEL WAS A CONDITION OF CONFIRMATION, HE ADDED IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE HON. LO TAK-SHING.

+SINCE 1963, WHEN PROPER RECORDS FIRST BEGAN TO BE KEPT,+ MR. ROWLANDS SAID, +57 SERVING OVERSEAS ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS HAVE OBTAINED LANGUAGE QUALIFICATIONS. 12 OF THESE HAVE PASSED THE ADVANCED LEVEL IN CANTONESE= 28 HAVE PASSED THE INTERMEDIATE LEVEL, AND A FURTHER 17 OFFICERS STILL ON PROBATION HAVE PASSED THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL. THE REMAINING 50 OVERSEAS ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS EITHER STUDIED CANTONESE BEFORE 1963 OR WERE APPOINTED TO HONG KONG AFTER THE AGE OF 40.+

ON WRITTEN CHINESE, 16 OVERSEAS OFFICERS HAVE PASSED GOVERNMENT EXAMINATIONS, TWO BEING AT THE ADVANCED LEVEL.

+I AM UNABLE TO DEDUCE FROM THESE FIGURES HOW MANY OFFICERS ARE CURRENTLY UP TO THE STANDARDS IMPLIED BY THE QUESTION. THIS IS PARTLY BECAUSE, AS ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS ADVANCE IN THEIR CAREERS, THE INCREASING DEMANDS OF THEIR WORK, COUPLED WITH REDUCED CONTACT WITH NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING PEOPLE, TEND TO RESULT IN THEIR LINGUISTIC FACILITY DECLINING,+ MR. ROWLANDS SAID.

HE ADDED THAT HE COULD NOT GIVE PRECISE FIGURES, BUT IT WAS A FACT THE THE NUMBERS WERE LESS THAN HE WOULD WISH.

+I SHALL LOOK INTO THE MATTER TO SEE WHAT CAN BE DONE BY WAY OF IMPROVEMENT,+ MR. ROWLANDS SAID.

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/15

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1978

- 15 -

SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS APPROVED

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) APPROVED THE SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS FOR THE QUARTER ENDED MARCH 31, 1978.

THE SCHEDULE OF SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS FOR THE FINAL QUARTER OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR, SAID THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, COVERED A TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$27.7 MILLION.

IN BREAKING DOWN THE TOTAL, MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID THAT:

- * \$10 MILLION WAS REQUIRED TO AUGMENT PERSONAL EMOLUMENTS SUBHEADS ON ACCOUNT OF THE 1977 SALARIES REVISION=
- * \$9.9 MILLION WAS REQUIRED TO COVER THE NET EXPENDITURE OF THE UNALLOCATED STORES ACCOUNT OF THE GOVERNMENT SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT=
- * \$3.8 MILLION WAS REQUIRED TO MEET WITHDRAWALS BY THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK AGAINST PROMISSORY NOTES ISSUED BY THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT= AND
- * \$2.8 MILLION WAS REQUIRED FOR PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS.

+THIS SCHEDULE BRINGS THE TOTAL SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS FOR 1977-78 TO \$1,121 MILLION. BUT BECAUSE OF SAVINGS IN OTHER SUBHEADS, ACTUAL TOTAL EXPENDITURE AT \$8,996.9 MILLION WAS ONLY \$752 MILLION MORE THAN THE ORIGINAL ESTIMATES,+ THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THE FINANCE COMMITTEE HAD APPROVED ALL THE ITEMS IN THE SCHEDULE.

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/16

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1978

- 16 -

STANDARDISING TRAFFIC SIGNS
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THE GOVERNMENT IS ALREADY PROGRESSIVELY IMPROVING AND STANDARDISING THE DESIGN AND SIZE OF TRAFFIC SIGNS, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY(WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. WONG LAM, MR. JONES SAID THAT EVENTUALLY ALL TRAFFIC SIGNS IN HONG KONG WOULD ACCORD WITH THE NEW INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS LAID DOWN IN THE 1968 UNITED NATIONS VIENNA CONVENTION ON ROADS AND SIGNS.

+MOST OF THESE SIGNS ARE DESIGNED IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEIR MEANING CAN BE EASILY AND QUICKLY RECOGNISED FROM THE SYMBOLS ON THEM AND, WHERE THE USE OF WORDS AND CHARACTERS IS UNAVOIDABLE, THEY HAVE BEEN KEPT TO THE ABSOLUTE MINIMUM,+ MR. JONES SAID.

+THE SIZES OF THE SIGNS ARE DETERMINED BY THE OPERATING SPEEDS OF VEHICLES ON THE ROADS WHERE THEY ARE PLACED, SO THAT THE SIGNS CAN BE EASILY SEEN AND UNDERSTOOD BY DRIVERS AND ACTED UPON IN GOOD TIME,+ HE ADDED.

MR. JONES POINTED OUT THAT UNDER THE EXISTING ROAD TRAFFIC (ROADS AND SIGNS) REGULATIONS THERE ARE TWO SCHEDULES OF TRAFFIC SIGNS.

THE FIRST COVERS THE OLD FASHIONED U.K. SIGNS WHICH ARE BEING PHASED OUT AND THE SECOND COMPRISES THE SET OF INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED SIGNS WHICH ARE GRADUALLY BEING INTRODUCED AND ARE INSTALLED AT ALL NEW HIGHWAY PROJECTS, HE SAID.

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SHA TIN RACE DAY TRAFFIC
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THE RACE DAY TRAFFIC SITUATION IN SHA TIN IS BEING CLOSELY MONITORED AND IF CONDITIONS DO DETERIORATE LATER, FURTHER STEPS WILL BE TAKEN TO EASE THE FLOW, THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WAS TOLD TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLYING TO A QUESTION RAISED BY THE HON. CHARLES YEUNG, THE HON. DEREK JONES, SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT SAID, +DESPITE AN INCREASE IN ATTENDANCE SINCE THE COURSE WAS OPENED, THERE HAVE BEEN NO TRAFFIC HOLD-UPS AT ANY OF THE ROAD JUNCTIONS IN SHA TIN RACE DAYS.

+ALTHOUGH IT IS TOO EARLY YET TO DRAW FIRM CONCLUSIONS FROM THIS EXPERIENCE, TRAFFIC CONDITIONS FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TRAVELLING THROUGH SHA TIN ON RACE DAYS ARE SATISFACTORY.+

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117

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1978

- 17 -

ACAN ENDORSES ANTI-DRUG PROPOSAL

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THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON. LEWIS DAVIES TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THE ACTION COMMITTEE AGAINST NARCOTICS HAS ENDORSED A PROPOSAL THAT AN AMENDMENT TO THE LAW SHOULD BE MADE WHICH WOULD ENABLE FINES TO BE IMPOSED ON THE CAPTAINS, MASTERS OR OWNERS OF OCEAN-GOING VESSELS ON WHICH DANGEROUS DRUGS HAVE BEEN REPEATEDLY FOUND.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE REV. THE HON. PATRICK MCGOVERN, MR. DAVIES SAID THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL'S ADVICE WILL BE SOUGHT IN THE NEAR FUTURE CONCERNING THE PROPOSAL.

THE PROPOSAL WAS MADE IN THE LIGHT OF INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM ENQUIRIES ABOUT THE LAWS OF A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES CONCERNING VESSELS FOUND CARRYING NARCOTIC DRUGS ILLICITLY.

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OVERSEAS STUDY ADVICE

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THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, THE HON. E.P. HO, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) REMINDED STUDENTS WHO INTEND TO STUDY OVERSEAS TO APPROACH THE OVERSEAS STUDENTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS SECTION OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, THE APPROPRIATE CONSULATE OR COMMISSION OR OTHER REPUTABLE AGENCIES FOR ADVICE, AND NOT TO RELY SOLELY ON GLOSSY PROSPECTUSES OR ADVERTISEMENTS.

ANSWERING A QUESTION FROM DR. THE HON. HO KAM-FAI AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ABOUT DOUBTFUL ACADEMIC STANDING OF CERTAIN CANADIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS, MR. HO SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO ASSESS THE ACADEMIC STANDING OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS OVERSEAS, +IT STANDS TO REASON THAT ONE SHOULD VIEW WITH CAUTION ANY OVERSEAS SCHOOL WHICH RESORTS TO ADVERTISING IN HONG KONG NEWSPAPERS WITH A VIEW TO RECRUITING STUDENTS FROM HERE.+

+THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S OVERSEAS STUDENTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS SECTION HAS FOR MANY YEARS WARNED ALL APPLICANTS SEEKING ADVICE ON STUDY ABROAD TO BE VERY CAUTIOUS IN APPROACHING EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN OTHER COUNTRIES,+ MR. HO ADDED.

HE ALSO SAID THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION PROPOSED TO ISSUE ANOTHER CIRCULAR TO ALL SECONDARY SCHOOLS EARLY NEXT YEAR TO ADVISE STUDENTS WHO INTEND TO STUDY OVERSEAS TO SEEK PROPER ADVICE BEFORE DEPOSITING DOWN PAYMENTS TOWARDS REGISTRATION OR TUITION FEES.

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1978

- 18 -

SAFETY IN CONSTRUCTION SITES

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CONTRACTORS ARE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE BETTER SAFETY MEASURES FOR THEIR EMPLOYEES ENGAGED IN OPERATING LIFTING APPLIANCES AND EXCAVATIONS.

IN A MOTION SEEKING AMENDMENTS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION SITES (SAFETY)(AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 1978 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR THE HON. NEIL HENDERSON SAID THE AMENDMENTS WERE MADE TO REMEDY CERTAIN DEFICIENCIES IN THE ORIGINAL REGULATIONS WHICH HAD COME TO LIGHT IN THE COURSE OF THEIR ENFORCEMENT, AND TO TIDY UP SOME OF THE EXISTING PROVISIONS.

AMONG THE AMENDMENTS APPROVED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IS THE INTRODUCTION OF A NEW DEFINITION FOR A +SUSPENDED SCAFFOLD+.

+THIS WOULD NOW MEAN A PLATFORM, CRADLE OR SIMILAR STRUCTURE SUSPENDED BY ROPES OR CHAINS AND CAPABLE OF BEING RAISED OR LOWERED, BUT DOES NOT INCLUDE A BOATSWAIN'S CHAIR OR SIMILAR APPLIANCE,+ MR. HENDERSON SAID.

OTHER AMENDMENTS INCLUDE A REQUIREMENT FOR CONTRACTORS TO ENSURE THAT A LIFTING APPLIANCE IS NOT USED UNLESS IT IS ADEQUATELY SUPPORTED AND SECURED- TO TAKE ADEQUATE PRECAUTIONS WHEN MORE THAN ONE LIFTING APPLIANCE IS USED FOR TANDEM LIFTS OR WHEN MULTIPLE SLINGS ARE USED OR WHEN SUITABLY DESIGNED POWER DRIVEN LIFTING APPLIANCES ARE USED TO CARRY PEOPLE.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT CONTRACTORS WERE ALSO REQUIRED TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE MEANS OF ESCAPE IN CASE OF ANY EMERGENCY FOR WORKMEN EMPLOYED IN EXCAVATIONS, SHAFTS, PITS OR TUNNELS, AND TO PROVIDE SUITABLE SAFETY MEASURES AND RESCUE EQUIPMENT WHERE WORKMEN EMPLOYED ON SITES ADJACENT TO WATER ARE EXPOSED TO THE RISK OF DROWNING.

MR. HENDERSON STRESSED THAT THE EXISTING REQUIREMENT FOR WORKERS TO WEAR SAFETY HELMETS IS ALSO EXTENDED TO COVER ANY OTHER PEOPLE WHO MAY ENTER A CONSTRUCTION SITE.

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1/18

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1978

- 19 -

EXTENSION OF POSTAL DELIVERY IN VILLAGES

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DOOR-TO-DOOR POSTAL DELIVERY SERVICE WOULD BE PROVIDED TO A FURTHER 344 ESTABLISHED VILLAGES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON. DAVID JEAFFRESON, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

ANSWERING A QUESTION FROM THE HON. CHARLES YEUNG, MR. JEAFFRESON SAID THAT THE POSTMASTER GENERAL HOPED TO COMPLETE THIS EXTENSION OF THE DELIVERY SERVICE BY THE END OF NEXT YEAR.

MR. JEAFFRESON SAID, HOWEVER, THE DATE FOR IMPLEMENTATION DEPENDED ON THE COMPLETION OF THE NAMING OF STREETS AND THE NUMBERING OF HOUSES.

+IT ALSO DEPENDS ON THE FINANCIAL COMMITTEE'S APPROVAL OF THE ADDITIONAL POSTS OF POSTMAN THE POSTMASTER GENERAL HAS REQUESTED,+ HE ADDED.

AT PRESENT 31 ESTABLISHED VILLAGES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES HAVE DOOR-TO-DOOR POSTAL DELIVERY SERVICE.

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/20

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1978

- 20 -

COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF N.T. LIBRARY SERVICES
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THE PACE OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEW TERRITORIES AND THE GENERAL RAISING OF PEOPLE'S STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS HAVE OVERTAKEN THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE WORKING PARTY SET UP SIX YEARS AGO TO EXAMINE LIBRARY FACILITIES IN RURAL AREAS, THE SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, THE HON. DAVID AKERS-JONES SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THAT A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF LIBRARY SERVICES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES WAS CURRENTLY IN HAND WITH A VIEW TO MAKING FRESH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION BEFORE NEXT YEAR'S ESTIMATES BECAME DUE.

MR. AKERS-JONES WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. ALEX WU REGARDING THE PROPOSED EXPENDITURE TO EQUIP, TO STOCK AND TO PROVIDE OTHER SERVICES IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD ALLOCATED \$1.1 MILLION TO MEET THE COST OF A BASIC STOCK OF BOOKS FOR THE NEW LIBRARIES PLANNED IN THE NEW TERRITORIES UNTIL 1982.

+IT IS ESTIMATED THAT A FURTHER \$0.8 MILLION WILL BE SPENT ON REPLACING OLD BOOKS AND EXPANDING EXISTING STOCK IN THE PERIOD TO 1983,+ HE WENT ON.

+THE EXPENDITURE ON THE PROVISION OF OTHER SERVICES - WHICH I TAKE TO MEAN SUCH FACILITIES AS LECTURES, FILM SHOWS, AND ORGANISED GROUP LIBRARY VISITS AND SO ON - IS NOW RUNNING AT ABOUT \$40,000 A YEAR.+

HOWEVER, HE POINTED OUT, BOTH THE LEVELS OF EXPENDITURE AND THE STANDARDS OF PROVISION FOR LIBRARIES WERE APPROVED IN 1976 ACCORDING TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORKING PARTY.

+THESE RECOMMENDATIONS HAVE BEEN OVERTAKEN BY THE PACE OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEW TERRITORIES AND THE GENERAL RAISING OF PEOPLE'S STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS,+ MR. AKERS-JONES SAID.

+I AM THEREFORE PLEASED TO REPORT THAT A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF LIBRARY SERVICES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES IS CURRENTLY IN HAND WITH A VIEW TO HAVING THE RESULTS AVAILABLE IN TIME TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION AT THE TIME WHEN NEXT YEAR'S ESTIMATES ARE DUE.+

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41.....

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1978

- 21 -

PROPOSED COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, THE HON. E.P. HO TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT MANY OF THE FUNCTIONS ENVISAGED FOR THE PROPOSED COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND TRAINING FALL WITHIN THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL WORK TRAINING.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN, MR. HO SAID THE REPORT ENVISAGED THAT, IN THE INTERIM, THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE COULD ASSUME THE ROLE OF THE PROPOSED COUNCIL.

+WHILST THE GOVERNMENT ACCEPTS THE NEED TO DEVELOP A VIABLE PATTERN OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN HONG KONG AND TO ENSURE ADEQUATE STANDARDS, IT REMAINS TO BE CONVINCED THAT, IN OUR CIRCUMSTANCES, A STATUTORY BODY WITH AN ELABORATE ACCREDITATION MACHINERY IN ONE SPECIFIC SUBJECT AREA CAN BE JUSTIFIED,+ HE SAID.

+I BELIEVE IT WILL BE BETTER FOR THESE TASKS TO REMAIN ENTRUSTED TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL WORK TRAINING, RECONSTITUTED AND STRENGTHENED AS MAY BE NECESSARY,+ HE ADDED.

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NO INTENTION TO PROMOTE HUNTING

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THE GOVERNMENT NEITHER PROMOTES, NOR DOES IT INTEND TO PROMOTE, HUNTING AS A SPORT, THE DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES, THE HON. TED NICHOLS TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. LEUNG TAT-SHING, MR. NICHOLS SAID HUNTING AT PRESENT RARELY INCONVENIENCED FARMERS BECAUSE OF THE CONSTRAINTS PLACED ON IT BY THE WILD ANIMALS PROTECTION ORDINANCE.

HE POINTED OUT THAT ONLY LIMITED AREAS AND SEASONS WERE AVAILABLE FOR HUNTING AND OF THE 450 HOLDERS OF GAME LICENCES ONLY SOME 150 WERE ACTIVE HUNTERS.

MR. NICHOLS ALSO NOTED THAT BIRDWATCHING WAS NOT SUSCEPTIBLE TO CONSTRAINTS. HE SAID THAT APART FROM THE MANY AMATEUR BIRD-WATCHERS ENGAGED IN THIS HOBBY AT ALL TIMES OF THE YEAR, THERE WERE ABOUT 200 OR MORE ENTHUSIASTS WHO WERE MEMBERS OF THE BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY AND/OR THE NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY.

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1978

- 22 -

SUPPLIER CREDITS FOR MTRC

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) APPROVED A MOTION TO GIVE AUTHORITY FOR A GOVERNMENT GUARANTEE TO ENABLE THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SUPPLIER CREDITS, TOTALLING HK\$950 MILLION, OFFERED IN RESPECT OF FOUR LARGE CONTRACTS.

IN MOVING THE MOTION, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE SAID THAT THE FOUR CONTRACTS FORM 80 PER CENT OF THE CIVIL ENGINEERING WORKS FOR THE EXTENSION OF THE RAILWAY TO TSUEN WAN, INCLUDING SEVEN STATIONS AND CONNECTING TUNNELS.

HE POINTED OUT THAT EACH CONTRACT HAS BEEN AWARDED AT FIXED PRICES AND THE SUPPLIER CREDITS IN HONG KONG DOLLARS, SO THE GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT IN RESPECT OF THE GUARANTEE WOULD BE ENTIRELY FREE FROM EXCHANGE RISKS.

+THE INTEREST RATES WILL BE COMPETITIVE AND THE SUPPLIER CREDITS WILL BE REPAYABLE OVER A PERIOD OF 8-1/2 YEARS,+ HE ADDED.

THE GUARANTEE BROUGHT THE GOVERNMENT'S TOTAL GUARANTEE COMMITMENT IN RESPECT OF THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION TO HK\$7,840 MILLION.

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/23

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1978

- 23 -

PARTITION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978

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A BILL WHICH SEEKS TO BRING IN CERTAIN AMENDMENTS TO THE PARTITION ORDINANCE WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE PARTITION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978, THE ACTING SOLICITOR GENERAL, THE HON. DAVID BOY SAID THIS WOULD ENABLE COURT PROCEEDINGS TO BE INSTITUTED IN RESPECT OF A PROPERTY WITHOUT THE CONCURRENCE OF THE MORTGAGEE, WHETHER HE WAS A MORTGAGEE OF THE ENTIRE PROPERTY OR ONLY A SHARE OF THE PROPERTY.

MR. BOY POINTED OUT THAT UNDER OTHER PROVISIONS IN THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE A MORTGAGEE COULD BE ADDED AS A PARTY IN THE PROCEEDINGS IF HIS PRESENCE BEFORE THE COURT WAS CONSIDERED DESIRABLE AND THAT NO ORDER FOR PARTITION COULD BE MADE WHICH WOULD PREJUDICE HIM UNLESS HE WAS MADE A PARTY TO THE PROCEEDINGS.

+THIS IS CONSIDERED TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE SAFEGUARDS TO MORTGAGEES,+ MR. BOY SAID.

MR. BOY EXPLAINED THAT A MORTGAGEE OF AN ENTIRE PROPERTY IN THE LAND CANNOT LEGALLY BE AFFECTED BY ANY ORDER FOR PARTITION WHICH THE COURT MAY MAKE UNDER THE ORDINANCE, SO THERE WOULD BE NO GOOD REASON WHY PROCEEDINGS UNDER THE ORDINANCE SHOULD DEPEND ON HIS CONSENT.

ON THE OTHER HAND, HE ADDED, A MORTGAGEE OF ONLY A SHARE OF THE PROPERTY COULD BE AFFECTED. +BUT, DEPENDING ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE CASE, A PARTITION WILL NOT NECESSARILY PREJUDICE HIM.+

+THERE IS NO GOOD REASON, THEREFORE, WHY HE SHOULD BE ABLE TO PREVENT THE INSTITUTION OF PROCEEDINGS SIMPLY BY WITHHOLDING HIS CONSENT -- PERHAPS QUITE UNREASONABLY,+ MR. BOY SAID.

+NONE OF THE JOINT TENANTS OR TENANTS IN COMMON, INCLUDING HIS OWN MORTGAGOR, IS IN THIS PRIVILEGED POSITION,+ HE ADDED.

MR. BOY ADDED THAT THE BILL WILL ALSO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT ONLY A JOINT TENANT, TENANT IN COMMON OR LEGAL MORTGAGEE OF A TENANT IN COMMON MAY INSTITUTE PROCEEDINGS UNDER THE ORDINANCE.

+THE VAGUENESS OF EXPRESSION IN THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE ON THIS ASPECT HAS LED TO SOME DOUBT,+ MR. BOY SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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124

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1978

- 24 -

BILLS PASSED
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FOUR BILLS WERE PASSED INTO LAW IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THESE WERE THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT)(NO. 5) BILL 1978, LANDS TRIBUNAL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978, UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978 AND PENSIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978.

CAUSEWAY BAY STAGE II TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS
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THE SECOND STAGE OF THE TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS TO IMPROVE TRAFFIC FLOW IN CAUSEWAY BAY WILL BE IMPLEMENTED FROM 10 A.M. ON FRIDAY (DECEMBER 1).

THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE AS FOLLOWS:-

- * THE SECTION OF YUN PING ROAD BETWEEN HYSAN AVENUE AND KAI CHIU ROAD WILL BE RE-ROUTED ONE WAY NORTHBOUND-
- * THE SECTION OF LEE GARDEN ROAD BETWEEN KAI CHIU ROAD AND HYSAN AVENUE WILL BE RE-ROUTED ONE WAY SOUTHBOUND-
- * THE SECTION OF KAI CHIU ROAD BETWEEN YUN PING ROAD AND LEE GARDEN ROAD WILL BE RE-ROUTED ONE WAY WESTBOUND-
- * PAK SHA ROAD WILL BE RE-ROUTED ONE WAY EASTBOUND-
- * LAN FONG ROAD WILL BE RE-ROUTED ONE WAY WESTBOUND-
- * THE SECTION OF RUSSELL STREET BETWEEN PERCIVAL STREET AND LEE GARDEN ROAD WILL BE RE-ROUTED ONE WAY EASTBOUND-
- * FOO MING STREET WILL BE RE-ROUTED ONE WAY WESTBOUND- AND
- * VEHICLES WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO TURN RIGHT FROM LEE GARDEN ROAD INTO HYSAN AVENUE.

PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO ENTER THE SECTION OF YUN PING ROAD BETWEEN HYSAN AVENUE AND KAI CHIU ROAD AS WELL AS PAK SHA ROAD UNLESS AUTHORISED IN WRITING BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT.

THE MAXICAB STAND IN KAI CHIU ROAD WILL BE CANCELLED AND RELOCATED IN THE SECTION OF YUN PING ROAD BETWEEN PAK SHA ROAD AND KAI CHIU ROAD.

APPROPRIATE TRAFFIC SIGNS WILL BE SET UP TO GUIDE MOTORISTS.
