



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1974

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DAILY GUIDE TO WHOLESALE PRICES AND SUPPLY OF BASIC FOOD COMMODITIES

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ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
STATISTICS SHOW SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS IN DECADE

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DR. THE HON. GERALD CHOA, DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY THAT SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE IN THE STATE OF HEALTH OF THE POPULATION OF HONG KONG IN THE LAST DECADE AS A RESULT OF ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE FIELD OF PREVENTIVE MEDICINE.

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH, HE LISTED CONSIDERABLE DECLINES IN THE INFANT MORTALITY RATE, MATERNAL MORTALITY, DIPHTHERIA, POLIOMYELITIS, LEPROSY, MALARIA, AND TUBERCULOSIS.

OF THE LATTER, HE SAID THE NOTIFICATION RATE HAD FALLEN FROM 358 PER 100,000 POPULATION IN 1964 TO 196 IN 1973, WHILE THE MORTALITY RATE HAD DROPPED FROM 41.1 PER 100,000 POPULATION IN 1964 TO 27.7 IN 1973.

THE CRUDE DEATH RATE NOW STOOD AT 5.1 PER 1,000 POPULATION +WHICH MUST BE CONSIDERED LOW.+

WHERE ONCE COMMUNICABLE DISEASES HAD BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE GREATER NUMBER OF DEATHS, THE MORTALITY PATTERN HAD NOW CHANGED. IN 1973, THE MAIN CAUSES OF DEATHS WERE CANCER, HEART AND HYPERTENSIVE DISEASES, PNEUMONIA, CEREBRO-VASCULAR DISEASES, ACCIDENTS AND TUBERCULOSIS -- IN THAT ORDER.

DR. CHOA RECALLED THAT TUBERCULOSIS HAD HELD FIRST PLACE FOR MANY YEARS AFTER THE WAR, BUT HAD NOW TAKEN THE SIXTH PLACE. THIS PATTERN -- WHICH EMERGED IN HONG KONG ONLY IN THE LAST DECADE -- WAS NOW THE SAME AS IN THE ADVANCED COUNTRIES.

IN VIEW OF THIS IMPROVEMENT, HE ANNOUNCED THAT AN EMINENT AUTHORITY ON CHEST DISEASES IN BRITAIN HAD BEEN INVITED, THROUGH THE BRITISH COUNCIL, TO VISIT HONG KONG EARLY NEXT YEAR TO ADVISE THE GOVERNMENT ON HOW TO REORGANISE THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT'S CHEST SERVICE.

DR. CHOA INFORMED THE COUNCIL THAT IN THE LAST 10 YEARS, 227 DOCTORS HAD BEEN SENT ABROAD FOR FURTHER STUDY, AND 218 DOCTORS HAD OBTAINED HIGHER QUALIFICATIONS EITHER IN HONG KONG OR ABROAD.

+MORE AND MORE ROYAL COLLEGES ARE NOW HOLDING PRIMARY OR FINAL EXAMINATIONS IN HONG KONG,+ HE SAID. +IN SOME CASES, THE EXPENSES FOR HOLDING SUCH EXAMINATIONS ARE BORNE BY THE GOVERNMENT, AND ALL THOSE WHO PASS ARE GIVEN A REFUND OF THE EXAMINATION FEES.+

IN A REFERENCE TO THE RECENT VISIT TO HONG KONG BY AN INDEPENDENT NURSING ADVISER, MISS MARGARET LAMB, WHO HAD REVIEWED THE NURSING SERVICE AND LEFT BEHIND A REPORT WHICH HAD NOW BEEN TRANSLATED AND MADE PUBLIC, DR. CHOA SAID HE FULLY SHARED THE IDEALS ON WHICH HER REPORT HAD BEEN BASED. A NUMBER OF MISS LAMB'S PROPOSALS HAD CONFIRMED LINES OF ACTION ON WHICH OFFICERS WERE ALREADY WORKING IN THE DEPARTMENT.

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MISS LAMB HAD RECOMMENDED THAT QUALIFIED CLINICAL INSTRUCTORS BE PROVIDED TO IMPROVE THE PRACTICAL SIDE OF TRAINING. SHE HAD ALSO FELT THAT THE EXISTING RATIO OF ONE TUTOR TO 70 STUDENT NURSES SHOULD BE REDUCED TO AT LEAST ONE TO 30.

+I RECOGNISE THAT THE RATIO IS UNSATISFACTORY,+ DR. CHOA EXPLAINED, +AND IT IS PROPOSED TO TRAIN TUTORS LOCALLY, AND ALSO TO PREPARE TRAINED CLINICAL INSTRUCTORS, BUT THESE AIMS CANNOT BE ACHIEVED IMMEDIATELY.+

HE COMMENTED ON MISS LAMB'S REMARKS ON THE NEED FOR BETTER COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE TEACHING STAFF, THE SENIOR NURSING STAFF, HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATORS AND STUDENTS, AND HE HOPED SHORTLY TO SEE THE INTRODUCTION OF IN-SERVICE COURSES +WITH THE OBJECT OF FOSTERING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS AND UNDERSTANDING.+

MISS LAMB HAD ALSO RECOMMENDED THAT PROMOTION IN THE NURSING SERVICE SHOULD NOT BE BASED MAINLY ON SENIORITY. +IN POINT OF FACT,+ DR. CHOA SAID, +IT IS NOT.+

PROMOTION FOLLOWED THE GENERAL CIVIL SERVICE PRINCIPLE OF CONSIDERING OFFICERS IN THEIR ORDER OF SENIORITY, BUT THE ACTUAL SUBSTANTIVE PROMOTION WAS BASED ON MERIT AS WELL AS SENIORITY.

MISS LAMB'S OTHER SUGGESTIONS, SUCH AS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FIRMER BASE FOR THE USE OF ENGLISH IN TRAINING, THE AMENDMENT AND RE-ARRANGEMENT OF THE TRAINING COURSE, AND IMPROVEMENT OF FACILITIES FOR STUDY AND RECREATION, WOULD RECEIVE CAREFUL ATTENTION.

DR. CHOA ALSO MADE REFERENCES TO CHANGES IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES TO MEET CHANGES IN GENERAL TRENDS.

THERE WOULD, FOR EXAMPLE, BE NO LONGER ONLY TWO SEPARATE DIVISIONS FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES IN THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE DEPARTMENT. INSTEAD OF THEM, THERE WOULD BE SET UP VARIOUS FUNCTIONAL DIVISIONS EACH WITH A SPECIFIC SERVICE TO PERFORM.

A PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DIVISION WOULD HAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTING ALL THE PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE WHITE PAPER ON THE TEN-YEAR PLAN. THIS DIVISION WOULD ALSO CARRY OUT FURTHER RESEARCH INTO THE REQUIREMENTS OF GERIATRIC AND PSYCHIATRIC BEDS, AND THE REDISTRIBUTION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES AND TUBERCULOSIS BEDS.

A NARCOTICS AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION DIVISION HAD ALREADY BEEN SET UP, AND THE TRAINING DIVISION WOULD CONTINUE.

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GOVERNMENT SEEKS COMMENTS
ON NURSE TRAINING REPORT
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THE DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES ANNOUNCED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY THAT HE HAS DISTRIBUTED COPIES OF A REPORT ON STUDENT NURSE TRAINING TO THE NEWS MEDIA AND INTERESTED NURSING BODIES.

THE REPORT, BY MISS MARGARET LAMB, IS PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH THE TRAINING OF GOVERNMENT STUDENT NURSES IN HONG KONG BUT INCLUDES ALSO WIDER-RANGING RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT THE NURSING PROFESSION GENERALLY AND CALLS FOR A GREATER APPRECIATION OF NURSES BOTH BY GOVERNMENT AND BY THE COMMUNITY. THE MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE REPORT ARE -

- (A) WITHIN THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT NURSING ADMINISTRATION SHOULD BE STRENGTHENED AND PROMOTION SHOULD NO LONGER BE BASED ONLY ON SENIORITY=
- (B) ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENT NURSES ARE TOO RIGID BUT THE MINIMUM SHOULD REMAIN FIVE HKCEE PASSES INCLUDING CHINESE, ENGLISH, BIOLOGY AND TWO OTHER SUBJECTS WHICH MAY BE SCIENCE OR ARTS=
- (C) TRAINING COURSES SHOULD BE MORE RELEVANT TO THE PRACTICAL WARD SITUATION=
- (D) QUALIFIED CLINICAL INSTRUCTORS SHOULD BE TRAINED= THE USE OF UNQUALIFIED TUTORS SHOULD BE DISCONTINUED AND THE STUDENT/TUTOR RATIO REDUCED BY THE APPOINTMENT OF ADDITIONAL QUALIFIED TUTORS=
- (E) COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN STAFF THEMSELVES AND STAFF AND STUDENTS SHOULD BE IMPROVED= AND
- (F) ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN AT ALL LEVELS TO IMPROVE AND DEVELOP THE USE OF ENGLISH WHICH IS SEEN AS THE PRINCIPAL PROBLEM FOR A LARGE NUMBER OF STUDENTS.

MISS MARGARET LAMB CAME TO HONG KONG AT THE END OF MAY FOR SIX WEEKS. SHE HAD JUST RETIRED AS THE TUTOR ORGANISER TO THE DEPARTMENT OF NURSE MANAGEMENT STUDIES FOR THE SOUTH-EASTERN REGIONAL HOSPITAL BOARD IN EDINBURGH. IN ADDITION TO VISITING GOVERNMENT STUDENT NURSE TRAINING SCHOOLS SHE WAS ALSO AFFORDED THE OPPORTUNITY OF SEEING OTHER NON-GOVERNMENT TRAINING HOSPITALS IN HONG KONG.

HER VISIT FOLLOWS EFFORTS WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE SINCE 1971 TO OBTAIN THE VIEWS OF AN EXTERNAL NURSING ADVISER. EVENTUALLY, MISS LAMB ACCEPTED AN INVITATION FROM THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT EARLIER THIS YEAR AND SHE WAS ASKED PARTICULARLY TO STUDY THE TRAINING OF STUDENT NURSES IN GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS.

/THE DIRECTOR

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THE DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES SAID HE WOULD WISH TO AWAIT COMMENTS FROM INTERESTED BODIES BEFORE MAKING ANY STATEMENT ON THE REPORT. HE MADE IT CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT HE FULLY SHARED THE IDEALS ON WHICH MISS LAMB'S REPORT WAS BASED AND WAS SURE THAT THESE WERE SHARED ALSO BY THE NURSING BOARD AND ALL WHO ARE CONCERNED WITH THE PROGRESSIVE AND ORDERLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROFESSION IN HONG KONG.

IN A NUMBER OF INSTANCES THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE REPORT CONFIRM LINES OF ACTION ALREADY IN HAND - THESE INCLUDE PROPOSALS FOR STRENGTHENING NURSING ADMINISTRATION AS WELL AS PLANS TO TRAIN TUTORS AND CLINICAL INSTRUCTORS IN HONG KONG AS SOON AS THE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE ESTABLISHED. PLANS ARE ALSO IN HAND TO IMPROVE IN-SERVICE COMMUNICATIONS AND TRAINING COURSES DESIGNED TO FOSTER BETTER RELATIONS AND UNDERSTANDING WILL BE PROGRESSIVELY INTRODUCED. IN THE PROMOTION OF NURSING STAFF THE SYSTEM WHICH APPLIES GENERALLY TO THE PUBLIC SERVICE IS APPLIED UNDER WHICH OFFICERS ARE CONSIDERED IN THEIR ORDER OF SENIORITY BUT WHICH ENSURES ALSO THAT SUBSTANTIVE PROMOTION IS BASED ON EXPERIENCE AND MERIT.

REDUCTION OF THE STUDENT/TUTOR RATIO AS PROPOSED BY MISS LAMB WOULD TAKE TIME. THE MEDICAL WHITE PAPER INCLUDES PROPOSALS TO ESTABLISH AN ADDITIONAL NURSE TRAINING SCHOOL. UNTIL THIS IS COMPLETED AND MORE TUTORS HAVE BEEN TRAINED, THE STUDENT/TUTOR RATIO CAN ONLY BE REDUCED SLOWLY.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS REQUIRING CAREFUL CONSIDERATION INCLUDE THOSE CONCERNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE USE OF ENGLISH AND INTRODUCING A MODICUM OF FLEXIBILITY INTO THE ENTRANCE QUALIFICATIONS.

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POSSIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND
TO BE STUDIED BY SOCIAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, THE HON. LI FOOK-KOW, SAID TODAY THAT THERE WERE STRONG ARGUMENTS AGAINST GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION OF A COMPULSORY CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL HE SAID THAT IF THE GOVERNMENT WERE TO OPERATE SUCH A FUND TO WHICH BOTH EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES WOULD BE OBLIGED TO CONTRIBUTE, +IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT MANY OF THEM WOULD OBJECT TO SUCH COMPULSION AND REGARD THE FUND AS A FORM OF TAXATION, PARTICULARLY IF ITS ASSETS WERE USED LOCALLY FOR DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES.+

MR. LI SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THESE OBJECTIONS MIGHT BE REDUCED IF THE COST OF ADMINISTRATION WERE MET FROM PUBLIC FUNDS, IT SEEMED UNDESIRABLE TO USE THEM FOR THIS PURPOSE AT THE EXPENSE OF OTHER SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY PROBLEMS WHICH HAVE URGENT CLAIMS ON +OUR LIMITED RESOURCES+.

+FOR EXAMPLE,+ HE SAID, +I AM SURE HONOURABLE MEMBERS WOULD AGREE THAT THE EXPANSION IN PUBLIC HOUSING AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF WHITE PAPERS ON SECONDARY EDUCATION AND MEDICAL SERVICES SHOULD HAVE PRIORITY.+

HOWEVER, MR. LI ADDED THAT IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR THE SOCIAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO DEVOTE ITS ATTENTION IN DUE COURSE TO THE POSSIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND +AS BEING ONE FORM OF CONTRIBUTORY SOCIAL INSURANCE.+

IN THE MEANTIME, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE EMPLOYERS TO SET UP THEIR OWN PROVIDENT FUND SCHEMES. IN FACT, A NUMBER OF THE LARGER AND BETTER EMPLOYERS ALREADY OPERATE SCHEMES FOR THEIR EMPLOYEES.

+FOR THOSE EMPLOYERS WITH A SMALL NUMBER OF WORKERS, A SEPARATE SCHEME MIGHT NOT BE VIABLE. HOWEVER SCHEMES ON THE BASIS OF INDIVIDUAL INDUSTRIES MIGHT BE FORMULATED BY THE APPROPRIATE TRADE ASSOCIATIONS AND EMPLOYERS' ORGANISATIONS,+ HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT HE INTENDED TO CONSULT SOME OF THESE BODIES TO SEE IF SATISFACTORY CONTRIBUTORY PROVIDENT FUND SCHEMES, NOT INVOLVING PUBLIC MONEY, COULD BE DEvised.

DISCUSSING THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND DISABILITY AND INFIRMITY ALLOWANCE SCHEMES, THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES SAID THAT AT THE END OF OCTOBER THERE WERE OVER 37,000 PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND 51,000 DISABILITY AND INFIRMITY ALLOWANCES CASES.

IN THE FIRST SEVEN MONTHS OF THIS FINANCIAL YEAR, PAYMENTS MADE UNDER THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE SCHEME AMOUNTED TO NEARLY \$50 MILLION COMPARED WITH \$23 MILLION FOR THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR. THE DISABILITY AND INFIRMITY ALLOWANCE SCHEME PAID OUT NEARLY \$32 MILLION, ALMOST THREE TIMES THE AMOUNT FOR THE CORRESPONDING PERIOD LAST YEAR.

/MR. LI

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MR. LI SAID THE INCREASE WAS NOT UNEXPECTED AS THE DISABILITY AND INFIRMITY ALLOWANCE SCHEME ONLY CAME INTO OPERATION IN APRIL 1973 AND BOTH SCHEMES HAVE HAD THEIR RATES INCREASED THREE TIMES BY AN AGGREGATE OF 62 PER CENT SINCE JUNE LAST YEAR.

+THE TREND IN PUBLIC ASSISTANCE CASES STILL SHOWS A RISE, PROBABLY REFLECTING THE PRESENT, AND I HOPE TEMPORARY, DIFFICULT EMPLOYMENT SITUATION. HOWEVER THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE DISABILITY AND INFIRMITY ALLOWANCE CASELOAD IS BEGINNING TO LEVEL OUT.+

A FURTHER \$1-1/4 MILLION HAS BEEN PAID OUT UNDER THE CRIMINAL LAW ENFORCEMENT INJURIES COMPENSATION SCHEME SINCE ITS INCEPTION 18 MONTHS AGO. THE SCHEME IS DESIGNED TO COMPENSATE BY EX-GRATIA PAYMENT THOSE VICTIMS OF CRIMES OF VIOLENCE AND THOSE WHO ARE ACCIDENTALLY INJURED BY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS.

ON THE SUBJECT OF RESEARCH, MR. LI SAID HE WAS CURRENTLY REVIEWING THE MEANS BY WHICH RESEARCH INTO SOCIAL PROBLEMS IS ORGANISED AND CO-ORDINATED +SO THAT WE MAY BETTER UNDERSTAND THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY AND HOW BEST THE RESOURCES BOTH IN FINANCE AND MANPOWER CAN BE DEPLOYED.+

AT THE SAME TIME AND WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF THE HONG KONG COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE A START HAS BEEN MADE ON EVALUATION PROGRAMME ON THE RELATIVE EFFICACY OF THE VARIOUS AGENCIES WORKING IN SOCIAL WELFARE WITH A VIEW TO INCREASING GENERAL EFFICIENCY AND MAKING BETTER USE OF RESOURCES.

+THE RESULTS OF THIS EXAMINATION SHOULD ENABLE CONSIDERATION TO BE GIVEN TO THE POSSIBILITY OF VARIOUS ORGANISATIONS AMALGAMATING OR, PERHAPS, REORGANISING THEMSELVES TO BRING ABOUT A MORE EQUITABLE GEOGRAPHIC SPREAD OF SERVICE,+ MR. LI SAID.

ALTHOUGH HE WAS CONSCIOUS OF THE NEED TO PRESERVE THE IDENTITY AND ENTHUSIASM OF ORGANISATIONS, +GREATER EFFICIENCY MUST BE THE ULTIMATE AIM.+

+IT WOULD BE WRONG FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO CONTINUE TO SUBVENT SERVICES WHICH ARE NO LONGER JUSTIFIED, WHILE DEPRIVING THOSE ORGANISATIONS, WHICH PROVIDE SERVICES TO MEET THE COMMUNITY'S CURRENT NEEDS, OF THEIR FAIR SHARE OF OUR SOCIAL WELFARE RESOURCES,+ MR. LI SAID.

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HOUSING PROGRAMME FORGES AHEAD
ESTATE HOME OWNERSHIP QUESTION TO BE RECONSIDERED

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THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON. IAN LIGHTBODY, TODAY DISPELLED RUMOURS THAT THE HOUSING PROGRAMME WAS IN ANY WAY SLOWING DOWN.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR. LIGHTBODY SAID THAT +TODAY CONTRACT WORK IS PROCEEDING ON 11 ESTATES TO HOUSE UP TO 270,000 PEOPLE= THESE ESTATES WILL COST ABOUT \$900 MILLION, THE BULK OF THEM WILL BE FINISHED IN 1976 AND ALL WILL BE COMPLETED BY 1978.+

LOOKING BEYOND THIS, HE SAID, DESIGN WORK ON A FURTHER NINE ESTATES, FOR UP TO 150,000 PEOPLE, HAS REACHED AN ADVANCED STAGE AND CONTRACTS FOR A NUMBER OF THESE WILL BE LET IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS.

THE MAJORITY OF THESE WILL BE READY FOR OCCUPATION IN 1978 AND THE REMAINDER WILL BE COMPLETED BY 1979.

MR. LIGHTBODY SAID THIS PROGRAMME INCLUDED A CONTRACT LET EARLIER IN THE YEAR FOR A NEW HOUSING AUTHORITY ESTATE AT TUEN MUN FOR 26,000 PEOPLE= AND ANOTHER CONTRACT LET LAST MONTH FOR AN ESTATE ON TSING YI ISLAND FOR A SIMILAR NUMBER OF PEOPLE.

+OUR PRIMARY TASK IS TO KEEP THE BUILDING PROGRAMME MOVING AHEAD AS FAST AS WE CAN, AND IF THIS CAN BE DONE THEN MANY OTHER PROBLEMS WILL FALL INTO PLACE,+ HE ADDED.

ON THE PROPOSITION THAT PUBLIC HOUSING TENANTS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO BUY THEIR FLATS BY INSTALMENTS, MR. LIGHTBODY SAID THIS COULD BE +POPULAR AS WELL AS SOCIOLOGICALLY SOUND+.

HE SAID THE QUESTION WAS CONSIDERED BY THE HOUSING AUTHORITY ABOUT A YEAR AGO AND IT WAS FELT THEN THAT, APART FROM THE MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL PROBLEMS INHERENT IN THE SALE OF UNITS, THE LIMITED SUPPLY OF PUBLIC HOUSING BECOMING AVAILABLE IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE MADE THE SCHEME UNSUITABLE.

AS TO THE BENEFITS THIS COULD BRING TO THE AUTHORITY'S FINANCIAL POSITION WHICH WAS MENTIONED BY TWO UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS, MR. LIGHTBODY POINTED OUT THAT THE AUTHORITY CATERS FOR FAMILIES EARNING LESS THAN \$1,400 PER MONTH (\$2,000 PER MONTH FOR LARGER FAMILIES) AND MANY OF THEM IN THE LOWER INCOME GROUPS WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT TO AFFORD THE PURCHASE PAYMENTS.

+ONE THING ONLY IS CERTAIN ABOUT THIS PROPOSITION, AND THAT IS THAT THE STRENGTH OF FEELING OF THOSE WHO FAVOUR IT IS WELL MATCHED BY THE EQUALLY STRONG CONVICTIONS OF THOSE WHO ARE TOTALLY AGAINST IT.

/NONETHELESS,

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+NONETHELESS, THE TIME IS PROBABLY RIPE FOR THE IDEA TO BE RECONSIDERED BY THE HOUSING AUTHORITY AND I WILL ARRANGE FOR THIS TO BE DONE,+ MR. LIGHTBODY SAID.

ON THE DIFFICULTIES OF SECURING THE REDEVELOPMENT OF SLUM PROPERTIES, THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD GIVEN THE HOUSING SOCIETY AN UNDERTAKING TO USE ITS RESUMPTION POWERS WHERE NECESSARY TO ALLOW THE SOCIETY TO OBTAIN SLUM PROPERTIES AND REBUILD THEM.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS AGREED TO PROVIDE THE SOCIETY WITH LOANS OF UP TO \$100 MILLION TO FINANCE THIS PROJECT WHICH WILL GENERATE SUFFICIENT FUNDS AFTER FIVE YEARS OR SO TO LET THE SOCIETY FINANCE FUTURE PROJECTS BY ITSELF.

MR. LIGHTBODY SAID THE SOCIETY HAD IDENTIFIED LARGE NUMBERS OF PRE-WAR URBAN DOMESTIC PROPERTIES WHICH WERE RUN-DOWN, UNSANITARY AND OVERCROWDED. SEVENTY-FIVE PER CENT OF THEM WERE ON HONG KONG ISLAND, MOSTLY IN THE WESTERN AND WANCHAI DISTRICTS, AND THE SOCIETY HAD DECIDED TO START THE SCHEME IN THESE AREAS.

IN FACT IT HAS LET ITS FIRST CONTRACT FOR A BLOCK OF ALMOST 200 FLATS IN WESTERN DISTRICT TO REHOUSE FAMILIES FROM NEARBY +BLACK SPOTS+ WHICH THE SOCIETY INTENDS TO ACQUIRE FOR REDEVELOPMENT.

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COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR PRAISES WORKERS
OVERSEAS CRITICISMS OF LABOUR CONDITIONS +WIDE OF THE MARK+

DESPITE THE PRESENT WORLD ECONOMIC SITUATION, HONG KONG SET A RECORD FOR INDUSTRIAL PEACE THIS YEAR, THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON. IAN PRICE, SAID TODAY.

AND MUCH OF THE CREDIT BELONGED TO ITS HARD-WORKING LABOUR FORCE, HE TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN HIS MAIDEN SPEECH.

MR. PRICE SAID IT WAS ALSO THE WORKERS WHO DESERVED A MAJOR SHARE OF THE CREDIT FOR HONG KONG'S ECONOMIC GROWTH.

COMMENTING ON THE PRESENT POST-WAR LOW OF WORKING DAYS LOST, HE SAID IT WAS LARGELY ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE REALISTIC ATTITUDE ADOPTED BY WORKERS TO THE PRESENT ECONOMIC SITUATION - AND TO A REMARKABLE DEGREE OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES.

THE COMMISSIONER REJECTED WHAT HE TERMED THE +DISTORTED IMAGE+ OF LABOUR RELATIONS IN HONG KONG.

HE POINTED OUT THAT HONG KONG SUFFERED LESS FROM INDUSTRIAL UNREST THAN NEARLY ANY OTHER TERRITORY - THE LAST 10 MONTHS' FIGURE BEING THE LOWEST IN 30 YEARS.

UP TO THE END OF OCTOBER, THERE HAD BEEN 70 INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES THIS YEAR, INVOLVING 16 WORK STOPPAGES AND A LOSS OF ONLY 2,900 WORKING-DAYS - COMPARED WITH 55,000 IN THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR.

IN A WIDE-RANGING REVIEW OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT'S WORK, MR. PRICE ALSO :-

* REPORTED THAT CONSULTATIONS ON HONG KONG'S FIRST LABOUR RELATIONS BILL WERE NOW WELL ADVANCED. THE BILL GIVES STATUTORY BACKING TO THE LABOUR RELATIONS SERVICE AND LAYS DOWN GUIDELINES FOR SETTLING INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES WHEN INITIAL CONCILIATION FAILS=

* REJECTED CLAIMS - +OFTEN BASED ON INACCURATE INFORMATION+ - OF WIDESPREAD CHILD LABOUR IN INDUSTRY, AND PREDICTED THE WHOLE PROBLEM OF CHILD LABOUR WOULD EVENTUALLY BE WIPED OUT BY THE GOVERNMENT'S RECENTLY-ANNOUNCED EDUCATION PROGRAMME=

* ANNOUNCED PLANS - TO BE BACKED WITH LEGISLATION - TO STREAMLINE THE COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENT STATISTICS AND CUT DOWN THE PAPERWORK EMPLOYERS HAD TO FACE IN PROVIDING THEM=

* REVEALED THAT THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT'S FIVE-YEAR PLAN TO PROMOTE INDUSTRIAL SAFETY WAS NOW READY AND SHOULD GO TO THE GOVERNMENT FOR APPROVAL SOON.

/REBUTTED ALLEGATIONS

- * REBUTTED ALLEGATIONS OF A WIDE GAP BETWEEN LABOUR AND MANAGEMENT IN HONG KONG, AND ASSURED COUNCILLORS THAT THE GOVERNMENT WELCOMED THE GROWTH OF A RESPONSIBLE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT=
- * CREDITED THE RECENTLY-ENACTED LEGISLATION ON SEVERANCE PAY WITH HAVING SO FAR HELPED TO PREVENT SERIOUS REDUNDANCY DISPUTES= AND
- * STRESSED THAT HE CONSIDERED IT HIS DUTY, IN THE ABSENCE AT PRESENT OF WIDE-SPREAD TRADE UNIONISM, TO ENSURE THAT LABOUR GETS A FAIR SHARE OF HONG KONG'S SUCCESS, AND TO SEEK CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENTS IN WORKING CONDITIONS AND TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT.

MR. PRICE SAID THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT HAD INTRODUCED 87 PIECES OF LEGISLATION SINCE 1967, AND HE HOPED TO INTRODUCE ABOUT 12 MORE IN THE CURRENT SESSION.

HE NAMED NOVEMBER 27 AS THE DATE WHEN HE WOULD SEEK COUNCIL APPROVAL FOR A REGULATION TO REDUCE THE MAXIMUM PERMISSIBLE OVERTIME FOR WOMEN AND YOUNG CHILDREN FROM 300 TO 250 HOURS A YEAR FROM JANUARY 1 NEXT YEAR, AND TO 200 HOURS A YEAR FROM JANUARY 1, 1976.

MR. PRICE SAID IT WAS NOT WIDELY KNOWN THAT PRACTICALLY ALL LABOUR LEGISLATION PREPARED BY HIS DEPARTMENT WAS FIRST CONSIDERED BY THE LABOUR ADVISORY BOARD, CONSISTING OF FOUR LABOUR AND FOUR MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATIVES, UNDER HIS CHAIRMANSHIP.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE BOARD'S +HARD WORK AND INVALUABLE ADVICE,+ HE SAID IT WAS A CREDIT TO MEMBERS' PRAGMATISM THAT THEY HAD NEARLY ALWAYS REACHED UNANIMOUS AGREEMENT.

ON THE SUBJECT OF LABOUR RELATIONS, MR. PRICE POINTED OUT THAT INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES RECEIVED FRONT-PAGE HEADLINES WHEN A DISPUTE BROKE OUT, AND TWO LINES - IF THAT - ON AN INSIDE PAGE WHEN IT HAD BEEN SETTLED.

+THIS, OF COURSE, IS A FACT OF LIFE, BUT IT MEANS THE WHOLE IMAGE OF HONG KONG'S LABOUR RELATIONS TENDS TO BE DISTORTED IN THE PUBLIC EYE,+ HE SAID.

+IN FACT, THE NUMBER OF LABOUR STOPPAGES CAUSED BY INDUSTRIAL ACTION IN HONG KONG IS ONE OF THE LOWEST IN THE WORLD. SO FAR THIS YEAR, A POST-WAR LOW HAS BEEN ACHIEVED.

THIS YEAR'S VERY LOW FIGURES ARE LARGELY ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE REALISTIC ATTITUDE ADOPTED BY HONG KONG'S HARD-WORKING LABOUR FORCE IN THE PRESENT DIFFICULT WORLD TRADING CONDITIONS.

+THE OVERALL GOOD INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS SITUATION HAS BEEN ACHIEVED BECAUSE OF A REMARKABLE DEGREE OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES, WHO CONTRIBUTE SO MUCH TO OUR ECONOMIC PROGRESS.

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+I MUST MENTION ALSO THE MANY HOURS OF UNSUNG WORK, OFTEN BEHIND THE SCENES AND LATE AT NIGHT, BY THE CONCILIATION OFFICERS OF THE LABOUR RELATIONS SERVICE.+

MR. PRICE DISMISSED AS +WIDE OF THE MARK+ CRITICISM, PARTICULARLY FROM OVERSEAS, OF LABOUR CONDITIONS IN HONG KONG.

HE SAID THESE CRITICS OFTEN POINTED TO WHAT THEY REGARDED AS A LACK OF TRADE UNIONISM AND A LACK OF JOINT CONSULTATIVE MACHINERY AS EVIDENCE OF A LABOUR-MANAGEMENT GAP WORKING TO THE DETRIMENT OF EMPLOYEES.

HE SAID : +THE GOVERNMENT DOES, OF COURSE, WELCOME THE GROWTH OF RESPONSIBLE TRADE UNIONS, AND IT IS TRUE THAT SOME LARGE CONCERNS MAY NEED FORMALISED JOINT CONSULTATION.

+BUT IT IS OFTEN OVERLOOKED THAT NEARLY 90 PER CENT OF HONG KONG'S INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS EMPLOY FEWER THAN 50 WORKERS.

+ IN SUCH SMALL ESTABLISHMENTS CONTACTS BETWEEN EMPLOYER AND WORKERS TAKE PLACE FREQUENTLY - OFTEN DAILY.

+THEREFORE, TO ACHIEVE THE BEST POSSIBLE RESULTS, THE LABOUR RELATIONS SERVICE DIRECTS ITS EFFORTS TOWARDS PROMOTING FORMAL JOINT CONSULTATIVE MACHINERY IN THE LARGER, RATHER THAN SMALLER, UNDERTAKINGS ALTHOUGH THE LATTER ARE EQUALLY WELCOME TO SEEK ITS ADVICE.+

MR. PRICE SAID IT WAS TOO EARLY TO MAKE A POSITIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE FULL EFFECTS OF THE RECENTLY-INTRODUCED LEGISLATION PROVIDING A LEGAL BASIS FOR THE PAYMENT OF SEVERANCE PAY ON REDUNDANCY TO WORKERS.

+HOWEVER, I AM CONVINCED THAT THE INTRODUCTION OF THIS LEGISLATION WAS TIMELY AND HAS SO FAR HELPED TO PREVENT SERIOUS DISPUTES ARISING FROM REDUNDANCIES AND RETRENCHMENTS.+ HE ADDED.

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CHILD LABOUR
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THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, MR. IAN PRICE, PREDICTED TODAY THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S RECENTLY-ANNOUNCED EDUCATION PLANS WOULD EVENTUALLY WIPE OUT ALL CHILD LABOUR IN HONG KONG.

BUT IN THE MEANTIME, HE ASSURED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT WOULD CONTINUE ITS VIGOROUS DRIVE TO ENFORCE THE LAW AGAINST EMPLOYMENT IN INDUSTRY OF CHILDREN UNDER 14.

MR. PRICE REFUTED WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS UNFAIR CRITICISM ON CHILD LABOUR - CRITICISM WHICH, HE SAID, WAS USUALLY BASED ON INACCURATE INFORMATION OR DISTORTION OF THE FACTS.

HE POINTED OUT THAT SINCE LAST DECEMBER, THREE SPECIAL ANTI-CHILD LABOUR CAMPAIGNS HAD COVERED MORE THAN 14,000 FACTORIES - ABOUT HALF THE NUMBER IN HONG KONG - BUT HAD REVEALED ONLY 131 CASES INVOLVING 161 CHILDREN.

THESE CAMPAIGNS HAD SO FAR RESULTED IN 104 CONVICTIONS - SOME CASES WERE PENDING - WITH FINES OF MORE THAN \$31,000.

MR. PRICE ADDED: +TWO OF THESE CAMPAIGNS WERE CONDUCTED IN TERM TIME AND IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT BOTH DISCOVERED ONLY HALF THE NUMBER OF CASES BROUGHT TO LIGHT DURING THE OTHER CAMPAIGN, WHICH WAS CARRIED OUT DURING THE SCHOOL HOLIDAYS.+

SAID 14 SUCH CAMPAIGNS HAD BEEN MOUNTED IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS, TO BACK UP REGULAR DAILY AND NIGHTLY VISITS BY LABOUR INSPECTORS.

+VIGILANCE WILL NOT BE RELAXED, BUT THESE CAMPAIGNS ARE NOW PRODUCING ENCOURAGINGLY LOW RESULTS IN TERMS OF CHILDREN EMPLOYED ILLEGALLY,+ HE SAID.

+HERE I SHOULD REPEAT THAT IT HAS BEEN, AND WILL REMAIN, THE POLICY OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT TO PROSECUTE EVERY CASE DISCOVERED OF ILLEGAL EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN.+

MR. PRICE SAID THE DEPARTMENT'S TASK WOULD BE MADE EASIER WHEN ALL CHILDREN UNDER 14 HAD BEEN ISSUED WITH THE NEW JUVENILE IDENTITY CARDS.

AND, HE ADDED, THE PROPOSALS IN THE WHITE PAPER ON SECONDARY EDUCATION WERE MOST APPROPRIATE IN THE CONTEXT OF CHILD LABOUR.

+ULTIMATELY THEY WILL BE OF GREAT ASSISTANCE IN LEADING TO THE PROGRESSIVE CONTROL OF THE EMPLOYMENT OF ALL CHILDREN UNDER 14 AND TO ITS EVENTUAL ERADICATION FROM ALL SECTORS OF OUR ECONOMY,+ HE SAID.

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INDUSTRIAL TRAINING

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THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, MR. IAN PRICE TODAY ANNOUNCED PLANS BY THE HONG KONG TRAINING COUNCIL TO INVESTIGATE WAYS OF TRAINING TECHNOLOGISTS LOCALLY.

+IN THE PAST,+ HE SAID, +POST-GRADUATE TRAINING OF TECHNOLOGISTS HAD TO BE OBTAINED OVERSEAS. BUT OPPORTUNITIES THERE ARE NOW DIMINISHING, AND ALTERNATIVES HAVE TO BE FOUND.+

HE SAID THE COUNCIL HAD ALSO STARTED INVESTIGATING THE TRAINING NEEDS OF THE COMMERCE AND SERVICES SECTORS, AS WELL AS UPDATING MANPOWER SURVEYS IN INDUSTRY CARRIED OUT BY ITS FORERUNNER, THE INDUSTRIAL TRAINING ADVISORY COUNCIL.

HE REPORTED ENCOURAGING PROGRESS IN THE APPRENTICESHIP FIELD, WHERE ABOUT 180 EMPLOYERS HAD NOW BEEN HELPED TO ESTABLISH MODERN APPRENTICESHIP SCHEMES BY THE DEPARTMENT'S INDUSTRIAL TRAINING DIVISION.

THE DIVISION HAD ALREADY PLACED ABOUT 2,500 SUITABLE YOUNG MEN IN THESE SCHEMES.

MR. PRICE SAID THE DIVISION - WHICH SERVICES THE HKTC COMPLEX OF 15 BOARDS AND COMMITTEES - WAS HAVING PROBLEMS RECRUITING SUITABLE STAFF.

+THIS STAFF SHORTAGE HAD IMPOSED A TREMENDOUS BURDEN ON PRESENT OFFICERS OF THE DIVISION, AND ONLY THEIR RESOLUTION AND ENTHUSIASM HAVE MAINTAINED THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE COUNCIL,+ HE SAID.

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INDUSTRIAL SAFETY

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THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT IS PLANNING NEW LEGISLATION TO SPEED UP REPORTING OF INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS - AND CUT DOWN ON EMPLOYERS' PAPER WORK IN THE PROCESS.

THIS WILL BE DONE BY SIMPLIFYING REPORTING PROCEDURES, WHICH AT PRESENT ARE DIFFERENT UNDER THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS ORDINANCE AND THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ORDINANCE:

THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, MR. IAN PRICE, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY HE HAD CREATED A NEW UNIT WITHIN HIS DEPARTMENT SOME TIME AGO TO IMPROVE THE COLLECTION, CLASSIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF ACCIDENT STATISTICS. THE IMPROVED ANALYSIS WOULD INDICATE MORE CLEARLY THE CAUSES OF ACCIDENTS.

+THIS WILL HELP ME TO INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO DEAL MORE EFFECTIVELY WITH DANGEROUS MACHINERY, AND TO USE THE FACTORY INSPECTORATE TO THE BEST ADVANTAGE,+ HE SAID.

MR. PRICE ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD SOON BE ASKED TO APPROVE IN PRINCIPLE THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT'S DETAILED FIVE-YEAR PLAN FOR THE PROMOTION OF INDUSTRIAL SAFETY.

+THIS PROGRAMME DEALS MAINLY WITH SAFETY EDUCATION IN ITS BROADEST SENSE BECAUSE WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING AT ALL LEVELS LITTLE PROGRESS CAN BE MADE,+ HE SAID.

+THIS IS ONLY ONE ASPECT OF THE DRIVE TO IMPROVE INDUSTRIAL SAFETY.

+THE OTHER ASPECTS - THE LONGER-TERM POLICIES OF SAFETY LEGISLATION, AND THE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING OF THE FACTORY INSPECTORATE - ARE CURRENTLY BEING STUDIED BY A HIGHLY-QUALIFIED FACTORY INSPECTOR FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM, ACTING AS LABOUR ADVISER TO ME.+

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NEW DIRECTION IN EDUCATION SYSTEM

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THE WHITE PAPER ON SECONDARY EDUCATION DURING THE NEXT DECADE GENUINELY POINTS TO A NEW DIRECTION IN HONG KONG'S EDUCATION SYSTEM. +IT DOES THIS BY CALLING FOR A NEW GENERAL CURRICULUM IN THE FIRST THREE YEARS OF SECONDARY EDUCATION,+ MR. KENNETH TOPLEY, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

IT CALLS FOR A MORE PRACTICAL APPROACH IN THE THREE JUNIOR SECONDARY YEARS.

MR. TOPLEY STATED: +IT IS CLEAR THAT THIS CURRICULUM FOR WHICH WE INTEND TO PRODUCE SUBSTANTIAL DRAFT PROPOSALS BY MARCH 1975 MUST BE TAUGHT AT DIFFERENT LEVELS AND DEPTHS IN THE GREAT VARIETY OF HONG KONG SCHOOLS.

+IT WILL TAKE TIME TO ESTABLISH NOT ONLY BECAUSE IT CALLS FOR GREATER USE OF EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS BUT BECAUSE IT CALLS FOR A NEW APPROACH IN TEACHING, FOR MORE PROBLEM SOLVING, LESS MEMORY WORK AND MORE PRACTICAL THINKING. THIS CANNOT HAPPEN OVERNIGHT.+

ANSWERING A POINT RAISED BY MRS. JOYCE SYMONS, THE DIRECTOR SAID THE CURRICULUM BEING PREPARED BY THE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE WAS BASED ON THE PRINCIPLE, ADOPTED BY THAT COMMITTEE, THAT 'ALL STUDENTS SHOULD HAVE COMPLETED A COURSE DESIGNED TO ENABLE THEM TO TAKE THEIR PLACE AS GOOD CITIZENS OF HONG KONG READY TO FACE THE DEMANDS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYMENT AS WELL AS TO LIVE A SATISFYING AND REWARDING PERSONAL AND FAMILY LIFE'.

AT THE SAME TIME, BECAUSE IT IS RECOGNISED THAT MANY STUDENTS WILL BE PROCEEDING TO FORM V, THE COURSE MUST ALSO LAY FIRM FOUNDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY OF THE NORMAL ACADEMIC, PRACTICAL AND CULTURAL SUBJECTS.

IT IS PLANNED TO HAVE NEW SUGGESTED SYLLABUSES READY FOR SEPTEMBER 1975 AS CHILDREN WILL BE ENTERING THE THREE-YEAR COURSE ON THAT DATE.

DEALING WITH THE CRITICAL THEME THAT SUBSIDIZED OR FREE SCHOOL PLACES SHOULD BE PROVIDED AT ALL LEVELS, MR. TOPLEY SAID: +A MAJOR THEME OF THE WHITE PAPER IS THAT THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO ADVANCE IN THIS DIRECTION BUT WITHIN ITS RESOURCES.+

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE OBJECTIVE OF PROVIDING THREE YEARS SUBSIDIZED EDUCATION FOR ALL MADE IT POSSIBLE TO DO AWAY WITH THE SECONDARY SCHOOL ENTRANCE EXAMINATION BUT NOT BEFORE THE PLACES WERE ACTUALLY PROVIDED.

+THIS IS ALREADY A MASSIVE OPERATION AND CORRESPONDINGLY EXPENSIVE,+ HE EMPHASISED.

/MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

TURNING TO THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION ISSUE, THE DIRECTOR SAID: +IT IS CLEAR AS HAS BEEN STATED BOTH IN THE GREEN AND IN THE WHITE PAPER THAT THERE ARE STRONG EDUCATIONAL ARGUMENTS FOR CHINESE AS THE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION BUT TO FORCE ALL SCHOOLS TO USE CHINESE EXCLUSIVELY IS ANOTHER MATTER.+

THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT FORCED TEACHING IN ENGLISH UPON THE SCHOOLS BUT HAS RESPONDED TO PARENTAL DEMAND EXPRESSED THROUGH THE SPONSORS OF NEW SCHOOLS.

+NEVERTHELESS, UNDER THE WHITE PAPER ARRANGEMENTS I AM SURE THAT THERE WILL BE MORE USE OF CHINESE IN THE SCHOOLS FOR TEACHING GENERAL SUBJECTS AND THAT THIS IS RIGHT,+ HE SAID.

THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WILL MONITOR DEVELOPMENTS TO ENSURE THAT THERE IS AN ADEQUATE BALANCE.

+AND FOR THIS,+ MR. TOPLEY SAID, +I AM SURE THAT WE SHALL REQUIRE TO DEVOTE MORE RESOURCES TO IMPROVING THE TEACHING OF BOTH CHINESE AND ENGLISH.

+NOT ONLY DO WE NEED AN INTERNAL LINGUA FRANCA WHICH CHINESE PROVIDES WHILE AT THE SAME TIME OPENING A DOOR TO THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF CHINA BUT ALSO STUDENTS NEED TO BE EQUIPPED WITH AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE WITH WHICH TO LOOK AND SPEAK OUTWARD. IF WE BECOME TOO TURNED IN OUR OWN AFFAIRS WE SHALL NOT BE ABLE TO EARN OUR WAY WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD.+

THE DIRECTOR WAS SURE THAT CHINESE HAD A VITAL PART TO PLAY AS THE MOTHER TONGUE OF THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF OUR POPULATION, AND TO THIS END MAXIMUM EFFORT WOULD BE MADE TO IMPROVE THE STANDARD OF CHINESE TEACHING. IT WOULD BE HARD, HOWEVER, FOR ALL TO ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE IN BOTH LANGUAGES.

+IT WILL BE FOR PUPILS THEMSELVES AS THEY ADVANCE THROUGH THEIR SCHOOL YEARS, GUIDED BY THEIR PARENTS AND BY THEIR SCHOOLS, TO DECIDE WHERE AND HOW THEIR LINGUISTIC EFFORTS ARE TO BE MADE.

+THE ARRANGEMENTS WE ARE PROPOSING SHOULD GIVE MAXIMUM SCOPE AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THESE DECISIONS TO BE MADE IN A SENSIBLE WAY,+ MR. TOPLEY SAID.

JUNIOR CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION

REFERRING TO CRITICISM OF THE PROPOSAL TO INTRODUCE A JUNIOR CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION, THE DIRECTOR SAID THE FACT THAT SINCE THE EXAMINATION WAS NOT TO BE INTRODUCED UNTIL 1982 +THERE MAY WELL BE CHANGES IN THE EDUCATIONAL SCENE AND THE NEEDS OF PUPILS. (CERTAINLY OUR ULTIMATE AIM SHOULD BE ABOLITION IF WE CAN HAVE PROMOTION FROM FORM III TO FORM V TO THE FULL EXTENT THAT IS NEEDED AND DESIRED. BUT WE ARE A VERY LONG WAY FROM THIS IDEAL STATE OF AFFAIRS.) BUT WE SHALL NEED SELECTION AT FORM III FOR MANY YEARS. THIS IS A FACT WHICH MUST BE FACED. THE QUESTION THEN BECOMES HOW WE SELECT. THE PRINCIPALS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS MUST BE ABLE TO RELY ON SELECTION PROCEDURES WHICH ARE FAIR AND, MORE IMPORTANT, ARE SEEN TO BE FAIR BY THE PUBLIC.+

/HE SAID

HE SAID UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL HAD MADE MANY USEFUL POINTS - CUMULATIVE RECORDS= ATTAINMENT, APTITUDE AND ABILITY TESTS= TEACHERS' ASSESSMENTS= ASSESSMENTS OF THE PRACTICAL WORK DONE BY PUPILS AS IS DONE IN THE CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

+ALL THESE ARE VALUABLE SUGGESTIONS, BUT AS MATTERS STAND A PUBLIC EXAMINATION MUST BE AN ELEMENT, POSSIBLY A MAJOR ELEMENT IN THE SELECTION PROCEDURE IF THIS PROCESS IS TO BE ORDERLY AND ABOVE ALL SEEN TO BE FAIR,+ HE STRESSED.

THE DIRECTOR GAVE AN ASSURANCE TO THE UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS THAT BEFORE +WE IMPLEMENT A NEW SYSTEM OF PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS MUCH DELIBERATIONS AND CONSULTATION WILL TAKE PLACE.

+THE IDEAS OF EDUCATORS, OF LAYMEN INTERESTED IN EDUCATION, AND GRASS ROOTS PUBLIC OPINION WILL ALL BE THOROUGHLY SOUNDED AND CONSIDERED,+ HE SAID.

INTAKE TO SECONDARY SCHOOLS

WITH THE ABOLITION OF THE S.S.E.E. IN 1979 OTHER ARRANGEMENTS WILL HAVE TO BE MADE TO SELECT AND ALLOCATE.

THE PRELIMINARY VIEW OF THE DIRECTOR IS THAT PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS MUST BE LINKED TOGETHER, PROBABLY ON A ZONAL BASIS AND THAT EACH ZONE SHOULD HAVE ITS ALLOCATING TEAM OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVES, INCLUDING OFFICERS OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

+I ENTIRELY AGREE THAT WE MUST FIRMLY ENCOURAGE SECONDARY SCHOOLS TO ACCEPT PUPILS OF ALL LEVELS OF ABILITY. IF CERTAIN SCHOOLS INSIST ON TAKING ONLY THE BETTER QUALITY PUPILS, OTHER SCHOOLS WILL JUSTIFIABLY WANT TO DO THE SAME AND A BASIC AIM OF THE WHITE PAPER WILL BE FRUSTRATED.+

A WORKING GROUP IS BEING SET UP TO RECOMMEND A SELECTION AND ALLOCATION SYSTEM THAT IS SEEN TO BE FAIR.

MR. TOPLEY SAID: +THE PUBLIC WILL HAVE TO BE ASSURED THAT MALPRACTICE OR FAVOURITISM CAN PLAY NO PART IN THESE PROCEDURES.+

PREVOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

THE DIRECTOR CLARIFIED SOME MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE TO PREVOCATIONAL SCHOOLS.

HE SAID: +THE CHANGE IN EMPHASIS FROM THAT OF THE GREEN PAPER TO THAT OF THE WHITE PAPER DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS LOST FAITH IN THE PREVOCATIONAL SCHOOLS, THAT PREVOCATIONAL SCHOOLS AND THE SPONSORS WHO ARE DEDICATED TO THE IDEA OF THE PREVOCATIONAL HAVE IN SOME WAY LOST THE SEAL OF THE GOVERNMENT'S APPROVAL ON THEIR WORK. WHAT IT DOES MEAN IS THAT THE GOVERNMENT FOLLOWING THE TENOR OF ADVICE GIVEN FEELS THAT THE EMPHASIS SHOULD LIE IN A NINE-YEAR GENERAL COURSE FOR OUR CHILDREN, THAT IT IS TOO EARLY TO DIVIDE CHILDREN INTO DISPARATE EDUCATIONAL CATEGORIES AT THE PRIMARY 6 LEVEL AND THAT THE INCREASINGLY COMPLEX DEMANDS, TECHNICAL, COMMERCIAL OR PROFESSIONAL, OF THE EIGHTIES WILL DEMAND A NINE-YEAR BASIC COURSE OF GENERAL EDUCATION WHICH INCLUDES A SUBSTANTIAL TECHNICAL/PRACTICAL ELEMENT.+

MR. TOPLEY MADE IT CLEAR THAT EXISTING AND PLANNED PREVOCATIONALS WILL CONTINUE AND WILL EXPAND UP TO THE TARGET OF SOME 10,000 PLACES.

+THIS MEANS THEIR NUMBER WILL BE TREBLED AND THEY WILL EXPAND FURTHER, IF, AS I VERY MUCH HOPE, THEY ADOPT THE EXTENDED DAY MODE OF OPERATION AND MAXIMISE THE USE OF THEIR ACCOMMODATION,+ HE SAID.

PREVOCATIONALS WILL CONTINUE TO EXIST IN THEIR OWN RIGHT AND WITH PARITY OF ESTEEM AND IMPORTANCE WITH OTHER SCHOOLS.

TECHNICAL LECTURERS TRAINING

ON MR. JAMES WU'S REFERENCE TO THE NEED FOR UP-DATING THE TRAINING OF LECTURERS IN THE TECHNICAL FIELD, THE DIRECTOR SAID THAT THE ORGANISATION OF SUCH RETRAINING LOCALLY WAS THE RESPONSIBILITY AT THIS STAGE OF THE TECHNICAL TEACHERS' COLLEGE.

HE EXPRESSED SOME DEGREE OF SATISFACTION AT THE SPEED WITH WHICH THIS COLLEGE WAS SET UP AND WITH THE EXCELLENT START IT HAS MADE SINCE THE OPENING DATE ONLY TWO MONTHS AGO.

+IN ADDITION, WE HAVE, AND HAVE HAD FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS, A SIGNIFICANT PROGRAMME OF OVERSEAS COURSES AND ATTACHMENTS FOR OFFICERS IN THE TECHNICAL FIELD TO ENSURE THE UP-DATING OF THE BASIC KNOWLEDGE OF THESE OFFICERS. THIS IS AN IMPORTANT MATTER WITH MODERN TECHNOLOGY MOVING AT THE RATE IT DOES.

+I FULLY APPRECIATE THE NEED FOR THE TECHNICAL INSTITUTES KEEPING IN THE CLOSEST POSSIBLE TOUCH WITH INDUSTRY AND I WILL GIVE EVERY ENCOURAGEMENT TO MY OFFICERS TO DO JUST THIS,+ MR. TOPLEY SAID.

SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION

REFERRING TO MR. CHEONG-LEEN'S REQUEST THAT A PAPER BE PREPARED ON THE EXTENSION OF EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION TO THE SECONDARY AND TERTIARY SECTORS OF EDUCATION WITHIN 18 MONTHS, THE DIRECTOR SAID: +THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALREADY APPROVED IN PRINCIPLE THE INTRODUCTION OF EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION INTO SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

+DETAILED PROPOSALS RESPECTING EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN FORMULATED AND ARE BEING STUDIED IN THE COLONIAL SECRETARIAT. SUCH A DEVELOPMENT WILL INDEED BE VERY VALUABLE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR SECONDARY EDUCATION.+

ON TACKLING THE PROBLEM OF DROPPING OUT, MR. TOPLEY SAID THE USE OF COMPULSORY POWERS WAS CERTAINLY RELEVANT BUT HE WOULD COUNSEL AT THIS STAGE AGAINST THE INTRODUCTION OF FURTHER LEGISLATION ON COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.

+WITHOUT A LARGE NUMBER OF ATTENDANCE OFFICERS, IT WOULD BE UNENFORCEABLE. FURTHERMORE, THE STATISTICS I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GATHER INDICATE THAT THE PROBLEM OF DROP-OUT IS QUANTITATIVELY SMALL, I.E. ONLY A VERY SMALL PERCENTAGE OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL ENROLMENT IN FACT DROP OUT. THIS IS NOT TO PLAY DOWN THE SERIOUS IMPLICATION FOR SOCIETY OF CHILDREN NOT AT SCHOOL INCLUDING THOSE DROPPING OUT,+ HE SAID.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN

MR. TOPLEY WAS CONSULTING THE DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION SERVICES ON THE BEST WAY OF MOUNTING A SHORT BUT INTENSIVE PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN, STRESSING THE IMPORTANCE OF CHILDREN OF ATTENDING SCHOOL AND OF COMPLETING THE FULL PRIMARY COURSE TO PARENTS.

+THIS WILL MAKE CLEAR TO THE PUBLIC IN GENERAL AND TO SOCIAL WORKERS IN PARTICULAR, WHAT THEY SHOULD DO IN CASES OF CHILDREN DROPPING OUT OR NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL. IT WILL ALSO EXPLAIN WHAT ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE TO REMEDY THE SITUATION,+ HE SAID.

THE DIRECTOR WENT ON TO SAY: +WHEN WE HAVE ACHIEVED THE NINE-YEAR BASIC COURSE, THE PROBLEM OF DROPPING OUT WILL EMERGE AT THE FORMS I TO III LEVEL, PROBABLY IN A MORE INTRACTABLE FORM.

+FURTHERMORE, UNTIL THE AIM OF HAVING PLACES AVAILABLE FOR 100 PER CENT OF THE 12-14 AGE GROUP IS ACHIEVED, I CANNOT OVER-EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF TRYING TO FILL THE GAP BY SOME INTERIM MEASURES.

+THE COUNCIL FOR RECREATION AND SPORT WILL BE ABLE TO HELP HERE AS WILL THE WIDE RANGE OF ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING CRAFT COURSES BEING ORGANISED BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT. I MYSELF AM GIVING PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO ASSESSING THE NEED FOR EVENING CLASSES.+

AGE OF ENTRY TO PRIMARY SCHOOL

TURNING TO MR. WILSON WANG'S PROPOSAL THAT THE AGE OF ENTRY TO PRIMARY SCHOOL SHOULD BE REDUCED FROM 6 TO 5, MR. TOPLEY SAID THIS COULD INDEED BE A DESIRABLE DEVELOPMENT FROM THE EDUCATIONAL VIEWPOINT OF THE PUPILS AND THEIR PARENTS.

+BUT IT BECOMES FULLY DESIRABLE ONLY IN THE CONTEXT OF STILL GREATER FINANCIAL RESOURCES APPLIED TO EDUCATION. WHILE THE RESOURCES APPLIED TO EDUCATION ARE THE SAME, THE WEIGHT WILL BE FELT IN THE FORM OF STRONGER DEMAND FOR PLACES IN SECONDARY AND TERTIARY EDUCATION.+

HE POINTED OUT THAT IT WOULD MEAN THAT SOME CHILDREN WOULD COMPLETE THREE YEARS OF SECONDARY EDUCATION BEFORE THEIR 14TH BIRTHDAY AND BEFORE THEY WERE FULLY ELIGIBLE FOR EMPLOYMENT.

+I THEREFORE WELCOME THE SUGGESTION BUT BELIEVE THAT THIS PROPOSAL SHOULD BE FURTHER DISCUSSED WHEN THE TARGETS IN THE WHITE PAPER HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED AND THE NEXT STAGE OF REVIEW HAS BEEN REACHED.+

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

MR. TOPLEY CONSIDERED THE EMPHASIS LAID BY MISS KO SIU-WAH ON EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES TO BE ENTIRELY JUSTIFIED.

HE ADMITTED THAT THE EXTENDED DAY ARRANGEMENTS +MAY MAKE FOR CERTAIN DIFFICULTIES IN THE ORGANISATION OF EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES BUT IN OTHER WAYS THE STAGGERING OF THE TIMES OF DISMISSAL OF CLASSES AT THE END OF THE SESSION MAY BE HELPFUL. I AM CONSTANTLY ENCOURAGING SCHOOLS TO EXTEND THEIR ACTIVITIES IN THIS FIELD AND MANY SCHOOLS DO A GREAT DEAL IN THIS DIRECTION.+

THE DIRECTOR WAS HOPING TO EXTEND THE LUEN YI SCHEME IN WHICH ONE SCHOOL, NORMALLY A SECONDARY, 'ADOPTS' A SMALLER PRIMARY SCHOOL TO SUPPORT A WIDE RANGE OF COMMUNITY SERVICE ACTIVITIES.

ACCEPTING MISS KO'S POINT THAT SCHOOLS REPRESENTED A VALUABLE CAPITAL INVESTMENT AND SHOULD NOT LIE EMPTY AFTER SCHOOL HOURS EXCEPT FOR PUPILS ENGAGED ON EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, MR. TOPLEY SAID THAT A MAJOR PRIORITY WAS TO EXTEND THE RANGE OF ADULT EDUCATION ACTIVITIES WHICH INCLUDED EVENING CALSSES.

QUALITY

TURNING TO CRITICISM OF THE WHITE PAPER FOR SAYING VERY LITTLE ON QUALITY, MR. TOPLEY SAID : +THIS HAS GIVEN A MISLEADING IMPRESSION TO THE PUBLIC THAT THE GOVERNMENT AND THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SIMPLY DO NOT CARE ENOUGH ABOUT QUALITY, THAT ONLY QUANTITY LOOMS LARGE IN OUR PLANS. NOTHING IS FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH. QUALITY IS A DIFFICULT AND ABSTRACT CONCEPT. IT IS OFTEN DEFINED IN TERMS OF BASIC EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHIES.

+I PREFER TO TAKE A MORE REALISTIC POSITION. IN MY VIEW, QUALITY IS A GOOD TEACHER, GIVING A GOOD LESSON TO PUPILS WHO FEEL THEY ARE LEARNING SOMETHING WORTHWHILE. THE KEY MUST LIE IN THE TEACHER AND IN THE EQUIPMENT AND MATERIAL AVAILABLE TO HIM FOR TEACHING. THUS TEACHER TRAINING AND RE-TRAINING IS THE KEY TO QUALITY.

+THE BASIC TEACHER TRAINING COURSES, THE THIRD YEAR COURSES TO EXTEND THE RANGE OF BASIC TRAINING, THE RE-TRAINING AND REFRESHER COURSES LONG AND SHORT, OVERSEAS COURSES, ALL HAVE A PART TO PLAY, ALL ARE BEING LOOKED AT WITH A VIEW TO IMPROVEMENTS.+

MR. TOPLEY SAID THE FOURTH COLLEGE OF EDUCATION WOULD BE THOUGHT OUT AND DESIGNED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF TRAINING TEACHERS TO PARTICIPATE IN A NEW EDUCATIONAL WORLD WHERE NEW AND MORE PRACTICAL SYLLABUSES WOULD BE TAUGHT.

HE SAID THAT THE CHINESE AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTRES WERE IN THEIR INFANCY BUT WERE SUSCEPTIBLE OF GREAT DEVELOPMENT.

MR. TOPLEY WAS CONSIDERING THE DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS' CENTRES BASED ON VISUAL EDUCATION AND TEACHING RESOURCE CENTRES. +WE HAVE ENOUGH SPARE PRIMARY ACCOMMODATION FOR THIS,+ HE ADDED.

THE INSPECTORATE, ABOVE ALL, HAS A VITAL ROLE TO PLAY, SO HAS THE DEVELOPMENT OF MORE APPROPRIATE AND LESS ACADEMIC SYLLABUSES.

+THERE IS NO ONE PANACEA WHICH WILL ENSURE QUALITY. THE PROBLEM HAS TO BE ATTACKED FROM EVERY QUARTER WITH DETERMINATION AND VIGOUR. THIS IS PRECISELY WHAT WE ARE DOING,+ THE DIRECTOR STRESSED.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

ALTHOUGH THERE WAS NO SPECIFIC MENTION OF EDUCATION FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN IN THE WHITE PAPER, MR. TOPLEY EMPHASISED THAT THE TARGETS SET FOR EDUCATION IN THE WHITE PAPER WERE ALSO ACCEPTED FOR CHILDREN NEEDING SPECIAL EDUCATION. BUT IT WOULD TAKE LONGER TO ACHIEVE.

+EVERY EFFORT WILL BE MADE TO ACCELERATE THE SECOND FIVE YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION NOW IN ITS THIRD YEAR AND TO DEVELOP IT TO INCLUDE AS MUCH EXPANSION IN THE SECONDARY SECTOR AS IS FEASIBLE.+

THE FIGURE OF 120,000 HANDICAPPED CHILDREN MENTIONED BY DR. FANG AND ACCEPTED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WAS A NOTIONAL ONE.

THE DIRECTOR SAID IT WAS ARRIVED AT BY ASSUMING THAT TEN PER CENT OF THE SCHOOL AGE POPULATION HAVE SOME FORM OF HANDICAP, THE PREPONDERANCE BEING SLOW LEARNERS. +IN FACT THE MAJORITY OF THESE CHILDREN ARE IN SCHOOL ALREADY RECEIVING A FORM OF PRIMARY EDUCATION NOT REALLY APPROPRIATE TO THEIR PRESENT LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT. WHAT IS IDEALLY REQUIRED IS THE PROVISION OF SPECIAL CLASSES FOR ALL SLOW LEARNERS. THIS WILL TAKE TIME. IN THE MEANTIME I INTEND THAT THERE SHOULD BE FRESH ARRANGEMENTS IN THE ORDINARY PRIMARY SCHOOL CLASSES TO MODIFY THE SYLLABUS TO BETTER MEET THE NEEDS OF THOSE PUPILS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES.+

DR. FANG HAS SAID THAT FOR THE 120,000 HANDICAPPED CHILDREN THERE ARE PLACES FOR LESS THAN 5,000.

IN FACT, MR. TOPLEY SAID, +THERE ARE 8,500 PLACES WHEN SPECIAL CLASSES ARE COUNTED IN, WHICH THEY CERTAINLY SHOULD BE.+

STATING THAT SPECIAL EDUCATION IS A DIFFERENT AND DIFFICULT QUESTION, THE DIRECTOR EMPHASISED THAT +EVEN WITH THE MOST GENEROUS POSSIBLE ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES IT WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE TO DISPOSE OF THIS PROBLEM COMPLETELY WITHIN A BRIEF PERIOD.

/+NEVERTHELESS

+NEVERTHELESS WE HAVE MADE A SUBSTANTIAL BEGINNING AND I AM CONVINCED WE ARE WORKING ALONG THE RIGHT LINES. WHAT IS MORE, OUR ACHIEVEMENT AND OUR STANDARDS OF WORK COMPARE FAVOURABLY WITH THE WORK DONE IN MANY NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES.+

ENGLISH SCHOOL PLACES

REGARDING THE CONCERN EXPRESSED BY MR. WILLIAMS IN RESPECT OF THE PROVISION OF ENGLISH SCHOOL PLACES, MR. TOPLEY ASSURED HIM THAT THE PRESENT POSITION WAS NOT DUE TO A LACK OF FORESIGHT OR PLANNING BUT TO A NEED TO USE AVAILABLE FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO THE UTMOST AGAINST AN ERRATIC DEMAND.

TO MEET THE PRESENT DEMAND, THE DIRECTOR SAID HE INTENDED TO USE SPARE ACCOMMODATION IN EXISTING BUILDINGS.

AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL, EASTERN HOSPITAL ROAD SCHOOL ON HONG KONG ISLAND AND TAI HANG TUNG SCHOOL IN YAU YAT CHUEN IN KOWLOON, THE FORMER ON A TEMPORARY BASIS UNTIL A NEW SCHOOL WAS BUILT AT STUBBS ROAD AND THE LATTER ON A PERMANENT BASIS.

+IN ADDITION, I INTEND TO CONTINUE TO USE THE EXISTING QUARRY BAY AND KENNEDY ROAD SCHOOLS UNTIL THEY CAN BE REPROVISIONED AS ONE SCHOOL ON A SITE ON THE SOUTHERN PART OF THE ISLAND,+ HE SAID.

AS REGARDS THE STUBBS ROAD SITE IT IS NOW INTENDED THAT A NEW SCHOOL TO BE RUN BY THE ENGLISH SCHOOLS FOUNDATION SHOULD BE BUILT ON THIS SITE. +I REGRET TO STATE, HOWEVER, THAT THE STUBBS ROAD PROJECT HAS FAILED TO COMPETE IN THE PUBLIC WORKS SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THIS COUNCIL WITH OTHER PRIORITY PROJECTS, AND CANNOT THEREFORE BE PROCEEDED WITH AT PRESENT DUE TO THE LACK OF FUNDS.+

AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL, THE DIRECTOR SAID + IT WILL BE ENTIRELY POSSIBLE TO USE THE PREMISES OF THE FORMER MILITARY HOSPITAL IN BOWEN ROAD AS AN ANNEX TO ISLAND SCHOOL ON HONG KONG ISLAND AND NECESSARY ALTERATIONS CAN BE PUT ON HAND STRAIGHT AWAY. A DEGREE OF FLOTATION CAN ALSO BE INTRODUCED IN KING GEORGE V SCHOOL IN KOWLOON. BOTH OF THESE MEASURES WILL BE TEMPORARY UNTIL A NEW SECONDARY SCHOOL CAN BE BUILT ON A SITE AVAILABLE IN CORNWALL STREET, KOWLOON.+ HOWEVER, MR. TOPLEY EMPHASISED THAT +NO FUNDS ARE AVAILABLE FOR THIS PROJECT AT PRESENT, AND I WILL TRY TO INTRODUCE AN ITEM IN THE PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME.+

HE EXPLAINED THAT FOR THE TIME BEING, BY PRESENT CALCULATIONS UNTIL 1978, ADEQUATE PLACES COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH-SPEAKING SCHOOLS AT BOTH THE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY LEVELS.

+IN THE LONGER TERM WE FACE A NEW SITUATION IN WHICH THE CASE FOR NEW SCHOOLS IS GENERALLY AGREED BUT IN WHICH THE SHORTAGE OF FUNDS IN RELATION TO THE STRENGTH OF OTHER COMPETING ITEMS OF CAPITAL EXPENDITURE MAKE THE SITUATION MUCH MORE DIFFICULT.

/+I HAVE

+I HAVE BEGUN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE ENGLISH SCHOOLS FOUNDATION AND THE JOINT COUNCIL OF PARENT-TEACHERS ASSOCIATIONS AS TO HOW BEST TO MEET THIS SITUATION, TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE BREATHING SPACE PROVIDED BY THE TEMPORARY ARRANGEMENTS WHICH I HAVE DESCRIBED,+ HE SAID.

GOOD PROGRESS MADE

THE DIRECTOR ENDED HIS ADDRESS BY DRAWING ATTENTION TO THE TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF PROGRESS ACHIEVED SINCE THE PREVIOUS WHITE PAPER ON EDUCATION WAS APPROVED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN 1965.

IN 1964 THERE WERE SOME 43,000 KINDERGARTEN PUPILS WHEREAS THIS YEAR THERE ARE 144,000. IN 1964 THERE WERE 316,000 PUPILS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR, TODAY THERE ARE 577,000 SUCH PUPILS.

AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL THE NUMBER ENROLLED IN GOVERNMENT, GRANT AND SUBSIDIZED SCHOOLS WAS 47,000. TODAY THERE ARE 180,000 PUPILS ENROLLED IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR, INCLUDING BOUGHT PLACES.

+IN THE FIELD OF QUALITY,+ HE SAID, +THERE HAS BEEN A COMPARABLE ADVANCE AS INSTANCED BY THE INTRODUCTION OF E.T.V. INTO SCHOOLS AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL, THE EXTENSION FROM ONE-YEAR TO TWO-YEARS COURSES IN THE COLLEGES OF EDUCATION AND THE INTRODUCTION OF THREE-YEAR COURSES IN CERTAIN SPECIALIST FIELDS= THE SETTING UP OF TEACHING CENTRES THE BUILDING OF A TECHNICAL INSTITUTE= THE OPENING OF A TECHNICAL TEACHERS' COLLEGE, THE INTRODUCTION OF THE SUMMER RECREATION PROGRAMME AND AT FORM V LEVEL THE CHANGE FROM A GROUP BASED EXAMINATION TO A SUBJECT BASED ONE WHICH CAN BE TAKEN IN EITHER ENGLISH OR CHINESE.+

MR. TOPLEY MENTIONED THE VIGOROUS DEVELOPMENT OF THE CURRICULUM AND TEACHING TECHNIQUES DURING THIS PERIOD WHEN FREE PRIMARY SCHOOLING WAS INTRODUCED.

IN THE SAME PERIOD TWO DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION WERE APPROVED, A NEW TEACHING STRUCTURE AND INCREASED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE WAS ACCORDED TO SCHOOLS IN THE AIDED SECTOR AND THE FORMER TECHNICAL COLLEGE DEVELOPED INTO A POLYTECHNIC.

AS REGARDS THE FUTURE, MR. TOPLEY SAID: +THERE IS MUCH STILL TO BE DONE AS I WELL KNOW. I AM SURE I CAN RELY UPON THE SUPPORT OF HONOURABLE MEMBERS IN THIS AND INDEED WE SHALL NEED THE SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF THOSE CONCERNED WITH AND CONCERNED ABOUT EDUCATION IN ALL SECTIONS OF OUR SOCIETY.+

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MORE RESIDENTIAL LAND TO BE MADE AVAILABLE IN NEW TERRITORIES

THE SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, THE HON. DAVID AKERS-JONES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY THAT MORE LAND WILL BE RESUMED IN THE NEW TERRITORIES NEXT YEAR TO PROVIDE YET MORE LAND FOR HOUSING PROJECTS.

LAST YEAR, HE SAID, SOME EIGHT MILLION SQUARE FEET OF PRIVATE LAND WERE RESUMED FOR PUBLIC USE.

MR. AKERS-JONES ADDED THAT WITH REGARD TO THE ACQUISITION OF PRIVATE LAND IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST, THE NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION LAST YEAR INTRODUCED A NEW METHOD OF COMPENSATING OWNERS OF LAND OUTSIDE THE NEW TOWNS AT A MORE REALISTIC RATE.

HOWEVER, HE SAID, THE LAND EXCHANGE SYSTEM, WHICH DEPENDS ON THE AVAILABILITY OF SUITABLE LAND FOR EXCHANGE, WAS NOT FUNCTIONING AS WELL AS HE WOULD LIKE.

HE EXPLAINED THAT THIS WAS BECAUSE THE DEMAND FOR LAND FOR PUBLIC HOUSING WAS SO GREAT THAT THERE WAS INSUFFICIENT LAND READILY AVAILABLE WITHIN A REASONABLE TIME SPAN TO ENABLE THE GOVERNMENT TO GRANT LAND IN EXCHANGE.

+THIS, AND A NUMBER OF OTHER LAND PROBLEMS ARE CONCERNING MY DEPARTMENT AT THIS MOMENT AND I MENTION THEM TODAY BY WAY OF EXPLANATION TO THIS COUNCIL AND TO A WIDER PUBLIC SO THAT THERE IS A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF THE FREQUENT REFERENCES IN OUR DAILY NEWSPAPERS TO THE VIGOROUS DISSATISFACTION SO FREQUENTLY VOICED ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT'S LAND POLICIES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES AND THE REGULAR DISCUSSIONS I HOLD WITH THE HEUNG YEE KUK. WE HAVE TO FIND AN EQUITABLE SOLUTION TO THESE QUESTIONS,+ MR. AKERS-JONES SAID.

IN REPLY TO A POINT RAISED BY THE HON. Q.W. LEE, ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE OLD MARKET TOWNS THE SECRETARY SAID:+ THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE OLD MARKET TOWNS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES IS NOT AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW TOWNS= THE TWO SHOULD GO ALONG SIDE BY SIDE.

+IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT WE ARE JUST ABOUT TO ENGAGE CONSULTANTS TO ADVISE US ON THE ENGINEERING REQUIREMENTS TO EXPAND THE MARKET TOWNS OF TAIPO, YUEN LONG AND SHEUNG SHUI,+ HE SAID.

WHEN THE BASIC INFORMATION WAS OBTAINED FROM THESE ENGINEERING STUDIES A COMPARATIVELY MODEST GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT IN A STAGED DEVELOPMENT OF ROADS AND DRAINS AT THESE TOWNS WOULD BE AMPLY REPAID, AND WOULD ENABLE THE PRIVATE DEVELOPER TO MAKE A FURTHER SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE FULFILMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S HOUSING TARGET IN THESE EXISTING CENTRES OF POPULATION.

• SPEAKING ABOUT THE FUTURE, MR. AKERS-JONES SAID ALMOST ALL THE GREAT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS FOR HONG KONG LIE IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

/SOME ARE

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+SOME ARE ALREADY NEARLY COMPLETE, OTHERS ARE UNDER CONSTRUCTION, OTHERS ARE PLANNED, OTHERS ARE TALKED ABOUT BUT ARE NOT YET SPECIFIC.

+THEY ALL CONCERN LAND - LAND FOR HOUSING, LAND FOR INDUSTRY, AND LAND FOR LEISURE.

+IMPLEMENTING THESE PLANS AND SOLVING THESE PROBLEMS WILL REQUIRE PATIENCE, FLEXIBILITY AND COMPROMISE= ABOVE ALL WE MUST ENSURE THAT OUR COMPENSATION POLICIES FOR THE DISTURBANCE OF EXISTING PROPERTY HOLDERS ARE PRACTICAL, FAIR AND UP-TO-DATE,+ MR. AKERS-JONES SAID.

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TEN BILLS INTRODUCED IN LEGCO
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TEN NEW BILLS WERE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY FOR FIRST AND SECOND READING.

THEY ARE THE FIRST BATCH OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION TO BE CONSIDERED DURING THE NEW SESSION.

THEY ARE:

THE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT)(NO.4) BILL WHICH, IF ENACTED, WILL GIVE FURTHER PROTECTION TO COMPANY NAMES BY PROHIBITING THE REGISTRATION OF ANY COMPANY UNDER A NAME IDENTICAL, OR DECEPTIVELY SIMILAR, TO THAT OF A FOREIGN COMPANY INCORPORATED OUTSIDE HONG KONG AND CARRYING ON BUSINESS HERE OR THAT OF A BODY CORPORATE INCORPORATED OR ESTABLISHED UNDER AN ORDINANCE.

THE CROSS-HARBOUR TUNNEL (AMENDMENT) BILL WHICH WILL ENABLE THE CROSS HARBOUR TUNNEL COMPANY TO CHARGE A FEE OF \$50 FOR THE ISSUE OF A PERMIT FOR EXTRA LARGE VEHICLES TO USE THE TUNNEL.

THE FIRE AND MARINE INSURANCE COMPANIES DEPOSIT (AMENDMENT) BILL AND THE LIFE INSURANCE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) BILL, BOTH OF WHICH SEEK TO MAKE NEW PROVISIONS WHICH WILL ALLOW A WIDER RANGE OF INVESTMENTS AND IN PARTICULAR WILL PERMIT COMPANIES TO DEPOSIT NOTES ISSUED BY THE HONG KONG BUILDING AND LOAN AGENCY THE PAYMENT OF WHICH IS GUARANTEED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

THE MERCHANT SHIPPING (AMENDMENT) BILL WHICH PROVIDES FOR AN INCREASE IN THE PENALTIES FOR CONTRAVENTION OF THE MERCHANT SHIPPING ORDINANCE, AND CONFERS ON THE DIRECTOR OF MARINE CERTAIN POWERS GOVERNING THE CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCY FOR OFFICERS AND SEAMEN OF THE MERCANTILE MARINE.

THE CHARITIES (LAND ACQUISITION) (REPEAL) BILL WHICH SEEKS TO REPEAL THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE WHICH PROHIBITS CHARITABLE BODIES FROM ACQUIRING LAND OTHER THAN UNDER LICENCE GRANTED BY THE GOVERNOR.

THE CLEAN AIR (AMENDMENT) BILL WHICH AMENDS THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE IN ORDER TO REMOVE SOME UNCERTAINTY.

THE LION ROCK TUNNEL (AMENDMENT) BILL WHICH INTRODUCES TRAFFIC ORDINANCE UNDER WHICH AUTHORISED OFFICERS CAN DEMAND PARTICULARS OF A DRIVER OF A VEHICLE SUSPECTED OF HAVING COMMITTED A TRAFFIC OFFENCE.

THE TEMPORARY RESTRICTION OF BUILDING DEVELOPMENT (POK FU LAM AND MID-LEVELS) (AMENDMENT)(NO.2) BILL WHICH LIFTS THE TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS ON DEVELOPMENT IN POK FU LAM BY THE END OF THIS YEAR.

/THE SUPPLEMENTARY

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THE SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION (1973-74) BILL WHICH SEEKS TO GIVE FINAL LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY TO THE SUPPLEMENTARY EXPENDITURE AUTHORIZED BY RESOLUTIONS OF THE COUNCIL. IT IS THE LAST STAGE IN DISPOSING OF EXPENDITURE INCURRED DURING THE FINANCIAL YEAR 1973-74.

THE TOTAL NET SUPPLEMENTARY EXPENDITURE AMOUNTS TO MORE THAN \$833 MILLION UNDER 46 HEADS, WITH THE \$300 MILLION REQUIRED AS EQUITY CONTRIBUTION TO THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION BEING THE LARGEST SINGLE ITEM ACCOUNTING FOR THE INCREASE.

AN UNOFFICIAL MEMBER, THE HON. J.H. BREMRIDGE, INTRODUCED THE HELENA MAY INSTITUTE OF WOMEN (AMENDMENT) BILL TO THE COUNCIL.

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CHARITIES (LAND ACQUISITION)(REPEAL) BILL, 1974

THE CHARITIES(LAND ACQUISITION) ORDINANCE, ENACTED IN 1958 WITH A VIEW TO PREVENT EXCESSIVE AREAS OF LAND IN THE HANDS OF CHARITABLE BODIES AND THEREBY TO ENSURE THAT THE BEST USE AND DEVELOPMENT BE MADE OF SUCH LAND, IS TO BE REPEALED.

THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MR. JAMES ROBSON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS AFTERNOON THAT THE ORDINANCE HAD ACHIEVED LITTLE.

IN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE CHARITIES (LAND ACQUISITION)(REPEAL) BILL, 1974, HE SAID: +IT WAS ARGUED, AT THE TIME OF ENACTMENT, THAT BECAUSE OF THE TENDENCY OF CHARITABLE BODIES, BY VIRTUE OF PERPETUAL SUCCESSION, TO RETAIN LAND INDEFINITELY AND NOT TO DEVELOP IT FULLY, GOVERNMENT STANDS TO LOSE ESTATE DUTY, STAMP DUTY ON CONVEYANCES, AND RATES.

+THE FEELING NOW, HOWEVER, IS THAT ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES IN HONG KONG NORMALLY DICTATE THE FULLEST POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT OF LAND WHETHER OR NOT IT IS OWNED BY A CHARITABLE BODY.+

THE RECORD SHOWED, HE CONTINUED, THAT SINCE THE ORDINANCE CAME INTO FORCE, ONLY ONE OUT OF OVER 750 APPLICATIONS HAD BEEN REFUSED FOR REASONS STRICTLY CONNECTED WITH ITS PROVISION, AND ONLY ANOTHER 12 HAD BEEN REFUSED FOR OTHER REASONS.

IN THE PAST 16 YEARS, ALMOST 14 MILLION SQUARE FEET OF LAND AND OVER 400 UNDIVIDED SHARES IN MULTI-STOREY BUILDINGS HAD BEEN ACQUIRED BY CHARITABLE BODIES UNDER LICENCE UNDER THE ORDINANCE.

HE ADDED: +THE ORDINANCE APPEARS THEREFORE TO BE ACHIEVING LITTLE BUT IT DOES OCCUPY THE TIME OF VALUABLE PROFESSIONAL STAFF, CHIEFLY IN THE REGISTRAR GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT AND, TO A LESSER EXTENT, IN THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE AND FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT.

+IT ALSO PLACES ON CHARITABLE BODIES A TEDIOUS OBLIGATION AS WELL AS A BURDEN IN THE FORM OF FEES FOR SOLICITORS' SERVICES.+

MR. ROBSON SAID HE WAS THEREFORE CONVINCED THAT +TO REPEAL THE ORDINANCE WOULD BE NOT MERELY A CHARITABLE ACT BUT ALSO A HIGHLY PRACTICAL ONE IN THAT IT WOULD ELIMINATE UNNECESSARY CONTROLS AND FREE GOVERNMENT STAFF AND PERHAPS SOLICITORS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR FOR MORE USEFUL WORK.+

DEBATE ON THE MOTION WAS ADJOURNED.

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STERLING GUARANTEE WILL NOT BE EXTENDED

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THE STERLING GUARANTEE ARRANGEMENT WILL NOT BE EXTENDED WHEN IT LAPSES AT THE END OF THIS YEAR.

THIS WAS ANNOUNCED BY MR. DENIS HEALEY, CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER IN HIS BUDGET SPEECH IN LONDON ON TUESDAY.

THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN INFORMED OF THE DECISION IN ADVANCE.

COMMENTING ON THIS DECISION, A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID, +THE GOVERNMENT NATURALLY REGRETS THE LOSS OF A FACILITY WHICH HAS BEEN AVAILABLE AT HONG KONG'S CHOICE TO ACCEPT OR REJECT. BUT THE GOVERNMENT ACKNOWLEDGES THAT THE ARRANGEMENT WAS OFFERED AS AN INDUCEMENT TO PARTICIPANTS TO HOLD FUNDS IN STERLING AND HONG KONG HAS NO RIGHT TO EXPECT OR DEMAND THE CONTINUATION OF SUCH A GUARANTEE. THE GOVERNMENT WILL DECIDE THE DISPOSITION OF ITS EXTERNAL RESERVES IN FUTURE BY REFERENCE TO NORMAL CONSIDERATIONS OF INTEREST RETURNS AND EXCHANGE RISKS.+

THE SPOKESMAN ADDED THAT THE U.K. AUTHORITIES TAKE THE VIEW THAT THE GUARANTEE ARRANGEMENTS HAVE IN THE PAST MADE AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL STABILITY, BUT THAT THEIR RELEVANCE HAS DIMINISHED SUBSTANTIALLY IN THE WAKE OF THE RECENT MASSIVE CHANGES IN THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL SYSTEM. THE GUARANTEES WERE ORIGINALLY DESIGNED IN 1968 TO ACHIEVE STABILITY OF EXISTING HOLDINGS OF STERLING. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT BELIEVES, HOWEVER, THAT THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION OF THE PROBLEM OF CHANNELLING THE SURPLUS REVENUES OF THE OIL PRODUCERS HAS MADE THEIR CONTINUATION INAPPROPRIATE.

BACKGROUND NOTES FOR EDITORS:

THE FIRST STERLING GUARANTEE AGREEMENT CAME INTO EFFECT IN SEPTEMBER 1968. BRITAIN OFFERED ALL MEMBERS OF THE STERLING AREA, INCLUDING HONG KONG, A GUARANTEE IN TERMS OF US DOLLAR VALUE OF ALL OFFICIALLY HELD STERLING IN EXCESS OF 10% OF EACH COUNTRY'S TOTAL OFFICIAL EXTERNAL RESERVES. THIS WAS IN RETURN FOR THEIR UNDERTAKING TO MAINTAIN A MINIMUM PROPORTION OF THEIR EXTERNAL RESERVES IN THE FORM OF STERLING. THE MINIMUM STERLING PROPORTION FOR HONG KONG WAS 99% AT FIRST, BUT IT WAS REDUCED TO 89.1% IN SEPTEMBER 1971. ARRANGEMENTS WERE MADE IN HONG KONG'S SPECIAL CASE TO BRING A SUBSTANTIAL PART OF THE COMMERCIAL BANKS' LARGE HOLDINGS OF STERLING WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE GUARANTEE. STERLING'S WEAKNESS LATE IN 1972 CAUSED THE GUARANTEE TO BE IMPLEMENTED, AND THE U.K. PAID OUT SOME 59 MILLION POUNDS STERLING IN COMPENSATION, OF WHICH 15.3 MILLION POUNDS STERLING WAS HONG KONG'S SHARE. THIS GUARANTEE AGREEMENT CAME TO AN END, AFTER FIVE YEARS, IN SEPTEMBER 1973.

THE UNCERTAIN WORLD OUTLOOK AT THAT TIME MADE IT UNLIKELY THAT PARTICIPANTS WOULD WISH TO ENTER INTO NEW LONG-TERM AGREEMENTS, SO THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT UNILATERALLY OFFERED A FURTHER GUARANTEE FOR THE PERIOD OF ABOUT SIX MONTHS ENDING 31ST MARCH 1974. THE TERMS WERE BROADLY SIMILAR, BUT THE STERLING HOLDINGS OF COMMERCIAL BANKS HERE WERE NO LONGER COVERED: REFLECTING THIS, HONG KONG'S MINIMUM STERLING PROPORTION WAS REDUCED TO 78%. ANOTHER PERIOD OF WEAKNESS FOR STERLING EARLY THIS YEAR LED TO FURTHER COMPENSATION PAYMENTS BEING MADE BY THE U.K. TO THE PARTICIPANTS, TOTALLING ABOUT 80 MILLION POUNDS STERLING: HONG KONG'S SHARE THIS TIME WAS LOWER, BECAUSE ONLY OFFICIAL STERLING HOLDINGS WERE COVERED.

THE GUARANTEE CURRENTLY IN OPERATION WAS AGAIN OFFERED UNILATERALLY BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO COVER THE PERIOD FROM 1ST APRIL TO 31ST DECEMBER THIS YEAR. THIS TIME HONG KONG'S MINIMUM STERLING PROPORTION IS 70% OF TOTAL OFFICIAL EXTERNAL RESERVES AS AT 31ST MARCH 1974. THE GUARANTEE IS NO LONGER IN TERMS OF US DOLLAR VALUE, BUT INSTEAD IS IN TERMS OF STERLING'S EFFECTIVE DEPRECIATION AGAINST TEN OTHER MAJOR CURRENCIES AS CALCULATED IN A TRADE-WEIGHTED INDEX. IT COMES INTO EFFECT IF THE POUND'S AVERAGE DEPRECIATION FROM +SMITHSONIAN+ PARITIES (I.E. SINCE 19TH DECEMBER 1971) IS GREATER ON AVERAGE DURING THE NINE-MONTH PERIOD OF THE GUARANTEE THAN 18.35% (THE AVERAGE DEPRECIATION DURING THE SIX-MONTH PERIOD OF THE PREVIOUS GUARANTEE).

A FEATURE OF THE GUARANTEES OFFERED UNILATERALLY SINCE SEPTEMBER 1973 HAS BEEN THAT HONG KONG HAS NOT HAD TO UNDERTAKE FROM THE START TO MAINTAIN THE REQUIRED STERLING HOLDING THROUGHOUT THE PERIOD. IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN POSSIBLE TO SPEND STERLING HELD IN THE RESERVES, PROVIDED THAT OTHER CURRENCIES WERE SPENT ALSO SO THAT THE SPECIFIED PROPORTIONS WERE MAINTAINED= BUT UNDER THE UNILATERAL OFFERS HONG KONG COULD ALSO HAVE DECIDED AT ANY TIME THAT THE GUARANTEE NO LONGER OFFERED SUFFICIENT INDUCEMENT TO MAINTAIN THE SPECIFIED STERLING HOLDING. IN PRACTICE, BECAUSE A LARGE PART OF HONG KONG'S OFFICIAL STERLING HOLDINGS WERE INVESTED IN GILT-EDGED SECURITIES, AND THE MARKET PRICES OF THESE HAVE TENDED TO BE WEAK IN A PERIOD OF HIGH INTEREST RATES (ALTHOUGH THEY WILL EVENTUALLY BE REDEEMED AT THEIR FULL NOMINAL VALUES), HONG KONG COULD HAVE SWITCHED OUT OF STERLING AND INTO OTHER CURRENCIES ONLY AT A SUBSTANTIAL LOSS. SO THE GUARANTEES HAVE IN EFFECT PROVIDED A USEFUL BONUS.

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MINIMUM OF RED TAPE PARTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR
HONG KONG'S TRADE SUCCESS, SAYS DIRECTOR
OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

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ONE OF THE FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR HONG KONG'S SUCCESS IN THE FIELD OF TRADE IS THAT THE GOVERNMENT TRIES TO KEEP RED TAPE TO A MINIMUM, THE DIRECTOR OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, MR. DAVID JORDAN SAID TODAY.

MR. JORDAN WAS SPEAKING AT THE OPENING OF THE HONG KONG FAR EAST TRADE FACILITATION SEMINAR - THE FIRST OF ITS KIND TO BE HELD HERE.

THE PURPOSE OF THE SEMINAR IS TO DISCUSS WAYS OF FURTHER STREAMLINING INTERNATIONAL TRADE PROCEDURES AND DOCUMENTATION TO KEEP ABREAST OF MODERN MODES OF FAST TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION.

MR. JORDAN SAID HONG KONG WAS AN APPROPRIATE PLACE FOR THE SEMINAR BECAUSE THE ECONOMY WAS UNIQUELY DEPENDENT ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE.

DELEGATES FROM MANY COUNTRIES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS ARE ATTENDING THE TWO-DAY EVENT. THESE INCLUDE THE UNITED STATES, CANADA, BRITAIN, JAPAN, THE PHILIPPINES, FRANCE, THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE (ECE), THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (ESCAP), THE INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (ICC) AND THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME COMMITTEE (CMI).

MR. JORDAN SAID HIS DEPARTMENT DOES ITS UTMOST TO ENSURE THAT TRADE FORMALITIES CAN BE OBSERVED WITH THE LEAST AMOUNT OF BOTHER TO THE TRADE, AND POINTED OUT THAT CERTIFICATES AND LICENCES, WHEN REQUIRED, COULD NORMALLY BE OBTAINED WITHIN 24 TO 48 HOURS AFTER APPLICATION.

HE EXPLAINED THAT THE TRADE FACILITATION MOVEMENT IN HONG KONG BEGAN IN 1967 WHEN A WORKING PARTY ON SIMPLIER TRADE DOCUMENTS WAS ESTABLISHED.

THIS WAS RECONSTITUTED LAST YEAR AS THE HONG KONG TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEE WHICH IS SERVICED BY THE COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY DEPARTMENT.

THE COMMITTEE'S MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL THE MAJOR TRADE, INDUSTRIAL, TRANSPORT, BANKING AND OTHER SERVICE INSTITUTIONS.

HE SAID CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE IN THE FIELD OF SIMPLIFICATION AND STANDARDISATION OF TRADE DOCUMENTS AND PROCEDURES.

/MR. JORDAN

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MR. JORDAN PAID TRIBUTE TO THE WORK OF MR. IAN TOMLIN, CHAIRMAN OF THE TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEE FOR HIS INITIATIVE, ENERGY AND SKILL IN FURTHERING TRADE FACILITATION PROGRESS IN HONG KONG. HE SAID THE TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEE HAD DONE MUCH TO STANDARDIZE THE DOCUMENTS USED IN TRADE.

HE ADDED : +WE NOW HAVE A HONG KONG 'MASTER' DOCUMENT TO WHICH ARE ALIGNED ALL THE GOVERNMENT FORMS USED IN THE COURSE OF OUR IMPORT/EXPORT TRADE.

+THIS DOCUMENT IN TURN IS ALIGNED TO THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION IN EUROPE LAYOUT KEY WITH MINOR MODIFICATION.+

NOTE TO EDITORS: COPIES OF THE FULL TEXT OF MR. JORDAN SPEECH ARE AVAILABLE FOR COLLECTION FROM THE G.I.S. PRESS ROOM, 6TH FLOOR, BEACONSFIELD HOUSE.

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WATER SITUATION REPORT

THE TOTAL WATER STORAGE IN ALL RESERVOIRS AS AT 9 A.M. TODAY (WEDNESDAY) STOOD AT 54,272 MILLION GALLONS, REPRESENTING 80.6 PER CENT OF THE FULL CAPACITY OF 67,300 MILLION GALLONS. AT THIS TIME LAST YEAR THERE WERE 59,279 MILLION GALLONS IN STORE.

THIS MORNING'S STORAGE AT PLOVER COVE WAS 38,162 MILLION GALLONS, COMPARED WITH 46,119 MILLION GALLONS ON THE SAME DAY LAST YEAR. PLOVER COVE'S PRESENT STORAGE REPRESENTS 75.6 PER CENT OF ITS FULL CAPACITY OF 50,500 MILLION GALLONS.

1.9 MM (0.07 IN) OF RAINFALL WAS RECORDED AT THE ROYAL OBSERVATORY DURING THE PAST 24 HOURS ENDING AT 9 A.M. TODAY. TOTAL RAINFALL RECORDED SO FAR THIS YEAR IS 2,112.3 MM (83.16 IN).

THE MEAN AVERAGE RAINFALL SINCE JANUARY 1 STANDS AT 2,115.5 MM (83.29 IN), REPRESENTING A SHORTFALL OF 0.15 PER CENT.

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1974

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KEEPING PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY FIT
* * * * *

TO KEEP PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY FIT IT IS ESSENTIAL TO HAVE DIVERSE EMOTIONAL OUTLETS IN ADDITION TO FOOD, CLOTHING AND SHELTER, THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, MR. MORRIS MORGAN, SAID TODAY.

HE WAS SPEAKING AT THE PRIZE-GIVING CEREMONY TO WINNERS OF GAMES AND COMPETITIONS AT THE THREE-DAY CAMP ORGANISED BY THE DEPARTMENT'S REHABILITATION DIVISION FOR 249 CHILDREN UNDER ITS CARE. THE CAMP WHICH ENDS TOMORROW IS BEING HELD AT WU KWAI SHA IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

MR. MORGAN SAID EVERYONE KNOWS THAT SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN OUR LIVES AND CAMPING IS A VERY GOOD MEANS OF RECREATION, PARTICULARLY AS WE LIVE IN A HIGHLY URBANISED AND INDUSTRIALISED PLACE LIKE HONG KONG.

+OUTDOOR LIFE, WHERE WE CAN ENJOY FRESH AIR, SUNSHINE AND TRANQUILITY, IS A WELCOME CHANGE FROM THE MONOTONY IN THE CITY. IN ADDITION, WE CAN GAIN VALUABLE EXPERIENCE THROUGH PLAYING AND LIVING WITH OTHERS.+

MRS. MORGAN PRESENTED PRIZES TO THE WINNERS.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

COPIES OF THE FULL TEXT OF MR. MORGAN'S SPEECH ARE BOXED FOR COLLECTION.

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1974

CONSUMER ADVISORY SERVICE

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THE FOLLOWING PRICES WERE REALISED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) AT SALE UNDER THE RICE CONTROL SCHEME AND AT THE VEGETABLE MARKETING ORGANISATION WHOLESALE MARKET AND THE FISH MARKETING ORGANISATION WHOLESALE MARKET AT CHEUNG SHA WAN, KOWLOON:

SUPPLIES AND WHOLESALE PRICES OF RICE

| <u>GRADE OF RICE</u> | <u>AVAILABILITY OF SUPPLY</u> | <u>WHOLESALE PRICE (\$/CATTY)</u> |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <u>CHINA RICE</u> | | |
| SEE MEW | GOOD | 1.94 |
| S.C. JIEN | GOOD | 1.78 |
| PO NGAI | GOOD | -- |
| CHU CHO | GOOD | -- |
| <u>THAI RICE</u> | | |
| 100% WHOLE | GOOD | 1.77 |
| 10-15% BROKENS | GOOD | 1.68 |
| A1 SUPER EXTRA | GOOD | 1.66 |
| A1 SUPER | GOOD | 1.39 |
| WHOLE GLUTINOUS | GOOD | 1.72 |
| <u>U.S. RICE</u> | GOOD | 1.91 |
| <u>AUSTRALIAN RICE</u> | GOOD | 1.88 |
| <u>PAKISTAN RICE</u> | GOOD | -- |
| <u>TAIWAN RICE</u> | GOOD | -- |

SUPPLIES AND WHOLESALE PRICE OF SWINE

(ALL SOURCES)

| | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|---|---------------|
| AVAILABILITY OF SUPPLY | - | GOOD |
| WHOLESALE PRICES OF PORK (\$/PICUL-LIVE WEIGHT) | - | 340 (AVERAGE) |

/SUPPLIES AND

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1974

SUPPLIES AND WHOLESALE PRICES OF MARINE FISH
 (FMO CHEUNG SHA WAN WHOLESALE FISH MARKET)

| SPECIES | AVAILABILITY OF SUPPLY | WHOLESALE PRICE (\$/CATTY) | | |
|------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|------|------|
| | | HIGH | LOW | MODE |
| GOLDEN THREAD | LIMITED | 6.30 | 2.00 | 4.80 |
| BIG-EYES | GOOD | 3.20 | 0.70 | 2.40 |
| SQUID | LIMITED | 5.50 | 2.80 | 3.50 |
| HAIR-TAILS | NORMAL | 2.60 | 1.20 | 2.00 |
| LIZARD FISHES | LIMITED | 4.00 | 1.00 | 2.40 |
| CROAKERS | NORMAL | 2.20 | 1.10 | 1.50 |
| CONGER-PIKE-EELS | LIMITED | 4.20 | 1.60 | 2.80 |
| MELON COAT | LIMITED | 4.50 | 1.70 | 2.80 |
| BREAMS | SCARCE | 6.00 | 4.00 | 5.00 |
| YELLOW BELLY | LIMITED | 2.00 | 0.80 | 1.20 |
| MACKERELS | SCARCE | 5.80 | 3.00 | 4.50 |
| RED GOAT FISH | NORMAL | 2.20 | 1.00 | 1.60 |
| FORK-TAIL | GOOD | 2.00 | 1.00 | 1.40 |
| HORSE-HEAD | SCARCE | 5.50 | 2.00 | 4.00 |
| MELON SEED | NORMAL | 2.80 | 2.00 | 2.50 |
| POMFRETS | SCARCE | 7.50 | 4.10 | 6.00 |
| GARROUPAS | LIMITED | 8.50 | 6.00 | 7.20 |
| YELLOW CROAKER | LIMITED | 6.70 | 4.50 | 5.50 |

SUPPLIES AND WHOLESALE PRICES OF LOCALLY PRODUCED VEGETABLES
 (VMO CHEUNG SHA WAN WHOLESALE VEGETABLE MARKET)

| TYPE OF VEGETABLE | AVAILABILITY OF SUPPLY | WHOLESALE PRICE (\$/CATTY) | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|------|------|
| | | HIGH | LOW | MODE |
| FLOWERING CABBAGE | SCARCE | 3.40 | 1.20 | 2.50 |
| WHITE CABBAGE | LIMITED | 2.00 | 0.60 | 1.40 |
| CHINESE LETTUCE | LIMITED | 2.40 | 0.80 | 1.60 |
| WATER SPINACH | SCARCE | 0.80 | 0.20 | 0.50 |
| CHINESE KALE | SCARCE | 3.20 | 1.20 | 2.40 |
| STRING BEANS | SCARCE | 2.60 | 1.50 | 2.20 |
| SPRING ONION | LIMITED | 1.60 | 0.40 | 1.00 |
| SPINACH | SCARCE | 3.50 | 1.20 | 2.50 |
| WATER CRESS | LIMITED | 3.00 | 1.80 | 2.50 |
| LEAF MUSTARD CABBAGE | SCARCE | 2.50 | 0.80 | 1.60 |
| CHINESE SPINACH | --- | | | |
| TOMATO | SCARCE | 4.50 | 2.50 | 3.50 |