



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1977

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HONG KONG TIME STAYS AT GMT +8
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HONG KONG TIME STAYS AT GMT +8 THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL APPROVED TODAY.

MOVING A MOTION FOR THE ADOPTION OF GMT +8 AS ONE TIME SYSTEM FOR HONG KONG, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON. F.K. LI, SAID THE RESULTS OF A SURVEY CONDUCTED BY THE HOME AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT CLEARLY INDICATED A GENERAL PREFERENCE FOR GMT +8.

PUBLIC REACTION ON THE TIME SYSTEM WAS OBTAINED BY INVITING COMMENT TO GPO BOX 10,000= BY SOUNDING THROUGH THE HOME AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT= AND BY ASKING HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS FOR THEIR VIEWS IN THE LIGHT OF THEIR EXPERIENCE WITH DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS AND DEALINGS WITH THE COMMUNITY.

SUPPORT FOR GMT +8 WAS ALSO REFLECTED IN OPINIONS VOICED IN AND THROUGH THE CHINESE PRESS, MR. LI POINTED OUT.

+I HAVE THEREFORE CONCLUDED THAT THE RETENTION OF GMT +8 THROUGHOUT THE YEAR REPRESENTS THE GENERAL WISH OF OUR COMMUNITY,+ HE SAID.

ON THE SURVEY CONDUCTED BY THE HOME AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT, MR. LI SAID ABOUT 73 PER CENT WAS FOR THE RETENTION OF GMT +8 THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, WITH 11 PER CENT FOR GMT +9, 12 PER CENT FOR A DUAL TIME SYSTEM AND THE REMAINDER HAVING NO PREFERENCE.

HE SAID THAT THE SURVEY TOOK THE FORM OF QUESTIONNAIRES AND INTERVIEWS WITH ABOUT 2,500 RESPONDENTS IN SEPTEMBER AND 2,200 IN NOVEMBER.

HALF OF THE RESPONDENTS FOR THE NOVEMBER SURVEY WERE DRAWN FROM THE LIST INTERVIEWED IN SEPTEMBER AND THE OTHER HALF WERE NEW RESPONDENTS.

+THIS WAS DONE IN ORDER TO PROVIDE A BASIS FOR COMPARISON BETWEEN OPINIONS EXPRESSED BY THE SAME GROUP AT TWO DIFFERENT OCCASIONS AND FOR COMPARISON OF OPINIONS EXPRESSED BY TWO DIFFERENT GROUPS,+ MR. LI ADDED.

ON THE RETURNS MADE TO GPO BOX 10,000, HE SAID THE RESPONSE IN THE MONTHS OF SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER CONSISTED OF ABOUT 51,000 REPRESENTATIONS IN THE FORM OF LETTERS, CARDS, NEWSPAPER CUTTINGS AND PRINTED SLIPS.

THESE INCLUDED AN ANONYMOUS LETTER CLAIMING THAT MANY PRINTED FORMS WERE FILLED IN BY ONE PERSON OR GROUP OF PERSONS BY TAKING NAMES AND ADDRESSES FROM THE TELEPHONE DIRECTORY.

/+THERE WERE ABOUT

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+THERE WERE ABOUT 45,000 SUCH FORMS, A LARGE NUMBER OF WHICH APPEARED TO BE FILLED IN AND SIGNED IN THE SAME HANDWRITING, AND ALL EXCEPT 240, WERE IN FAVOUR OF GMT +9 THROUGHOUT THE YEAR,+ MR. LI SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT A SMALL RANDOM SAMPLE OF 45 WAS SUBSEQUENTLY SELECTED FOR CHECKING AND ALL 45 PERSONS CONTACTED DISCLAIMED ANY KNOWLEDGE OF THE RETURN, AND +IN FACT, TWO OF THEM DIED OVER SIX MONTHS AGO.+

+THE VALIDITY OF THESE RETURNS IS THEREFORE DOUBTFUL,+ MR. LI REMARKED.

OF THE REMAINING 6,000 RETURNS, REPRESENTING NEARLY 13,000 INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS, INCLUDING SOME LARGE ORGANISATIONS, SOME 65 PER CENT EXPRESSED A PREFERENCE FOR GMT +8 AS HONG KONG TIME THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

MR. LI SAID: +THOUGH THE RETURNS TO GPO BOX 10,000 FAVOUR GMT +9 THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, I AM AFRAID WE CANNOT PUT TOO MUCH WEIGHT ON THIS SURVEY BECAUSE OF THE DOUBTS ON 45,000 PRINTED FORMS.+

TURNING TO THE REACTION FROM HEADS OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, HE SAID IT WAS MORE VARIED IN THE LIGHT OF THEIR DEPARTMENTAL OPERATIONS AND THEIR DEALINGS WITH DIFFERENT SECTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY.

+HOWEVER,+ HE SAID, +THESE RETURNS ALSO SHOW A GENERAL PREFERENCE FOR GMT +8 THROUGHOUT THE YEAR - 50 PER CENT AS OPPOSED TO 38 PER CENT IN FAVOUR OF DUAL TIME AND 12 PER CENT IN FAVOUR OF GMT +9.+

TWO UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS, THE HON. JOHN BREMRIDGE AND THE HON. WONG LAM ALSO SPOKE IN SUPPORT OF THE MOTION.

MR. BREMRIDGE SAID HE WAS SATISFIED THAT THE LARGE MAJORITY OF HONG KONG'S CHINESE PREFERRED GMT +8.

+I THUS FIND NO DIFFICULTY IN SUPPORTING THEIR PREFERENCE, WHICH IN MY OPINION, HAS BEEN WELL ESTABLISHED.

+I MUST ALSO NOTE THE ADVANTAGE TO MANY OF PRESENTING IN HONG KONG, THE SAME TIME THROUGHOUT THE YEAR AS THAT IN CANTON,+ HE SAID.

MR. WONG LAM SHARED MR. BREMRIDGE'S VIEW AND SAID: +ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN A NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE EXPOUNDED THEIR VIEWS, BOTH IN ENGLISH PRESS AND IN OTHER MEDIA, THAT GMT +9 SHOULD BE ADOPTED, I MUST SAY THAT FROM MY OWN PERSONAL CONTACTS WITH PEOPLE IN EVERY SECTOR OF THIS COMMUNITY, I HAVE GAINED THE IMPRESSION THE SILENT MAJORITY PAY PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO SUCH PRACTICAL CONSIDERATION, SUCH AS THE MAINTENANCE OF LAW AND ORDER, AND WOULD ALSO PREFER GMT +8 AS THE TIME SYSTEM FOR HONG KONG.+

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

GOVERNOR RETURNING ON DECEMBER 30

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THE GOVERNOR, SIR MURRAY MACLEHOSE, IS EXPECTED TO RETURN TO HONG KONG ON DECEMBER 30 AFTER SIX WEEKS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

SIR MURRAY WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY LADY MACLEHOSE.

THE GOVERNOR AND LADY MACLEHOSE ARE DUE TO RETURN BY BA888 ON DECEMBER 30, E.T.A. 1755 HOURS.

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LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION)(AMENDMENT) BILL PASSED

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY PASSED THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION)(AMENDMENT) BILL 1977.

THE MAJORITY OF THE UNOFFICIALS WELCOMED AND SUPPORTED THE BILL AS +STRIKING A SENSIBLE BALANCE+.

ONLY ONE UNOFFICIAL, REV. THE HON. PATRICK MCGOVERN, OPPOSED IT.

OPPOSING THE BILL AT THE RESUMED DEBATE, FATHER MCGOVERN SAID IT WOULD CONTINUE TO UNDO THE LIMITED MEASURE OF RENT CONTROL WHICH TOOK YEARS OF PUBLIC CLAMOUR TO PUSH THE GOVERNMENT TO INTRODUCE.

+I HAVE SAID IT BEFORE AND I SAY IT AGAIN NOW, THERE IS NO SUCH THING IN HONG KONG AS A FAIR MARKET RENT. ALSO, IN SO FAR AS THE MARKET IS FREE IT IS UNFAIR TO THE TENANT,+ HE SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT IN SUPPORTING PAPERS GIVING THE GOVERNMENT'S ARGUMENTS FOR THE BILL, THE WORDS +FAIR MARKET RENT+ OCCURRED 13 TIMES, AND THE WORDS +FREE MARKET RENT+ TWICE, IN A CONTEXT WHERE IT WAS USED AS IF IT WAS THE SAME AS THE FORMER.

HE EXPLAINED THAT THERE IS IMBALANCE BETWEEN DEMAND FOR PRIVATE HOUSING AND SUPPLY OF HOUSING AT RENTS WHICH TENANTS CAN AFFORD BECAUSE OF SCARCITY OF BUILDING LAND. +IT MUST THEREFORE REMAIN CONTROLLED IF IT IS TO BE EVEN PARTLY FAIR TO THE TENANT.+

FURTHERMORE THE PRIVATE SECTOR HAVE HAD THEIR CHANCE BUT THIS WAS SO ABUSED BY +RAPACIOUSLY RAISING RENTS THAT THEY BROUGHT RENT CONTROL ON THEIR OWN HEADS.+ +I HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE PRIVATE SECTOR WOULD BE ANY DIFFERENT IF THEY GOT THE CHANCE AGAIN,+ HE SAID.

THE SECTOR MIGHT HAVE A FUNCTION IN BUILDING EXPENSIVE OFFICES AND LUXURY HOUSING FOR EXECUTIVES BUT EVEN THEN THE COST OF THESE EXPENSIVE OFFICES AND FLATS WAS BEING PASSED ON TO CUSTOMERS.

/FATHER MCGOVERN

FATHER MCGOVERN WAS CONCERNED THAT STEP BY STEP RENT CONTROL COULD BE REMOVED UNTIL THE ACTUAL RENT PAID WOULD BE THE SAME AS +THE SO-CALLED FAIR MARKET RENT.+

+WE WILL BE BACK TO THE INTOLERABLE SITUATION WHICH MADE RENT CONTROL NECESSARY -- THE SURVIVAL OF THE RICHEST IN THE FREE-FOR-ALL WARFARE OF THE CONCRETE JUNGLE, BACKED, AS WAS THEN COMMONLY BELIEVED, BY GOVERNMENT BY THE RICH FOR THE RICH.+

EVEN IF THE 21 PER CENT CEILING REMAINS AT THE END OF THE PROCESS, HE ADDED, IT IS TOO HIGH FOR THE ORDINARY TENANT WHOSE REAL WAGES ARE NOT GOING UP TO THIS MUCH= AND EVEN IF THEY ARE, THERE IS NO REASON WHY ALL THE INCREASE SHOULD GO INTO THE POCKET OF THE LANDLORDS INSTEAD OF TO IMPROVING HIS STANDARD OF LIVING.

HE WARNED OF A +TEMPTING POSSIBILITY+ IF RENTS WERE TO CONTINUE TO RISE UNREASONABLY= +THE METHOD OF ASSESSMENT OF RATEABLE VALUES IS DERIVED FROM THE UNFAIR MARKET RENT. IF THAT UNFAIR MARKET RENT CONTINUES TO RISE, THEN ASSESSMENTS WILL NECESSARILY RISE. IT WOULD THEN BE POSSIBLE, WITHOUT CHANGING THE POUNDAGE, TO HAVE A TIDY RISE IN RATES WHICH WILL OF COURSE BE PASSED ON TO THE TENANT.

+I MERELY MENTION THIS AS A POSSIBLE STRAW IN THE WIND WHICH MIGHT BLOW ON SOME UNWARY TENANT'S BACK, EVEN A TENANT IN PUBLIC HOUSING WHOSE ASSESSMENT IS BASED ON THE SAME UNFAIR MARKET RENT,+ HE SAID.

FATHER MCGOVERN SAID HE HEARD ONE OF THE REASONS FOR ALLOWING A MORE RAPID RISE IN RENTS WAS THAT IT WOULD ENCOURAGE MORE NEW STARTS IN PRIVATE HOUSING AND THUS REDRESS THE IMBALANCE OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND. +THE PRIVATE SECTOR NEEDS NO SUCH ENCOURAGEMENT. AS DEVELOPERS, LANDLORDS AND SPECULATORS KNOW, NEW RENTALS DO NOT COME UNDER THE PRESENT CONTROLS. THE ONLY ONES TO BENEFIT FROM THIS BILL WILL BE THOSE WHO HAVE ALREADY MADE THEIR PACKET,+ HE SAID.

THE HON. PETER C. WONG SPOKE IN SUPPORT OF THE BILL. HE SAID IT WAS GENERALLY ACCEPTED BY ECONOMISTS THAT RENT CONTROLS WERE TEMPORARY MEASURES AND SHOULD NOT BE USED TO RESTRICT RENTS AT ARTIFICIAL LEVELS PERMANENTLY. +SUCH MEASURES SHOULD BE RELAXED OR ABANDONED IN THE LIGHT OF CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES.+

ON PRE-WAR PREMISES, MR. WONG SAID THE AVERAGE RENT NOW PAYABLE WAS ROUGHLY ONE-FIFTH OF THE FAIR MARKET RENT.

+IN THE FACE OF RISING PRICES, IT IS DIFFICULT TO FIND JUSTIFICATION FOR CONTINUING INDEFINITELY, AT THE EXPENSE OF OWNERS, THE SUBSTANTIAL BENEFITS CONFERRED BY THIS ORDINANCE ON TENANTS OF PRE-WAR PREMISES.+

THE INCREASES INTRODUCED BY THE BILL WHICH HE CONSIDERED FAIR AND REASONABLE, MIGHT ALSO STRENGTHEN THE LANDLORDS' INCENTIVE TO MAINTAIN THEIR PREMISES IN A PROPER STATE OF REPAIR, HE ADDED.

ON POST-WAR PREMISES, MR. WONG SAID THE CONTROL LEGISLATION HAS REMAINED IN FORCE WITH ONLY MINOR CHANGES SINCE THE END OF 1969.

+UNDER EXISTING CIRCUMSTANCES, IT IS SOCIALLY AND ECONOMICALLY DESIRABLE TO FURTHER CLOSE THE GAP BETWEEN CONTROLLED AND OPEN MARKET RENTS.+ +THE PROPOSED INCREASES ARE IN NO WAY EXCESSIVE,+ HE SAID, +AND SHOULD NOT ENTAIL HARDSHIP ON THE PART OF THE TENANTS OR ADVERSE ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES TO THE COMMUNITY.+

THE HON. OSWALD CHEUNG ALSO SPOKE BRIEFLY ON THE BILL, POINTING OUT THAT A PREPONDERANT MAJORITY OF THE UNOFFICIALS WELCOMED AND SUPPORTED IT: +AS THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING HAS OBSERVED, THE INTERESTS OF LANDLORDS AND TENANTS ARE POLARISED, AND I SHALL SAY NO MORE THAN THAT THE PROPOSALS IN OUR VIEW STRIKE A SENSIBLE BALANCE,+ HE SAID.

IN REPLY TO POINTS RAISED BY FATHER MCGOVERN, THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON. ALAN SCOTT SAID IT WAS A CONFUSION OF THE ISSUES TO ALLEGE THAT PROPOSALS TO INCREASE CONTROLLED RENTS WOULD LEAD TO A GENERAL RISE IN MARKET LEVEL RENTS AND THEREBY PROVE INFLATIONARY.

+THIS IS SIMPLY NOT TRUE. CONTROLLED RENTS ARE BELOW MARKET LEVEL RENTS. THE PROPOSALS BEFORE MEMBERS COULD AT MOST MEAN AN INCREASE IN THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX OF NOT MORE THAN HALF PER CENT FOR FAMILIES SPENDING UP TO \$3,000 A MONTH,+ MR. SCOTT SAID.

HE ALSO REFUTED THE SUGGESTION THAT THE AVERAGE FACTORY WORKER IS GOING TO BE SEVERELY AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSALS IN THE BILL.

MR. SCOTT POINTED OUT THAT OVER 44 PER CENT OF OUR POPULATION, WHICH MUST INCLUDE A VERY LARGE NUMBER OF FACTORY WORKERS, LIVE IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES, THE RENTS OF WHICH ARE WELL BELOW THE AVERAGE LEVEL IN HONG KONG.

HE SAID THOSE RENTS WERE IN NO WAY AFFECTED BY THIS BILL AND THE AVERAGE TENANT IN HONG KONG PAID ABOUT 15 PER CENT OF HIS INCOME AS RENT.

MR. SCOTT SAID THERE WAS A FALLACY IN FATHER MCGOVERN'S REMARKS ON THE 21 PER CENT CEILING.

+THE FALLACY LIES IN THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE TENANT SPENDS THE WHOLE OF HIS INCOME ON RENT.

+OF COURSE, HE DOES NOT. TAKING A HYPOTHETICAL EXAMPLE GIVEN BY THE REV. MCGOVERN, AND USING THE AVERAGE FIGURE OF 15 PER CENT OF INCOME GOING TO RENT WHICH I MENTIONED EARLIER, OF THE INCREASE OF 21 PER CENT IN WAGES, THREE PER CENT WOULD GO IN RENT AND 18 PER CENT WOULD REMAIN AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE TENANT,+ HE SAID.

MR. SCOTT SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD NEVER BELIEVED IN A COMPREHENSIVE AND TOTALLY RESTRICTIVE RENT CONTROL SYSTEM.

+RENT CONTROL IN HONG KONG IS INTENDED TO DEAL WITH RELATIVELY SHORT-TERM SITUATIONS ARISING FROM THE CYCLICAL NATURE OF BUILDING ACTIVITY, AND IS INTRODUCED WHEN HOUSING SUPPLY OSCILLATES FROM REASONABLE PLENTY TO INSUFFICIENCY.+

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HE NOTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT ONLY TRIED TO MAINTAIN THE BALANCE BETWEEN CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT OF SECURITY FOR THE TENANTS AND A REASONABLE RETURN FOR LANDLORDS ON THEIR INVESTMENT.

+ON THAT POINT, I WAS RECENTLY INFORMED BY A PROMINENT BANKER THAT, ASSESSED AT CURRENT PRICES AND RENTALS, THE RETURN IS ABOUT SIX PER CENT ON CAPITAL EMPLOYED. THIS CAN HARDLY BE CALLED EXCESSIVE,+ HE ADDED.

MR. SCOTT ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE BILL PROPOSES AN INCREASE IN CONTROLLED RENTS WHICH WOULD HAVE NO EFFECT ON THE RATEABLE VALUE OF THE PREMISES AND THEREFORE OF ITSELF CANNOT LEAD TO AN INCREASE IN RATES.

HE EXPRESSED GRÁTITUDE FOR THE +LUCID AND BRIEF+ SUPPORT OF THE BILL BY MR. PETER WONG AND MR. OSWALD CHEUNG.

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LEGCO WAIVES STAR FERRY COMPANY'S ROYALTY

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY PASSED A MOTION WAIVING THE STAR FERRY COMPANY'S ROYALTY PAYMENTS FOR THE YEARS 1977 TO 1979.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE SUMS PAYABLE BY THE COMPANY IN RESPECT OF ITS REVENUE FROM ADVERTISING ON PIERS FOR THE YEARS 1974 TO 1979 HAS ALSO BEEN WAIVED.

MOVING THE MOTION, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES SAID THE COMPANY HAD APPLIED FOR EITHER A WAIVER OF ROYALTY FOR 1977 OR FOR AN INCREASE IN FARES IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN A REASONABLE LEVEL OF PROFIT.

AFTER PAYMENT OF ROYALTY AND TAXES, HE SAID, THE COMPANY EXPECTED TO MAKE A PROFIT OF ONLY ABOUT \$1.5 MILLION IN 1977, COMPARED WITH ABOUT \$2.1 MILLION IN 1976, MAINLY BECAUSE OF FURTHER INCREASES IN OPERATING COSTS AND A CONTINUING DECLINE IN PASSENGER NUMBERS ON ITS MAIN ROUTE BETWEEN EDINBURGH PLACE AND KOWLOON POINT.

+AFTER CAREFULLY EXAMINING THE COMPANY'S ACCOUNTS AND ITS PROJECTIONS OF COSTS AND REVENUE, THE GOVERNMENT HAS CONCLUDED THAT SOME AMELIORATION IS NECESSARY AND THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER TO FOREGO ROYALTY THAN TO AGREE TO AN INCREASE IN FARES,+ MR. JONES SAID.

THE EFFECT OF WAIVING THE ROYALTY, HE ADDED, SHOULD BE TO ALLOW THE COMPANY TO MAKE ROUGHLY THE SAME LEVEL OF PROFITS IN 1977 AS IN 1976.

+AS FOR THE FUTURE, PROFITS CAN BE EXPECTED TO DECLINE IN 1978 AND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT A LOSS WILL BE INCURRED IN 1979,+ HE SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE WAIVING OF THE COMPANY'S ROYALTY PAYMENTS UNTIL THE END OF 1979 BROUGHT THE STAR FERRY COMPANY INTO LINE WITH THE HONG KONG YAUMATI FERRY COMPANY AND OTHER PUBLIC TRANSPORT COMPANIES, NONE OF WHICH WERE NOW REQUIRED TO PAY ROYALTY.

MR. JONES SAID IT WAS ALSO NECESSARY TO WAIVE THE CHARGE PAYABLE BY THE COMPANY FOR REVENUE FROM ADVERTISING ON PIERS BECAUSE THE BENEFITS OF WAIVING THE ROYALTIES WOULD BE COMPLETELY NEGATED IF THIS CHARGE WERE TO BE IMPOSED.

UNDER THE ORDINANCE, THE WAIVING OF THE ROYALTY WOULD LEGALLY RENDER THE COMPANY LIABLE TO PAY THE GOVERNMENT 80 PER CENT OF ITS REVENUE FROM ADVERTISING ON PIERS.

UNOFFICIALS SUPPORT CRIMES (AMENDMENT) BILL
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DEBATE ON THE CRIMES (AMENDMENT) BILL, WHICH SEEKS TO PROTECT WOMEN AND GIRLS AGAINST EXPLOITATION FOR PROSTITUTION, RESUMED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

FIVE UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS SPOKE IN SUPPORT OF THE BILL, AND WERE ASSURED BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON. JOHN HOBLEY, THAT CAREFUL CONSIDERATION WOULD BE GIVEN TO THEIR SUGGESTIONS RELATING TO THE ACTION THEY THOUGHT SHOULD BE ASSOCIATED WITH POLICE ENFORCEMENT OF THE LAW.

THE HON. OSWALD CHEUNG SAID IT HAD GIVEN THE UNOFFICIALS MUCH CONCERN AND A LARGE GROUP OF THEM HAD SPENT LONG HOURS IN STUDYING ITS CONTENTS AND IMPLICATIONS AND IN DISCUSSING IT AMONG THEMSELVES AND WITH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL.

+BEYOND A CERTAIN LIMIT, I THINK ONE CANNOT LEGISLATE FOR PEOPLE'S SEXUAL LIVES= WE CAN ONLY SET CERTAIN MINIMUM STANDARDS ACCEPTABLE TO THE COMMUNITY,+ HE SAID.

HE EXPLAINED: +WE HAVE SET OUR FACE AGAINST THE EXPLOITATION OF WOMEN FOR SEXUAL PURPOSES AND AGAINST VICE-ESTABLISHMENTS CARRIED ON UNDER A THIN VENEER OF PROBITY ... PIMPS AND BAWDS WHEN CONVICTED WILL FIND THAT THE TARIFF WILL HAVE GONE UP.

+NOR WILL WE TOLERATE RAPE OR THE PROCUREMENT OF WOMEN BY THREAT, FORCE, FALSE PRETENCES OR THE USE OF DRUGS, NOR THE DEFILEMENT OF YOUNG GIRLS AND THEIR ENTICEMENT INTO PROSTITUTION.

+WE HAVE NOT HOWEVER THOUGHT IT RIGHT TO CHANGE THE LAW ON UNNATURAL OFFENCES, NOR INCREASE THE PENALTIES FOR IT,+ HE ADDED.

IN HIS SPEECH, THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN POINTED OUT THAT EXPLOITATION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS FOR PROSTITUTION WAS VERY OFTEN ASSOCIATED WITH TRIAD ACTIVITY.

HE HOPED THAT WITH THE PASSING OF THE BILL, POLICE EFFORTS AND EFFECTIVENESS WOULD BE REINFORCED SO AS TO ELIMINATE THE WORST EXCESSES OF TRIAD INVOLVEMENT IN ORGANISED PROSTITUTION.

+OF THE SEVERAL THOUSAND GIRLS WHO ARE REPORTED MISSING EVERY YEAR, THERE IS AS YET NO EXACT FIGURE OF HOW MANY OF THEM ARE LURED, CAJOLED OR COERCED INTO PROSTITUTION. HOWEVER THE FIGURE IS NOT INSIGNIFICANT.

+YOUNG GIRLS WHO HAVE RUN AWAY FROM HOME ARE THE PRINCIPAL TARGETS. THROUGH VARIOUS PLOYS AND PRACTICES, WHICH COULD GO AS FAR AS GANG-RAPING, THE VICTIMS THROUGH SHOCK FEAR, AND SHAME ARE REDUCED TO A STATE WHERE THEY BECOME INCAPABLE OF REFUSING TO OBEY THE ORDERS OF THE TRIAD GANG,+ HE SAID.

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THE HON. MRS. KWAN KO SIU-WAH ALSO POINTED OUT THAT SOME YOUNG GIRLS MISSING FROM HOME WERE KNOWN TO BE DETAINED AGAINST THEIR WILL BY OPERATORS OF ILLEGAL BROTHELS.

SHE STRESSED THE NEED FOR PROTECTING MISSING GIRLS AS WELL AS GIRLS UNDER 16 AND THE DEFECTIVES FROM BEING LED OR FORCED INTO PROSTITUTION BY HEAVIER PENALTIES.

SHE REITERATED HER PLEA FOR EARLY INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO OBTAIN THE NEED FOR RAPE VICTIMS TO DISCLOSE THEIR NAMES AND PAST SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR SO AS TO ENCOURAGE MORE REPORTS AND THUS DETER SUCH CRIMES. SHE ALSO ASKED THAT WOMEN POLICE BE MADE AVAILABLE AT ALL TIMES TO DEAL WITH SUCH REPORTS, AT LEAST AT FIRST.

SHE SUGGESTED A NEW PROCEDURE UNDER WHICH A TRAINED SOCIAL WORKER FROM THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT WOULD BE PRESENT WHEN THE POLICE QUESTION AND SCREEN YOUNG GIRLS ARRESTED DURING RAIDS ON BARS, MUSIC PARLOURS AND OTHER SUCH ESTABLISHMENTS.

AT PRESENT, SHE POINTED OUT, THE POLICE IN PRACTICE ONLY REFER A GIRL TO THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT IF THEY CONSIDER SHE NEEDS CARE AND ATTENTION OR SHE OR A MEMBER OF HER FAMILY REQUESTS THAT THIS BE DONE.

LAST YEAR, 4,300 YOUNG GIRLS WERE ARRESTED DURING POLICE RAIDS, BUT ONLY A MERE 472 OF THEM WERE REFERRED.

+IT SEEMS OBVIOUS THAT THESE GIRLS WERE AT RISK AND THUS NEEDED SPECIAL COUNSELLING OR CARE AND ATTENTION.+ THEIR TYPE IS DIFFICULT TO CONTACT IN THE MORE TRADITIONAL WAYS AND SOCIAL WORKERS ARE MAKING AN EFFORT IN VARIOUS DISTRICTS TO IDENTIFY THOSE WITH PROBLEMS AND HELP THEM IN THEIR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT.

AS THE EXTENSION OF THIS TYPE OF OUTREACH PROGRAMME HAS BEEN PROPOSED IN THE GREEN PAPER ON DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONAL SOCIAL WORK AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE, +IT SEEMS A VERY SHORT-SIGHTED AND EXTRAVAGANT POLICY THAT, AFTER POLICE RAIDS LAST YEAR, ONLY ABOUT 10 PER CENT OF THESE GIRLS WERE REFERRED TO THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT WHICH COULD EITHER WORK WITH THEM OR REFER SOME OF THEM TO THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES CONCERNED,+ SHE SAID.

REV. THE HON. JOYCE M. BENNETT HOPED SOCIAL WORKERS WOULD ALSO COME INTO ACTION TO HELP THOSE GIRLS AND WOMEN DISPLACED FROM VICE ESTABLISHMENTS ONCE THE AMENDING LEGISLATION CAME INTO FORCE.

SHE ALSO URGED THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE TO PROVIDE FACILITIES FOR HIS CASE WORKERS TO REHABILITATE THEM.

+IF A FORM IV SCHOOL GIRL GIVES UP STUDYING TO EARN \$3,000 PER MONTH FROM HER 'MEN FRIENDS', A POSITIVE EFFORT MUST BE MADE TO TRAIN THESE GIRLS AND WOMEN TO EARN THEIR LIVING IN A DIFFERENT WAY.

+UNLESS REHABILITATION OF THESE WOMEN AND GIRLS INTO SOCIETY TAKES PLACE THEY WILL STILL BE EXPLOITED AND ABUSED,+ SHE SAID.

SHE POINTED OUT THAT THIS IS NO EASY TASK AND WILL REQUIRE MUCH PATIENT COUNSELLING BOTH OF THE GIRLS AND THEIR FAMILIES. SHE FURTHER URGED THAT THIS ASPECT OF THE PROBLEM BE THOROUGHLY CONSIDERED BY THOSE CONCERNED IN THE COMMUNITY.

SHE BELIEVED THAT THE BILL WOULD DO MUCH TO ACHIEVE THE AIM OF STAMPING OUT THE SLAVERY OF WOMEN. +PROSTITUTION IS A DENIAL OF THE BASIC HUMAN RIGHT OF EVERY WOMAN OVER HER OWN PERSON AND HER OWN PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS,+ SHE SAID.

THE HON. WONG LAM SUPPORTED THE BILL AND POINTED OUT THAT ANY LEGISLATION DEALING WITH PROSTITUTION MUST BE PARTICULARLY AIMED AT THOSE WHO BENEFIT FROM THE EMPLOYMENT OF PROSTITUTES AND MUST DEFINITELY BE ENFORCEABLE.

HE BELIEVED THAT MANY PROSTITUTES WERE COMPELLED BY PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES TO ENTER THE PROFESSION AND A NUMBER OF YOUNG GIRLS WERE PROBABLY MISLED BY IGNORANCE.

+HENCE THE SOLUTION DOES NOT NECESSARILY LIE IN ARRESTING AND IMPRISONING THEM.+ GOVERNMENT SHOULD AIM AT MEASURES AGAINST THOSE PERSONS WHO, FOR THEIR OWN PERSONAL GAIN, COMPEL OR ENTICE OTHERS INTO PROSTITUTION, HE SAID, AND HE WAS GLAD THAT IT WAS MAKING AN EFFORT IN THIS DIRECTION.

HE AGREED WITH THE VIEW THAT THE POLICE IN TAKING ACTION AGAINST PROSTITUTES DID NOT OBTAIN RESULTS WHICH WERE COMMENSURATE WITH THE TIME AND EFFORT MADE, BUT HE DID NOT THINK THE POLICE WERE TO BE BLAMED. +IT IS REALLY THE STATE OF THE LAW, UP TO NOW.+ HE SAID.

MR. WONG SAID IT WAS THEREFORE OF SOME URGENCY THAT THE EXISTING LEGISLATION BE AMENDED TO ALLOW THE POLICE TO ACHIEVE GREATER RESULTS IN TAKING ACTION, AND HE SUPPORTED THE INCREASE IN PENALTIES AGAINST THOSE PERSONS WHO BENEFIT FROM PROSTITUTION.

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WIDOWS' AND CHILDREN'S PENSIONS BILL PASSED

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY PASSED THE WIDOWS' AND CHILDREN'S PENSIONS BILL, WHICH WILL IMPROVE THE ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE NEW PENSIONS SCHEME AND THE COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD SUPERVISING IT.

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE OF THE BILL, THE SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, THE HON. RON BRIDGE, ASSURED THE COUNCIL THAT THE NEW SCHEME AS AMENDED WOULD PROVIDE A RANGE OF BENEFITS WHICH COULD NOT BE PROVIDED MORE EFFECTIVELY BY ANY OTHER SIMILAR TYPE OF SCHEME.

/AT THE COMMITTEE

AT THE COMMITTEE STAGE OF THE BILL, MR. BRIDGE MADE A NUMBER OF AMENDMENTS. THESE CONCERNED:

- * THE PROTECTION OF WIDOWS' AND CHILDREN'S PENSIONS FROM BANKRUPTCY PROCEEDINGS WHETHER BANKRUPTCY OCCURS IN HONG KONG OR ELSEWHERE=
- * ALLOWANCE FOR SUMS DUE TO CONTRIBUTORS TO BE SET OFF AGAINST SUMS DUE FROM THEM=
- * ALLOWANCE FOR DIVORCED OR WIDOWED FEMALE OFFICER TO WITHDRAW FROM THE SCHEME WHEN SHE REMARRIES, WITH HER CONTRIBUTIONS RETURNED AND THE RETENTION OF SUCH RIGHTS AS MIGHT ACCRUE TO HER CHILDREN=
- * A CLARIFICATION THAT RETROSPECTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS BY A FEMALE OFFICER ARE ALLOWED ONLY FOR THE PERIOD OF HER PENSIONABLE SERVICE= AND
- * THE ENLARGEMENT OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD TO INCLUDE TWO MEMBERS WHO ARE NEITHER SERVING NOR RETIRED PUBLIC OFFICERS AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION SHOULD BE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD EX-OFFICIO.

MR. BRIDGE POINTED OUT THAT THE SCHEME HAS HAD AN INDEPENDENT ACTUARIAL ASSESSMENT BY THE UK GOVERNMENT ACTUARY, WHO AND SOME OF HIS SENIOR STAFF, HAVE AN +UNRIVALLED COMBINATION OF LONG EXPERIENCE IN COMMERCIAL INSURANCE FIRMS WITH SPECIALIST EXPERIENCE IN PUBLIC SECTOR PENSION SCHEMES WHICH ARE VERY DIFFERENT FROM THOSE IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR.+

+I AM CONFIDENT, THEREFORE, THAT WE HAVE HAD THE BEST POSSIBLE INDEPENDENT ACTUARIAL ASSESSMENT AND THAT, AS A RESULT, THE SCHEME IS WELL DESIGNED TO MEET ITS PURPOSE,+ MR. BRIDGE SAID.

THE HON. Q.W. LEE, WHO COVENED AN AD HOC GROUP OF UNOFFICIALS TO STUDY THE BILL, ALSO SPOKE IN THE RESUMED DEBATE.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE MAIN ATTRACTION OF THE SCHEME IS ITS RELATIVE SIMPLICITY IN THAT THE METHOD OF CALCULATING THE BENEFITS PAYABLE TO THE WIDOW AND CHILDREN OF A DECEASED CONTRIBUTOR WILL BE SIMILAR TO THE METHOD OF CALCULATING AN OFFICER'S OWN SERVICE PENSION.

HE SAID THIS WOULD MAKE IT MUCH EASIER FOR CONTRIBUTORS AND THEIR DEPENDANTS TO UNDERSTAND. HE OUTLINED THE IMPROVED FEATURES OF THE NEW SCHEME AS FOLLOWS:

- * THE CALCULATION OF BENEFITS TO BE BASED ON FINAL SALARY OR PENSION=
- * THE INCLUSION IN THE SCHEME OF MALE JUNIOR RANKS AND WIDOWED AND DIVORCED FEMALE OFFICERS= AND
- * THE EXTENSION OF THE PERIOD FOR WHICH A CHILD REMAINS ELIGIBLE UP TO THE AGE OF 23 WHERE HE OR SHE IS RECEIVING FULL-TIME EDUCATION.

MR. LEE WAS GLAD THAT THE POINTS SUGGESTED BY THE AD HOC GROUP IN THE COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS WERE RECOGNISED BY THE SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE AND AMENDMENTS WERE MADE TO INCORPORATE THE SUGGESTIONS.

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HK NOT RESTRICTED IN TALKS WITH E.E.C.
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THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE TODAY ASSURED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THAT THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT WAS IN NO WAY INHIBITED BY ITS CONSTITUTIONAL STATUS NOR WERE WE RESTRICTED IN THE CONDUCT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMISSION.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. FRANCIS TIEN, HE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS AWARE THAT HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT WAS ONE OF THE E.E.C. MEMBERS WHICH INSISTED ON DISCRIMINATORY MEASURES AGAINST HONG KONG AND WAS ALSO AWARE OF THE BITTERNESS FELT BY THE PEOPLE IN HONG KONG AS WELL AS BY CONSUMERS IN E.E.C. COUNTRIES WHO WERE THUS DEPRIVED OF CERTAIN GOOD QUALITY HONG KONG PRODUCTS.

TURNING TO ANOTHER PART OF MR. TIEN'S QUESTION, MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID, +BEFORE AND DURING THESE PROTRACTED NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE E.E.C. WHICH WAS ACTING WITHIN A MANDATE HANDED DOWN BY THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF THE COMMUNITY, THE GOVERNMENT WAS IN CONSTANT COMMUNICATION WITH HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE AND THE GOVERNOR PERSONALLY HAD INTERVIEWS WITH SEVERAL MINISTERS IN SEPTEMBER AND NOVEMBER.+

HE NOTED THAT THE VARIOUS EXCHANGES, WRITTEN AND ORAL, WHICH TOOK PLACE HAD THREE OBJECTIVES.

+FIRST, TO ENSURE THAT HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT UNDERSTOOD THE EXTENT TO WHICH HONG KONG WAS BEING DEPRIVED OF ITS RIGHTS UNDER THE MULTI-FIBRE AGREEMENT (WHICH IN ITSELF IS A DEROGATION OF OUR MOST FAVOURED NATIONS' RIGHTS OF ENTRY UNDER THE GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE).

+SECONDLY, TO ENSURE THAT HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT WAS AWARE OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE COMMISSION'S NEGOTIATING MANDATE FOR OUR GROWTH PROSPECTS AND FOR OUR NEGOTIATING POSITION VIS-A-VIS OTHER IMPORTING COUNTRIES.

+THIRDLY, TO PROTEST TO HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT BOTH AS THE METROPOLITAN POWER AND AS AN INFLUENTIAL MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY AT THE HIGHLY DISCRIMINATORY NATURE OF THE TREATMENT BEING METED OUT TO US.+

MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID THAT HE COULD SEE LITTLE POINT NOW IN MAKING A FURTHER PROTEST BUT IF THE UNOFFICIALS WISHED, HE SHOULD CERTAINLY SEE THAT THEIR FEELINGS OF DISMAY WERE FORMALLY CONVEYED TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

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MFA TO BE EXTENDED FOR FOUR YEARS

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THE DIRECTOR OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND CUSTOMS, THE HON. DAVID JORDAN, HAS REVEALED THAT THE MULTI-FIBRE ARRANGEMENT (MFA) WOULD BE EXTENDED FOR A PERIOD OF FOUR YEARS, UNTIL THE END OF 1981.

ANSWERING A QUESTION FROM THE HON. FRANCIS TIEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY ABOUT THE CONCLUSIONS REGARDING THE FUTURE OF THE MFA IN THE TEXTILES COMMITTEE UNDER THE GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE (GATT), MR. JORDAN SAID THIS WAS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CONCLUSIONS REACHED ON DECEMBER 14 FROM HONG KONG'S POINT VIEW.

HE SAID THE OTHER MOST IMPORTANT ONE WAS THAT +MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTIONS TO TEXTILE TRADE PROBLEMS UNDER THE MFA INCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY OF JOINTLY AGREED REASONABLE DEPARTURES FROM PARTICULAR ELEMENTS OF THE MFA IN PARTICULAR CASES.+

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DESIGN OF NEW \$1 COIN FINALISED

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THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE SAID THE DESIGN OF THE NEW ONE DOLLAR COIN BASED ON RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COINAGE REVIEW COMMITTEE HAD BEEN FINALISED AND HE DID NOT THINK THE PUBLIC WILL FIND IT HARD TO IDENTIFY THE NEW COIN.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY ON WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER INSCRIBING ON THE PROPOSED NEW \$1 AND 10 CENT COINS THEIR RESPECTIVE DENOMINATIONS IN CLEAR ARABIC NUMERALS IN ORDER TO FACILITATE READY IDENTIFICATION.

MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID THE INSCRIPTION AND MOTIF ON BOTH SIDES OF THE NEW DOLLAR COIN WOULD BE SIMILAR TO THE PRESENT ONE EXCEPT THAT THE LATEST EFFIGY OF THE QUEEN WOULD BE USED.

HE SAID IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO CONFUSE IT WITH ANY CENT DENOMINATION COIN BECAUSE IT WOULD BE LARGER IN DIAMETER= WEIGH MORE THAN THE 50 CENT COIN= CARRY A DIFFERENT MOTIF AND ITS COLOUR WOULD BE DIFFERENT BECAUSE IT WOULD BE MADE OF CUPRO-NICKEL INSTEAD OF NICKEL BRASS, THE METAL FROM WHICH THE CENT DENOMINATION COINS ARE MADE.

HE NOTED THAT IT WOULD ALSO BE DIFFICULT TO CONFUSE THE ONE DOLLAR COIN WITH EITHER THE TWO OR FIVE DOLLAR COINS.

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+THE DOLLAR COIN WILL BE ROUND, WHEREAS THE TWO DOLLAR COIN HAS 12 SCALLOPS AND THE FIVE DOLLAR COIN HAS 10 SIDES. IN ADDITION, THE DOLLAR COIN WILL BE LIGHTER IN WEIGHT THAN BOTH THE TWO DOLLAR AND FIVE DOLLAR COINS, AND ITS DIAMETER WILL BE 25.5 MM, COMPARED WITH 28 MM FOR THE TWO DOLLAR COIN, AND 31 MM FOR THE FIVE DOLLAR COIN.+

AS FOR THE DESIGN OF THE NEW 10 CENT COIN, MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID THAT THIS HAD NOT YET BEEN FINALISED BUT ONE OF THE DESIGNS UNDER CONSIDERATION WAS SIMILAR TO THAT WHICH HE THOUGHT MR. CHEONG-LEEN HAD IN MIND.

REPLYING TO ANOTHER QUESTION FROM THE HON. Q.W. LEE ON THE SHORTAGE OF 10 CENT COINS, MR. HADDON-CAVE POINTED OUT THAT THE TOTAL OUTSTANDING CIRCULATION OF 10 CENT COINS WAS ABOUT 2,100 METRIC TONS OR 460 MILLION COINS, - ABOUT 100 PER HEAD OF THE POPULATION.

+WITH SO MANY 10 CENT COIN IN CIRCULATION, IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT THERE IS A REAL SHORTAGE,+ HE SAID.

HE NOTED THAT IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT REPORTS OF SHORTAGES COMING SO CLOSE TO THE CHINESE NEW YEAR FESTIVAL HAD LED TO HOARDING OF THESE COINS OR IT MIGHT BE THAT A LARGE NUMBER OF 10 CENT COINS TENDED TO BE PUT AWAY FOR A RAINY DAY AND THEN FORGOTTEN.

+THERE IS NOTHING THAT CAN BE DONE IMMEDIATELY TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF 10 CENT COINS IN CIRCULATION, BUT WE HAVE CONTINGENCY PLANS IN HAND SHOULD THE POSITION BECOME CRITICAL,+ HE SAID.

HE EXPLAINED THAT ONE OF THE PURPOSES OF INTRODUCING THE 20 CENT COIN WAS TO DISPLACE 10 CENT COINS, SO THAT WHEN THE PRESENT COIN WAS REPLACED FEWER NEW COINS WOULD BE NEEDED.

+UNFORTUNATELY, THIS HAS NOT WORKED OUT AS WELL AS THE COINAGE REVIEW COMMITTEE AND THE GOVERNMENT HOPED AND THERE HAS BEEN NO REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF 10 CENT COINS IN CIRCULATION= IN FACT, THE NUMBER HAS INCREASED BY ABOUT 21 MILLION SINCE THE 20 CENT COIN WAS FIRST INTRODUCED IN AUGUST 1975,+ HE SAID.

+IT SEEMS THAT THE PUBLIC STILL NOT FULLY ACCUSTOMED TO THE 20 CENT COINS WITH THE RESULT THAT RATHER MORE 10 CENT COINS ARE BEING USED IN TRANSACTIONS. IN RECENT MONTHS THERE HAVE BEEN SIGNS THAT RATHER MORE USE IS BEING MADE OF THE 20 CENT COINS AND, HOPEFULLY, THIS SHOULD EVENTUALLY LEAD TO A REDUCTION IN THE DEMAND FOR 10 CENT COINS,+ HE ADDED.

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WATER RESTRICTIONS GENERALLY OBSERVED BY CONSUMERS
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THE GOVERNMENT IS SATISFIED THAT THE EXISTING WATER RESTRICTIONS ARE BEING GENERALLY OBSERVED BY CONSUMERS, THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, MR. DAVID MCDONALD, SAID TODAY.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. LI FOOK-WO IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, HE SAID THAT WITH THE MULTITUDE OF HIGH RISE BUILDINGS IN HONG KONG, EACH OF WHICH HAD A ROOF STORAGE TANK, THE OPPORTUNITY TO USE THE STORED WATER OUTSIDE THE SUPPLY PERIODS WAS EVER PRESENT.

+CONTROL OF SUPPLY FROM THESE TANKS CAN ONLY BE EFFECTED WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF THE BUILDING MANagements,+ MR. MCDONALD SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT LETTERS WERE WRITTEN TO INDIVIDUAL MANAGEMENT BODIES AND AN APPEAL WAS MADE AS PART OF GENERAL PUBLICITY TO SEEK THEIR CO-OPERATION IN OBSERVING THE PRESCRIBED HOURS OF SUPPLY.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS WERE REQUIRED TO OBSERVE THE PRESCRIBED HOURS OF SUPPLY BY A WRITTEN INSTRUCTION, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMPLIANCE RESTING WITH THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION OF EACH DEPARTMENT.

IN ANSWER TO ANOTHER QUESTION ABOUT THE PRESENT WATER STORAGE SITUATION, MR. MCDONALD SAID THAT RESERVOIR STORAGE ON DECEMBER 19 WAS 190.7 MILLION CUBIC METRES OR 41,950 MILLION GALLONS (INCLUDING HIGH ISLAND).

AT THE SAME TIME, THE OUTSTANDING AMOUNT OF WATER TO BE SUPPLIED FROM CHINA FOR THE 1977/78 SUPPLY PERIOD WAS 104.1 MILLION CUBIC METRES OR 22,903 MILLION GALLONS.

THE DESALTER, HE ADDED, WAS IN FULL PRODUCTION WITH AN AVERAGE DAILY RATE OF 0.182 MILLION CUBIC METRES OR 40 MILLION GALLONS.

+WITH THE CONTINUATION OF THE CURRENT LEVEL OF RESTRICTION AND ASSUMING NO SIGNIFICANT RAINFALL IN THE DRY SEASON IT IS ESTIMATED THAT STORAGE ON MAY 1, 1978 WILL BE ABOUT 152.3 MILLION CUBIC METRES OR 33,500 MILLION GALLONS WHICH WILL ONLY BE SLIGHTLY ABOVE THE STORAGE REQUIRED THEN TO MAINTAIN A FOUR-HOUR DAILY SUPPLY FOR THE SUBSEQUENT PERIOD SHOULD A DROUGHT OCCUR NEXT SUMMER,+ MR. MCDONALD SAID.

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BILL TO PROVIDE FURTHER BENEFITS TO INJURED WORKERS
RECEIVES UNANIMOUS SUPPORT FROM UNOFFICIALS

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A BILL WHICH WILL PROVIDE FURTHER BENEFITS TO INJURED WORKERS RECEIVED UNANIMOUS SUPPORT FROM THE UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON. PETER WILLIAMS GAVE AN ASSURANCE THAT THE DAILY RATES OF MEDICAL EXPENSES PAYABLE BY EMPLOYERS UNDER THE BILL WOULD BE KEPT UNDER REGULAR REVIEW BY THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT IN CONSULTATION WITH THE DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES AND WOULD BE REVISED AS NECESSARY.

HE SAID THE ENACTMENT OF THE BILL WOULD BE ANOTHER VERY BENEFICIAL STEP FORWARD FOR THE WELFARE OF HONG KONG'S WORKFORCE AND THUS THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE.

THE HON. WONG LAM SAID, THE UNOFFICIALS SUPPORTED THE BILL +AS WE FEEL THAT THE VARIOUS AMENDMENTS PROPOSED WILL CERTAINLY MEET AN URGENT NEED AND WILL FILL SOME OF THE LOOPHOLES IN THE EXISTING LABOUR LEGISLATION.+

+AT THE SAME TIME,+ HE ADDED, +WE WELCOME THE PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR OF AN INTER-DEPARTMENTAL WORKING PARTY TO UNDERTAKE A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE.+

HE SAID THE VIEWS OF THE AD HOC GROUP FORMED TO STUDY THE BILL, WERE SUPPORTED BY UNOFFICIALS AND WERE BROADLY AS FOLLOWS:

- * THE PROPOSAL TO REQUIRE AN EMPLOYER TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MEDICAL EXPENSES INCURRED BY A WORKMAN WHO IS INJURED DURING THE COURSE OF HIS EMPLOYMENT IS REASONABLE. AT PRESENT, THE MEDICAL EXPENSES INCURRED BY A WORKER ARE EITHER SETTLED BY THE WORKER HIMSELF OR ARE WAIVED BY THE GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL CONCERNED, IN WHICH CASE IT IS REALLY THE TAXPAYERS WHO FOOT THE BILL FOR HIS EMPLOYER. THIS IS OBVIOUSLY UNFAIR.
- * IT IS REASONABLE IN PRINCIPLE TO STIPULATE CLEARLY AN EMPLOYER'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR, AND THE CONDITIONS RELATING TO, A WORKMAN'S MEDICAL EXPENSES, AND TO PRESCRIBE THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH THE EMPLOYER MAY BE EXEMPTED FROM GIVING CASH REIMBURSEMENT.
- * THE PROPOSAL THAT, IN THE EVENT OF DISPUTE OVER THE LIABILITY TO PAY MEDICAL EXPENSES OR THE AMOUNT OF THE MEDICAL EXPENSES, THE WORKMAN OR THE EMPLOYER MAY APPLY TO THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR FOR THE DETERMINATION OF THE DISPUTE IS ALSO VERY APPROPRIATE.
- * WE ENTIRELY AGREE THAT IF AN EMPLOYER FAILS TO PAY MEDICAL EXPENSES TO HIS WORKMAN 21 DAYS AFTER SUCH PAYMENT IS DUE, THE WORKMAN MAY SEEK TO RECOVER THE MEDICAL EXPENSES AS A CIVIL DEBT IN THE SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL.

ALSO SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE BILL, THE HON. LEUNG TAT-SHING SAID: +THE AMOUNT OF MEDICAL EXPENSES THAT CAN BE REIMBURSED AND THE PERIOD OF TIME FOR CLAIMING REIMBURSEMENTS AS PROPOSED IN THE BILL ARE CONSIDERED REASONABLE AND ACCEPTABLE IN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES.+

+HOWEVER,+ HE ADDED, +IT IS IMPORTANT THAT REGULAR REVIEWS OF THOSE BENEFITS SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT BY THE AUTHORITY CONCERNED.+

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QUEEN ELIZABETH STADIUM TO BENEFIT THE COMMUNITY

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THE ACTING GOVERNOR, SIR DENYS ROBERTS SAID TODAY THE QUEEN ELIZABETH STADIUM DUE FOR COMPLETION BY THE END OF 1979, WOULD BRING +SUBSTANTIAL BENEFIT TO THE COMMUNITY IN GENERAL AND TO OUR YOUNG SPORTSMEN IN PARTICULAR.+

SPEAKING AT THE STADIUM'S FOUNDATION STONE LAYING CEREMONY, SIR DENYS SAID THE COMMUNITY OWED A GREAT DEBT OF GRATITUDE TO THE DONORS TO THE ROYAL VISIT COMMEMORATIVE FUND IN WHICH \$10 MILLION WAS RAISED FOR THIS \$42 MILLION PROJECT.

HE SAID THESE DONORS SHOULD BE GIVEN THE MAIN CREDIT FOR BRINGING THIS EXCITING PROJECT TO LIFE.

SIR DENYS NOTED THAT APART FROM THE \$10 MILLION RAISED BY THE ROYAL VISIT FUND THE COST OF THE PROJECT WILL BE MET FROM THE PROCEEDS OF THE SALE OF THE COMMEMORATIVE GOLD COIN, WHICH WAS MINTED TO MARK THE QUEEN'S VISIT, AND FROM CONTRIBUTIONS BY THE GOVERNMENT AND THE URBAN COUNCIL.

THE FOLLOWING IS THE FULL TEXT OF THE SPEECH BY SIR DENYS ROBERTS:

+IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO LAY THE FOUNDATION STONE FOR THIS INDOOR STADIUM, WHICH, WITH HER MAJESTY'S CONSENT, WILL BE NAMED +THE QUEEN ELIZABETH STADIUM+.

+AS LONG AGO AS 1962, THE IDEA WAS FIRST CONCEIVED OF AN INDOOR SPORTS CENTRE FOR HONG KONG ISLAND. BUT IT WOULD PROBABLY STILL BE NO MORE THAN AN AMBITIOUS PLAN, BUT FOR THE GENEROSITY OF A NUMBER OF PUBLIC SPIRITED CITIZENS, LED BY SIR SHIU-KIN TANG, SIR RUN RUN SHAW, MR. LI DAK-SUM, MR. PONG DING-YUEN AND MANY OTHERS, WHO CONTRIBUTED MOST GENEROUSLY TO A FUND TO COMMEMORATE THE QUEEN'S VISIT TO HONG KONG IN 1975. THIS FUND AMOUNTS TO OVER \$10 MILLION, ALL OF WHICH WILL BE DEVOTED TO THIS PROJECT. THIS ACT OF GENEROSITY HAS PROVIDED THE IMPETUS WHICH HAS TRANSFORMED A PROJECT INTO REALITY.

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+SINCE 1975, THE CONCEPT OF THE STADIUM HAS UNDERGONE VARIOUS CHANGES, AS THE GOVERNMENT AND THE URBAN COUNCIL HAVE EXPANDED THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE OF THE PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION OF SPORTING FACILITIES.

+INSTEAD OF BEING A CENTRE FOR SPORT ONLY, THE STADIUM WILL ALSO INCLUDE FACILITIES WHICH WILL ENABLE EXHIBITIONS, TRADE SHOWS AND ENTERTAINMENTS TO BE STAGED HERE. THIS WILL HELP TO MEET THE HEAVY EXPENSE OF RUNNING SUCH A STADIUM AND WILL GREATLY ENLARGE ITS USEFULNESS TO THE COMMUNITY.

+WHEN THE STADIUM IS COMPLETED, BY THE END OF 1979, IT WILL CONSIST OF AN ARENA SEATING 3,000 PEOPLE, A GAMES PRACTICE AREA, VARIOUS SPORTS COURTS, ANCILLARY TRAINING AND CHANGING FACILITIES AND A TOWER BLOCK OF HOSTEL ACCOMMODATION FOR TEAMS VISITING HONG KONG FOR COMPETITIONS, WHETHER AT THE STADIUM OR ELSEWHERE.

+THE URBAN COUNCIL, WITH ITS CONSIDERABLE EXPERIENCE AND MARKED SUCCESS IN ADMINISTERING SIMILAR FACILITIES, WILL MANAGE IT.

+THE STADIUM IS EXPECTED TO COST A TOTAL OF ABOUT \$42 MILLION. APART FROM THE \$10 MILLION RAISED BY THE ROYAL VISIT COMMEMORATIVE FUND, THE COST WILL BE MET FROM THE PROCEEDS OF THE SALE OF THE COMMEMORATIVE GOLD COIN, WHICH WAS MINTED TO MARK THE QUEEN'S VISIT, AND FROM CONTRIBUTIONS BY THE GOVERNMENT AND THE URBAN COUNCIL.

+THE COMMUNITY OWES A GREAT DEBT OF GRATITUDE TO THE DONORS TO THE ROYAL VISIT COMMEMORATIVE FUND, TO WHOM SHOULD BE GIVEN THE MAIN CREDIT FOR BRINGING THIS EXCITING PROJECT TO LIFE.

+I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THE STADIUM WILL BRING SUBSTANTIAL BENEFIT TO THE COMMUNITY IN GENERAL AND TO OUR YOUNG SPORTSMEN IN PARTICULAR.

+IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO LAY THE FOUNDATION STONE FOR THE QUEEN ELIZABETH STADIUM.+

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SIGNIFICANT EFFORT MADE IN KEEPING WORKERS
INFORMED OF THEIR RIGHTS

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THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON. PETER WILLIAMS, SAID TODAY THAT HIS DEPARTMENT HAD ALREADY PUT SIGNIFICANT EFFORT IN KEEPING THE WORKFORCE INFORMED OF THEIR RIGHTS TO WORKERS' BENEFITS.

HE SAID THAT APART FROM THE STANDARD PUBLICITY EFFORT THROUGH TELEVISION, RADIO AND THE PRESS HIS DEPARTMENT REGULARLY PROVIDED MANY SPEAKERS FOR ORGANISATIONS INTERESTED IN LABOUR AND RELATED MATTERS.

HE WAS REPLYING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. LEUNG TAT-SHING WHO ASKED WHETHER GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE EFFECTIVE STEPS TO KEEP HONG KONG WORKERS INFORMED OF THEIR RIGHTS.

MR. WILLIAMS SAID HIS DEPARTMENT PRODUCED A WIDE RANGE OF GUIDES AND BOOKLETS IN ENGLISH AND CHINESE EXPLAINING LABOUR LEGISLATION IN SIMPLE TERMS.

+THESE PUBLICATIONS ARE PROVIDED FREE OF CHARGE AND ARE AVAILABLE AT OFFICES OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS CENTRE, ENQUIRY CENTRES OF THE NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION AND CITY DISTRICT OFFICES,+ HE SAID.

+ABOUT \$500,000 WILL BE SPENT ON THESE PUBLICATIONS NEXT YEAR,+ HE ADDED.

MR. WILLIAMS SAID THE DEPARTMENT FROM TIME-TO-TIME STAGED FULL SCALE PROMOTIONAL EXHIBITIONS AND CAMPAIGNS SUCH AS THE MACHINERY GUARDED EXHIBITION IN MARCH THIS YEAR AND THE CAREERS EXHIBITION PRESENTED EARLIER THIS MONTH.

+I WILL EXPECT ALL THESE SERVICES TO BE EXPANDED GRADUALLY, AND OUR PLANNED PROGRAMME OF OPENING NEW BRANCH OFFICES WILL ALSO HELP TO MAKE THIS KIND OF INFORMATION EVEN MORE READILY AVAILABLE,+ MR. WILLIAMS SAID.

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TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT CAREFULLY PLANNED TO
COPE WITH SUNDAY RACING AT SHATIN
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THE GOVERNMENT HAS GIVEN MOST CAREFUL CONSIDERATION TO THE MATTERS OF TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT IN THE NEW TERRITORIES BEFORE THE DECISION WAS TAKEN TO ALLOW SUNDAY RACING AT SHATIN, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM REV. THE HON. JOYCE M. BENNETT, MR. JONES SAID THE AVAILABILITY OF ADEQUATE ROAD AND RAIL COMMUNICATIONS TO COPE WITH THE EXPECTED TRAFFIC AND THE TIME OF RACE MEETINGS TO AVOID CONFLICT WITH OTHER RECREATIONAL TRAFFIC WERE CAREFULLY TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.

MR. JONES SAID THE RACE COURSE WOULD HAVE A CAPACITY OF 35,000 AND, AS NO MORE THAN 1,000 CAR PARKING SPACES WOULD BE PROVIDED AND ALLOCATED, THE MAJORITY OF THOSE ATTENDING WOULD NEED TO USE PUBLIC TRANSPORT TO GET THERE.

HE NOTED: +THE KOWLOON CANTON RAILWAY, WHOSE SHATIN RACE COURSE STATION WILL BE COMPLETED BY SEPTEMBER 1978, AND THE BUS COMPANIES, WILL BETWEEN THEM BE ABLE TO CARRY 28,000 PASSENGERS TO THE COURSE AND 33,000 HOME AFTERWARDS.

+THE CAPACITY OF THE ROAD SYSTEM WILL ALSO BE IMPROVED NEXT YEAR WITH THE OPENING OF THE SECOND TUBE OF THE LION ROCK TUNNEL AND ITS ASSOCIATED ROAD WORKS, AND IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT THE ROADS WILL BE ABLE TO COPE WITH THE BALANCE OF RACEGOERS USING OTHER MEANS OF TRANSPORT, AS WELL AS OTHER TRAFFIC,+ MR. JONES SAID.

REPLYING TO ANOTHER QUESTION CONCERNING TAXIS RAISED BY THE HON. JOHN BREMRIDGE, MR. JONES SAID THAT PROGRAMME FOR CONVERTING PUBLIC HIRE CARS TO TAXIS WAS PROCEEDING AS RAPIDLY AS THE RESOURCES OF THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT PERMIT.

HE SAID: +THEY SHOULD ALL BE CONVERTED BY EARLY JULY 1978 AND, FROM MAY ONWARDS, IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO RESUME THE AGREED POLICY FOR THE DIRECT ISSUE OF FURTHER URBAN TAXI LICENCES. BY THEN THERE WILL BE OVER 7,000 TAXIS AVAILABLE.+

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EXTENDING DUTIES OF TRAFFIC WARDENS CONSIDERED

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THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES SAID CONSIDERATION WAS BEING GIVEN TO TRAFFIC WARDENS TO UNDERTAKE CERTAIN OTHER TASKS NOW PERFORMED ENTIRELY BY TRAFFIC POLICE.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. ROGER LOBO IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, MR. JONES SAID THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE WAS VERY MUCH IN FAVOUR OF EXTENDING THE DUTIES OF TRAFFIC WARDENS IN SO FAR AS THIS WAS POSSIBLE.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS SATISFIED THAT TRAFFIC WARDENS ARE PERFORMING A USEFUL ROLE AND APART FROM THEIR ORIGINAL DUTIES OF CONTROLLING PARKING, THEY ARE ALREADY DIRECTING TRAFFIC IN SOME PLACES.

MR. JONES ALSO NOTED THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TRAFFIC WARDENS HAS ALREADY BEEN INCREASED AND RECRUITMENT IS STILL GOING ON TO BRING IT UP TO STRENGTH.

+ONCE THIS HAS BEEN ACHIEVED, THE ESTABLISHMENT WILL BE FURTHER ENLARGED AND RECRUITMENT WILL CONTINUE,+ HE SAID.

ANSWERING ANOTHER QUESTION FROM DR. THE HON. HARRY FANG ABOUT RECENT ACCIDENTS IN WHICH TWO STUDENTS WERE KILLED AFTER FALLING OFF CROWDED BUSES WHICH THEY WERE TRYING TO BOARD, MR. JONES SAID THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT WOULD BE TAKING UP WITH THE BUS COMPANIES THE POSSIBILITY OF POSTING MORE QUEUE REGULATORS AT THE BUSIER BUS STOPS WHICH WERE NOT YET CONTROLLED DURING RUSH HOURS.

HE ALSO SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO STEP UP ROAD SAFETY CAMPAIGNS GENERALLY AND ADDITIONAL FUNDS ARE BEING REQUESTED FOR THIS PURPOSE IN THE NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR.

+AN INCREASE IN THE SUBVENTION TO THE ROAD SAFETY ASSOCIATION IS ALSO BEING SOUGHT TO ASSIST THE ASSOCIATION TO FORM MORE SCHOOL ROAD SAFETY PATROLS,+ MR. JONES ADDED.

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1977

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REHOUSING POLICY APPLIES TO BOAT DWELLERS
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ACCOMMODATION WILL BE AUTOMATICALLY OFFERED TO DWELLERS IN BOATS WHICH ARE EITHER AFFECTED BY DEVELOPMENT CLEARANCES OR CONSIDERED BY THE MARINE DEPARTMENT TO BE IN SUCH A CONDITION THAT THEY MAY BE RENDERED HOMELESS AT SHORT NOTICE, THE HON. ALAN SCOTT, SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, SAID AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HE SAID THIS WAS CONSISTENT WITH EXISTING POLICY IN REGARD TO REHOUSING OTHER GROUPS SUCH AS ROOFTOP SQUATTERS, TENEMENT DWELLERS AND LAND SQUATTERS.

MR. SCOTT WAS REPLYING TO THE HON. MRS. KWAN KO SIU-WAH WHO ASKED WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER REVIEWING THE OVERALL SITUATION OF BOAT SQUATTERS WITH A VIEW TO MEETING THE VARIOUS SPECIAL NEEDS AND THE PROBLEMS OF THIS PARTICULAR GROUP FOR REHOUSING AND OTHER SOCIAL SERVICES IN ORDER TO ACCELERATE THEIR ASSIMILATION INTO THE COMMUNITY.

HE POINTED OUT THAT MANY FAMILIES AMONG THESE VARIOUS GROUPS, WHO WERE NOT AFFECTED BY PUBLIC WORKS OR EMERGENCIES, WERE LIVING IN UNSATISFACTORY LIVING CONDITIONS.

+THE HOUSING AUTHORITY TRIES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THESE GROUPS IN AS BALANCED AND EQUITABLE A WAY AS IT CAN,+ MR. SCOTT SAID.

AS FAR AS PUBLIC ASSISTANCE, SOCIAL WELFARE, EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND MEDICAL SERVICES WERE CONCERNED, MR. SCOTT SAID BOAT SQUATTERS HAD ACCESS TO ALL THESE SERVICES ON LAND.

+THEIR NEEDS FOR THESE SERVICES DO NOT APPEAR TO BE SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT FROM LAND DWELLERS, AND THEY ARE THEREFORE, TREATED IN THE SAME WAY AS ALL MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

+IT IS APPRECIATED THAT BOAT SQUATTERS HAVE THEIR OWN PARTICULAR BACKGROUND IN HISTORICAL, CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC TERMS, BUT IT IS NOT CONSIDERED THAT THIS JUSTIFIES SPECIAL PRIORITY IN RELATION TO THE OTHER GROUPS I HAVE MENTIONED,+ MR. SCOTT SAID.

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1977

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MEASURES TO CUSHION INCREASE IN RATEABLE VALUE
OF NON-PROFIT MAKING RECREATIONAL CLUBS

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THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, TODAY OUTLINED THE MEASURES GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE TO CUSHION THE EFFECT OF THE INCREASE IN THE RATEABLE VALUE OF NON-PROFIT MAKING SPORTS AND RECREATIONAL CLUBS.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. CHARLES YEUNG, MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID TO RECTIFY THE POSSIBLE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF THE INCREASE, +NON-PROFIT MAKING SPORTS AND RECREATIONAL CLUBS ARE ELIGIBLE, ALONG WITH ALL OTHER PREMISES, FOR THE GENERAL SCHEME OF RELIEF WHICH I ANNOUNCED IN THE BUDGET EARLIER THIS YEAR.+

UNDER THIS SCHEME OF RELIEF, HE SAID, THE RATES PAYABLE BY A RATEPAYER IN 1977-78 WOULD NOT BE MORE THAN ONE THIRD ABOVE THE RATES PAYABLE BY HIM IN 1976-77.

+SO IN THE EXTREME CASE AT THE UPPER END OF THE RANGE, WHERE THE RATEABLE VALUE FOR THE CLUB CONCERNED HAS INCREASED TWENTY-FOLD THE ACTUAL AMOUNT OF INCREASE IN THE RATES PAYABLE IN 1977-78 IS ONLY \$345,+ HE POINTED OUT.

+THIS INCREASE SPREAD AMONGST THE CLUB'S PRESENT MEMBERSHIP, AMOUNTS TO ABOUT 55 CENTS PER MEMBER FOR THIS YEAR,+ HE ADDED.

AND FOR 1978-79, HE SAID, THE RATES PAYABLE IN 1977-78 FOR THIS PARTICULAR CLUB WOULD FURTHER INCREASE BY ABOUT \$460.

+EVEN WHEN THE SCHEME OF RELIEF CEASES TO APPLY IN 1979-80, THE AMOUNT OF RATES PAYABLE BY EACH MEMBER OF A CLUB IS UNLIKELY TO AMOUNT TO MORE THAN A SMALL FRACTION OF MEMBERS' MONTHLY BILLS,+ HE NOTED.

MR. HADDON-CAVE EXPLAINED THAT THE REASON FOR INCREASE IN RATEABLE VALUE WAS THAT THE PREVIOUS VALUATIONS WERE BASED ON AN OUT-DATED FORMULA.

+THIS FORMULA WOULD HAVE PRODUCED VALUES WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN GENERALLY OUT OF LINE WITH THE VALUES OF OTHER CATEGORIES OF PREMISES. FURTHERMORE, IT WOULD ALSO HAVE PRODUCED VALUES AS BETWEEN ONE CLUB AND ANOTHER WHICH WOULD NOT HAVE ADEQUATELY REFLECTED THE VARIETY OF FACILITIES PROVIDED,+ HE SAID.

+THE COMMISSIONER OF RATING AND VALUATION THEREFORE ADOPTED A NEW APPROACH WHICH HAS RECENTLY BEEN UPHELD IN AN APPEAL TO THE LANDS TRIBUNAL,+ HE ADDED.

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1977

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GOVERNMENT TAKING MEASURES TO REDUCE WAITING TIME FOR
X-RAY EXAMINATIONS

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THE DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES, DR. THE HON. K.L. THONG, SAID THAT BOTH SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM MEASURES ARE BEING INSTITUTED TO REDUCE WAITING TIME FOR SPECIAL X-RAY EXAMINATIONS AT GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS.

DR. THONG WAS REPLYING TO QUESTIONS ON X-RAY SERVICES BY THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN, DURING THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY.

HE SAID IN THE IMMEDIATE SHORT-TERM ACTIVE CONSIDERATION IS BEING GIVEN TO INCREASING THE NUMBER OF SESSIONS WITHIN THE PRESENT FACILITIES WHICH +SHOULD REDUCE THE WAITING TIME TO A CONSIDERABLE EXTENT.+

AT THE SAME TIME, STEPS ARE BEING TAKEN TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL FACILITIES IN MAJOR INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS THE SOUTH KWAI CHUNG POLYCLINIC, THE PRINCESS MARGARET HOSPITAL, THE QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL AND THE KOWLOON HOSPITAL, HE SAID.

+IN FACT, THE FACILITIES AT SOUTH KWAI CHUNG POLYCLINIC SHOULD BE OPERATIONAL BY EARLY NEXT YEAR AND GIVEN THE RESOURCES THE OTHER FACILITIES SHOULD ALSO BE IN USE WITHIN THE NEXT TWO TO THREE YEARS, WHICH WILL FURTHER IMPROVE THE SITUATION,+ HE ADDED.

DR. THONG EXPLAINED THAT SPECIAL X-RAY EXAMINATIONS PRESENTLY CARRIED OUT IN GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS FALL GENERALLY INTO TWO CATEGORIES.

THE FIRST CATEGORY RELATES TO CASES WHICH ARE CONSIDERED URGENT FOR DETERMINING THE DIAGNOSIS SO THAT APPROPRIATE TREATMENT COULD BE STARTED.

+FOR SUCH CASES, THERE IS NO WAITING TIME,+ HE SAID.

THERE ARE CERTAIN CASES WHICH, IN THE OPINION OF THE ATTENDING DOCTOR, SHOULD UNDERGO FURTHER EXAMINATIONS FOR MORE DETAILED INVESTIGATIONS AND CONFIRMATION OF THE CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS AND FOR FOLLOW-UP AT CERTAIN INTERVALS.

FOR SUCH CASES, THERE IS A PRIORITY SCHEDULE AND DEPENDING ON THE INDIVIDUAL CASE THERE MAY BE ON THE AVERAGE A WAITING TIME OF ABOUT FOUR MONTHS FOR THE QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL WHILE THE WAITING TIME FOR QUEEN MARY AND PRINCESS MARGARET HOSPITALS IS MUCH LESS, HE SAID.

+I MIGHT ADD THAT THIS PICTURE IS GENERALLY TRUE ALSO IN THE UNITED KINGDOM,+ SAID DR. THONG.

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1977

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MONITORING OF TV PROGRAMMES
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THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TELEVISION STANDARDS CONTROL OFFICERS HAS RECENTLY BEEN INCREASED FROM SIX TO NINE AND WHEN THE THREE VACANCIES HAVE BEEN FILLED THIS SHOULD ENABLE THE TELEVISION AUTHORITY TO INCREASE ITS MONITORING COVERAGE, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON. F.K. LI, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. MRS. KWAN KO SIU-WAH.

+I AM NOT ABLE TO SAY WHAT PERCENTAGE COVERAGE THIS WOULD AMOUNT TO AS THE COMBINED OUTPUT OF THE THREE STATIONS IS INCREASING AND AS THE TELEVISION STANDARDS CONTROL OFFICERS ARE ALSO REQUIRED TO DIRECT AND ADVISE THE STATIONS ON PROGRAMME STANDARDS,+ MR. LI SAID.

THE AIM OF THE TELEVISION AUTHORITY BOARD IS A COMPREHENSIVE MONITORING OF ALL PROGRAMMES, MR. LI POINTED OUT, BUT THIS WOULD REQUIRE A DISPROPORTIONATE AMOUNT OF MANPOWER.

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CROWD CONTROL AT FOOTBALL MATCH
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THE POLICE WILL CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN CLOSE LIAISON WITH THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION IN ORDER TO TRY TO ENSURE AS ACCURATE A FORECAST OF LIKELY ATTENDANCE AS POSSIBLE, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON. LEWIS DAVIES SAID TODAY.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR. THE HON. HENRY HU IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ABOUT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CROWD CONTROL AT A RECENT FOOTBALL MATCH AT BOUNDARY STREET STADIUM, MR. DAVIES SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT ENTIRELY SATISFIED WITH THE CROWD CONTROL AT THAT MATCH BECAUSE THE SIZE OF THE CROWD WAS SUBSTANTIALLY GREATER THAN THE ADVANCE ESTIMATE OF AN ATTENDANCE OF 7,000 BY THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION.

+IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES THE ORIGINAL DETACHMENT OF POLICE FOR CROWD CONTROL DUTIES HAD TO SEEK REINFORCEMENT. THESE WERE PROVIDED BY THE RESERVE UNIT WHICH WAS STANDING BY,+ HE SAID.

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1977

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DUTY-FREE BRANDY FOR CHRISTMAS

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THE TRADE, INDUSTRY AND CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT HAS ANNOUNCED THAT PASSENGERS ARRIVING FROM MACAU DURING THE TWO DAYS FOLLOWING CHRISTMAS DAY (DECEMBER 26 AND 27), MAY BRING INTO HONG KONG DUTY FREE ONE BOTTLE OF PORTUGUESE BRANDY OF NOT MORE THAN ONE LITRE INSTEAD OF THE ONE-QUART BOTTLE OF GRAPE WINE NORMALLY ALLOWED.

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GOVERNMENT CONSIDERS AMENDING LAW
ON POSTING OF ILLEGAL ADVERTISEMENTS

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THE GOVERNMENT IS CONSIDERING TO AMEND EXISTING LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE THAT THE +PERSON OR ORGANISATION SEEKING TO BENEFIT FROM THE POSTING OF ANY ILLEGAL ADVERTISEMENT+ BE MADE LIABLE, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES SAID TODAY.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. PETER C. WONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR. JONES SAID IT WAS NOT EASY TO ENFORCE THE EXISTING LAW, WHICH PROVIDED FOR CONTROL OVER THE POSTING OF HANDBILLS AND OTHER ADVERTISING MATERIAL IN PUBLIC PLACES BECAUSE OF THE DIFFICULTY OF IDENTIFYING THE PERSONS WHO ACTUALLY PUT UP THE SIGNS AND POSTERS.

HE SAID THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, THE NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION, THE HOUSING AND THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENTS ALL MADE EFFORTS WITHIN THEIR RESOURCES TO REMOVE ILLEGAL ADVERTISEMENTS.

HOWEVER, MR. JONES SAID, THESE ACTIVITIES HAD ONLY A LIMITED EFFECT ON THE PROBLEM, AS IN MANY CASES NEW ADVERTISEMENTS APPEARED ALMOST AS SOON AS THE OLD ONES WERE REMOVED.

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POLICE PATROLS IN COUNTRY PARKS

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POLICE PATROLS IN COUNTRY PARKS WERE ALWAYS INCREASED AT WEEKENDS AND ON PUBLIC HOLIDAYS= THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON. LEWIS DAVIES SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. WONG LAM, MR. DAVIES SAID THE POLICE PROTECTED MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC USING COUNTRY PARKS IN THE SAME WAY THAT PROTECTION WAS PROVIDED TO THE PUBLIC IN OTHER PARTS OF HONG KONG.

HE SAID THE MOST IMPORTANT MEANS OF PROTECTION IN COUNTRY PARKS WAS BY POLICE PATROLS ON FOOT AND IN VEHICLES.

MR. DAVIES SAID THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT ALSO PROVIDED FOREST GUARDS TO ASSIST THE PUBLIC AND TO ENSURE THAT MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC COMPLY WITH THE COUNTRY PARKS REGULATIONS.

+THEY ALSO DRAW THE ATTENTION OF POLICE OFFICERS TO ANY SUSPICIOUS CHARACTERS OR CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES THEY OBSERVED DURING THEIR PATROLS,+ MR. DAVIES ADDED.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR POLICING COUNTRY PARKS ARE KEPT UNDER CONSTANT REVIEW BY THE POLICE AND THE NUMBER OF OFFICERS DEPLOYED ON PATROL DUTIES IS INCREASED AS AND WHEN THE NEED ARISES.

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NO AVERAGE TIME FOR SUMMONS PROCEEDINGS

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THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON. JOHN HOBLEY SAID IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO PROVIDE MEANINGFUL AVERAGE TIME TAKEN IN DEALING WITH THE WHOLE RANGE OF OFFENCES WHERE SUMMONS PROCEDURE WAS ADOPTED.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM REV. THE HON. JOYCE M. BENNETT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY ON THE AVERAGE TIME IN CASES DEALT WITH BY SUMMONS IN MAGISTRATES COURTS.

MR. HOBLEY SAID THE QUESTION RELATED TO THE WHOLE OF THE CONSIDERABLE RANGE OF OFFENCES IN RELATION TO WHICH CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS WERE TAKEN BY SUMMONS.

HE POINTED OUT THAT SUMMONSES ARE ISSUED ON COMPLAINT BY POLICE OFFICERS, AND ALSO BY OFFICERS OF MOST OTHER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

HE SAID IF THE UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS COULD DIRECT ATTENTION TO PARTICULAR OFFENCES, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CERTAINLY PROVIDE SUCH INFORMATION AS MAY BE AVAILABLE.

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1977

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FIVE BILLS PASSED
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FIVE BILLS COMPLETED THEIR COMMITTEE STAGE AND THIRD READING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY AND BECAME LAW.

THEY WERE THE HONG KONG TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1977, THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1977, THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1977, THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1977 AND THE WIDOWS' AND CHILDREN'S PENSIONS BILL 1977.

TWO BILLS - THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND URBAN SERVICES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978 AND THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978 - WERE INTRODUCED INTO THE COUNCIL FOR FIRST AND SECOND READINGS.

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YUEN LONG DISTRICT ADVISORY BOARD HOLDS FIRST MEETING
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COMPREHENSIVE PLANS ARE TO BE DRAWN UP FOR 1978-79 ON CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES AS WELL AS ON MINOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS AND LOCAL PUBLIC WORK PROJECTS IN THE YUEN LONG MARKET TOWN.

AT ITS FIRST MEETING TODAY, THE NEWLY-CREATED YUEN LONG DISTRICT ADVISORY BOARD SET UP TWO SUB-COMMITTEES CHARGED WITH THE TASK OF FORMULATING THE PLANS.

THE PLANS WILL FORM THE BASIS OF WORK FOR THE BOARD DURING THE COMING FINANCIAL YEAR.

DURING THE NEXT TWO MONTHS, THE TWO SUB-COMMITTEES WILL WORK ON AN INFORMAL BASIS WITH ASSISTANCE FROM THE YUEN LONG DISTRICT OFFICE.

THE YUEN LONG DISTRICT OFFICER, MR. MICHAEL CARTLAND, WHO IS THE BOARD CHAIRMAN, SAID: +THE PLANS WILL THEN BE PUT TO THE FULL BOARD FOR CONSIDERATION AND ENDORSEMENT IN MARCH AS WELL AS FOR THE ALLOCATION OF FUNDS.+

THEREAFTER, MR. CARTLAND SAID, THE BOARD WILL MEET REGULARLY TO MONITOR PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS PROGRAMMES AND TO CONSIDER MATTERS RELATING TO YET ANOTHER MAIN ITEM OF INTEREST - THE PUBLIC WORK PROGRAMME.

AT THE MEETING, THE BOARD MEMBERS ALSO LOOKED AT THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR YUEN LONG TOWN.

SITTING ON THE BOARD WERE 15 UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS REPRESENTING A WIDE CROSS SECTION OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.

EARLIER TODAY, THE TAI PO DISTRICT ADVISORY BOARD ALSO CONVENED ITS FIRST MEETING UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE TAI PO DISTRICT OFFICER, MR. CLIVE OXLEY.

MR. OXLEY BRIEFED THE MEMBERS ON THE DISTRICT'S LOCAL PUBLIC WORKS PROGRESS AND SAID A LARGE NUMBER OF WORK ITEMS COSTING THE GOVERNMENT A TOTAL OF ABOUT \$284,000 HAD BEEN COMPLETED SINCE APRIL THIS YEAR.

FURTHER ITEMS, INCLUDING REPAIRS TO TRACKS, BUILDING MOTORABLE BRIDGES AND IMPROVEMENTS TO WATER SUPPLY IN REMOTE VILLAGES, ARE TO BE CARRIED OUT BEFORE THE NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR BEGINS, HE SAID.

TODAY'S TWO MEETINGS COMPLETED THE SERIES OF INAUGURAL MEETINGS FOR THE SEVEN NEW TERRITORIES DISTRICT ADVISORY BOARDS SINCE THEIR ESTABLISHMENTS WERE GAZETTED LATE LAST MONTH.

BOTH MEETINGS WERE ATTENDED BY THE SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, MR. DAVID AKERS-JONES, WHO BRIEFLY ADDRESSED THE MEMBERS.