



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1975

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POPULATION GROWTH MUST BE CAREFULLY WATCHED

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POPULATION GROWTH MUST BE CLOSELY MONITORED AND THE PROGRAMME TO MEET THE NEED FOR FURTHER PUBLICITY AND PROVISION OF FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES MUST BE INTENSIFIED, THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, THE HON. F.K. LI, SAID TODAY.

SPEAKING IN AN ADJOURNMENT DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, HE SAID THE PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS WAS LIKELY TO BE ABOUT 80,000, OR JUST LESS THAN TWO PER CENT A YEAR.

MR. LI SAID THIS INDICATED THAT +A PROBLEM EXISTS AND THAT IT MUST BE CAREFULLY WATCHED.+

HE SAID THE WORK DONE BY THE FAMILY PLANNING ASSOCIATION +MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO DISSIPATE+ AND THE GOVERNMENT +IS BUILDING ON THE FOUNDATIONS SO WELL BEGUN.+

HE CONTINUED : +CONTROL OF LEGAL AND ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION MUST BE SEEN IN THIS CONTEXT AND GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS ARE RECOGNISED NOT ONLY IN THIS COUNCIL BUT AMONG THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG AT LARGE.+

MR. LI SAID WHAT POLICY MAKERS HAD TO ASSESS WAS THE +RIGHT BALANCE BETWEEN A POPULATION BEING TOO HIGH AND IT BEING TOO LOW.+

HE DESCRIBED HONG KONG'S PROBLEMS AS +UNIQUE+. EIGHTY-FIVE PER CENT OF THE POPULATION ARE LIVING IN ONLY 15 SQUARE MILES OF SPACE.

+IT IS IN THIS CONTEXT,+ HE SAID, +THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS STRONGLY SUPPORTED FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES IN HONG KONG AND MORE RECENTLY HAS BECOME INVOLVED IN THE DIRECT PROVISION OF THESE SERVICES.+

THE SECRETARY SAID EXCESSIVE POPULATION GROWTH WOULD HAVE IMPORTANT IMPLICATIONS FOR HONG KONG'S SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES.

+WHILE WE HAVE NOT ADOPTED ANY ECONOMIC DISINCENTIVE MEASURES AIMED TO DISCOURAGE POPULATION GROWTH, THE RATE OF GROWTH IN HONG KONG COMPARES REASONABLY WELL WITH THAT OF SINGAPORE,+ HE SAID.

PRESENT FIGURES INDICATE THAT WHILE 18 PER CENT OF MARRIED WOMEN BETWEEN 15 AND 49 WERE ATTENDING FAMILY PLANNING CLINICS IN 1970, BY 1974 THE FIGURE HAD INCREASED TO 28 PER CENT.

MR. LI SAID : +THIS PERCENTAGE MUST BE FURTHER INCREASED IF ONLY BECAUSE THE NUMBER OF WOMEN IN THIS CATEGORY WILL RISE BY ALMOST ONE-FIFTH OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS.+

/EARLIER,

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EARLIER, THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN, WHO RAISED THE MATTER OF +SOCIAL PLANNING AND POPULATION GROWTH+ IN THE DEBATE, CALLED FOR A +POSITIVE EXPRESSION BY GOVERNMENT OF A POPULATION POLICY SUITED TO THE VITAL NEEDS OF HONG KONG FOR THE COMING YEARS.+

HE SAID : +WITHOUT A WELL-DEFINED AND WELL-ACTIVATED POPULATION POLICY, OUR YOUNG PEOPLE WILL HAVE NO MORE THAN HALF-A-CHANCE TOWARDS ACQUIRING EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY.+

MR. CHEONG-LEEN SAID THAT IN SO FAR AS THE CONTROL OF LEGAL AND ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION WAS CONCERNED, THE GOVERNMENT HAD ADOPTED AND CONTINUED TO ADOPT THE MOST PRACTICABLE MEASURES AVAILABLE UNDER CONDITIONS AS THEY VARIED FROM TIME TO TIME.

+YET,+ HE SAID, +IN REGARD TO INTERNAL POPULATION GROWTH, THE GOVERNMENT HAS SO FAR SHOWN A 'SHYING AWAY' ATTITUDE IN EXAMINING AND PROPOSING MORE EFFECTIVE MEASURES AT POPULATION GROWTH.+

MR. CHEONG-LEEN SAID HE DID NOT PROPOSE THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD FOLLOW WHAT OTHER COUNTRIES WERE DOING TO TACKLE PROBLEMS OF POPULATION GROWTH. +OUR POPULATION POLICY SHOULD BE TAILORED TO OUR OWN CIRCUMSTANCES AND SPECIFIC NEEDS,+ HE SAID.

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PROTECTION FOR WORKERS IN COMPRESSED AIR CONDITIONS
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NEW REGULATIONS APPROVED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY WILL PROTECT PEOPLE FROM SICKNESS AND ILL HEALTH CAUSED BY WORKING IN AN ENVIRONMENT OF COMPRESSED AIR.

MOVING A RESOLUTION FOR THE APPROVAL OF THESE COMPLEX REGULATIONS, THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON. IAN PRICE, SAID HE HAD NO DOUBT THAT CONTRACTORS WHO WOULD BE USING COMPRESSED AIR FOR THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY PROJECT WERE AWARE OF THE PRINCIPLES OF THE REGULATIONS BECAUSE THEY WERE BASED ON INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTED STANDARDS.

BUT HE STRESSED THAT WORKING IN COMPRESSED AIR COULD BE HAZARDOUS. IF PROPER PRECAUTIONS WERE NOT TAKEN, AND IF THE CORRECT PROCEDURES WERE NEGLECTED DECOMPRESSION SICKNESS COULD RESULT.

HE EXPLAINED THAT COMPRESSED AIR WAS REQUIRED TO KEEP OUT EXCESS WATER WHICH MIGHT BE ENCOUNTERED, FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN TUNNELLING THROUGH POROUS ROCK OR SOIL. +THE PRESSURE OF THE COMPRESSED AIR DEPENDS, TO SOME EXTENT, UPON THE DEPTH BELOW GROUND AND THE POROUSNESS OF THE SOIL IN WHICH THE WORK IS BEING PERFORMED.+

THE ILLNESS -- DECOMPRESSION SICKNESS -- WHICH MAY RESULT FROM WORKING IN COMPRESSED AIR IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE FACT THAT WHEN A PERSON LEAVES THE WORKING AREA HE MUST ENTER A MAN LOCK AND BE BROUGHT BACK BY CAREFULLY CONTROLLED STAGES TO THE NORMAL PRESSURE.

+UNLESS THIS IS DONE WITH METICULOUS REGARD FOR THE PROCEDURES LAID DOWN IN DECOMPRESSION TABLES (WHICH ARE PART OF THE REGULATIONS), THE COMPRESSED AIR WHICH HAS BEEN ABSORBED IN THE BLOOD, OR TISSUE FLUIDS, WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ESCAPE, WITH THE RESULT THAT BUBBLES OF GAS FORM IN THE BODY,+ MR. PRICE SAID.

THIS COULD CAUSE PAIN, PARTICULARLY IN THE JOINTS AND LIMBS, RANGING FROM RELATIVELY MILD DISCOMFORT TO REALLY INTENSE SUFFERING, LEADING TO COLLAPSE. OTHER SYMPTOMS INCLUDED HEADACHES, GIDDINESS, CONVULSIONS, VOMITTING AND NUMBNESS OF THE LIMBS.

THE ONSET OF DECOMPRESSION SICKNESS, MR. PRICE SAID, COULD OCCUR HOURS AFTER THE WORKER HAD LEFT THE CONSTRUCTION SITE.

+THE SYMPTOMS MAY BE SIMILAR TO THOSE OF DRUNKENESS, BUT NOT NECESSARILY SO. OR THE WORKER MAY COLLAPSE. IT IS VITAL THAT HE BE TAKEN TO THE NEAREST MEDICAL LOCK WITHOUT DELAY.

+THEREFORE THOSE WORKING IN COMPRESSED AIR EXCEEDING 14 P.S.I. MUST WEAR, NEXT TO THE SKIN, A WARNING BADGE SUPPLIED BY THE EMPLOYER GIVING THE ADDRESS OF THE MEDICAL LOCK TO WHICH HE MUST BE SENT IF TAKEN ILL.+

MR. PRICE

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MR. PRICE SAID HE HAD TAKEN STEPS TO ENSURE THAT MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS, HOSPITALS AND THE POLICE WOULD BE MADE AWARE OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS BADGE.

THE MAIN EMPHASIS OF THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS (WORK IN COMPRESSED AIR) REGULATIONS WAS THE PROVISION OF SPECIFIC PROCEDURES FOR BRINGING BACK A PERSON FROM THE WORKING PRESSURE TO NORMAL ATMOSPHERIC PRESSURE, THE COMMISSIONER SAID.

THE REGULATIONS COVERED FOUR BROAD AREAS :-

- * THE PROVISION OF PROPER EQUIPMENT, CONTROLLED AND OPERATED BY TRAINED AND RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE.
- * DETAILED PROCEDURES FOR DECOMPRESSION.
- * PREVENTIVE MEDICINE AND HEALTH EDUCATION.
- * THE PROVISION OF SPECIAL MEDICAL SUPERVISION AND FACILITIES ON SITE IN THE EVENT OF SICKNESS.

MR. PRICE STRESSED THAT EACH WORKER MUST BE INFORMED OF THE IMPORTANCE OF OBSERVING ALL THE PROCEDURES IN THE REGULATIONS.

AN ADVISORY LEAFLET WILL BE ISSUED, AND EXPLAINED, TO EACH WORKER= IT WILL GIVE SIMPLE AND CLEAR ADVICE TO HIM ON WHAT TO DO IF HE FEELS ILL AFTER LEAVING THE SITE.

MR. PRICE SAID REGULATIONS WERE SIMILAR TO THOSE IN FORCE IN MANY COUNTRIES. +THEY ARE DERIVED FROM U.K. REGULATIONS, AS UPDATED BY THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRIES RESEARCH AND INFORMATION ASSOCIATION, BUT HAVE BEEN TAILORED TO HONG KONG'S NEEDS. CONSULTATIONS WERE ALSO HELD WITH THE CHAIRMAN OF THE U.K. MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL DECOMPRESSION SICKNESS PANEL.+

+THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION HAD ENDORSED THE REGULATIONS+, HE ADDED.

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FIRE DANGER: PUBLIC URGED TO BE ALERT
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A FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN TODAY REMINDED MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO HEED THE RED FIRE DANGER WARNING NOW IN FORCE FOLLOWING A MARKED INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF FIRES DURING THE PAST TWO DAYS.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THERE WERE 44 FIRES YESTERDAY, AND 34 ON MONDAY. ON THE PREVIOUS SIX DAYS THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF FIRES WAS 14.

HE POINTED OUT THAT WHEN THERE WAS A SIGNIFICANT DROP IN THE HUMIDITY LEVEL, IT TOOK ONLY A SIMPLE ACT OF CARELESSNESS TO START A FIRE.

THE SPOKESMAN URGED ALL VISITORS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE TO PUT OUT CIGARETTE ENDS AND MATCHES BEFORE DISPOSING OF THEM.

+GROUPS PLANNING BARBECUE PARTIES SHOULD USE AREAS SET ASIDE FOR THIS PURPOSE BY THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT,+ HE SAID.

IN THE HOME, RUBBISH SHOULD BE CLEARED REGULARLY AND GREAT CARE SHOULD BE EXERCISED WHEN HANDLING ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES SUCH AS HEATERS. MATCHES OR LIGHTERS SHOULD NOT BE LEFT WITHIN REACH OF CHILDREN.

THE SPOKESMAN CALLED ON FACTORY MANAGERMENTS TO HAVE THEIR ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS CHECKED BY QUALIFIED ELECTRICIANS, PAYING PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO THE WIRING.

+WE URGE THE PUBLIC TO CALL US IMMEDIATELY THEY SEE A FIRE AND NEVER TO ASSUME THAT OTHERS HAVE ALREADY DONE SO,+ HE ADDED.

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WATER INTERRUPTION
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A NUMBER OF PREMISES IN KVUN TONG WILL BE WITHOUT WATER FROM 10 P.M. ON FRIDAY (DECEMBER 19) TO 8 A.M. ON THE FOLLOWING DAY TO ALLOW WATERWORKS TO BE CARRIED OUT.

AFFECTED WILL BE PREMISES IN 165-189 WAI YIP STREET, 30-36 AND 31-47 HUNG TO ROAD, 66-68 AND 94-96 HOW MING STREET, AND 41-51 TSUN YIP STREET.

IN TSIM SHA TSUI, SUPPLY TO THE AREA BOUNDED BY AUSTIN AVENUE, CHATHAM ROAD, OBSERVATORY ROAD, KIMBERLEY ROAD AND NATHAN ROAD, INCLUDING THE ROYAL OBSERVATORY, WILL BE INTERRUPTED BETWEEN 1 A.M. AND 6 A.M. ON FRIDAY.

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JUNIOR CAREER SOCIETIES PROPOSED TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE
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THE DIRECTOR OF THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC, DR. KEITH LEGG, TODAY CALLED FOR THE FORMATION OF JUNIOR CAREER SOCIETIES BASED IN CONVENIENT CENTRES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION AND HELP YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE CHOICE OF CAREERS.

HE PROPOSED THIS IN HIS OPENING ADDRESS TO THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT'S FOURTH ANNUAL CAREER EXHIBITION -- CAREERS '76 -- AT THE CITY HALL.

THE EXHIBITION IS OPEN DAILY FROM 9:30 A.M. TO 7 P.M. AND CLOSES AT 5 P.M. ON DECEMBER 23.

DR. LEGG SAID HE HAD BEEN INVOLVED WITH CAREERS INFORMATION IN A VARIETY OF WAYS FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS, AND HE OFTEN OBSERVED THAT THERE WAS MUCH UNTAPPED ADVICE WHICH COULD BE HARNESSSED IF PROPERLY COORDINATED.

SOME COUNTRIES EMPLOYED JUNIOR SOCIETIES BASED ON EDUCATIONAL OR INDUSTRIAL CENTRES IN CONVENIENT LOCATIONS.

THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT'S YOUTH EMPLOYMENT ADVISORY SERVICE, ORGANISER OF CAREERS '76, WAS SHOWING THE WAY AND +WE MIGHT NOW ASK THE QUESTION WHETHER IT IS TIME TO INSTITUTE A GREATER DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION,+ HE SAID.

DR. LEGG NOTED THAT HONG KONG INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE WERE BECOMING MORE SOPHISTICATED AND IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO MAINTAIN AND INCREASE ITS COMPETITIVENESS.

+HONG KONG IS ALSO BECOMING INCREASINGLY AWARE OF THE SOCIAL NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY -- HELP FOR THE UNDERPRIVILEGED, FOR THE AGED AND FOR THE PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED. THERE IS ALSO THE NEED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT, FOR LESS NOISE, AND LESS ATMOSPHERIC AND WATER POLLUTION.

+ALL OF THESE FACTORS ARE OPENING UP NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT AND THERE ARE MANY BODIES IN HONG KONG THAT POSSESS, OR COULD DEVISE, CAREERS INFORMATION ON ALL OF THESE AREAS AS WELL AS ON EXISTING OPPORTUNITIES,+ HE SAID.

SUCH BODIES INCLUDED THE PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTIONS, EDUCATIONAL UNITS, TRAINING BODIES, INDUSTRY, COMMERCE, GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND MANY ASSOCIATIONS AND SOCIETIES.

/+I SUGGEST

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+I SUGGEST THAT THESE COULD BE HARNESSSED TO FORM A COORDINATED PATTERN OF JUNIOR CAREER SOCIETIES BASED ON THE MOST CONVENIENT CENTRES IN HONG KONG INCLUDING THE NEW TERRITORIES.

+I WOULD BE VERY HAPPY TO OFFER THE POLYTECHNIC AS ONE OF THESE CENTRES NOW. TOGETHER WITH THE ADVISORY SERVICE, WE MIGHT EMBARK ON A PIONEERING VENTURE IN THIS DIRECTION.+

HOPING THAT THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR WOULD SERIOUSLY CONSIDER HIS PROPOSAL, DR. LEGG ADDED: +I AM SURE THAT SUCH MEASURES ARE ESSENTIAL IF WE ARE TO PROVIDE THE KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING THAT OUR YOUNG PEOPLE REQUIRE AND INDEED DESERVE IF THEY ARE TO CHOOSE THEIR CAREERS WISELY AND CORRECTLY BOTH FOR THE GOOD OF THEMSELVES AND HONG KONG.+

ON CAREERS '76, HE SAID THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS EXHIBITION IN THE ANNUAL CALENDAR COULD NOT BE OVER-RATED. +THE ACHIEVEMENT SO FAR REFLECTS GREAT CREDIT ON THE STAFF OF THE ADVISORY SERVICE AND I AM SURE THAT THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE GREATLY APPRECIATES THE EFFORT.+

HE SAID IT SEEMED TO BE AXIOMATIC IN MANY PLACES IN THE WORLD THAT YOUNG PEOPLE CHOSE AND ENTERED A CAREER IN A VERY CASUAL WAY AND WITH A CONSIDERABLE LACK OF INITIAL INFORMATION. YET THERE COULD BE FEW MORE IMPORTANT DECISIONS IN LIFE THAN THAT OF CHOOSING A CAREER.

THE DECISION ON CAREER CHOICE WAS NOT ONLY THE CONCERN OF YOUNG PEOPLE BUT ALSO OF THE POPULATION GENERALLY AND PARENTS IN PARTICULAR. +IT IS THEREFORE ESSENTIAL THAT PARENTS ALSO ACQUIRE ACCURATE CAREERS INFORMATION AND I URGE ALL PARENTS OF CHILDREN FACING A CAREER CHOICE TO ATTEND THIS EXHIBITION IF THEY POSSIBLY CAN.

+I AM SURE THAT THE EXHIBITION WILL NOT GIVE THE ANSWER TO EVERY SPECIFIC CAREER QUESTION IN SPITE OF THE WEALTH OF INFORMATION PROVIDED. HOWEVER, EVEN IF THIS IS SO, A VISIT TO THE EXHIBITION WILL STILL PROVIDE SOURCES AND CONTACTS WHICH CAN BE FOLLOWED UP TO YIELD AN ANSWER TO ANY CAREER QUESTION.+

TOUCHING ON BLUE AND WHITE COLLAR WORK, DR. LEGG SAID THERE COULD BE NO DOUBT OF THE IMPORTANCE OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, MANUFACTURE AND PRODUCTION TO THE PRESENT OR FUTURE ECONOMY OF HONG KONG.

+THUS THE OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE IN THESE AREAS ARE NOT ONLY GREAT BUT THEY ARE VERY SATISFYING AND REWARDING. WHAT MATTERS THEN IF PEOPLE GET THEIR 'HAND DIRTY' IN THE PROCESS?+

/ON CAREERS

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ON CAREERS FOR GIRLS, HE SAID: +THE EMPHASIS ON FEMALE REPETITIVE LABOUR MUST REDUCE AS AUTOMATION ADVANCES. WE THEREFORE HAVE A SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO ENCOURAGE GIRLS TO LOOK TO NEW HORIZONS IN THEIR CAREERS AND SPECIFIC CONCENTRATION ON THIS AREA IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT.+

THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, MR. IAN PRICE, INTRODUCING DR. LEGG WHO WAS AN ENGINEERING APPRENTICE FROM 1940 TO 1945, COMMENDED HIM AS AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT APPRENTICES COULD ACHIEVE.

+I STRESS THIS POINT BECAUSE IN HONG KONG THERE IS STILL PREJUDICE ON THE PART OF PARENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE AGAINST DOING WORK WHICH DIRTIES ONE'S HANDS,+ MR. PRICE SAID.

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TRANSPORT WHITE PAPER EXPECTED IN DECEMBER 1976

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A WHITE PAPER ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT WILL BE PUBLISHED TOWARDS THE END OF NEXT YEAR ACCORDING TO PRESENT PLANS.

REPLYING TO QUESTIONS BY THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN IN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. JAMES ROBSON, SAID SEVEN OUT OF NINE TESTS TO BE CONDUCTED BY CONSULTANTS WITHIN A COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORT STUDY HAD ALREADY BEEN COMPLETED.

HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE FINAL TWO TESTS WOULD BE COMPLETED +WITHIN A MONTH OR SO.+

+THE CONSULTANTS WILL BE SUBMITTING A REPORT ON THE CONCLUSIONS TO BE DRAWN FROM THEIR RESEARCHES ON SUCH MATTERS AS THE FUTURE ROLE FOR THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY, FOR THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY, FOR THE PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES AND FOR THE FRANCHISED BUSES,+ HE SAID.

THERE WOULD ALSO BE INDICATIONS OF THE REQUIRED ROAD EXPENDITURE AND ANY NECESSARY LIMITATIONS ON ROAD USE, SUCH AS RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF PRIVATE CARS, IF PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES WERE TO BE PROVIDED AT ACCEPTABLE SPEEDS OVER THE YEARS AHEAD.

+THE POLICY RECOMMENDATION OF THE TRANSPORT WHITE PAPER WILL BE BASED BOTH ON THIS REPORT AND ON FURTHER TESTS TO BE CARRIED OUT BY A BACK-UP TEAM OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS,+ MR. ROBSON SAID.

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TRAINING LEVY ON CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS
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BUILDING CONTRACTORS WILL BE REQUIRED TO PAY A LEVY OF 0.25 PER CENT OF THE VALUE OF WORKS WORTH MORE THAN A QUARTER OF A MILLION DOLLARS TO FINANCE A MAJOR TRAINING SCHEME FOR THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY.

THE RATE OF LEVY, WHICH HAD BEEN ENDORSED BY THE BUILDING CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION, WAS APPROVED BY RESOLUTION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

SPEAKING ON THE MOTION, THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON. IAN PRICE, SAID THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY TRAINING AUTHORITY WAS CURRENTLY ESTABLISHING A TEMPORARY OFFICE AND RECRUITING STAFF, AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR COLLECTING THE LEVY WOULD BE READY BY EARLY NEXT MONTH.

THE LEVY WILL COME INTO EFFECT 30 DAYS AFTER THE RESOLUTION IS PUBLISHED IN THE GAZETTE.

THE TRAINING CENTRE FOR THE TRADE IS SCHEDULED FOR COMPLETION IN APRIL, 1977 IN TAI YIP STREET, KOWLOON BAY.

MR. PRICE EXPLAINED THAT CONSTRUCTION WORKS VALUED BELOW \$250,000 WOULD NOT BE SUBJECT TO THE LEVY BECAUSE THEY +WOULD BE MAINLY OF A DECORATIVE NATURE OR MAINTENANCE+ AND IT WOULD BE +EXTREMELY DIFFICULT AND COSTLY+ TO COLLECT THE LEVY ON SUCH WORKS.

INCOME FROM THE LEVY ON THE ESTIMATED \$3,000 MILLION WORTH OF CONSTRUCTION WORKS WHICH WILL BE SUBJECT TO THE LEVY NEXT YEAR WILL YIELD \$7.5 MILLION.

THE TOTAL CAPITAL AND RECURRENT EXPENDITURE OF THE AUTHORITY IS ESTIMATED AT \$7.1 MILLION. THE REMAINING \$0.4 MILLION WOULD PROVIDE FOR A SMALL RESERVE.

MR. PRICE SAID THAT THE AUTHORITY'S CAPITAL EXPENDITURE, AT \$6.5 MILLION, COMPRISED PROFESSIONAL FEES AND PAYMENTS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TRAINING CENTRE AND FOR ITS EQUIPMENT.

\$0.4 MILLION IN RECURRENT EXPENDITURE WILL BE REQUIRED FOR STAFF SALARIES AND OFFICE RENT. ABOUT \$0.2 MILLION MIGHT HAVE TO BE PAID AS INTEREST ON THE PART OF A LOAN FROM THE DEVELOPMENT LOAN FUND WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE USED TO MEET CAPITAL COSTS DURING THE EARLY PART OF NEXT YEAR.

MR. PRICE SAID THE AUTHORITY HAD DECIDED TO FINANCE THE PROJECT AS FAR AS POSSIBLE FROM THE LEVY ONLY AND THAT IT WOULD DRAW UPON THE LOAN ONLY IF IT WAS NECESSARY.

+THIS WILL NOT ONLY REDUCE TO THE ABSOLUTE MINIMUM THE AMOUNT OF INTEREST TO BE PAID, BUT ALSO SHOULD ENABLE THE AUTHORITY TO BE QUICKLY SELF-SUPPORTING, THUS ALLOWING GOVERNMENT TO RELEASE THE LOAN AT SOME DATE FOR SOME OTHER IMPORTANT PURPOSE,+ HE ADDED.

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SOLUTION SUGGESTED TO STOP MALPRACTICES OF TAXI-DRIVERS
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THE ONLY EFFECTIVE SOLUTION TO STOP MALPRACTICES OF TAXI-DRIVERS IS PROBABLY +TO INCREASE COMPETITION WITHIN THE TRADE TO THE EXTENT THAT DRIVERS WILL RISK LOSING MONEY IF THEY REFUSE PASSENGERS OR DEMAND HIGHER FARES,+ THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. JAMES ROBSON, SAID TODAY.

HE DISCLOSED THAT PROPOSALS FOR INCREASES IN THE NUMBER OF TAXIS WOULD BE PUT TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL EARLY NEXT YEAR.

MR. ROBSON WAS REPLYING TO QUESTIONS ON MEASURES TO PREVENT MALPRACTICES OF TAXI-DRIVERS BY THE HON. ROGER LOBO IN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

SOME OF THE MALPRACTICES POINTED OUT BY MR. LOBO ARE REFUSING TO ACCEPT PASSENGERS, CARRYING PASSENGERS WITHOUT ACTIVATING THE METERS, DEMANDING HIGHER PAYMENTS FOR CERTAIN JOURNEYS, AND TAKING ON ADDITIONAL PASSENGERS DURING A JOURNEY.

MR. ROBSON STRESSED THAT ONLY AN +IRRESPONSIBLE MINORITY+ OF DRIVERS BEHAVED BADLY AND THE EVIDENCE WAS THAT THE MAJORITY GAVE AN HONEST SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC.

HE SAID HE WOULD DISCUSS THE SUBJECT WITH THE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE TOMORROW AND WOULD INFORM MR. LOBO OF THE COMMITTEE'S VIEWS.

MR. ROBSON POINTED OUT THAT EXISTING LAW HAD ADEQUATE PENALTIES FOR MALPRACTICES BUT NOT MANY AGGRIEVED PASSENGERS WOULD COME FORWARD TO COMPLAIN TO THE POLICE AND GIVE EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF A PROSECUTION.

+BUT EVEN SO, DURING THE FIRST TEN MONTHS OF THIS YEAR, A TOTAL OF 170 SUMMONSES WERE TAKEN OUT IN RESPECT OF THIS KIND OF OFFENCE AND OUT OF THESE 170 CASES 142 HAD SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE TO PROCEED FURTHER,+ HE SAID.

APART FROM THESE PROSECUTIONS, MR. ROBSON SAID, THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ALSO SOUGHT THE SUPPORT OF THE TAXI ASSOCIATIONS IN DISCIPLINING THEIR MEMBERS, BUT NOT ALL TAXI DRIVERS BELONGED TO AN ASSOCIATION.

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GOVERNMENT'S OFFICE SPACE NEEDS BEING LOOKED INTO

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THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, THE HON. DAVID MCDONALD, SAID TODAY A STUDY WAS BEING MADE INTO THE MOST EFFECTIVE METHODS OF MEETING THE GOVERNMENT'S LONG-TERM OFFICE ACCOMMODATION REQUIREMENTS.

HE SAID THE STUDY WAS BEING CONDUCTED BY THE SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE WITH THE ADVICE OF AN INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE.

MR. MCDONALD WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION RAISED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BY THE HON. LO TAK-SHING WHO WANTED TO KNOW WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT PLANNED TO REBUILD THE FIRE BRIGADE BUILDING IN CENTRAL, OLD MURRAY BUILDING OR NEW RODNEY BLOCK.

+IT IS NOT UNLIKELY,+ THE DIRECTOR SAID, +THAT SOME OF THE DEPARTMENTS ACCOMMODATED IN THE THREE BUILDINGS NAMED MAY IN THE REASONABLY NEAR FUTURE BE MOVED ELSEWHERE TO MEET THEIR OWN OR PUBLIC NEEDS.+

THERE WERE NO PLANS TO REBUILD ON THE FIRE BUILDING SITE, HE SAID, AND THE INTENTION WAS TO RELEASE THE SITE FOR SALE.

+A STUDY IS IN HAND TO DETERMINE THE FEASIBILITY OF CONSTRUCTING A MULTI-USER BUILDING ON THE CENTRAL RECLAMATION TO PROVIDE A CENTRAL FIRE STATION TOGETHER WITH ACCOMMODATION FOR OTHER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

+IT IS INTENDED THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, THE ONLY OTHER OCCUPANT OF THE FIRE BRIGADE BUILDING, WILL BE ACCOMMODATED EITHER IN A CUSTOM-DESIGNED BUILDING ON THE WANCHAI RECLAMATION OR IN LEASED ACCOMMODATION,+ HE ADDED.

THE DIRECTOR NOTED THAT THE SITE OF OLD MURRAY HOUSE WAS PART OF A LARGE SITE EARMARKED FOR A COMPLEX DEVELOPMENT TO ACCOMMODATE GOVERNMENT OFFICES, A PUBLIC CAR PARK AND A NEW SUPREME COURT BUILDING.

+THE CIVIL SERVICE BRANCH IS STUDYING THE NEED FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT IN THIS LOCATION AND COULD CONCEIVABLY ADVISE AGAINST PROCEEDING WITH THE SCHEME AS PLANNED.

+IF SUCH ADVICE IS TENDERED AND ACCEPTED,+ HE SAID, +THE SITE, EITHER WHOLLY OR IN PART, WOULD BE OFFERED FOR SALE.+

ON NEW RODNEY BLOCK, MR. MCDONALD SAID THIS WAS SITUATED IN AN AREA PLANNED FOR PUBLIC OPEN SPACE, AND ALTHOUGH NO DECISION HAD YET BEEN TAKEN ON ITS FUTURE, THE BUILDING WOULD BE RETAINED.

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MORE POSTS FOR FORENSIC LABORATORY

THE DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES, THE HON. GERALD CHOA, WILL SEEK APPROVAL FOR THE CREATION OF ADDITIONAL POSTS FOR THE NEW FORENSIC LABORATORY STAFF TO PROVIDE SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE AS REQUIRED BY THE COURTS AND TO MEET THEIR MANY OTHER COMMITMENTS.

REPLYING TO THE HON. MRS. JOYCE SYMONS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, HE DESCRIBED THE PRESENT SITUATION AS +EXCEPTIONAL+ AND SAID THAT THE PROBLEM WAS +NOT JUST ONE OF INSUFFICIENT STAFF FOR THE NARCOTICS SECTION BUT ONE OF INSUFFICIENT STAFF FOR THE WHOLE GOVERNMENT LABORATORY.+

DR. CHOA SAID THE SECTION WAS NORMALLY CAPABLE OF HANDLING ROUTINE INVESTIGATIONS AND THE WORK INVOLVED WHEN A CLANDESTINE FACTORY WAS UNCOVERED. +BUT,+ HE SAID, +IT CANNOT COPE WHEN SEVERAL CASES OCCUR TOGETHER.+

TO HANDLE THIS KIND OF SITUATION, STAFF WAS PREVIOUSLY BORROWED FROM OTHER SECTIONS OF THE LABORATORY. +AS OTHER SECTIONS ARE NOW MORE THAN FULLY OCCUPIED NO STAFF CAN BE DEPLOYED,+ DR. CHOA SAID.

THE DIRECTOR SAID IN JULY THIS YEAR, HE ASKED FOR THE CREATION OF FIVE ADDITIONAL POSTS AND THE DEPUTY FINANCIAL SECRETARY WAS NOW PREPARING A PAPER FOR SUBMISSION TO FINANCE COMMITTEE.

HE SAID IT WOULD TAKE SOME TIME TO RECRUIT AND TRAIN SUITABLE STAFF AND THESE ADDITIONAL POSTS WOULD THEREFORE MAKE LITTLE IMPACT IN THE SHORT TERM.

HE GAVE A WARNING THAT THERE WOULD CONTINUE TO BE +DELAYS IN PROVIDING SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE IF THE NUMBER OF CASES REQUIRING SUCH EVIDENCE CONTINUES AT THE PRESENT HIGH LEVEL.+

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REPORT ON TEACHERS : POINTS TO BE FURTHER EXAMINED

SEVERAL POINTS IN THE REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMISSION ON CERTIFICATED MASTERS ARE NOW BEING FURTHER EXAMINED, THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, THE HON. LI FOOK-KOW, SAID TODAY.

HE WAS REPLYING TO THE HON. LI FOOK-WO WHO HAD ASKED WHEN THE REPORT WOULD BE PUBLISHED.

THE SECRETARY SAID THE REPORT WAS CONSIDERED BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL LAST MONTH, FOLLOWING WHICH SEVERAL POINTS WERE ORDERED TO BE FURTHER EXAMINED.

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1975

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EARLY START EXPECTED ON TRAINING CENTRE FOR THE BLIND

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A PROJECT TO BUILD A TRAINING CENTRE FOR MENTALLY RETARDED BLIND CHILDREN AND A VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE FOR BLIND ADULTS SHOULD SOON MATERIALISE, THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, THE HON. LI FOOK KOW, SAID TODAY.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. MISS KO SIU WAH IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MR. LI SAID THE PROPOSAL WAS INCLUDED AS A POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT FOR NEXT YEAR IN THE 1975 REVIEW OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE FIVE-YEAR PLAN.

THE VOLUNTARY AGENCY SPONSORING THE PROJECT HOWEVER HAS RECEIVED A GENEROUS OFFER OF MORE THAN \$1 MILLION FROM THE CHRISTOFFEL BLINDENMISSION OF WEST GERMANY TO MEET THE CAPITAL AND RECURRENT COSTS.

+IN VIEW OF THE DONOR'S DESIRE TO MOVE QUICKLY, THIS MATTER WAS DISCUSSED YESTERDAY AFTERNOON AT THE RELEVANT SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND THE SUB-COMMITTEE ADVISED THAT THE PROJECT SHOULD BE SUPPORTED.

+IF THE SOCIAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE CONCURS, I AM CONFIDENT THAT A START CAN SOON BE MADE ON THIS PROJECT,+ HE SAID.

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MTR-KCR LINK UNDER STUDY

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THE GOVERNMENT IS CONSIDERING WHETHER TO BUILD AN INTERCHANGE FOR THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY AND THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY AT KOWLOON TONG, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. JAMES ROBSON, SAID TODAY.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY DR. THE HON. S.Y. CHUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

HE SAID A STEERING GROUP HAD BEEN SET UP UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE GENERAL MANAGER OF THE RAILWAY TO EXAMINE THE PROPOSAL.

THERE WERE OBVIOUS ADVANTAGES, MR. ROBSON SAID, AS +THIS INTERCHANGE WOULD PROVIDE DIRECT ACCESS TO HONG KONG AND URBAN KOWLOON FOR RAILWAY PASSENGERS AND ACCESS TO THE NEW TERRITORIES FOR MASS TRANSIT PASSENGERS.+

HOWEVER, HE ADDED THAT +IT IS TOO EARLY TO SAY WHETHER IT IS FEASIBLE.+

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1975.

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YOUNG PEOPLE NEEDED AS VOLUNTEERS
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THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, MR. MORRIS MORGAN, TODAY URGED YOUNG PEOPLE TO DIRECT THEIR TALENTS AND ENERGY TOWARDS BUILDING A BETTER COMMUNITY BY HELPING THE LESS FORTUNATE.

MR. MORGAN WAS SPEAKING AT THE ANNUAL ATHLETICS MEETING OF THE JU CHING CHU ENGLISH COLLEGE HELD TODAY AT THE TSUEN WAN SPORTS GROUND.

HE NOTED THAT IN RECENT YEARS, HONG KONG HAD MADE CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL WELFARE. MANY NEW SERVICES AND FACILITIES HAD BEEN INTRODUCED AND PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON SOCIAL WELFARE OVER THE PAST DECADE HAD INCREASED MORE THAN TEN-FOLD.

+HOWEVER, THERE IS STILL ROOM IN MANY AREAS FOR ADDITIONAL HELP, AND NOT NECESSARILY FINANCIAL,+ HE SAID.

VOLUNTEERS COULD MAKE A VERY REAL CONTRIBUTION IN MANY SERVICES IN THEIR SPARE TIME, HE POINTED OUT.

MR. MORGAN SAID: +EXPERIENCE BOTH LOCALLY AND OVERSEAS, WHERE THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEERS IS INCREASINGLY RECOGNISED, HAS SHOWN THAT THEIR USE IS MOST EFFECTIVE IN WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH GROUPS, WITH THE ELDERLY IN THEIR HOMES AND INSTITUTIONS AND WITH THE MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY DISABLED.+

+THERE IS THUS PLENTY OF SCOPE FOR VOLUNTEERS, OF WHOM MORE AND MORE ARE NEEDED AND ARE ALWAYS WELCOME.+

THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT AS WELL AS THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES, HE SAID, WOULD BE MOST HAPPY TO PUT YOUNG PEOPLE, EITHER INDIVIDUALLY OR IN GROUPS, IN TOUCH WITH THE RIGHT ORGANISATION.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

THE FULL TEXT OF MR. MORRIS MORGAN'S SPEECH IS DISTRIBUTED SEPARATELY IN THE G.I.S. PRESS ROOM FOR COLLECTION.

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SALARY RISES FOR CIVIL SERVANTS: POLICY RESTATED
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THE GOVERNMENT MUST HAVE REGARD TO +GENERAL PUBLIC POLICY AS WELL AS ITS NORMAL PAY POLICY+ WHEN CONSIDERING SALARY INCREASES FOR CIVIL SERVANTS, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. DEREK JONES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. J.H. BREMIDGE HE SAID +THE GOVERNMENT MUST DECIDE THE PRIORITY TO BE GIVEN TO ITS DUTY TO BEHAVE AS A REASONABLY GOOD EMPLOYER, AS AGAINST ITS ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF THE PUBLIC FINANCES AND OTHER COMPETING CLAIMS ON ITS LIMITED RESOURCES.+

THE MAIN PRINCIPLE, MR. JONES SAID, WAS THAT CIVIL SERVANTS SHOULD BE REMUNERATED AT LEVELS WHICH THEY MIGHT EXPECT TO OBTAIN IN COMPARABLE EMPLOYMENT WITH REASONABLY GOOD EMPLOYERS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

WITHIN THIS PRINCIPLE, IT WAS ACCEPTED THAT THE CIVIL SERVICE HAD A REASONABLE CLAIM TO THE MAINTENANCE OF REAL INCOME PROVIDED THAT THIS WAS ALSO THE EXPERIENCE OF OTHER EMPLOYEES, HE SAID.

HE SAID CIVIL SERVANTS DID NOT HAVE +AN AUTOMATIC RIGHT TO HAVE THE REAL VALUE OF THEIR SALARIES PROTECTED.+

MR. JONES SAID WHEN CONSIDERING SALARY INCREASES, THE GOVERNMENT LIKE ANY OTHER EMPLOYER, MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT ITS ABILITY TO PAY IN THE LIGHT OF THE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES PREVAILING AT THE TIME.

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BILLS PASSED
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THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION)(AMENDMENT) (NO.4) BILL 1975 AND FOUR OTHER BILLS PASSED THROUGH THEIR COMMITTEE STAGE AND THIRD READING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THE OTHER BILLS WERE THE TRUSTEE (AMENDMENT AND VALIDATION) BILL 1975, THE MERCHANT SHIPPING (RECRUITING OF SEAMEN) (AMENDMENT) (NO.2) BILL 1975, THE SUPREME COURT BILL 1975 AND THE CHEERO CLUB INCORPORATION (REPEAL) BILL 1975.

THE BANKRUPTCY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1975 AND THE PENSIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1975 WERE INTRODUCED INTO THE COUNCIL. DEBATE ON THEIR SECOND READING WAS ADJOURNED.

A MOTION SETTING A 0.25 PER CENT LEVY ON THE VALUE OF ALL CONSTRUCTION WORKS OVER \$250,000 WAS ADOPTED.

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