



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Wednesday, November 15, 1972

TOUGH NEW MEASURES ANNOUNCED TO COMBAT CRIME

The Attorney General, the Hon D.T.E. Roberts, announced today that the Government proposes to adopt a number of tougher measures to combat the substantial growth of violent crime in Hong Kong.

He said the time had come "for us to take a harsher view" and the proposed measures will make it clear that the Government is as gravely concerned with the present level of violent crime as the community at large.

He was speaking in the Legislative Council on a motion of thanks for the Governor's address given last month at the opening of the Council's new session.

The proposed measures are:

- * To provide a mandatory sentence of at least six months imprisonment or a detention order for people found guilty of possessing offensive weapons in public places illegally or without reasonable excuse;
- * To increase the maximum sentence for such an offence from two years to three years;
- * To empower any police officer to stop and search any person for offensive weapons in a public place at any time; and
- * To set up a scheme for the compensation of victims of violent crimes.

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The Government will also consider instituting other measures.

These include:

- * The re-introduction of a form of rigorous imprisonment for people convicted of violent crimes;
- * To introduce a preventive detention system to remove "habitual criminals" from society for long periods;
- * To introduce compulsory corporal punishment for specified offences; and
- * To introduce minimum sentences for robbery or serious assaults.

Mr. Roberts said these proposed measures showed the part the Government was taking to deal with the problem. "But we cannot do it alone -- crime cannot be kept within acceptable bounds unless every member of the community is prepared to do what he can to help."

A person has a public duty to report a crime, even if it might be inconvenient and take a lot of time, if he wishes to see crime contained, he said.

The Attorney General said the Commissioner of Police was re-examining the procedures in force in his stations in an effort to reduce the inconvenience to people who attend to report crime, "but there will always be a measure of inconvenience remaining".

Mr. Roberts pointed out that during the past generation "we in Hong Kong have prided ourselves on an increasingly liberal and humane attitude towards the treatment of wrongdoers."

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More and more emphasis, he said, was put on the needs and the rehabilitation of the offender, rather than on the legitimate protection of the interests of the community.

Mr. Roberts continued: "It is a matter of regret that the time has come for us to take a harsher view.

"I have no doubt that the confidence of the public is more important than the rehabilitation and the personal circumstances of a particular offender."

Mr. Roberts said the mandatory sentence or detention order, as well as the stop-and-search power, will be provided in amending legislation to be submitted in the near future to the Governor in Council for approval.

In addition, he said, it is proposed to move a resolution so as to add the offence of possession of an offensive weapon to those in relation to which a sentence of imprisonment may not be suspended.

The object of the amendment is to try to prevent the carrying of offensive weapons, but if it fails in this, it may be necessary to consider introducing minimum sentences also for robbery or serious assaults.

He said the possible re-introduction of rigorous imprisonment for people convicted of crimes involving violence aims at bringing about a tougher and more exacting prison regime than is applicable to other prisoners, but it depends mainly on the availability of buildings and prison officers.

Referring to the system of preventive detention, Mr. Roberts said detention of this nature was in force in the United Kingdom for nearly 20 years after the war, providing that a person who had at least three previous convictions on a serious offence and who had undergone at least two custodial sentences, could be ordered to be detained as "habitual criminal" for between five and 14 years.

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The proposed compensation scheme has been approved in principle by the Governor in Council, and it covers people injured by the criminal or by the police who are acting in the execution of their duty, he said.

Details of the actual scale of payments to be made to people qualifying under the scheme may be announced in the near future, he added.

On compulsory corporal punishment, he said this may be seriously considered by the Government if the present trend of violence continues.

As regards public criticism directed at the police and the courts, he said this is largely unjustified, and he assured the Council that the courts are fully alive to the public views concerning adequate punishment of offenders.

He cited figures in the last two years which showed an increase of about 10 per cent in the proportion of people convicted of robbery in the Supreme Court or the District Court and sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment or more.

Other figures he cited also showed general increases in the average length of sentences imposed in the Supreme Court, the District Court and the magistracies, as well as increases in the proportion of convicts sentenced by the courts.

On police strength, Mr. Roberts said a vigorous campaign has just been launched in an effort to recruit large numbers of men into the police force, and the size of the Auxiliary police force is being substantially augmented.

"If this is achieved, it is the Government's intention to seek further increases in strength to the limit of the needs of the community and the ability of the regular police to make use of auxiliaries," he said.

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NEW BILL TO REGULATE STOCK EXCHANGES

The following is the full text of the reply by the Financial Secretary to a question on stock exchanges by the Hon. P.C. Woo in Legislative Council today:

"The Government cannot at present prevent the establishment of any more stock exchanges in Hong Kong. The fact is no statutory powers exist to forbid the formation and operation of stock exchanges, but only to withhold recognition under Section 2A of the Companies Ordinance.

"Under the Bill dealing with securities, which I hope to introduce into this Council within a few months, only those stock exchanges approved by the Financial Secretary will be allowed to operate in Hong Kong after the Bill goes into force. I intend to approve only those which are recognized for the purposes of Section 2A of the Companies Ordinance. It follows that any exchange which is not recognized cannot continue to operate; and any new stock exchange which may be established between now and the date of the enactment of the Securities Bill will not be recognized. In other words, it is our intention to restrict the number of exchanges allowed to operate and this will be coupled with a system of registration of all dealers.

"Having said this and lest there be any misunderstanding, may I conclude by reaffirming the Government's view that there is scope for improving the organisational arrangements and procedures of the existing stock exchanges.

"The Securities Bill is designed, among other things, to achieve this".

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BETTER DEAL FOR NEWS MEDIA

The newly appointed Secretary for Information, the Hon. Jack Cater, is to set in motion plans to encourage government departments to deal more directly with the news media.

Speaking in Legislative Council today, he said that he had held several meetings with representatives from the press, television and radio stations to hear at first hand their comments on the Government's public relations organisation and effort.

The main criticisms he has heard so far centred on difficulties encountered in making direct contact with government departments to obtain information.

Mr. Cater said: "As a result, G.I.S. often acts as agent for journalists in obtaining information from departments. Inevitably, if GIS finds it difficult to obtain that information, it comes in for criticism by some sections of the media as being 'obstructive' or 'protective'."

In addition, he said, some government officers reluctant to deal with the press, encourage journalists to submit requests through GIS to avoid direct confrontation with the media.

"It is easy to see, therefore, how some journalists may gain the impression that GIS is hindering them in their legitimate quest for information," he added.

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However, he accepted that there was room for some improvement in the work of G.I.S. and Radio Hong Kong, although the main criticisms he had heard since taking over the appointment was the one dealing with the difficulties in making direct contact with the departments.

Mr. Cater said he intended in the near future to propose suitable ways for making this possible and then he hoped GIS would be able to spend more time on the important aspect of its work of advising government officers on the presentation of information.

The criticism, he said, did not apply to all departments and some had very good relationships with the media.

"Journalists tell me that the situation seems to be better in departments which have their own public relations officers, seconded from GIS. By January 1 next year, nine major departments will have their own public relations officers and the number will be increased during the course of the year," he added.

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SCHOOLS CAN BE MADE BETTER

The year 1973 will see an average of a new secondary school completed every fortnight, and the Government will thus be able to provide aided secondary education to an even greater proportion of primary school leavers.

The Director of Education, the Hon. J. Canning, told the Legislative Council today that this year, it was possible to allocate places in government and aided schools and places purchased in private schools to 44 per cent of the pupils who entered the Secondary Schools Entrance Examination.

"We shall do even better next year as we can reasonably expect that 26 new secondary schools will be completed in 1973," he said.

He said he has every confidence that it will be possible to achieve the interim target of three years post-primary education for 50 per cent of all children in the 12-14 age group by 1976.

Mr. Canning said urgent steps are being taken to reconstitute the Board of Education, and it is hoped that a full and detailed paper will soon be presented to the Board outlining the programme for secondary expansion.

The targets which the Government is setting itself would need huge capital and recurrent expenditures and it will be necessary for voluntary agencies engaged in education to extend their efforts considerably if the great tasks lying ahead are to be accomplished, he added.

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On the question of abolishing the Secondary School Entrance Examination, Mr. Canning said it remains "the fairest method of selection" even in the tremendously expanded secondary education system which is envisaged.

The proposed increase in secondary education will, however, take "much of the heat" out of this examination to the benefit of all concerned, he added.

As regards the Certificate of Education examination, he said he has already taken steps to make it less of a hurdle - by doing away with the branding of failure or pass, and by combining the Chinese and the English examinations into one.

He said any suggestion to abandon this examination would be a "retrograde step" because it is valued by employers, local and overseas universities, professional institutions and others concerned.

The Director described as "unfair and untrue" some of the comments made about schools here, and said the quality of education provided and the standards achieved are very high and compare favourably with state-supported schools abroad.

"We are, however, dedicated to the proposition that our schools can be made better, and to that end have established curriculum renewal and development teams to survey the whole content of primary and secondary education."

Mr. Canning agreed that there is the need to encourage a fuller range of activities in schools and said schools are being actively urged to do this in order to broaden the interests of pupils.

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STUDY ON ILLEGAL GAMBLING TO BE CONSIDERED

The conclusions of a study carried out by the Government on illegal gambling will soon be considered by the Governor in Council.

The Secretary for Home Affairs, the Hon. D.C.C. Luddington, told the Legislative Council today that a lot of thought had been given to the subject and the Government does not intend to encourage the people to gamble.

The study into gambling has taken into account the practical facts about illegal gambling today, what police effort has been devoted to control it and to what effect.

"The issues are not only moral issues of good and evil but practical issues of what is and is not feasible," he said.

Mr. Luddington recalled the Governor's reference to the "Keep Hong Kong Clean" Campaign as an "experiment in the mobilisation of responsible citizenship for the benefit of each neighbourhood", and that Unofficial members had suggested that a similar technique might be applied to many other problems.

He assured the Council that he and his staff have already been considering other problems which might be tackled in a similar manner.

"Crime, fire prevention, traffic and environmental hygiene were all mentioned. Each one would involve different departments and different techniques, but all would require a special effort by the Secretary for Information and all the mass media which have co-operated so readily in the current Clean Hong Kong Campaign," he said.

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Mr. Luddington said young people are concerned about their city, neighbours and environment, and City District Officers and others have for some time been making use of this youthful enthusiasm on which many different voluntary services rely.

"More could certainly be done to co-ordinate such voluntary effort on a regional basis and I will look into this."

On the question of executive duties for C.D.Os, Mr. Luddington emphasised that although they do not have any executive powers now, they do have an ever widening task to improve and maintain the relationships between the people and the executive departments of Government.

He said he was not against C.D.Os assuming executive duties, but he was concerned that they should not be given such duties which "could only be carried out at the expense of their present work." The staff of the C.D.Os. are already working long hours to meet their present commitments, he added.

"New campaigns and new duties without further staff and further accommodation would endanger the contacts which we have established and the services we do now provide," he said.

Mr. Luddington agreed with Unofficial members on the need for experienced officers to be posted as C.D.Os. but said the C.D.O. scheme is not an end in itself.

"Other departments responsible for achieving practical targets in housing, social welfare, sanitation and recreation must have their share of the relatively small pool of experience," he said.

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NEW HOUSING AUTHORITY TO CONSIDER THE QUESTION
OF WEALTHY FAMILIES IN PUBLIC HOUSING

The Commissioner for Resettlement, the Hon. I.M. Lightbody, described as a "sound and attractive idea in principle" the suggestion that wealthy families living in public housing should move to the private sector.

However, he stressed that it could only be applied to manifestly well-off families who were able to afford a self-contained unit in the private sector "at a probable minimum rent of around \$600."

"The problem is to define what constitutes a level of family income that would justify moving them on; and then to find out which families are earning more than the accepted limit," he said.

As to checking on family income, Mr. Lightbody said it was in effect a kind of means test and making continuing checks of this kind on such a scale, because of the vast numbers in public housing, did not appear to be a practical proposition.

It would need an "army" of inspectors who would be exposed to "endless temptations".

However, Mr. Lightbody added that it would be one of the many questions which the new Housing Authority would be asked to consider.

On the subject of the present certified square footage in the housing units, the Commissioner said that it was already the subject of frequent review and discussion.

As always the problem faced was of striking a balance between "the numbers we can house, housing standards and the availability of funds". At the same time, he said, lower densities required more land.

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SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WHITE PAPER ON SOCIAL WELFARE

The draft white paper on social welfare policy has laid the foundation for translating community concern into practical social-welfare programmes of which the people of Hong Kong can be proud.

"The important thing is to sustain the impetus for progress," the retiring Director of Social Welfare, the Hon. G.T. Rowe, told the Legislative Council today.

"I believe the joint planning machinery -- between the Social Welfare Department and the voluntary agencies -- that has been established will provide an effective means of doing so."

He was speaking at the resumed debate on Hong Kong affairs, taking the occasion to reply to points raised by unofficial members, six of whom had referred to the white paper in their speeches two weeks ago.

It was Mr. Rowe's last speech and appearance in the Council before departing from Hong Kong on leave prior to retirement. He described his four years as Director of Social Welfare as "exciting and challenging," and he thanked members for the support they had always given him, and the interest they had expressed in social welfare matters.

He said he had been "particularly glad" that the production of the white paper had involved the voluntary agencies, because they had had, and would continue to have, "a vital role to play in the provision of social welfare services in Hong Kong."

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The joint planning already undertaken, and now established as a permanent feature, would go a long way to meet the worries of agencies about "red tape, occasional lack of government response, and a real worry about their financial position."

Mr. Rowe believed that the projected rate of increase of 50 per cent in subvention for the agencies over the five years from April 1973 would be adequate to sustain the continued improvement in the quality of social welfare service that everyone wished to see.

He was sure the agencies themselves, who had subscribed to the proposals in the white paper, also regarded it as realistic.

In addition, the proposed rate of increase had to be seen against a background of recent rapid increases in social welfare subventions -- which had risen by 300 per cent between 1965 and 1972.

He said the rate of development required differed with the agencies, according to their activities. Some agencies would be "positively encouraged to double their activities in the five-year period."

On the proposed disability and infirmity allowance scheme, Mr. Rowe said he had noted the views of members on whether some form of means test should be included. Although he could not anticipate the decision of the Governor in Council, the views expressed would be taken into account when the decision was reached.

About the proposed Institute for Social Work Training, he gave members the assurance that every effort would be made to get it into operation as quickly as possible.

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But in the meantime, the implementation of the proposals in the white paper would not be delayed because there were not enough trained staff to fill all the posts -- the Department would do the best it could with the resources it had.

Mr. Rowe believed the Institute would provide a "valuable area of training" for those who were not particularly academically minded, but who wanted to serve the community in a skilled and professional way.

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NEW CONVERSION FACTOR ON EXPORTS OF WOVEN TROUSERS

Local exports of woven trousers to the European Economic Community (EEC) are to be controlled by the use of a new conversion factor of 3,184 pieces per metric ton, the Director of Commerce and Industry, Mr. D.H. Jordan, announced today.

The new conversion factor is necessary because it has been found that the existing ones have resulted in shipments of woven trousers exceeding the limits in metric tons as provided in the HK/EEC Agreement on Cotton Textiles.

Further information is obtainable from the following officers:

Mr. P.C. Leung - Assistant Trade Officer (Tel. No. 5-229777)

Mr. H.K. Chan - Industry Assistant (Tel. No. 5-228513)

Mr. S.Y. Chiu - Industry Assistant (Tel. No. 5-228513)

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LACK OF INTEREST BY EMPLOYERS IN INDUSTRIAL SAFETY

The Commissioner of Labour, the Hon. Paul Tsui, has expressed concern at the apparent lack of interest by employers in the promotion of industrial safety, which he described as "an essential function of good management".

Speaking in the Legislative Council today, he said there were 638 fatal accidents from among 51,000 people injured at work during 1970 and 1971.

"To me these figures are worrying, but I regret to say that they do not seem to be a matter of concern to the employers at large, as reflected by the rather discouraging response to the safety training courses offered by the Industrial Safety Training Centre of the Labour Department," Mr. Tsui said.

He appealed to all directors and managers to take a positive interest in the safety and health of their workers.

The Commissioner emphasised that it was only the boardrooms which had "the influence, power and resources" to take the initiative in producing firm policy-statements regarding safety objectives and to see that they are carried out.

If the boards of all companies and firms in Hong Kong had done this, "we would have advanced further along the road of promoting industrial safety".

Mr. Tsui also had a word for the workers and said that they had a part to play in accident prevention, particularly by observing working rules and safe practices.

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He also called on industry to accept and implement one of the most important recommendations of the Industrial Training Advisory Committee's recommendations -- the need for industry-wide apprentice training.

Referring to severance pay on redundancy, the Commissioner said the problems involved are complex, and have been tackled in various ways in different countries.

"We have now completed an examination of these and the outlines of a possible scheme for Hong Kong have emerged. If one proves generally feasible and acceptable, legislation will be introduced," he said.

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WATER INTERRUPTION IN MONG KOK

Water supplies to a number of premises in Mong Kok will be interrupted for five hours from 1 a.m. on Friday (November 17).

The temporary stoppage is to enable the Water-works Office to carry out a leakage test in the area.

The area affected is bounded by Pitt Street, Dundas Street, Shanghai Street, Nelson Street and the seafront.

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CONCERN FOR HONG KONG'S STERLING RESERVES

The Financial Secretary, the Hon. C.P. Haddon-Cave, said today he shared the concern expressed by the Hon. Q.W. Lee about the future security of Hong Kong's sterling reserves, and promised to make a full statement soon after his return from his forthcoming visit to London.

Speaking in the Legislative Council, he said it would not be in the best interests of a satisfactory settlement for him to make a statement at this time "as representations have recently been made to H.M. Government at the highest level and as I shall be following up these representations while in London this week and next."

At present, he said, about half of Hong Kong's sterling reserves are owned by the Government, and half by the banks against their Hong Kong dollar liabilities.

Referring to the Hon. Wilfred Wong's remarks about estimates of the Gross National Product, the Financial Secretary assured him that he considered estimates of various national income aggregates as being "useful tools for the understanding of even an economy as externally oriented as ours."

He said the Census and Statistics Department has prepared "very preliminary" estimates of the Gross Domestic Product going back for several years.

The Gross Domestic Product, he said, is a slightly different aggregate from the Gross National Product in that it does not include net earnings from investments abroad but is less difficult to calculate in local circumstances.

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Furthermore, the Gross Domestic Product estimates have only been calculated on the so-called expenditure side and could therefore be subject to a wide margin of error, he added.

Mr. Haddon-Cave said efforts are now being made to prepare an alternative estimate based on incomes, that is wages, salaries, profits and so on, with the help of an experienced national income statistician from the United Kingdom who will be visiting Hong Kong later this month.

"This will enable a check to be made on the original expenditure estimates and will mean, more likely than not, that adjustments will have to be made," he said.

He said in due course when progress has been made with the forthcoming census of production, a third estimate will be attempted from the production side.

When more work has been done on refining the figures, he said it is the Government's intention to publish the results and this, he hoped, can be done in the course of the next 12 months.

"Meanwhile, I shall be using the present estimates in framing the 1973-74 budget," he said.

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OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOK FOR HONG KONG TRADE

The Director of Commerce and Industry, the Hon David Jordan, is optimistic about Hong Kong's trading prospects for 1973 and said there are already signs that "demand is picking up again".

Speaking in the Legislative Council, he said Hong Kong should expect to achieve an average annual growth in exports of 12 to 15 per cent over the year.

"We may not reach this rate in 1972, but I think that if this happens, it will be due as much to unfavourable general conditions in some of our main markets as it will be to increased competition from other suppliers," Mr. Jordan said.

He agreed that industry must seek every way open to it to increase its productivity and to expand and improve its range of products.

"I also accept that the Government must do all it can to persuade other countries not to apply discriminatory restrictions against Hong Kong products and to have these removed where they exist."

He described French restrictions on many Hong Kong products as "certainly discriminatory and unjustifiable and we will continue to press for their removal".

Mr. Jordan admitted that Hong Kong still had a relatively narrow industrial base, with over 50 per cent of export earnings coming from textiles and garments.

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"It seems economically desirable that our industrial base should be widened further so as to provide opportunities for developing new markets and, by developing new skills and investment in more sophisticated processes, to increase our productivity and earning power," he added.

To this end the Commerce and Industry Department has for some years actively promoted overseas investment in Hong Kong industry, with some encouraging results.

Mr. Jordan also revealed that the Government was considering the selling of land for specific industries under restricted user conditions, to facilitate the establishment of new and more sophisticated industries.

It was possible, he said, that at least one site may be offered for sale under these conditions within the next few months and he hoped that this would result in an industry completely new to Hong Kong being established here.

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CERTAIN MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT RECOMMENDATIONS ALREADY
BEING IMPLEMENTED BY GOVERNMENT

Recommendations made by the management consultants on how to make the best use of Government's staff resources are still in the form of "discussion drafts" but Government is already implementing some of them in selected areas.

This was stated today by the Colonial Secretary, the Hon. Sir Hugh Norman-Walker, in the Legislative Council.

Sir Hugh said: "This procedure, of trying out recommendations in pilot test areas as we go along, is of basic importance - we must make sure that the existing machinery which has served its purpose well can take the input of a higher voltage without complete rewiring."

He hoped the results of the exercise would be visible before the exercise itself is completed.

"The Government is a large and complex organisation, and complete implementation of all the recommendations may take up to three or four years," he said.

He said the consultants' recommendations fall into four main categories - first, the improvement of existing procedures; second, the adoption of entirely new procedures based on management by measurement of objectives and output; third, improvements in the recruitment and development of manpower resources; and fourth, a number of long term suggestions.

The first three categories are either being or will be experimented. The fourth part consisting of long term recommendations has only reached the stage of preliminary discussion, he said.

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On medical and health services, Sir Hugh said work is already in hand on making careful study regarding the proposal that a population policy be formulated.

At the same time, he said, the Director of Medical and Health Services has prepared a five-year forecast of expected developments in the medical and health fields, and will in due course explain the proposals to Council members.

These proposals include the expansion of clinical services and the future of a dental service, he added.

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GOVERNMENT ACCEPTS REPORTS ON SUPERSCALE SALARIES

The Colonial Secretary, the Hon. Sir Hugh Norman-Walker, today tabled in the Legislative Council the Third and Fourth Reports of the Standing Committee on Superscale Salaries.

He told the Council that the Third Report was almost entirely concerned with the grading of superscale posts as distinct from any question of salaries.

The Fourth Report, Sir Hugh said, dealt principally with superscale salaries, and flowed from the accepted recommendations of the overall salaries review by the 1971 Salaries Commission.

The following is the full text of the Colonial Secretary's speech:-

"I laid on the table this afternoon the Third and Fourth Reports of the Standing Committee on Superscale Salaries.

"The Third Report was almost entirely concerned with the grading of superscale posts as distinct from any question of salaries. The Committee's review of gradings was comprehensive, and I must express my gratitude. All their recommendations have already been accepted by the Finance Committee of this Council and have been put into effect. Certain recommendations regarding superscale conditions of service overlapped with more generalized conditions of service and of course had to await the results of the 1971 Salaries Commission.

"The Fourth Report dealt principally with superscale salaries, and flowed from the accepted recommendations of the overall salaries review by the 1971 Salaries Commission. So far as the Committee's recommendations

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on salaries are concerned they have been accepted by you, Sir, in Council and by the Finance Committee of this Council. But the Fourth Report deals also with a number of matters affecting officers in the superscale, some of which have service wide implications, and on some of which the further advice of the Committee may have to be sought. As regards salaries the functions of the Standing Committee on Superscale Salaries is to ensure that the remuneration of senior officers does not fall seriously behind salaries in the private sector, and remains consonant with the salaries of the time-scale officers. Thus, as usual, the senior officers are being dealt with not first, but last.

"It is not necessary that Heads of Government Departments and other senior officers should be remunerated exactly on a par with the heads and senior executives of major business enterprises, but it is vital, as I have said, that the rewards should not be too much out of line with those in the private sector, but taking into account the greater security of tenure of the civil servants, and the lack of flexibility in Government salaries. In the private sector individual salaries may be adjusted by bonuses which also reflect the profitability from time to time of a particular business enterprise. A balance must therefore be struck, and the Committee, who, I am glad to see, paid special attention to bonuses on this occasion, have produced their judgement of Solomon.

"I think it is opportune to remind the public why superscale salaries are considered by this independent Committee, which is composed entirely of Unofficials, and to place on record my assurance that no intervention is made by senior officials in the Committee's deliberations on salaries, and that the recommendations made by the Committee are not in any way

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prejudiced by official views. As in the United Kingdom where there is a similar Committee under Lord Boyle we consider that senior civil servants should have no part in adjudicating on their own remuneration - not only would this be improper but it would be most embarrassing for the officers concerned if this obligation were laid upon them.

"Finally, because of the dating of this Fourth Report of the Committee it might be represented that this is the first in another round of civil service pay awards. Far from this being the case it is in fact the last of the awards made as a result of the 1971 Salaries Commission, and dates back not to April 1971 but only to April of this year - although certain minor adjustments to superscale salaries were made in January this year which principally related to the new method of calculating rent payments introduced in April 1971.

"The Standing Committee was set up in 1963, and the first and second reviews were made in 1964 and 1969. As the revision now accepted by the Finance Committee of this Council was based on a review of the position in the private sector as of April 1 this year, it was agreed that only this degree of retrospectivity was equitable in the circumstances.

"In conclusion I should like to express my gratitude to Mr. G.R. Ross as Chairman of the Committee and the Members for the thorough review which they have carried out and for their conclusions which Government accepts as being both fair to the officers concerned and to the public whom they serve."

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LAND COMPENSATION SCHEME REASONABLE

The present compensation scheme for land in the New Territories required for public purposes is a reasonable one.

Speaking in the Legislative Council today, the District Commissioner, New Territories, the Hon. D.C. Bray, said that the scheme was a "quite incredibly complicated web of logic, law, administrative practice and plain common sense."

An example was cited that when the Crown required from a lessee a lease which entitled him to cultivate land, it was only logical that the Crown should offer no more in compensation than what the wording justified.

Similarly, when a new lease entitling the lessee to build on the land replaces the old lease, a premium equal to the difference between the two types of leases should be paid.

Mr. Bray admitted, however, that the present system did have its shortcomings, and said he had been holding discussions with the Heung Yee Kuk to seek a satisfactory and practical solution.

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CITY HALL STILL HEAVILY BOOKED

Certain priority is given to non-profit making organisations in balloting for the City Hall and its facilities for performances.

This was stated by the Director of Urban Services, the Hon. D.R.W. Alexander, this afternoon during the resumed debate in the Legislative Council on a motion of thanks for the Governor's address last month.

He said that at present the City Hall is very heavily booked and it is impossible to satisfy all the demands for the use of its facilities for performances, much less for rehearsals.

Even if a decision could be reached soon on the proposed Kowloon cultural centre, it would take several years for such an extensive project to be completed.

Mr. Alexander said that special attention is paid to organisations such as the Music Festival, the Hong Kong Youth Orchestra and the Children's Choir along with other deserving non-profit-making societies.

In view of the shortage of practice facilities, he said, the Hong Kong Youth Orchestra had been granted the use of part of a building in Kowloon Park, where the members can also store their instruments.

Mr. Alexander also expressed the belief that the Hong Kong Arts Centre will assist with the development and progress of local culture, especially in the fields of music, drama and dancing.

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TRAFFIC DIVERSIONS FOR CONNAUGHT ROAD

Temporary traffic diversions will be imposed on Connaught Road Central for about two months with effect from 10 a.m. tomorrow (Thursday).

The series of diversions will enable work to be carried out on widening the section of road in front of the Fire Brigade Building.

Eastbound traffic on Connaught Road Central wishing to turn right into Queen Victoria Street will be diverted further eastwards to make a U-turn in front of the General Post Office Building. From there motorists can turn left into Queen Victoria Street via the westbound lanes on Connaught Road Central.

Traffic wishing to turn right from Jubilee Street into Connaught Road Central will be diverted westwards to make a U-turn in front of International Building and turn into Connaught Road Central via eastbound lanes.

Route 12A buses from Jubilee Street will proceed westwards on Connaught Road Central to make the U-turn in front of International Building.

Appropriate traffic signs will be erected.

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NEW HOSPITAL LAUNDRY TO BE HANDED OVER

The newly completed hospitals laundry in Chai Wan, which is costing some \$8.4 million, will be officially handed over to the Medical and Health Department on Thursday (November 16).

In a brief ceremony on the site Mr. C.R.J. Donnithorne, the Director of Building Development, will hand over the building to Dr. G.H. Choa, Director of Medical and Health Services.

The two-storey factory-type laundry building, the first of its type in Hong Kong, has a total floor area of about 40,500 square feet. It will be able to handle about one million pounds of hospital laundry a month.

The upper floor will house the laundry proper, the linen exchange, and administrative offices, and the ground floor will accommodate a boiler plant, store rooms and staff facilities. Cars and trucks will carry laundry directly to the upper floor via a slipway.

A spokesman for the Public Works Department said the layout of the work area in the building was based on a full study of "work flow" principles as applied to laundries, and particular attention had been given to the problem of heat disposal.

The roof over the work areas had been specially designed for efficient natural lighting conditions, and a proper dispersion of heat associated with largescale laundry installations.

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Note to Editors: You are invited to send a reporter and photographer to cover the handing over ceremony which will take place at 3.30 p.m. on Thursday. The laundry is in Chai Wan Road near its junction with Tytam Road.

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SPECIAL TEAMS TO TAKE OVER PLANNING OF NEW TOWNS

Special teams are to be set up to take over the planning and construction of the new towns in the New Territories.

The Director of Public Works, the Hon. J.J. Robson, told Legislative Council today that these teams would produce comprehensive and detailed plans for the most appropriate disposition of facilities and for the timing of the development of the towns.

He said that if the target of housing 1.8 million people in 10 years was to be met, there was an obvious need for comprehensive development plans. "For it is new towns which must be built at Sha Tin, Tuen Mun and Tsuen Wan/Kwai Chung, not simply government housing."

He said the Public Works Department must take up the new burden of accelerated planning and construction of the new towns to provide all the formed land which will be required, the roads, the utility services and all the public buildings.

Secondly, he continued, "we must facilitate the contribution private developers have to make to the housing programme by accelerating land sales in the New Territories."

The third was "the need to encourage efficiency and reduce costs in the building industry by fostering mechanisation and increased labour productivity." Government has, in the past tested the economics of "system building" and will continue to do so to see how successful it will be in saving time and money.

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Referring to permitting street-side parking of containers for the purpose of 'stuffing' and 'unstuffing', Mr. Robson said that the streets of Hong Kong must be reserved primarily to serve the needs of moving traffic.

"The larger manufacturer, who has sufficient goods to fill complete containers, should do his stuffing within his own premises," he continued, "the smaller manufacturer should make use of godowns which have been specifically designed to provide this service."

Nevertheless, he was prepared to discuss the matter further with representatives of the Container Lines Committee, the General Chamber of Commerce and other bodies primarily affected provided that there were some alternative proposals on how to deal with the problem of road congestion.

Turning to the movement of containers, he assured that forward planning and present construction of roadworks have taken full account of the needs of container traffic.

"We have in hand over \$71 million worth of roadworks in northern Kowloon which will help to provide speedy access to and from the Kwai Chung container terminals."

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MOTOR VEHICLE EXHAUST FUMES TO BE MORE STRICTLY CONTROLLED

Legislation to impose stricter control over motor vehicle exhaust fumes is being drafted.

This was disclosed today by the Colonial Secretary, the Hon. Sir Hugh Norman-Walker, in reply to a question by the Hon. P.C. Woo at the Legislative Council meeting.

He said that when a police officer sees a vehicle emitting excessive exhaust smoke, a report is made to the Traffic Division which decides whether to prosecute under Regulation 106 of the Road Traffic (Construction and Use) Regulations, or to call the vehicle up for inspection under Regulation 167.

The Colonial Secretary also said that there were separate proposals for a new mechanical inspection centre at which a wider range of vehicles could be inspected annually before their licences were renewed.

Sir Hugh said that in September and October this year, 878 notices were served by the police, requiring owners to produce vehicles for inspection because of excessive smoke.

"These notices related to 348 public transport vehicles, 324 private cars and 206 goods vehicles."

He also added that during the same period, there were 77 prosecutions for this offence.

The Colonial Secretary went on to explain that most complaints about excessive smoke related to diesel-engined vehicles "because they often produce black smoke and an unpleasant smell, and their exhaust fumes are therefore more obvious".

"But according to the Report on Air Pollution, fumes of this sort are not toxic. In fact, the most dangerous pollutant emitted by vehicles is the less visible carbon monoxide, of which only a low level is produced by diesel engines," Sir Hugh said.

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BILLS PASSED

The Pensions (Amendment) Regulations 1972, was approved by the Legislative Council this afternoon.

Three Bills received their third reading.

They were the Professional Accountants Bill 1972 which was passed with amendments, and the Magistrate (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 1972 and the Probate and Administration (Amendment) Bill 1972 which were passed without amendment.

Four sessional papers were tabled in the Council. They were the Annual Reports by the Director of Government Supplies, the Chairman of the Public Services Commission, the Commissioner for Census and Statistics and that of the Hong Kong War Memorial Fund Committee for the year 1971.

The Legislative Council will meet again on Wednesday, November 29.

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Release time: 9.00 p.m.