



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 1979

<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
REVISED WATER RATES EFFECTIVE FROM APRIL 1	1
TOUGHER LAWS INTRODUCED IN FIGHT AGAINST SQUATTER HUT RACKETEERS	4
BILL TO TIGHTEN BAILING PROCEDURES BECOMES LAW	5
INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979	7
DELEGATION OF FINANCIAL POWERS	7
BILL TO RAISE INTEREST TAX EXEMPTION RATE	8
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION (1977-78) BILL 1979	9
SMALL-SCALE INDUSTRIES -- MORE SUPPORT NEEDED	10
PARENTAL CONTROL -- ANSWER TO UNDER-AGE DRINKING	14
BA FLIGHT SCHEDULES	15
USE OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR, TRANSLATION CLARIFIED	17
RESPONSES TO YOUTH CENTRES POSITIVE	18
REVIEW OF INCOME LIMIT FOR H.O.S. FLATS	19
LEAD CONTENT OF PETROL	20
MORE BUSES -- NATURAL BRAKE ON PLB FARES	21
POLICE ACTION AGAINST ILLEGAL GAMBLING AND VICE	22
ADEQUATE RECREATION AMENITIES IN NT	22
PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE SCHOOL LIBRARY SERVICE	23
DEATH INQUESTS	23
STARTING TIMES OF RACE MEETINGS	24
STEPS TO IMPROVE CAUSEWAY BAY TRAFFIC	24

/NEW GRASS



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

NEW GRASS CUTTING ARRANGEMENTS	25
ONE OBVIOUS WAY TO CONTROL CYCLISTS	25
GOVERNOR TO INSPECT PRISONS DEPARTMENT ANNUAL PARADE ..	26
'DRIVE CAREFULLY ON TUEN MUN ROAD' APPEAL	27
TWO BILLS PASSED	27
PRESENTATION OF AWARD TO VOLUNTARY WEATHER OBSERVER ON FISHING BOAT	28
TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENT IN HUNG HOM	28

REVISED WATER RATES EFFECTIVE FROM APRIL 1

A REVISED PRICE STRUCTURE FOR WATER SUPPLIES WILL BE INTRODUCED ON APRIL 1 THIS YEAR WITH 55 PER CENT OF ALL DOMESTIC CONSUMERS CONTINUING TO PAY NOTHING OR LESS THAN AT PRESENT.

THE REVISED STRUCTURE SEEKS TO RECONCILE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS TO BRING THE WATERWORKS ACCOUNTS INTO BALANCE AND TO ENCOURAGE CONSERVATION OF WATER.

UNDER THE REVISED STRUCTURE, THE NUMBER OF UNITS OF FREE DOMESTIC SUPPLIES WILL BE INCREASED FROM THE EXISTING FIRST 2-2/3 TO FOUR UNITS AND CONSUMPTION THEREAFTER WILL BE CHARGED UNDER A FOUR-TIER PRICE SYSTEM FOR EVERY FOUR MONTH BILLING PERIOD.

THE NEW CHARGES FOR DOMESTIC CONSUMERS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

UNITS	CHARGE PER UNIT
0-4	FREE
OVER 4 AND UP TO 8	\$3.00
OVER 8 AND UP TO 14	\$5.50
OVER 14 AND UP TO 20	\$8.50
OVER 20	\$12

UNDER THE NEW SYSTEM, SALT WATER FOR FLUSHING PURPOSES AT PRESENT CHARGED AT 70 CENTS PER UNIT WILL BE SUPPLIED FREE.

FOR PREMISES SUPPLIED WITH FRESH WATER FOR FLUSHING, THE CURRENT CHARGE OF \$3 PER UNIT WILL REMAIN BUT A DEDUCTION OF \$20 (OR THE ACTUAL CHARGE IF LESS) PER DWELLING WILL BE MADE IN EACH FOUR-MONTH BILLING PERIOD.

THE CHARGE FOR TRADE CONSUMERS WILL BE INCREASED FROM \$4 TO \$5.50 PER UNIT, AND AS A TEMPORARY MEASURE, A CONCESSIONARY TARIFF AT \$4 PER UNIT FOR CONSUMPTION IN EXCESS OF 6,000 UNITS IN ANY FOUR-MONTH BILLING PERIOD WILL BE INTRODUCED FOR TRADE CONSUMERS WHO SATISFY CERTAIN CRITERIA.

THIS CONCESSIONARY RATE WILL BE WITHDRAWN AT THE END OF 1981-82.

THE CURRENT CHARGES FOR SHIPPING SUPPLIES WILL BE INCREASED FROM \$4 TO \$5.50 PER UNIT FOR NON-OCEAN GOING VESSELS AND FROM \$7.00 TO \$12 FOR OCEAN GOING VESSELS. THE CHARGES FOR CONSTRUCTION SUPPLIES WILL BE INCREASED FROM \$5 TO \$8.50 PER UNIT AND FOR PRE-PAID SUPPLIES FROM \$4 TO \$5.50 PER UNIT.

ANNOUNCING THE REVISED PRICE STRUCTURE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE SAID THE FOUR-TIER CHARGE SYSTEM FOR DOMESTIC CONSUMERS IS AIMED AT ENCOURAGING THE CONSERVATION OF WATER AND AT THE SAME TIME MOVING THE WATER ACCOUNTS INTO BALANCE.

HE SAID THE FIRST TWO TIERS IN THE REVISED STRUCTURE ARE TO ENCOURAGE THE CONSERVATION OF WATER, WHILE THE THIRD TIER ATTRACTS A CHARGE WHICH IS ROUGHLY THE FULL PRODUCTION COST PER UNIT OVER THE FOUR YEARS ENDING 1982-83.

CONSUMPTION ABOVE 20 UNITS IS CLEARLY VERY EXCESSIVE, IT SHOULD ATTRACT AN EVEN HIGHER DETERRENT CHARGE, MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT ALTHOUGH THE REVISED PRICE STRUCTURE FOR DOMESTIC SUPPLIES ENVISAGES INCREASED CHARGES FOR POTABLE WATER AT HIGHER LEVELS OF CONSUMPTION, THE INCREASE IN THE FREE ALLOWANCE WILL PARTIALLY OFFSET THE EFFECT OF THIS REVISED PRICE STRUCTURE ON ALL CONSUMERS WHETHER OR NOT THEY ARE SEPARATELY METERED.

FOR EXAMPLE, THE REVISED PRICE STRUCTURE WILL ACTUALLY REDUCE THE COST OF POTABLE WATER WHERE CONSUMPTION IS NINE UNITS OR LESS PER FOUR-MONTH BILLING PERIOD. A MARGINAL INCREASE OF \$1 PER BILLING IS EXPECTED FOR CONSUMPTION REACHING 10 UNITS.

HE SAID THE INCREASE IN THE FREE ALLOWANCE IN RESPECT OF POTABLE WATER WILL MEAN THAT 15 PER CENT OF ALL CONSUMERS WILL PAY NO CHARGES COMPARED WITH THE NINE PER CENT AT PRESENT, WHILE ANOTHER 32 PER CENT WILL PAY LESS THAN THEY ARE PAYING AT PRESENT.

ANOTHER 26 PER CENT OF CONSUMERS, WHO USE BETWEEN 10 AND 14 UNITS, WILL PAY BETWEEN \$1 AND \$11 MORE PER FOUR-MONTH BILLING PERIOD.

MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID THE INCREASES WILL BE FURTHER OFFSET BY THE NEW FREE ALLOWANCE FOR FRESH WATER FLUSHING SUPPLIES AND BY MAKING SALT WATER FLUSHING SUPPLIES FREE OF CHARGE.

+THUS, WHILST THE LARGER FREE ALLOWANCE IN RESPECT OF POTABLE WATER MEANS THAT 47 PER CENT OF ALL DOMESTIC CONSUMERS WILL EITHER CONTINUE TO PAY NO CHARGES, OR PAY LESS THAN WHAT THEY ARE PAYING AT PRESENT, THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSALS IN RESPECT OF FLUSHING SUPPLIES MEANS THAT AS MANY AS 55 PER CENT OF ALL DOMESTIC CONSUMERS WILL CONTINUE TO PAY NOTHING OR TO PAY LESS THAN AT PRESENT,+ HE SAID.

TURNING TO TRADE SUPPLIES, MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID THE NO-SUBSIDY PRINCIPLE SHOULD APPLY TO THIS CATEGORY OF USERS FOR AT LEAST THREE REASONS.

/+FIRST,

+FIRST, ITS APPLICATION WOULD AVOID AN INDISCRIMINATE CONTRIBUTION FROM EITHER GENERAL REVENUE OR FROM DOMESTIC CONSUMERS TO THE PROFIT OF TRADE CONSUMERS.

+SECONDLY, THE APPLICATION OF THIS PRINCIPLE WOULD ENCOURAGE CONSUMERS TO APPRECIATE THE TRUE VALUE OF WATER AND TO USE IT ECONOMICALLY. AND THIRDLY, THE APPLICATION SHOULD REDUCE THE NEED TO EXPAND WATER RESOURCES PURELY TO COPE WITH EXTRAVAGANT AND EXCESSIVE USE,+ HE SAID.

MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID THE CONCESSIONARY TARIFF WOULD APPLY TO THOSE TRADE CONSUMERS WHO, ON APPLICATION, ARE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE, FIRST THAT CONSUMPTION AT A RATE IN EXCESS OF 6,000 UNITS PER FOUR-MONTH BILLING PERIOD IS LIKELY TO BE SUSTAINED FOR AT LEAST 12 MONTHS= SECONDLY, THAT SUCH HIGH LEVELS OF CONSUMPTION ARE ESSENTIAL FOR THE PROCESSES INVOLVED= THIRDLY, THAT WATER IS USED ECONOMICALLY= FOURTHLY, THAT PRACTICAL STEPS HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO CONSERVE OR RE-CYCLE WATER AND, FINALLY, THAT THE COST OF WATER REPRESENTS A LARGE ELEMENT IN OPERATING COSTS.

HE SAID THE DIRECTOR OF WATER SUPPLIES WILL ANNOUNCE HOW TO APPLY FOR THIS CONCESSIONARY TARIFF IN DUE COURSE.

TURNING TO THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE REVISED PRICE STRUCTURE ON THE ECONOMY, MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID THE EFFECT OF THE REVISED CHARGES WOULD BE TO INCREASE THE CONSUMER-PRICE INDEX BY NO MORE THAN 0.03 OF A PERCENTAGE POINT WHILE THE REVISED CHARGE FOR TRADE SUPPLIES WOULD INCREASE AVERAGE MANUFACTURING COSTS BY LESS THAN 0.1 OF A PERCENTAGE POINT.

HE SAID THE WEIGHTED AVERAGE COST OF POTABLE WATER OVER THE FOUR YEARS 1979-80 TO 1982-83 IS ESTIMATED AT \$8.13 PER UNIT. THE AMOUNTS INCLUDED FOR THE BULK PURCHASE OF WATER HAVE BEEN ADJUSTED UPWARDS TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE RECENT INCREASE IN THE PRICE AND QUANTITY OF WATER PURCHASED FROM CHINA.

+BUT THE INCREASED EXPENDITURE INVOLVED IS MORE THAN OFFSET -- AND I WISH TO STRESS THIS POINT -- BY A REDUCTION IN THE AMOUNT ALLOWED FOR INTEREST ON CAPITAL EMPLOYED, AS IT HAS BEEN ASSUMED THAT THE SUBSTANTIAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE INVOLVED IN DEVELOPING ADDITIONAL CATCHMENT AREAS WILL NO LONGER BE REQUIRED HAVING REGARD TO THE EXPECTATION OF FURTHER SUPPLIES FROM CHINA AFTER 1982.+

ON THE WATERWORKS ACCOUNTS, HE SAID THE REVISED PRICE STRUCTURE WOULD REDUCE THE ACCUMULATED DEFICIT OF ABOUT \$170 MILLION AT THE END OF THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR TO ABOUT \$142 MILLION AT THE END OF 1982-83.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 1979

- 4 -

TOUGHER LAWS INTRODUCED IN FIGHT
AGAINST SQUATTER HUT RACKETEERS

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THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) MOVED THE SECOND READING OF A BILL GIVING THE HOUSING AUTHORITY FAR MORE POWER AGAINST RACKETEERS WHO DEAL IN ILLEGAL HUTS FOR SQUATTERS, AND OTHER PEOPLE WHO WRONGLY USE LAND LEASED TO THEM FOR AGRICULTURAL PURPOSES.

THE HON. A.J. SCOTT SAID OF THE CROWN LAND (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979: +IN THE CONTROL OF UNLAWFUL OCCUPATION OF UNLEASED LAND, THE EXISTING LEGISLATION HAS NOT PROVED A SUFFICIENT DETERRENT TO INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS ENGAGING IN THE UNAUTHORISED CONSTRUCTION AND SALE OF STRUCTURES ON CROWN LAND.+

UNDER THE POWERS IN THE AMENDING BILL, HE SAID, SQUATTER CONTROL STAFF WOULD BE ABLE TO DEMOLISH STRUCTURES BEFORE THEY WERE SOLD AND OCCUPIED, AND PROSECUTE THE PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR BUILDING SUCH STRUCTURES.

ADDITIONALLY, THE WIDER POWERS OF ENTRY AND INSPECTION WOULD FACILITATE SURVEY WORK FOR THE CLEARANCE OF AREAS BEFORE DEVELOPMENT, AND ENSURE THAT ACCURATE INFORMATION WAS OBTAINED.

+THE PENALTIES FOR PROVIDING FALSE INFORMATION WILL DETER THOSE WHO ATTEMPT TO GAIN UNFAIR ADVANTAGE IN RESPECT OF HOUSING OR THE PAYMENT OF COMPENSATION AND EX-GRATIA ALLOWANCES,+ SAID MR. SCOTT.

ON THE REASONS BEHIND THE INTRODUCTION OF TOUGHER CONTROLS, MR. SCOTT SAID THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW TOWNS HAD INCREASED THE TEMPTATION FOR OCCUPIERS OF LEASED LAND TO CONVERT AGRICULTURAL PREMISES FOR VARIOUS UNAUTHORISED USES, SUCH AS INDUSTRIAL PURPOSES.

+IN ORDER TO PREVENT REPETITION OF THE WIDESPREAD CONVERSIONS PREVIOUSLY EXPERIENCED IN NEW KOWLOON, A SUMMARY REMEDY IS PROPOSED IN THE BILL WHICH WILL ENABLE THE AUTHORITY TO DEMAND THAT THE LESSEE DISCONTINUE THE WRONGFUL USE AND RESTORE THE STRUCTURE TO ITS ORIGINAL USE= FAILING WHICH, THE AUTHORITY MAY DO THE RESTORATION FOR HIM OR MAY DEMOLISH THE STRUCTURE,+ SAID MR. SCOTT.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 1979

- 5 -

BILL TO TIGHTEN BAILING PROCEDURES BECOMES LAW

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THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE (AMENDMENT)(NO. 4) BILL, WHICH PROPOSES TO TIGHTEN UP THE EXISTING LAW ON THE GRANTING OF BAIL, HAS RECEIVED THE SUPPORT OF A LEGISLATION SCRUTINY GROUP OF UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AFTER CAREFUL STUDY AND DISCUSSION OF ITS PROVISIONS WITH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL.

THE GROUP'S CONVENER, THE HON. T.S. LO, SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE BILL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) SAID HOWEVER THAT THERE WERE A NUMBER OF POINTS WHICH HE FELT WARRANTED FURTHER ELABORATION.

THE FIRST POINT CONCERNED THE STATEMENT MADE BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL WHEN HE MOVED THE SECOND READING, THAT +AN ACCUSED PERSON WHO IS REFUSED BAIL HAS ALWAYS BEEN ABLE TO APPLY TO THE HIGH COURT FOR A REVIEW AND IS ABLE TO APPLY TO ONE JUDGE AFTER ANOTHER IF HE IS UNSUCCESSFUL.+

THIS, MR. LO SAID, DID NOT APPEAR TO BE THE POSITION AS LAID DOWN BY JUDGE LI IN WONG VS R IN 1976. +HOWEVER THERE IS NO HARM IN RESTATING THE LAW PARTICULARLY WHEN IN THE MINDS OF SOME DOUBT EXISTS,+ HE SAID.

SECONDLY, ON THE PROPOSED NEW SECTION 12B PROVIDING IN EFFECT THAT NO APPEAL SHOULD LIE FROM THE DECISION OF A COURT OR A JUDGE IF BAIL WAS REFUSED, MR. LO SAID THIS MIGHT SEEM ODD AT FIRST SIGHT, AS IT WAS ALWAYS POSSIBLE FOR A COURT OR A JUDGE TO GO WRONG ON A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE.

+HOWEVER THE LEGCO GROUP HAS BEEN PERSUADED BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S ARGUMENT THAT AS BAIL IS ALWAYS DISCRETIONARY AND EACH CASE HAS TO BE CONSIDERED ON ITS OWN MERITS, THE QUESTION OF PRINCIPLES DOES NOT ARISE.+

THIRDLY, MR. LO SAID, THE LEGCO GROUP FELT IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO ENSURE THAT THE POWER OF APPLYING FOR REVIEW OF A BAIL ORDER WAS EXERCISED WITH GREAT CARE.

THEY CONSIDERED THAT IF POSSIBLE, SUCH POWER SHOULD BE EXERCISED BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL PERSONALLY, AND WERE TOLD THAT THEY WOULD BE GIVEN SUCH AN ASSURANCE.

FOURTHLY, THE GROUP FELT THAT IN CASES WHERE THE REVIEW OF A BAIL ORDER WAS THE RESULT OF THE FAILURE OF THE PROSECUTION TO ADDUCE ALL THE MATERIAL EVIDENCE BEFORE THE COURT WHEN BAIL WAS FIRST APPLIED FOR, THE COURT SHOULD BE GIVEN THE DISCRETION TO AWARD COSTS AGAINST THE CROWN. THEY ALSO HAD AN ASSURANCE THAT AN AMENDMENT TO THIS EFFECT WOULD BE MOVED.

/LASTLY,

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 1979

- 6 -

LASTLY, MR. LO SAID, HE AND HIS UNOFFICIAL COLLEAGUES WERE MOST CONCERNED ABOUT THE PRESENT ORDER OF DELAYS BEFORE AN ACCUSED WAS BROUGHT TO TRIAL.

DELAY INEVITABLY HAD SOME BEARING ON A COURT'S EXERCISE OF ITS DISCRETION ON BAIL.

ALTHOUGH THEY WERE GIVEN TO UNDERSTAND THAT IN THIS RESPECT HONG KONG COMPARES REASONABLY WELL WITH COMPARABLE JURISDICTIONS ELSEWHERE, THEY THOUGHT THERE WAS NO CAUSE FOR COMPLACENCY AND THAT THERE WAS A REAL NEED FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO SEE WHAT NEEDED TO BE DONE TO EXPEDITE THE DISPENSATION OF JUSTICE.

MR. LO SAID BAIL HAD LONG BEEN A SUBJECT OF CONTROVERSY, AND THE BILL HAD AROUSED CONSIDERABLE PUBLIC INTEREST, PARTICULARLY AMONG THE LEGAL PROFESSION.

IN REPLY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON. JOHN HOBLEY, CONFIRMED THAT DECISIONS TO SEEK A REVIEW OF A DECISION OF A MAGISTRATE OR DISTRICT JUDGE TO GRANT BAIL WOULD BE TAKEN ONLY BY THE LAW OFFICERS OR THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS.

MR. HOBLEY ALSO CONFIRMED THAT HE WOULD BE MOVING AN AMENDMENT IN COMMITTEE TO GIVE EFFECT TO THE VERY FAIR PROPOSAL OF UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS THAT THE JUDGE HEARING AN APPLICATION BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR A REVIEW OF A DECISION TO GRANT BAIL SHOULD HAVE POWER TO AWARD COSTS AGAINST THE CROWN.

ON TRIAL DELAYS, MR HOBLEY SAID IT WAS ONE WHICH CONSTANTLY EXERCISED THE MINDS OF BOTH THOSE WHO WERE DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND CONCERNED ONLOOKERS.

+IT IS, HOWEVER, RIGHT TO SAY THAT VIEWS AS TO WHAT IS A REASONABLY ACCEPTABLE INTERVAL BETWEEN ARREST AND TRIAL DIFFER CONSIDERABLY,+ HE SAID.

+THREE NEW POSTS OF HIGH COURT JUDGE WERE APPROVED QUITE RECENTLY BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THIS COUNCIL AND THIS IS BUT ONE EXAMPLE OF THE CONTINUING REVIEW OF THE STATE OF JUDICIAL BUSINESS.

+MEMBERS MAY FEEL SURE THAT THE MATTER IS CLOSELY MONITORED AT ALL TIMES,+ MR HOBLEY ADDED.

THE BILL WAS LATER PASSED INTO LAW.

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INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979

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THE HON. CHARLES YEUNG WELCOMED THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979 WHICH EXEMPTED FROM PROPERTY TAX, PREMISES OWNED AND OCCUPIED BY TRADE AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS, CLUBS, CLANS, FAMILIES OR 'TONGS' AND NOT USED COMMERCIALY. THE BILL WAS PASSED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

+IT IS A DEFINITE SIGN OF GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO ASSIST TRADE AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND ITS RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FAMILY AND COMMUNAL SPIRIT AS WELL AS LONG-STANDING TRADITIONS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES,+ MR. YEUNG SAID.

HE SAID THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF THE NEW TERRITORIES WILL PARTICULARLY WELCOME THE BILL. THE CONCEPT OF PROPERTY TAX IS NEW TO THEM AND THEY SEE ANY REASON WHY THEIR 'KUNG SORS', 'CHI TONGS' AND OTHER COMMUNAL BUILDINGS WHICH BENEFIT THE COMMUNITY AND DO NOT BEAR INCOME SHOULD BE CHARGEABLE TO TAX.

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DELEGATION OF FINANCIAL POWERS

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) ADOPTED A MOTION TO DELEGATE TO THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY THE AUTHORITY TO CHARGE TO GENERAL REVENUE A SUM EQUAL TO THAT BY WHICH RECEIPTS APPLIED AS APPROPRIATIONS-IN-AID IS LESS, OR IS LIKELY TO BE LESS, THAN THE SUM SHOWN IN THE SCHEDULE TO THE APPROPRIATION BILL.

MOVING THE MOTION, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, SAID THE GROSS EXPENDITURE WOULD CONTINUE TO BE MAINTAINED WITHIN THE APPROVED PROVISIONS.

MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID THAT FOLLOWING THE INTRODUCTION OF THE APPROPRIATIONS-IN-AID SYSTEM IN 1976-77, MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL WERE INVITED IN THE ANNUAL APPROPRIATION BILL TO AUTHORISE THE APPLICATION OF CERTAIN RECEIPTS AS APPROPRIATIONS-IN-AID OF THE GROSS EXPENDITURE ON THE SERVICES AND PURPOSES UNDER EACH HEAD OF EXPENDITURE IN THE SCHEDULE TO THE BILL.

+HONOURABLE MEMBERS ARE ALSO INVITED TO AUTHORISE THE CHARGE TO GENERAL REVENUE OF A SUM EQUAL TO THE NET EXPENDITURE FOR EACH HEAD OF EXPENDITURE, THAT IS TO SAY, THE GROSS EXPENDITURE FOR THAT HEAD OF EXPENDITURE LESS RECEIPTS APPLIED AS APPROPRIATIONS-IN-AID,+ HE SAID.

MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID IN THE EVENT OF A SHORTFALL OCCURRING IN RECEIPTS APPLIED AS APPROPRIATIONS-IN-AID, HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS SHOULD EFFECT A CORRESPONDING REDUCTION IN GROSS EXPENDITURE IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT NET EXPENDITURE WAS NOT EXCEEDED.

MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID THIS, AT TIMES, WAS NOT POSSIBLE WITHOUT SERIOUSLY DISRUPTING THE SERVICES PROVIDED, ADDING THAT THERE WAS AT PRESENT NO DELEGATED AUTHORITY FOR MAINTAINING THE LEVEL OF GROSS EXPENDITURE IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 1979

- 8 -

BILL TO RAISE INTEREST TAX EXEMPTION RATE

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A BILL WHICH SEEKS TO RAISE FROM FIVE PER CENT TO 7-1/2 PER CENT THE CEILING ON THE POWERS OF THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO SPECIFY THE INTEREST TAX EXEMPTION RATE WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE SECOND READING OF THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL IN THE COUNCIL, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE SAID A SERIES OF REFORMS WAS MADE SINCE 1975 TO AVOID THE TIMING PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN ENSURING THAT THE EXEMPTION RATE REMAINS THE SAME AS THE SAVINGS ACCOUNT RATE.

HE SAID THROUGHOUT THESE REFORMS, ONE FACTOR HAD REMAINED UNCHANGED AND THAT IS THE CEILING OF FIVE PER CENT ON THE AUTHORITY SET OUT IN THE INLAND REVENUE ORDINANCE FOR THE EXEMPTION RATE TO BE CHANGED.

MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID: +IT WOULD HAVE BEEN OPEN TO US TO REFUSE TO RAISE THE RATE OF EXEMPTION ABOVE FIVE PER CENT TO AVOID THE INCREASING COST TO THE PUBLIC REVENUE OF THIS LONG-STANDING POLICY.+

BUT THAT REFUSAL WOULD HAVE BEEN COSTLY IN TERMS OF ADMINISTRATIVE EFFORT IN THE INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT FOR THEY WOULD HAVE TO COPE WITH A VERY LARGE NUMBER OF CLAIMS FOR REFUNDS. HE ALSO NOTED THAT FROM JANUARY 2 THIS YEAR, THE SAVINGS ACCOUNTS HAVE BORNE INTEREST AT THE RATE OF 5-1/4 PER CENT.

HE SAID THE TAX EXEMPTION RATE APPLIES TO INTEREST ON SAVINGS ACCOUNTS AND THE LATEST ESTIMATE OF SUCH ACCOUNTS NUMBERED OVER FOUR MILLION. THE RATE ALSO APPLIES TO INTEREST PAID BY THE PUBLIC UTILITY COMPANIES AND AT LEAST ONE OF THOSE COMPANIES PAYS THE SAME RATE AS THE BANK SAVINGS ACCOUNT RATE.

+IT ACCORDINGLY SEEMS APPROPRIATE TO AVOID A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS AND GREAT INCONVENIENCE, LEADING PROBABLY TO AN UNWELCOME REDUCTION IN THE SAVINGS HABIT, BY CONTINUING OUR PRESENT POLICY OF EXEMPTING THIS INTEREST FROM TAX- WE, THEREFORE NEED, TO AMEND SECTION 28 OF THE ORDINANCE TO ENABLE CHANGES IN THE RATE OF EXEMPTION TO BE SYNCHRONISED WITH THE CHANGES IN THE RATE OF INTEREST PAID ON SAVINGS ACCOUNT.+

MR. HADDON-CAVE ALSO NOTED THAT THE BILL WAS BROUGHT INTO FORCE ON JANUARY 2 BY MEANS OF A REVENUE PROTECTION ORDER TO COINCIDE WITH A NOTICE SIGNED BY HIM SPECIFYING 5-1/4 PER CENT AS THE RATE OF EXEMPTION FOR THE TIME BEING.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS LATER ADJOURNED.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 1979

- 9 -

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION (1977-78) BILL 1979

THE SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION (1977-78) BILL 1979 WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) TO PROVIDE FOR THE APPROPRIATION OF \$1,164 MILLION FOR THE 1977-78 FINANCIAL YEAR IN ADDITION TO THE SUM APPROPRIATED BY THE APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE 1977.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, SAID THE BILL SOUGHT TO GIVE FINAL LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY TO THE SUPPLEMENTARY EXPENDITURE AUTHORISED BY RESOLUTIONS OF THE COUNCIL, AND WAS THE LAST STAGE IN DISPOSING OF EXPENDITURE INCURRED DURING THE FINANCIAL YEAR 1977-78.

+IT ALSO SEEKS AN APPROPRIATION TO MEET EXPENDITURE INCURRED BY DEPARTMENTS WHERE RECEIPTS APPROPRIATED-IN-AID FELL SHORT OF THE SUMS ORIGINALLY ESTIMATED,+ HE SAID.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID THE ORIGINAL ESTIMATES WERE GIVEN LEGISLATIVE FORM IN THE APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE 1977, WHICH AUTHORISED A SPECIFIC SUM UNDER EACH HEAD OF EXPENDITURE.

+IT IS NECESSARY NOW TO LEGISLATE FURTHER IN RESPECT OF THOSE HEADS OF EXPENDITURE WHERE THE NET EFFECT OF SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS, SHORTFALLS IN RECEIPTS APPROPRIATED-IN-AID AND UNDER-SPENDING HAS RESULTED IN AN EXCESS OVER THE NET SUM APPROPRIATED IN THE APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE 1977.

+THE TOTAL SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION REQUIRED IS \$1,164 MILLION UNDER 24 HEADS AS AGAINST SAVINGS OF \$349 MILLION UNDER VARIOUS OTHER HEADS,+ MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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/10

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 1979

- 10 -

SMALL-SCALE INDUSTRIES --- MORE SUPPORT NEEDED
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THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN TOLD THE GOVERNMENT THAT IT WOULD HAVE TO COME OUT OF ITS +LAISSEZ FAIRE COCOON+, PARTICULARLY IN ITS ATTITUDE AND APPROACH TOWARDS SMALL-SCALE INDUSTRIES, IF THE ECONOMY WAS TO REMAIN HEALTHY AND VIGOROUS.

SPEAKING ON SMALL-SCALE INDUSTRY IN HONG KONG AT THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MR. CHEONG-LEEN SAID THERE WAS ALREADY A LOOSE SYSTEM OF SUPPORT FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, AS EXPLAINED IN A REPORT PREPARED BY A TEAM UNDER DR. VICTOR SIT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG'S CENTRE OF ASIAN STUDIES.

THE QUESTION WAS WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONSCIOUSLY GIVING ENOUGH ATTENTION AND SUPPORT BY EXPLOITING EXISTING FACILITIES MORE FULLY, HE SAID.

FOR EXAMPLE, THE HONG KONG PRODUCTIVITY CENTRE COULD BE GIVEN FURTHER FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO PROVIDE MORE RAPIDLY TECHNICAL INFORMATION, MANPOWER AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, QUALITY CONTROL, TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AND OTHER SERVICES TO SMALL-SCALE INDUSTRIES.

HONG KONG COULD ALSO LEARN FROM JAPAN WHERE THERE WAS A 'SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE AGENCY', WHERE THE CRUCIAL ROLE SMALL BUSINESSES PLAYED EVEN TODAY IN JAPANESE ECONOMY WAS RECOGNISED AND WHERE A VARIETY OF SUPPORT SERVICES, SUCH AS MANAGEMENT DISGNOSING CONSULTANCY, WAS PROVIDED AT LITTLE OR NO COST TO SMALL INDUSTRY.

MR. CHEONG-LEEN SAID ONE OF THE MOST SERIOUS PROBLEMS WAS THE SHORTAGE OF SUITABLY-SIZED FACTORY UNITS AND ONLY RECENTLY HAD THE GOVERNMENT BECOME MORE CONSCIOUS OF THIS SHORTAGE.

ITS DECISION TO REQUIRE A PROPORTION OF INDUSTRIAL LAND TO BE SOLD IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO HAVE HALF THE ACCOMMODATION IN UNITS NOT EXCEEDING 100 SQ. METRES (1,090 SQ. FT.) WAS A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

BUT IT COULD GO EVEN FURTHER AND ENCOURAGE THE BUILDING OF FLATTED FACTORY COMPLEXES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES TO ACCOMMODATE BOTH MEDIUM AND SMALL-SCALE FACTORIES, WITH NEARBY WAREHOUSE FACILITIES, ROUND-THE-CLOCK SECURITY, BANKING AND OTHER ESSENTIAL SERVICES.

HE HAD PROVIDED THE DIRECTOR OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE WITH A BROCHURE OF ONE SUCH FLATTED FACTORY COMPLEX IN ANOTHER CITY AND HE THOUGHT THE GOVERNMENT COULD DO EVEN BETTER.

IT SHOULD SEEK TO UPGRADE THE QUALITY AND DESIGN SO THAT THE COMPLEXES WILL ATTRACT SMALL-SCALE FACTORIES GEARING UP TO HIGHER TECHNOLOGY, AND IT SHOULD ALSO ENSURE THERE WOULD BE CAPABLE AND PERMANENT MANAGEMENT ONCE THE COMPLEXES WERE COMPLETED.

/HE SAID

HE SAID HONG KONG WAS FORTUNATE AT THE MOMENT TO HAVE LOW UNEMPLOYMENT, BUT WITH THE LARGE NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS COMING IN AND THE DRIVE FOR INDUSTRIALISATION GATHERING MOMENTUM IN CHINA, THE ECONOMIC AND INDUSTRIAL SITUATION IN HONG KONG FOUR OR FIVE YEARS FROM NOW WAS UNCERTAIN.

HE WANTED TO KNOW WHAT THE GOVERNMENT THINKING AND PLANS WERE TO SUSTAIN AND ENHANCE THE SMALL-SCALE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR WHICH, RELATIVELY SPEAKING, HAD BEEN NEGLECTED.

ACCORDING TO THE REPORT BY DR. SIT, THE INDUSTRY MADE UP 92.1 PER CENT OF TOTAL MANUFACTURING ESTABLISHMENTS IN 1977 AND CONTRIBUTED 303,553 JOBS (40.2 PER CENT OF TOTAL MANUFACTURING EMPLOYMENT OR 18.1 PER CENT OF TOTAL EMPLOYMENT IN ALL SECTORS).

THE HON. JAMES WU AND THE HON. S.L. CHEN SPOKE IN SUPPORT OF MR. CHEONG-LEEN.

MR. WU SAID APPREHENSION WAS GROWING AS TO WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT'S ONCE GREAT TRADITIONAL ECONOMIC POLICY HAS OUTLIVED ITS USEFULNESS.

+IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE GOVERNMENT MUST INCREASE ITS INPUT AND PARTICIPATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR INDUSTRIES SO THAT THESE PRODUCTIVE AND WEALTH-CREATING VENTURES CAN PROSPER FOR THE GENERAL GOOD,+ HE SAID.

HE REMINDED THE COUNCIL THAT DUE TO INCREASED INTERNAL DEMAND AND SLUGGISH REAL EXPORT GROWTH, THE TRADE DEFICIT IN 1978 INCREASED BY MORE THAN 130 PER CENT OVER 1977 AND THE NEAR 20 PER CENT REDUCTION IN THE PURCHASING VALUE OF THE HONG KONG DOLLAR DURING THE LAST TWO YEARS HAD OBVIOUSLY RESULTED FROM THIS WORRYING SITUATION.

AS CHAIRMAN OF THE FEDERATION OF HONG KONG INDUSTRIES, HE WAS GRATEFUL TO MR. CHEONG-LEEN FOR DRAWING ATTENTION TO DIFFICULTIES AND PLIGHT OF SMALL INDUSTRIES IN HONG KONG.

ON THE PROBLEM OF FACTORY ACCOMMODATION, MR. WU SAID FAIR MARKET PRICES IN HONG KONG WERE A MOCKERY AND A SYNONYM OF INFLATED RENTAL AND PREMIUM BEYOND VIABILITY. AS A RESULT, +INVESTMENT IN PRODUCTIVE CAPACITY SLACKENS AS MONEY IS DRAWN TO THE MORE SPECULATIVE FIELDS THAT APPEAR TO OFFER MORE LUCRATIVE AND QUICKER RETURNS.+

SMALL INDUSTRIALISTS WERE ALSO GENERALLY OF MODEST BEGINNING AND USUALLY HARD PRESSED, SO THAT IF LEFT TO THEIR OWN, THEY WERE POORLY EQUIPPED AND ILL-PREPARED TO SOLVE THEIR LABOUR PROBLEMS AND PROBLEMS ARISING FROM INSUFFICIENT TECHNICAL AND MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE AND FINANCIAL WORRIES.

IN TODAY'S CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIGH INFLATION, RAPIDLY RISING MATERIAL COSTS, AND TIGHT LABOUR SITUATION, THE SITUATION HAD BECOME EVEN MORE UNTENABLE.

FOR EXAMPLE, HE SAID, HIGH OVERHEADS DICTATED LARGER PRODUCTION VOLUMES AND ORDERS, BUT RAPIDLY RISING MATERIAL AND LABOUR COSTS COULD UPSET EARLIER COSTINGS UPON WHICH ORDERS WERE NEGOTIATED AND ACCEPTED.

FOR THOSE IN THE GARMENT INDUSTRY, UNPREDICTABLE QUOTA PRICES AND AVAILABILITY, AGGRAVATED BY FERVENT SPECULATION, COULD MEAN NON-SHIPMENT OF FINISHED GOODS AND IRREPARABLE LOSSES.

OTHER SMALL INDUSTRIES WERE ALSO MAINLY OF LOW TECHNOLOGY AND HIGH LABOUR INTENSITY AND WHAT LITTLE LEAD HONG KONG ENJOYED IN MANUAL SKILLS WAS BEING RAPIDLY ERODED BY KEEN COMPETITORS WHO, WITH THEIR GOVERNMENTS' ASSISTANCE AND CO-OPERATION, HAD BEEN ABLE TO ADVANCE FARTHER IN TECHNOLOGY AND LARGER IN SCALE.

MR. S.L. CHEN, CHAIRMAN OF THE HONG KONG PRODUCTIVITY COUNCIL, SUPPORTED MR. CHEONG-LEEN'S CALL FOR FURTHER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO SUBVENTED BODIES TO PROVIDE SUPPORT SERVICES TO SMALL-SCALE INDUSTRIES.

HE POINTED OUT THAT WITH THE INCREASING SOPHISTICATION OF HONG KONG INDUSTRIES AND BEARING IN MIND THAT SMALL-SCALE INDUSTRIES HAD NEITHER THE TECHNICAL CAPABILITY NOR THE FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO DEVELOP THEIR OWN SERVICE FACILITIES, THE NEED OF GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY BUT WITHOUT NECESSARILY INCREASING GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE, IS MORE IMPORTANT THEN EVER.+

HE RECALLED THAT IN THE BUDGET DEBATE LAST YEAR HE HAD SUGGESTED SETTING UP A +FACTORY OWNERSHIP SCHEME+ TO HELP SMALL INDUSTRIAL OPERATIONS.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY HAD AT THAT TIME SAID HE WAS +SOEELY TEMPTED TO RESPOND IN GREAT DETAIL TO THESE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS AND PROPOSALS+, OF WHICH THE SCHEME WAS ONE, BUT DID NOT DO SO BECAUSE HE FELT IT WOULD BE PREMATURE AND DISCOURTEOUS TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON DIVERSIFICATION.

MR. CHEN SAID HE WAS THEREFORE VERY GLAD TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BRING THE MATTER BACK TO THE FORE.

REPLYING TO POINTS RAISED BY THE UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS, THE DIRECTOR OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND CUSTOMS, THE HON. DAVID JORDAN SAID A GREAT DEAL OF EFFORT HAS RECENTLY BEEN MADE TO ALLEVIATE THE SHORTAGE OF SUITABLE ACCOMMODATION FOR SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES.

HE STRESSED THAT FOR THESE INDUSTRIES WHICH REPRESENT THE MAJORITY AND ARE SUITABLE FOR LOCATION IN ORDINARY FLATTED FACTORIES, THERE WILL BE NO SHORTAGE OF SPACE IN THE NEAR TO MEDIUM TERM.

BY THE END OF THIS YEAR, AN ADDITIONAL 13 MILLION SQ. FT. OF FLATTED FACTORY SPACE WILL BECOME AVAILABLE -- ABOUT 3 MILLION SQ. FT. MORE THAN IN 1978 AND OVER 4 MILLION MORE THAN IN 1977.

MR. JORDAN ALSO ADMITTED THAT AT PRESENT THERE WAS A SHORTAGE OF GOVERNMENT-FINANCED FLATTED FACTORY ACCOMMODATION FOR RESETTLING SQUATTER FACTORIES OWING TO AN ACCELERATION IN THE NUMBER OF FACTORIES BEING CLEARED.

HOWEVER, HE SAID, A LARGE CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMME WAS NOW IN HAND.

/+IN THE MEANTIME,

+IN THE MEANTIME, SQUATTER FACTORIES ELIGIBLE FOR RESETTLEMENT AND CLEARED FROM LAND REQUIRED FOR REDEVELOPMENT BUT WHICH CANNOT BE ACCOMMODATED IMMEDIATELY WILL BE GIVEN TEMPORARY RESITE AREAS UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE BUILDINGS ARE READY FOR THEM.

+FOR OTHERS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR, OR NOT INTERESTED IN, SUCH ACCOMMODATION EX-GRATIA CASH PAYMENTS HAVE RECENTLY BEEN INCREASED SUBSTANTIALLY,+ HE SAID.

ON THE PROBLEM OF SMALL FACTORIES IN NON-INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS, HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY WAS TO PREVENT PROLIFERATION OF THESE FACTORIES IN THE NEW TOWNS AND IN NEW BUILDINGS WHERE INDUSTRIAL USE CONTRAVENED LEASE CONDITIONS.

+LEASE ENFORCEMENT ACTION IN EXISTING BUILDINGS IS PRESENTLY TAKEN ONLY IN RESPECT OF MORE OBJECTIONABLE FACTORIES, I.E. THOSE WHICH ARE POSITIVELY DANGEROUS OR OBNOXIOUS.

+ONLY WHEN THERE IS ADEQUATE AND SUITABLE INDUSTRIAL ACCOMMODATION AVAILABLE WILL THIS ACTION BE EXTENDED TO COVER OTHER FACTORIES IN EXISTING NON-INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS,+ HE SAID.

MR. JORDAN ALSO REVEALED THAT CONSIDERATION IS BEING GIVEN TO A POSSIBLE EXTENSION OF AN EXPERIMENTAL SCHEME UNDER WHICH SALE OF THE LEASES OF SOME SITES IS SUBJECT TO A CONDITION THAT UNITS OF 100 SQ. METRES ARE CONSTRUCTED ON THEM.

+BUT THE GOVERNMENT HAS TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE FACT THAT IN SO DOING, IT WOULD BE DENYING THE USE OF THE SITES IN QUESTION TO OTHER LARGER SCALE INDUSTRY. CLEARLY IT IS NECESSARY TO TRY TO BALANCE THE INTEREST OF THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE,+ HE SAID.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONSCIOUS OF THE NEED TO KEEP UP WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRY IN THIS REGARD AND WAS ACTIVELY EXAMINING THE NEED TO CHANGE ITS LAYOUT PLANS AS A RESULT.

ON MR. CHEN'S SUGGESTION FOR A FACTORY OWNERSHIP SCHEME, MR. JORDAN SAID THE PROPOSAL WOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON DIVERSIFICATION.

MR. JORDAN ALSO ARGUED OVER THE TERM +LOOSE+ TO DESCRIBE THE SYSTEM OF SUPPORT FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, BY SAYING THAT THERE WERE ADVANTAGES IN THIS.

HE SAID THIS LOOSE SYSTEM OF SUPPORT AS DESCRIBED IN DR. SIT'S REPORT CREATED AN ACTIVE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT WHICH OFFERED SMALL ENTERPRISES MORE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES AND OTHER INDIRECT BENEFITS. +BUT HERE AGAIN IS AN AREA WHICH IS BEING CONSIDERED BY THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON DIVERSIFICATION.+

MR. JORDAN ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE HONG KONG PRODUCTIVITY COUNCIL ALREADY CONCENTRATED ON PROVIDING SERVICES SPECIFICALLY GEARED TO THE SMALLER AND MEDIUM SIZED FACTORIES AND HE BELIEVED THERE WAS A STRONG CASE FOR ENCOURAGING THE PRODUCTIVITY COUNCIL TO CONTINUE TO INCREASE AND IMPROVE ON SERVICES OFFERED TO HONG KONG INDUSTRIES AS A WHOLE.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 1979

- 14 -

PARENTAL CONTROL -- ANSWER TO UNDER-AGE DRINKING
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THE ANSWER TO UNDER-AGE DRINKING LIES IN INCREASED PARENTAL CONTROL AND NOT NECESSARILY IN THE ENACTMENT OF MORE STRINGENT LEGISLATION OR INCREASED POLICE EFFORTS, SAID THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON. LEWIS DAVIES IN TODAY'S (WEDNESDAY) LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. LYDIA DUNN ON WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WAS SATISFIED THAT ADEQUENT MEASURES WERE TAKEN TO ENSURE ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES WERE NOT SERVED IN RESTAURANTS, NIGHT-CLUBS AND DISCOTHQUES TO PATRONS WHO WERE UNDER 18, MR. DAVIES SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT ALTOGETHER SATISFIED WITH THE SITUATION.

HE SAID THE DUTIABLE COMMODITIES (LIQUOR) REGULATIONS MADE IT AN OFFENCE FOR A LICENSEE TO PERMIT ANY PERSON UNDER THE AGE OF 18 TO DRINK INTOXICATING LIQUOR ON ANY LICENSED PREMISES.

HOWEVER, HE CONTINUED, THE COURTS HAD RULED THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO PROVE THAT THE LICENSEE SOLD LIQUOR TO A PERSON KNOWING THE PERSON TO BE UNDER-AGE. THIS HAD MADE IT DIFFICULT TO SECURE CONVICTIONS FOR THE OFFENCE.

MR. DAVIES SAID THE LAW WAS CURRENTLY BEING RE-EXAMINED AS PART OF AN OVERALL REVIEW OF THE LIQUOR LICENSING PROVISIONS.

+UNDER-AGE DRINKING IS ONE OF THE ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED,+ HE SAID.

ACCORDING TO HIM, THE POLICE ASSESSMENT WAS THAT UNDER-AGE DRINKING WAS NOT A SERIOUS OR WIDESPREAD PROBLEM.

+IT IS ESSENTIALLY A SOCIAL ISSUE AND THE ANSWER WOULD SEEM TO LIE IN INCREASED PARENTAL CONTROL AND NOT NECESSARILY IN THE ENACTMENT OF MORE STRINGENT LEGISLATION OR INCREASED POLICE EFFORTS,+ MR. DAVIES SAID.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 1979

- 15 -
BA FLIGHT SCHEDULES
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IN THE THREE MONTHS FROM OCTOBER TO DECEMBER LAST YEAR, THERE WAS A MARKED IMPROVEMENT IN THE PERFORMANCE OF BRITISH AIRWAYS' DIRECT SCHEDULED PASSENGER FLIGHTS BETWEEN HONG KONG AND LONDON, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON. D.G. JEAFFRESON TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. OSWALD CHEUNG, MR. JEAFFRESON ADDED THAT WHEN HE SAID +BETWEEN HONG KONG AND LONDON+, HE INCLUDED JOURNEYS BOTH FROM LONDON TO HONG KONG AND FROM HONG KONG TO LONDON.

ON THE ADEQUACY OF THESE SERVICES, MR. JEAFFRESON SAID THERE CONTINUED TO BE 10 FLIGHTS A WEEK FROM LONDON TO HONG KONG, AND THE SAME IN THE OTHER DIRECTION.

+DURING THE TRADITIONALLY BUSY CHRISTMAS PERIOD, BRITISH AIRWAYS INCREASED THE CAPACITY ON THIS ROUTE BY INTRODUCING THREE EXTRA SERVICES WITH BOEING 747'S THAT PROVIDED 1,240 ADDITIONAL SEATS EACH WAY DURING THE MONTH OF DECEMBER.

IN ONLY NINE INSTANCES WERE SEATS UNOBTAINABLE ON A PARTICULAR FLIGHT TO LONDON, AND ON ALL OF THESE OCCASIONS SEATS WERE AVAILABLE EITHER ON AN ALTERNATIVE FLIGHT ON THE SAME DAY OR WITHIN 24 HOURS.

ON PUNCTUALITY, MR. JEAFFRESON HAD THIS TO SAY: +WHEN I ANSWERED THIS QUESTION ON 18TH OCTOBER 1978, I SAID THAT DURING THE MONTHS OF JULY, AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER, 63 PER CENT OF FLIGHTS HAD BEEN DELAYED FOR OVER 15 MINUTES AND THAT THE AVERAGE DELAY WAS FOUR HOURS AND NINE MINUTES.

+THE DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION'S RECORDS OF TIME KEEPING IN RESPECT OF ARRIVALS AT AND DEPARTURES FROM HONG KONG SHOW THAT, DURING OCTOBER, NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 1978, 59 PER CENT OF THE BA FLIGHTS ON THE DIRECT HONG KONG-LONDON ROUTE WERE DELAYED FOR OVER 15 MINTUES, AND THE AVERAGE DELAY WAS TWO HOURS AND 50 MINUTES.+

MR. JEAFFRESON SAID THERE HAD ALSO BEEN SOME IMPROVEMENT IN THE DEPENDABILITY OF THE AIR SERVICES BETWEEN HONG KONG AND LONDON.

+REFLECTING THE PRIORITY WHICH I TOLD HONOURABLE MEMBERS IN OCTOBER THAT BA SAID THEY WERE ACCORDING TO THEIR HONG KONG SERVICE, BA CANCELLED ONLY TWO FLIGHTS DURING OCTOBER, NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 1978, COMPARED WITH 16 CANCELLATIONS DURING THE PREVIOUS THREE MONTH PERIOD.+

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 1979

- 16 -

AS TO THE FUTURE, MR. JEAFFRESON MENTIONED THE VARIOUS IMPROVEMENTS WHICH BA ARE PLANNING FOR THEIR SUMMER SCHEDULE.

+WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT STARTING IN APRIL THIS YEAR, THERE WILL BE AN EXTRA ROUND TRIP BOEING 747 FLIGHT, THUS PROVIDING WEEKLY A TOTAL OF 10 '747' SERVICES EACH WAY PLUS ONE ROUND TRIP VC 10 SERVICE BETWEEN HONG KONG AND LONDON.

+BRITISH AIRWAYS ALSO SAY THAT THE SUMMER SCHEDULES WILL PROVIDE FASTER FLIGHTS BETWEEN HONG KONG AND LONDON.+

DURING THE QUARTER ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1978, 21 BRITISH AIRWAYS FLIGHTS OPERATING FROM HONG KONG TO LONDON AND THREE IN THE REVERSE DIRECTION MADE STOPS NOT SHOWN AS SCHEDULED IN THE CORPORATION'S TIMETABLE, MR. JEAFFRESON SAID.

MR. JEAFFRESON SAID THIS IN REPLY TO ANOTHER QUESTION FROM MR. CHEUNG.

+OF THESE 24 FLIGHTS, 16 MADE AN UNSCHEDULED CALL AT MUSCAT FOLLOWING A DECISION BY BRITISH AIRWAYS TO AVOID TEHERAN BECAUSE OF THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN IRAN,+ HE SAID.

OF THE REMAINING EIGHT FLIGHTS, HE ADDED HE WAS TOLD THAT IN FIVE CASES AN UNSCHEDULED STOP WAS MADE BECAUSE OF WEATHER CONDITIONS AT A SCHEDULED STOP. THREE FLIGHTS MADE AN ADDITIONAL EN ROUTE CALL FOR TECHNICAL REASONS.

REGARDING THE CORPORATION'S DECISION TO AVOID TEHERAN, MR. JEAFFRESON SAID APPROPRIATE AMENDMENTS WERE MADE TO THE SCHEDULES PUBLISHED BY THE CORPORATION IN THE LATEST EDITION OF THEIR LOCAL TIMETABLE ISSUED EARLIER THIS MONTH.

IT WAS DIFFICULT, HE SAID, TO SAY TO WHAT EXTENT DELAYS TO BRITISH AIRWAYS FLIGHTS DURING THE QUARTER ENDING DECEMBER 31 WERE ATTRIBUTABLE TO THESE UNSCHEDULED STOPS.

+I AM TOLD THAT WHILE THE UNSCHEDULED ADDITIONAL CALLS UNDOUBTEDLY ADDED TO TOTAL JOURNEY TIME, BA REGARD THE ORIGINAL CAUSE OF THE DIVERSION (FOR EXAMPLE, BAD WEATHER OR TECHNICAL PROBLEMS) AS THE MAIN REASON FOR THE DELAY,+ HE SAID.

MR. JEAFFRESON ALSO SAID HE WAS ADVISED THAT THE CALLS MADE AT MUSCAT IN PLACE OF TEHERAN DID NOT ADD TO THE TOTAL JOURNEY TIME.

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/17 ...

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 1979

- 17 -

USE OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR, TRANSLATION CLARIFIED
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THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, THE HON. KENNETH TOPLEY, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) CLARIFIED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THE USE OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR AND TRANSLATION IN SCHOOLS.

MR. TOPLEY, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. JAMES WU, SAID: +IF BY GRAMMAR MR. WU IS REFERRING TO THE REGULAR FEATURES OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, THE UNDERLYING SYSTEM WHICH MAKES THE LANGUAGE WORK, THEN THE LANGUAGE TEACHING IN OUR SCHOOLS ALREADY DOES, AND INDEED MUST INCLUDE GRAMMAR.

+IF, HOWEVER, HE MEANS THE USE OF TRADITIONAL GRAMMATICAL NOMENCLATURE SUCH AS 'THE FUTURE PERFECT CONTINUOUS TENSE' OR 'DEFINING AND NON-DEFINING ADJECTIVAL CLAUSES', TOGETHER WITH THE ROTE LEARNING OF VERBAL PARADIGMS AND LISTS OF EXCEPTIONS TO GRAMMATICAL 'RULES', MODERN EXPERIENCE HAS SHOWN THAT THESE ARE NOT ESSENTIAL FOR SUCCESSFUL LANGUAGE LEARNING, THOUGH SOME KNOWLEDGE OF TERMINOLOGY MAY BE USEFUL FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS,+ MR. TOPLEY SAID.

HE SAID IT WAS THEREFORE NOT INTENDED TO REINTRODUCE THIS +FORMAL+ GRAMMAR INTO SCHOOLS.

ON TRANSLATION, MR. TOPLEY HAD THIS TO SAY: +IF BY 'TRANSLATION' MR. WU MEANS THE TRANSLATION OF LONG DESCRIPTIVE OR NARRATIVE PASSAGES FROM ENGLISH TO CHINESE AND VICE VERSA, THIS IS A VERY ADVANCED SKILL AND IS CLEARLY NOT A SUITABLE EXERCISE AT THE BEGINNING OR INTERMEDIATE STAGES OF LEARNING A SECOND LANGUAGE.+

THEREFORE, HE SAID, HE DID NOT CONSIDER IT SUITABLE FOR INCLUSION IN THE NORMAL GENERAL SECONDARY COURSE.

MR. TOPLEY SAID THAT IF MR. WU WAS REFERRING TO THE TRANSLATION OF INDIVIDUAL PHRASES AND SENTENCES TO DEMONSTRATE HOW CHINESE AND ENGLISH DIFFER IN THEIR SYNTAX, THIS WAS STANDARD PRACTICE IN MOST LANGUAGE TEACHING BEYOND THE BEGINNER'S LEVEL.

+IT ALREADY TAKES PLACE IN OUR SCHOOLS,+ MR. TOPLEY STRESSED.

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/18

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 1979

- 18 -

RESPONSES TO YOUTH CENTRES POSITIVE

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THE MAJORITY OF RESPONSES BY YOUNG PEOPLE TO A SURVEY INITIATED BY THE HONG KONG FEDERATION OF STUDENTS LAST SUMMER ON A NUMBER OF YOUTH CENTRES WERE POSITIVE.

THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, THE HON. THOMAS LEE TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM DR. THE HON. HO KAM-FAI.

+THEY CONSIDERED THAT ACTIVITIES ORGANISED BY THE CENTRES WERE USEFUL TO THEM AND THAT YOUTH CENTRES WERE PROVIDING THE MUCH NEEDED OPPORTUNITIES FOR THEM TO DEVELOP INTERESTS, MAKE NEW FRIENDS, LEARN NEW SKILLS, IMPROVE THEIR ABILITY AND ENHANCE SELF-CONFIDENCE AND SENSE OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY,+ MR. LEE ADDED.

— HOWEVER, THE REPORT — THE SURVEY WAS COMPLETED LAST NOVEMBER — HAD A FEW CRITICISMS TO MAKE ON THESE YOUTH CENTRES.

FIRST, THERE WERE NOT ENOUGH TRAINED PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORKERS TO MAN THEM.

SECOND, THERE WAS TOO MUCH EMPHASIS ON RECREATION AND NOT ENOUGH COUNSELLING SERVICE TO INDIVIDUALS.

THIRD, MEMBERS DID NOT RECEIVE SUFFICIENT ENCOURAGEMENT TO CONCERN THEMSELVES WITH CURRENT SOCIAL ISSUES.

LASTLY, THE CENTRES WERE NOT REACHING OUT TO YOUNG INDIVIDUALS WHO DID NOT COME FORWARD TO JOIN THE YOUTH CENTRES OR WHO WERE USUALLY REFERRED TO AS +PROBLEM YOUTHS+.

COMMENTING ON THESE REMARKS, MR. LEE POINTED OUT THAT THE OBJECTIVE OF YOUTH CENTRES +IS TO HELP YOUNG PERSONS TO ACHIEVE A BALANCED DEVELOPMENT- RECREATION IS BUT A MEANS TO THIS END.+

HE ADDED THAT THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT'S POLICY ON YOUTH CENTRES WAS EXAMINED ANNUALLY TO MEET THE CHANGING NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE.

+ A WORKING PARTY UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE HAS JUST COMPLETED ITS REPORT ON THE FUTURE ROLE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH CENTRES AND HAS MADE POSITIVE RECOMMENDATIONS ON SERVICES, USE OF PREMISES, MEMBERSHIP AND STAFFING OF THESE CENTRES, WHICH ARE NOW BEING STUDIED,+ HE SAID.

/HE ALSO

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 1979

- 19 -

HE ALSO SAID THAT AT PRESENT, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF EACH SUBVENTED YOUTH CENTRE PROVIDED FOR AT LEAST ONE TRAINED SOCIAL WORKER AND TWO YOUTH WORKERS, FOR WHOM THERE WERE OPPORTUNITIES FOR IN-SERVICE TRAINING.

+SOME VOLUNTARY AGENCIES MAY NOT BE ABLE TO FILL THE SENIOR POSTS WITH PROFESSIONAL WORKERS BECAUSE OF THE GENERAL SHORTAGE OF TRAINED SOCIAL WORKERS. HOWEVER, THIS MATTER IS BEING LOOKED AT SEPARATELY.

+THE PROGRAMME PLAN ON PERSONAL SOCIAL WORK AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE WHICH COVERS OUTREACHING SOCIAL WORK, YOUTH GUIDANCE, SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK AND FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION WILL BE IMPLEMENTED AS SOON AS THE POLICY IS APPROVED IN THE FORM OF A WHITE PAPER.

+THIS WILL DEFINITELY STRENGTHEN THE SERVICES FOR YOUTH INCLUDING REACHING OUT, COUNSELLING AND GUIDANCE,+ MR. LEE CONCLUDED.

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REVIEW OF INCOME LIMIT FOR H.O.S. FLATS
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THE INCOME LIMIT FOR FLATS IN THE SECOND PHASE OF THE HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME, AND OTHER ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA APPLYING TO APPLICANTS FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR, WILL SOON BE REVIEWED BY THE HOUSING AUTHORITY'S HOME OWNERSHIP COMMITTEE.

THIS WAS SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON. A.J. SCOTT IN REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN.

MR. CHEONG-LEEN ASKED WHETHER THE MAXIMUM INCOME LEVEL FOR H.O.S. FLATS WOULD BE RAISED FROM \$3,500 TO \$4,000.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 1979

- 20 -

LEAD CONTENT OF PETROL
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THE GOVERNMENT IS NOT IN A POSITION TO GIVE A DEFINITE ANSWER AS TO WHETHER IT IS SATISFIED THE LEVEL OF THE LEAD CONTENT OF PETROL USED BY MOTOR VEHICLES IN HONG KONG WAS ACCEPTABLE FROM A HEALTH POINT OF VIEW.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. WONG LAM AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR. JONES EXPLAINED THAT THIS WAS BECAUSE THE STAFF AND EQUIPMENT HE HAD REQUESTED FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION UNIT HAD NOT YET BEEN PROVIDED.

HOWEVER, MR. JONES SAID THIS WAS NOW IN HAND AND WILL, HOPEFULLY, +NOT TAKE TOO LONG+.

+THE IMPORTANT POINT TO CONSIDER HERE IS NOT SO MUCH THE AMOUNT OF LEAD EMITTED FROM INDIVIDUAL VEHICLE EXHAUSTS BUT THE ACTUAL CONCENTRATION OF LEAD REACHED IN THE ENVIRONMENT,+ MR. JONES STRESSED.

+THE GENERAL OPINION WHICH I SHOULD EMPHASISE IS THAT IT IS MOST UNLIKELY THAT LEAD LEVELS IN HONG KONG HAVE REACHED LEVELS REQUIRING PRECIPITOUS ACTION. BUT THERE IS SUFFICIENT CAUSE FOR CONCERN FOR THIS TO BE A PRIORITY PROBLEM FOR ATTENTION ONCE THE NECESSARY SPECIALIST STAFF AND EQUIPMENT ARE AVAILABLE.+

MR. JONES SAID THAT IF THIS WORK THEN SHOWED LEAD LEVELS IN HONG KONG, OR IN CERTAIN AREAS, WERE UNACCEPTABLY HIGH IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY CONTROLS UNDER THE PROPOSED AIR POLLUTION CONTROL BILL +WHICH I HOPE TO BRING BEFORE THIS COUNCIL LATER IN THIS SESSION.+

+THE INTENTION IS THAT THIS LEGISLATION WILL, AMONG OTHER THINGS, CONTAIN PROVISIONS WHICH WILL PERMIT THE GOVERNMENT TO CONTROL THE COMPOSITION OF FUEL IN GENERAL.+

MR. WONG ALSO ASKED: +IN THE INTEREST OF PUBLIC HEALTH, WILL GOVERNMENT CONSIDER REQUIRING PETROL IMPORTERS TO MAKE AVAILABLE TO THE MOTORING PUBLIC LOW-OCTANE PETROL WHICH CONTAINS LESS LEAD THAN THE HIGH-OCTANE (PREMIER GRADE) PETROL CURRENTLY ON SALE IN HONG KONG?+

IN REPLY, MR. JONES SAID A LARGE PROPORTION OF THE PETROL-ENGINED VEHICLES NOW BEING USED IN HONG KONG WOULD NOT WORK AT ALL WELL WITH LOW OCTANE PETROL, EVEN WITH APPROPRIATE ADJUSTMENTS TO THEIR IGNITION SYSTEMS.

/+I FEEL,

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 1979

- 21 -

+I FEEL, THEREFORE, THAT, BEFORE TAKING ACTION OF THIS SORT, WE SHOULD FIRST AWAIT THE OUTCOME OF THE MONITORING WORK I REFERRED TO IN REPLYING TO THE LAST QUESTION IN ORDER TO SEE WHETHER THERE IS A PROBLEM,+ MR. JONES SAID.

HE ADDED THAT IF THIS WORK SHOWED THAT LEAD LEVELS IN THE ENVIRONMENT WERE UNACCEPTABLY HIGH A NUMBER OF POSSIBLE LINES OF ACTION WOULD BE OPEN.

+THIS COULD INCLUDE THE USE OF LOWER OCTANE PETROL THAN AT PRESENT. BUT IT COULD ALSO INCLUDE THE USE OF HIGHER OCTANE, LOW LEAD, PETROL WHICH WOULD BE RATHER MORE EXPENSIVE THAN THE PETROL NOW IN USE.

+I WOULD, HOWEVER, EXPECT TO CONSULT THE OIL COMPANIES, THE MOTORING ORGANISATIONS AND THE MOTOR TRADERS ASSOCIATION BEFORE DECIDING WHAT EXACTLY SHOULD BE DONE.+

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MORE BUSES -- NATURAL BRAKE ON PLB FARES
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THE AVAILABILITY OF SUFFICIENT FRANCHISED BUSES IN FUTURE WOULD ACT AS A NATURAL BRAKE ON THE FARES THAT COULD BE CHARGED BY THE PUBLIC LIGHT BUS OPERATORS, SAID THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, MR. DEREK JONES, IN TODAY'S (WEDNESDAY) LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING.

MR. JONES WAS ANSWERING A QUESTION FROM THE HON. J.H. BREMRIDGE ON WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT AGREED THAT THE INSUFFICIENCIES OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE FRANCHISED BUS COMPANIES MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE TO CONTROL THE FARES QUOTED BY PUBLIC LIGHT BUS OPERATORS.

MR. JONES SAID HE WOULD AGREE WITH MR. BREMRIDGE IF HIS QUESTION MEANT THAT IF THERE WERE NOT ENOUGH FRANCHISED BUSES ON THE ROADS TO COPE WITH PEAK DEMANDS, THEN TO CONTROL PUBLIC LIGHT BUS FARES WOULD PRODUCE A SHORTAGE OF THAT FORM OF TRANSPORT AS WELL.

BUT HE ADDED THAT ONCE THERE WERE SUFFICIENT FRANCHISED BUSES AVAILABLE, THERE WOULD BE, IN ANY CASE, NO NEED TO CONTROL PUBLIC LIGHT BUS FARES FOR THE COMPETITION FROM BUSES WOULD ACT AS A NATURAL BRAKE ON THE FARES ABLE TO BE CHARGED.

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/22

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 1979

- 22 -

POLICE ACTION AGAINST ILLEGAL GAMBLING AND VICE

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THE GOVERNMENT IS TAKING ACTION AGAINST ILLEGAL GAMBLING AND VICE ESTABLISHMENTS OPERATING IN DOMESTIC PREMISES, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON. LEWIS DAVIES SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. ANDREW SO, MR. DAVIES STRESSED THAT POLICE ACTION AGAINST ILLEGAL GAMBLING AND VICE ESTABLISHMENTS WAS A CONTINUOUS PROCESS.

HE ADDED THAT SPECIAL POLICE SQUADS IN DIVISIONAL STATIONS AND IN DISTRICT POLICE HEADQUARTERS OPERATED EXCLUSIVELY TO COUNTER ILLEGAL GAMBLING AND VICE.

+THE OUTCOME OF THIS ACTION IN 1978 WAS THAT 510 PERSONS WERE PROSECUTED FOR OPERATING ILLEGAL GAMBLING ESTABLISHMENTS AND 305 FOR KEEPING VICE ESTABLISHMENTS.+

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ADEQUATE RECREATION AMENITIES IN NT

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THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT SATISFIED THAT THERE WERE ADEQUATE RECREATION AMENITIES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, BUT THIS HAD TO BE SET IN THE WIDER BACKGROUND OF A GENERALLY MORE PLEASANT ENVIRONMENT THAN THE CROWDED STREETS OF THE URBAN AREAS, THE SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, THE HON. DAVID AKERS-JONES SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. CHARLES YEUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR. AKERS-JONES SAID THERE WERE ITEMS IN THE PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME WHICH, WHEN FUNDS BECAME AVAILABLE, WOULD MAKE GOOD DEFICIENCIES TO BRING DISTRICT PROVISION UP TO APPROVED STANDARDS.

+IN THIS CONTEXT IT HAS TO BE REMEMBERED THAT THE PROVISION OF RECREATION FACILITIES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES HAS TO BE SET IN THE WIDER BACKGROUND OF A GENERALLY MORE PLEASANT ENVIRONMENT THAN THE CROWDED STREETS OF TOWN, AND WHEN THERE ARE MANY CALLS ON PUBLIC FUNDS, IT IS IMPORTANT TO GET OUR PRIORITIES RIGHT,+ HE POINTED OUT.

HE TOLD MEMBERS THAT IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS RUNNING TRACKS IN THE YUEN LONG AND TSUEN WAN SPORTS GROUNDS HAD BEEN RELAID, THE TSUEN WAN SPORTS GROUND FLOODLIT, A NEW MULTI-PURPOSE SPORTS GROUND OPENED AT KWAI CHUNG AND A SWIMMING POOL OPENED AT FANLING.

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/23

PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE SCHOOL LIBRARY SERVICE

THE GOVERNMENT IS CONSIDERING A SET OF PROPOSALS SUBMITTED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT FOR SETTING UP A GREATLY IMPROVED LIBRARY SERVICE TO SCHOOLS, THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION THE HON. KENNETH TOPLEY, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE REV. THE HON. JOYCE M. BENNETT, MR. TOPLEY SAID THE PROPOSALS INCLUDED INCREASED STAFF FOR THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S LIBRARY SECTION TO ENABLE IT TO TRAIN SCHOOL PERSONNEL AND ADVISE ALL SCHOOLS ON THE MANAGEMENT, ORGANISATION AND MOST EFFECTIVE USE OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

IN REPLY TO ANOTHER QUESTION FROM MISS BENNETT, MR. TOPLEY SAID THE PROPOSALS ALSO INCLUDED THE INTRODUCTION OF AN ADDITIONAL POST IN EVERY GOVERNMENT AND AIDED SECONDARY SCHOOL TO ENABLE A STAFF MEMBER TO TAKE FULL CHARGE OF THE LIBRARY.

+INCREASES IN THE PRESENT PER CAPITA LIBRARY GRANTS IN GOVERNMENT AND AIDED SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND THE INTRODUCTION OF SUCH GRANTS FOR CLASS 4-6 PUPILS IN GOVERNMENT AND AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOLS HAVE ALSO BEEN PROPOSED,+ MR. TOPLEY SAID.

+BOTH OF THESE MEASURES WOULD BE PHASED IN OVER A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS,+ HE ADDED.

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DEATH INQUESTS

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL, THE HON. G.C. THORNTON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IT WOULD NOT BE BENEFICIAL FOR HONG KONG TO MOVE TO THE UNITED KINGDOM POSITION OF MANDATORY DEATH INQUESTS.

REPLYING TO THE HON. T.S. LO, HE SAID THE ATTORNEY GENERAL HAD FOR SOME TIME CONSIDERED THE CORONERS ORDINANCE AND THE WAY IT WORKED.

MR. THORNTON NOTED THAT IN SOME CIRCUMSTANCES AN INQUEST IN THE UNITED KINGDOM WAS MANDATORY WHEREAS IN HONG KONG THE HOLDING OF AN INQUEST DEPENDED ON THE EXERCISE OF THE DISCRETION OF A CORONER.

SO FAR AS HE WAS AWARE, +CORONERS ARE EXERCISING THIS DISCRETION SATISFACTORILY,+ MR. THORNTON SAID.

+THE PUBLIC INTEREST IS ALSO SAFEGUARDED IN THAT DEATH REPORTS IN WHICH AN INQUEST IS NOT ORDERED ARE PERUSED BY PROFESSIONAL OFFICERS IN THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT.+

+IN A VERY SMALL NUMBER OF CASES, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL EXERCISES HIS STATUTORY RIGHT TO REQUIRE THAT AN INQUEST BE HELD,+ HE ADDED.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 1979

- 24 -

STARTING TIMES OF RACE MEETINGS

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THE ROYAL HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB ALREADY CO-OPERATES SATISFACTORILY WITH THE POLICE AND TRANSPORT AUTHORITIES ON STARTING TIMES OF RACE MEETINGS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON. F.K. LI IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. T.S. LO IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR. LI SAID THAT AS THE EXISTING PATTERN HAD NOT CAUSED ANY SERIOUS INCONVENIENCES TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC IN TERMS OF TRANSPORT AND TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS, IT WOULD NOT BE NECESSARY FOR GOVERNMENT TO CONSIDER MR. LO'S SUGGESTION AT PRESENT -- THAT RACES SHOULD NOT START UNTIL AT LEAST ONE AND A HALF HOUR AFTER THE HOUR AT WHICH OFFICES NORMALLY CLOSE FOR BUSINESS.

HOWEVER, MR. LI SAID THE SITUATION WOULD BE MONITORED CONTINUOUSLY.

+SHOULD ADJUSTMENTS TO THE EXISTING PATTERN ARE REQUIRED, GOVERNMENT WOULD APPROACH THE ROYAL HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB ACCORDINGLY,+ HE ADDED.

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STEPS TO IMPROVE CAUSEWAY BAY TRAFFIC

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THE FIRST STEPS TO IMPROVE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT IN CAUSEWAY BAY WILL BE TAKEN IN MARCH, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES SAID AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. S.L. CHEN ON TURNING GREAT GEORGE STREET AND PATERSON STREET IN CAUSEWAY BAY INTO A PEDESTRIAN PRECINCT ON SUNDAYS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS, MR. JONES SAID A SMALL WORKING GROUP FROM THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT, THE HIGHWAYS OFFICE AND THE POLICE WAS ALREADY STUDYING WAYS OF IMPROVING TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT IN CAUSEWAY BAY AND THEY WOULD BE ASKED TO EXAMINE THIS PROPOSAL IN DETAIL.

+THE GROUP HAS SO FAR MADE A NUMBER OF SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE CIRCULATION OF BOTH VEHICLES AND PEDESTRIANS AND THE FIRST STEPS TO IMPLEMENT THESE WILL BE TAKEN IN MARCH THIS YEAR,+ HE SAID.

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/25

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 1979

- 25 -

NEW GRASS CUTTING ARRANGEMENTS

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GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS TO WHICH CROWN LAND HAS BEEN ALLOCATED ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS MAINTENANCE, INCLUDING GRASS CUTTING, WHILE THE LAND AUTHORITY IS RESPONSIBLE FOR UNALLOCATED CROWN LAND, THE SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, THE HON. DAVID AKERS-JONES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. FRANCIS TIEN, MR. AKERS-JONES SAID NEW ARRANGEMENTS HAD RECENTLY BEEN MADE TO CATER FOR CUTTING ROADSIDE GRASS, FOR WHICH THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT WAS NOW RESPONSIBLE.

+MORE STAFF WILL BE NEEDED IF ROADSIDE GRASS IS TO BE CUT MORE REGULARLY THAN IN THE PAST, AND APPLICATION FOR THE NECESSARY FUNDS FOR NEXT YEAR WILL BE MADE,+ MR. AKERS-JONES SAID.

+IN THE INTERIM, TEMPORARY ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE BY REDEPLOYING EXISTING RESOURCES,+ HE ADDED.

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ONE OBVIOUS WAY TO CONTROL CYCLISTS

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ONE OBVIOUS METHOD OF CONTROLLING BICYCLES IS TO SEGREGATE THEM FROM OTHER TRAFFIC, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

BUT ALTHOUGH THIS COULD BE DONE IN SOME PARTS OF THE NEW TOWNS, PARTICULARLY IN SHA TIN, IT WAS NOT A PRACTICABLE PROPOSITION IN MOST OF THE URBAN AREA, MR. JONES SAID.

+A FACTOR TO BE BORNE IN MIND IS THAT BICYCLES ARE NOT VERY HEAVILY USED IN HONG KONG. CYCLISTS ACCOUNTED FOR LESS THAN FOUR PER CENT OF CASUALTIES FROM TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS IN 1978 AND THIS FIGURE HAS BEEN DROPPING IN RECENT YEARS,+ MR. JONES ADDED.

HE SAID SOME OF THE CREDIT FOR THIS MUST GO TO THE POLICE, WHO ARE CONTINUALLY SEEKING TO REDUCE TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS INVOLVING CYCLISTS.

+FOR INSTANCE, THE POLICE ARE NOW ATTEMPTING TO ARRANGE TRAINING FOR CYCLISTS THROUGH THE RECREATION AND SPORT SERVICE AND OTHER SIMILAR ORGANISATIONS, AND THROUGH EVENTS SUCH AS THE 'CYCLE SAFETY DAY' WHICH WAS HELD IN VICTORIA PARK LAST SUNDAY, JANUARY 21.+

EARLIER, MR. JONES TOLD THE COUNCIL THAT BICYCLES, LIKE ALL VEHICULAR TRAFFIC, ARE SUBJECT TO CONTROL UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE ROAD TRAFFIC ORDINANCE.

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/26

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 1979

- 26 -

GOVERNOR TO INSPECT PRISONS DEPARTMENT ANNUAL PARADE
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THE GOVERNOR, SIR MURRAY MACLEHOSE, WILL INSPECT THE ANNUAL PARADE OF THE PRISONS DEPARTMENT ON FRIDAY AT THE DEPARTMENT'S STAFF TRAINING INSTITUTE AT STANLEY.

SIR MURRAY WILL PRESENT COLONIAL PRISON SERVICE MEDALS, AWARDED FOR 18 YEARS' EXEMPLARY SERVICE, TO 31 OFFICERS AFTER THE INSPECTION.

EIGHT CONTINGENTS COMPRISING ABOUT 220 PRISON OFFICERS WILL TAKE PART IN THE PARADE COMMANDED BY SENIOR SUPERINTENDENT MAK PAK-LAM.

THROUGHOUT THE PARADE THE BAND, PIPES AND DRUMS OF CAPE COLLINSON TRAINING CENTRE WILL PROVIDE MUSIC.

THE ANNUAL INSPECTION WILL BE ATTENDED BY DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, STAFF MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO SEND REPORTERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS TO COVER THE PRISONS DEPARTMENT ANNUAL PARADE ON FRIDAY. FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES, TRANSPORT WILL LEAVE PRISONS DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS AT GUARDIAN HOUSE, 32 01 KWAN ROAD, WAN CHAI, AT 3.15 P.M.

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/27

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 1979

- 27 -

'DRIVE CAREFULLY ON TUEN MUN ROAD' APPEAL

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THE POLICE AND THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT TODAY (WEDNESDAY) JOINTLY WARNED MOTORISTS TO BE CAREFUL ALONG THE NEW TUEN MUN ROAD DURING THE LUNAR NEW YEAR HOLIDAYS.

SPOKESMEN FOR BOTH DEPARTMENTS STRESSED THAT CARELESSNESS WAS THE MAIN CAUSE OF ACCIDENTS ON THE HIGHWAY.

THE HIGHWAY ITSELF, THEY SAID, WAS NOT TO BLAME.

+STUPIDITY IS THE MAIN CAUSE,+ SAID THE POLICE SPOKESMAN. +THE ROAD IS WELL SIGN-POSTED AND WELL LIGHTED. IT IS WELL DESIGNED, BUT IF MOTORISTS PERSIST IN DRIVING CARELESSLY THEY HAVE ONLY THEMSELVES TO BLAME FOR THE HURT CAUSED.+

THE PWD SPOKESMAN ADDED THAT IF DRIVERS PAID ATTENTION TO THE MARKINGS AND SIGNS ON THE ROAD, KEPT TO THE SPEED LIMIT AND WERE AWARE OF OTHER MOTORISTS USING THE HIGHWAY, ACCIDENTS COULD EASILY BE AVOIDED.

DURING THE HOLIDAY PERIOD THE POLICE WILL BE ACTIVE ALONG THE TUEN MUN ROAD AND, AS WELL AS REGULAR PATROLS, RADAR +TRAPS+ WILL BE SET UP.

+SAFETY DESIGNS HAVE BEEN BUILT INTO THE ROAD,+ SAID THE PWD SPOKESMAN, +AND UNLESS DRIVERS ARE CARELESS THERE IS NO REASON FOR ACCIDENTS.+

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TWO BILLS PASSED

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TWO BILLS WERE PASSED INTO LAW IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THEY WERE THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1979 AND THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE (AMENDMENT) (NO. 4) BILL 1978.

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/28

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 1979

- 28 -

PRESENTATION OF AWARD TO VOLUNTARY WEATHER OBSERVER ON
FISHING BOAT

AT A BRIEF CEREMONY HELD AT THE ROYAL OBSERVATORY TODAY (WEDNESDAY) MR. HO PAK TAI, A FISHERMAN IN ABERDEEN, WAS PRESENTED WITH AN ANEROID BAROMETER AND A CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION BY THE DIRECTOR OF ROYAL OBSERVATORY, MR. GORDON BELL, FOR MAKING EXCELLENT WEATHER OBSERVATIONS AT SEA.

MR. HO IS THE OWNER OF THE FISHING BOAT M62160A AND HAS VOLUNTARILY MADE AND RECORDED OVER 700 WEATHER OBSERVATIONS FOR THE ROYAL OBSERVATORY SINCE NOVEMBER, 1975.

WEATHER OBSERVATIONS MADE BY VOLUNTARY OBSERVERS ON FISHING BOATS, SUCH AS MR. HO, ARE USED IN THE ROYAL OBSERVATORY FOR CLIMATOLOGICAL PURPOSES AND TO IMPROVE WEATHER SERVICES FOR FISHERMEN.

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TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENT IN HUNG HOM

THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT A 24-HOUR URBAN CLEARWAY RESTRICTION WILL BE IMPOSED ON CHEONG WAN ROAD AND ON WAN ROAD AT THE PODIUM LEVEL OF THE KOWLOON RAILWAY STATION BUILDING FROM 10 A.M. ON FRIDAY TO IMPROVE TRAFFIC FLOW.

ALL MOTOR VEHICLES, EXCEPT FRANCHISED BUSES, WILL BE PROHIBITED FROM STOPPING ON THESE ROADS, OTHER THAN AT SPECIALLY DESIGNATED LAY-BYS, FOR PASSENGERS OR GOODS.

TRAFFIC SIGNS WILL BE SET UP THERE TO GUIDE MOTORISTS.

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