



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

THURSDAY, APRIL 7, 1977

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THURSDAY, APRIL 7, 1977

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HONG KONG EXAMINATIONS AUTHORITY TO BE SET UP

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THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL HAS DECIDED THAT AN EXAMINATIONS AUTHORITY, CHARGED WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CONDUCTING EXAMINATIONS IN HONG KONG, SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED, SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THE NECESSARY LEGISLATION.

IT WILL BE KNOWN AS THE HONG KONG EXAMINATIONS AUTHORITY. THE ORGANISATION WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE THREE EXISTING MAJOR SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS - THE HONG KONG CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION EXAMINATION, THE MATRICULATION EXAMINATION OF THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG, AND THE 'A' LEVEL EXAMINATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG - TOGETHER WITH ANY OTHER SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS THAT MAY BE INTRODUCED SUBSEQUENTLY, AS WELL AS THE EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS. (THE AUTHORITY MAY FIND IT APPROPRIATE TO CHANGE THE NAMES OF THE LOCAL EXAMINATIONS).

THE GOVERNOR IS TO APPOINT THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AS THE FIRST CHAIRMAN OF THE AUTHORITY, TO PRESIDE OVER THE TRANSITIONAL STAGE OF THREE YEARS. SINCE THE AUTHORITY WILL BE DEPENDENT ON THE CO-OPERATION OF VARIOUS GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, IT IS CONSIDERED NECESSARY FOR THE FIRST CHAIRMAN TO BE AN OFFICIAL. THEREAFTER ANY MEMBER OF THE AUTHORITY, OFFICIAL OR UNOFFICIAL, COULD BE APPOINTED CHAIRMAN.

THERE WILL BE FIVE EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS AND BETWEEN 17 AND 20 OTHER MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR. THE EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS WILL BE THE VICE-CHANCELLORS OF THE TWO UNIVERSITIES (OR THEIR REPRESENTATIVES), THE DIRECTOR OF POLYTECHNIC (OR HIS REPRESENTATIVE), THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION (OR HIS REPRESENTATIVE) AND THE SECRETARY TO THE AUTHORITY.

AMONG THE APPOINTED MEMBERS THERE WILL BE THREE OTHER OFFICERS FROM THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, ONE OF WHOM WILL BE THE PRINCIPAL OF TECHNICAL INSTITUTE AND A REPRESENTATIVE FROM EACH UNIVERSITY SENATE AND FROM THE POLYTECHNIC BOARD OF GOVERNORS.

THE REMAINING APPOINTED MEMBERS WILL BE DRAWN FROM SCHOOLS, COLLEGES OF EDUCATION, AND POST-SECONDARY COLLEGES, AND FROM COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY.

MEMBERS OF THE AUTHORITY WILL BE APPOINTED FOR RENEWABLE TERMS NOT EXCEEDING THREE YEARS. THE INITIAL APPOINTEES WILL THEREFORE HOLD OFFICE FOR THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD OF THREE YEARS DURING WHICH THE AUTHORITY WILL ASSUME ITS FULL RANGE OF RESPONSIBILITIES.

/APPOINTMENT

APPOINTMENT OF SECRETARY

THE AUTHORITY'S FIRST SECRETARY WILL BE APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR WHILE SUBSEQUENT APPOINTMENTS OF THE SECRETARY WILL BE MADE BY THE AUTHORITY. IT MAY BE DESIRABLE FOR THE FIRST SECRETARY TO BE AN OFFICER FROM THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WITH EXPERIENCE OF THE DEPARTMENT'S PRESENT EXAMINATION RESPONSIBILITIES, THOUGH CONSIDERATION WOULD BE GIVEN ALSO TO OTHER SUITABLE CANDIDATES. IF AN OFFICER FROM THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WERE APPOINTED, HE WOULD SERVE ON SECONDMENT FOR A TWO-YEAR OR THREE-YEAR PERIOD.

IT IS PROPOSED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD MAKE A SETTING-UP GRANT TO THE AUTHORITY TO COVER THE PROVISION OF THE ACCOMMODATION NEEDED FOR EXAMINATIONS OFFICES, ONE ON EACH SIDE OF THE HARBOUR, AND A CASH GRANT TO MEET THE COST OF FITTING OUT AND EQUIPPING THEM. APPROVAL OF THE GRANT WILL BE SOUGHT FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

UNTIL THESE OFFICES ARE HANDED OVER TO THE AUTHORITY, ONE AND A HALF FLOORS OF OFFICE SPACE IN THE CANTON ROAD GOVERNMENT OFFICES NOW OCCUPIED BY THE EXAMINATIONS DIVISION WILL BE USED BY THE AUTHORITY. SUBSEQUENTLY, THIS OFFICE SPACE WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

H.K. EXAMINATIONS AUTHORITY BILL

A BILL TO SET UP THE HONG KONG EXAMINATIONS AUTHORITY WAS PUBLISHED IN TODAY'S GOVERNMENT GAZETTE. THE BILL WILL BE INTRODUCED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON APRIL 20 AND IT IS INTENDED THAT THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION, IF PASSED, SHOULD COME INTO OPERATION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE THEREAFTER.

THE DECISION TO ESTABLISH THE AUTHORITY FOLLOWS CONSULTATIONS WITH THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, THE TWO UNIVERSITIES AND THE POLYTECHNIC. THE TERMS OF THE BILL AND OTHER ARRANGEMENTS PROPOSED FOR THE AUTHORITY HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THESE INSTITUTIONS.

IT IS PLANNED THAT THE AUTHORITY SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED FORMALLY BY SEPTEMBER 1, 1977 IN ORDER TO PROVIDE IT WITH SUFFICIENT TIME TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR ADMINISTERING THE CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION EXAMINATION IN 1978.

IT IS PROPOSED THAT THE AUTHORITY SHOULD TAKE OVER THE MATRICULATION EXAMINATION OF THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG FROM 1979 AND THE HONG KONG UNIVERSITY 'A' LEVEL EXAMINATION FROM 1980. SHOULD IT BE DECIDED TO INTRODUCE ANY FURTHER SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS, THE ORGANISATION WOULD BE ABLE TO EXPAND ACCORDINGLY.

THE AUTHORITY WILL ALSO HAVE THE POWER TO CONDUCT ANY OTHER EXAMINATIONS APPROVED BY THE GOVERNOR. THESE EXAMINATIONS, GENERALLY KNOWN AS +EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS,+ ARE AT PRESENT ADMINISTERED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT ON AN AGENCY BASIS. THEY INCLUDE THE GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION 'O' AND 'A' LEVEL EXAMINATIONS, THE TEST OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE, LONDON UNIVERSITY EXTERNAL DEGREES, LONDON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE EXAMINATIONS AND A NUMBER OF EXAMINATIONS PROVIDING SECRETARIAL, ACCOUNTANCY AND PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS.

PROPOSAL TO INCREASE RATE OF SEVERANCE PAYMENT
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A BILL WHICH SEEKS TO INCREASE THE RATE OF SEVERANCE PAYMENT TO WORKERS WHOSE SERVICES ARE TERMINATED THROUGH NO FAULT OF THEIR OWN WAS PUBLISHED IN THE GOVERNMENT GAZETTE TODAY (THURSDAY).

THE EMPLOYMENT (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1977, IF APPROVED, WILL INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF SEVERANCE PAY PER YEAR OF SERVICE FROM ONE-THIRD OF A MONTH'S PAY TO HALF A MONTH'S PAY FOR MONTHLY RATED EMPLOYEES, AND FROM 10 DAYS' WAGES TO 13 DAYS' WAGES FOR TIME OR PIECE-RATED EMPLOYEES.

THE BILL ALSO SEEKS TO EXTEND THE PERIOD OF SERVICE WHICH WOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN CALCULATING SEVERANCE PAY FROM FIVE TO EIGHT YEARS, PRIOR TO AUGUST 23, 1974.

THE MAIN EFFECT OF THESE CHANGES IS TO GIVE MORE SEVERANCE PAY PARTICULARLY TO LONGER SERVING EMPLOYEES WITH EIGHT TO 11 YEARS OF CONTINUOUS SERVICE WITH THE SAME EMPLOYER.

A LABOUR DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN POINTED OUT THAT OF 168 TRADE DISPUTES INVOLVING SEVERANCE PAY HANDLED BY THE LABOUR RELATIONS SERVICE, ABOUT 25 PER CENT WERE SETTLED AFTER THE EMPLOYERS HAD AGREED TO PAY 12 TO 30 DAYS WAGES FOR EVERY YEAR OF SERVICE.

+IN OTHER CASES,+ HE SAID, +EMPLOYERS MADE EX-GRATIA PAYMENTS TO ACHIEVE SPEEDY SETTLEMENT.+

+A NUMBER OF WELL ESTABLISHED COMPANIES OPERATE SCHEMES WHICH PROVIDE FOR REDUNDANCY PAYMENTS RANGING FROM 15 TO 30 DAYS' WAGES PER YEAR OF SERVICE,+ HE ADDED.

THE LAW AT PRESENT PROVIDES FOR EMPLOYEES TO BE GIVEN SEVERANCE PAYMENTS AT A FLAT RATE OF ONE-THIRD OF A MONTH'S PAY FOR MONTHLY-RATED WORKERS, OR 10 DAYS' WAGES FOR TIME AND PIECE-RATED WORKERS FOR EVERY YEAR OF CONTINUOUS SERVICE, SUBJECT TO A QUALIFYING PERIOD OF TWO YEARS' SERVICE AND TO A MAXIMUM PAYMENT NOT EXCEEDING 12 MONTHS' PAY. ANY SERVICE IN EXCESS OF FIVE YEARS PRIOR TO THE ENACTMENT OF THE LEGISLATION, I.E. AUGUST 23, 1974, DOES NOT COUNT FOR THE CALCULATION OF PAYMENTS.

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PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS (AMENDMENT) BILL

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THE PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1977, WHICH WAS PUBLISHED IN THE GAZETTE TODAY, SEEKS TO ALTER CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS CONCERNING THE ISSUE OF PRACTISING CERTIFICATES.

IF ENACTED, AN ACCOUNTANT WISHING TO APPLY FOR A PRACTISING CERTIFICATE FROM THE HONG KONG SOCIETY OF ACCOUNTANTS WILL HAVE TO BE ORDINARILY RESIDENT IN HONG KONG AND TO HAVE SOME KNOWLEDGE OF LOCAL LAW AND PRACTICE.

IN ADDITION, MEMBERS OF THE CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC FINANCE AND ACCOUNTANCY AND THE INSTITUTE OF COST AND MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTANTS, BOTH BASED IN BRITAIN, WILL NOT BE ISSUED WITH PRACTISING CERTIFICATES SOLELY BY VIRTUE OF THE MEMBERSHIP OF EITHER OF THE TWO INSTITUTES. WHILE THEY WOULD CONTINUE TO BE REGISTERED AS PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS WITH THE HONG KONG SOCIETY OF ACCOUNTANTS THEY WILL NOT BE ISSUED WITH PRACTISING CERTIFICATES UNTIL THEY HAVE PASSED CERTAIN EXAMINATIONS.

COMMENTING ON THIS PROVISION, A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THAT THE TRAINING OF MEMBERS OF THESE TWO INSTITUTES IS NOT DIRECTED TOWARDS CONDUCTING STATUTORY AUDITS. AUDITING IS NOT EXAMINED AS A SEPARATE SUBJECT BY THE INSTITUTE OF COST AND MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTANTS, WHILE THE TRAINING OF MEMBERS OF THE CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC FINANCE AND ACCOUNTANCY IS AIMED AT THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

BOTH INSTITUTES WERE CONSULTED AND HAVE RAISED NO OBJECTION TO THE AMENDMENTS.

+THIS PROPOSED AMENDMENT WOULD BRING THE SITUATION INTO LINE WITH THAT IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND OTHER COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES WHERE THE TWO INSTITUTES IN QUESTION ARE NOT RECOGNISED FOR THE PURPOSE OF COMPANY AUDIT AND SHOULD RESULT IN THE SOCIETY OBTAINING WIDER OVERSEAS RECOGNITION,+ THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

THE BILL CONTAINS A NUMBER OF MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS INCLUDING PROVISION FOR THE REGISTRATION OF FIRMS OF ACCOUNTANTS.

AT PRESENT, THERE IS ALREADY PROVISION FOR THE REGISTRATION OF INDIVIDUALS.

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SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES TO PRESENT PRIZES
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NOTE TO EDITORS:

THE SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, MR. DAVID AKERS-JONES, WILL OFFICIATE AT A PRIZE-PRESENTATION CEREMONY OF THE SECOND NEW TERRITORIES ATHLETIC MEET AT 3.30 P.M. ON MONDAY (APRIL 11) AT THE MONGKOK STADIUM, BOUNDARY STREET, KOWLOON.

THE ATHLETIC MEET, WHICH WILL START FROM 9 A.M. THAT DAY, IS SPONSORED BY THE HEUNG YEE KUK, THE RECREATION AND SPORTS SERVICE OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND THE NEW TERRITORIES SCHOOL'S SPORTS ADVANCEMENT ASSOCIATION.

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO COVER THE EVENT.

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