



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

FRIDAY, MAY 21, 1976

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ELEVEN CHILD CARE CENTRE INSPECTORS APPOINTED

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ELEVEN OFFICERS OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT HAVE BEEN APPOINTED AS INSPECTORS OF CHILD CARE CENTRES, IT WAS ANNOUNCED IN THE GAZETTE TODAY.

THEY COMPRISE ONE PRINCIPAL SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICER, ONE SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICER AND NINE ASSISTANT SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICERS.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE GAZETTE ALSO ANNOUNCED THE APPOINTMENT OF SEVEN GOVERNMENT DOCTORS AS MEDICAL OFFICERS OF CHILD CARE CENTRES.

WHEN THE CHILD CARE CENTRE ORDINANCE COMES INTO OPERATION ON JUNE 1, 1976, THESE INSPECTORS AND MEDICAL OFFICERS WILL HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO ENTER AND INSPECT ANY CHILD CARE CENTRE AND REQUIRE TO BE FURNISHED WITH ANY INFORMATION.

THE CHILD CARE CENTRES ORDINANCE PROVIDES LEGISLATION FOR THE REGISTRATION, CONTROL AND INSPECTION OF NURSERIES, CRECHES, PLAYGROUPS AND OTHER PLACES WHERE MORE THAN FIVE YOUNG CHILDREN UNDER SIX YEARS OF AGE ARE REGULARLY BROUGHT TOGETHER TO BE LOOKED AFTER IN HONG KONG.

COMMENTING ON THE ORDINANCE, A SPOKESMAN FOR THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT SAID, +AT PRESENT, THERE MUST BE CHILD CARE CENTRES OPERATING BELOW ACCEPTABLE STANDARDS. INSTANCES OF NEGLECT AND ABUSE HAVE OCCURRED IN SOME SUCH CENTRES AND THE CONDITIONS IN OTHERS MIGHT BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY.

+THE LEGISLATION IS TO CONTROL THEM WITH THE INTENTION OF IMPROVING THEIR SAFETY AND THE STANDARD OF THEIR SERVICES, AND TO MAKE QUALITY CHILD CARE A REALITY IN HONG KONG.+

ALTHOUGH MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS ARE STIPULATED AND OFFENCES PROVIDED TO ELIMINATE THE WORST ABUSE, THE SPOKESMAN STRESSED THAT THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE HAS BEEN GIVEN FULL AUTHORITY TO EXERCISE HIS DISCRETION SO AS TO ENABLE HIM TO BE FLEXIBLE IN ENFORCING THE LEGISLATION AND NOT TO CAUSE UNDUE HARDSHIP TO OPERATORS AND PARENTS.

+THE STANDARDS ARE THE MINIMUM AND REALISTIC REQUIREMENTS NECESSARY TO SAFEGUARD AGAINST FIRE AND HEALTH HAZARDS AND SUCH FACILITIES AS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR CHILD CARE MUST BE PROVIDED,+ HE SAID.

SINCE THE DATE OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHILD CARE CENTRES ORDINANCE WAS ANNOUNCED IN APRIL, THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN RECEIVING MANY ENQUIRIES FROM CENTRE OPERATORS AND PARENTS.

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THE SPOKESMAN SAID +THE ENQUIRIES ARE MAINLY ABOUT THE PHASED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ORDINANCE, SPACE REQUIREMENTS, STAFF AND CHILDREN RATIO ESPECIALLY IN SMALL CENTRES, QUALIFICATIONS OF STAFF AND THE TRAINING FACILITIES FOR THEM.+

WITH REGARD TO THE PHASED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ORDINANCE, HE NOTED THAT THE FIRST STAGE WOULD TAKE PLACE WITHIN ONE YEAR OF THE ENACTMENT OF THE LEGISLATION, THAT IS, FROM JUNE 1, 1976 TO MAY 31, 1977. +THIS INVOLVES COMPLIANCE WITH ALL STRUCTURAL, FIRE SAFETY AND HEALTH REQUIREMENTS. DURING THE YEAR, SOME PROGRESS MUST ALSO BE MADE TOWARDS ADEQUATE TRAINING AND STAFFING OF THE CENTRES AND A SATISFACTORY DIETARY SCALE AND A PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES MUST BE INTRODUCED.

+A YEAR LATER, THE RATIO OF STAFF TO CHILDREN AND THE FLOOR AREA ALLOTTED TO EACH CHILD MUST BE UP TO THE STANDARD PRESCRIBED AND FURTHER PROGRESS MUST BE MADE TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE TARGET OF TRAINED STAFF.

+WITHIN THREE YEARS, ALL STAFF MUST HAVE OBTAINED THE REQUIRED MINIMUM ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS.+

ON THE QUESTION OF SPACE REQUIREMENT, THE SPOKESMAN EXPLAINED: +IN DAY CENTRES, THOSE CHILDREN WHO ARE TWO YEARS OR OVER MUST HAVE 20 SQUARE FEET OF SPACE EACH AND THOSE UNDER TWO YEARS 30 SQUARE FEET. IN THE CASE OF OVERNIGHT CARE, IT WILL BE 35 SQUARE FEET IRRESPECTIVE OF AGE.+

IT IS IMPORTANT TO POINT OUT THAT SPACE IS REQUIRED FOR ACTIVITIES WHICH ARE ESSENTIAL IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH OF BABIES AND CHILDREN, HE ADDED.

TURNING TO THE STAFF AND CHILDREN RATIO, THE SPOKESMAN NOTED THAT FOR NON-RESIDENT CHILDREN, THE RATIO SHOULD BE ONE STAFF MEMBER FOR EVERY 14 CHILDREN WHO ARE TWO YEARS OR OLDER AND ONE FOR EVERY SIX CHILDREN UNDER TWO. +FOR RESIDENT CHILDREN, THE CENTRE IS REQUIRED TO HAVE ON DUTY ONE STAFF MEMBER FOR EVERY SIX CHILDREN.+

AS FOR THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THE STAFF, HE SAID THAT STAFF IN A CHILD CARE CENTRE WAS MAINLY DIVIDED INTO TWO CATEGORIES : THE SUPERVISOR AND THE CHILD CARE WORKERS.

+CHILD CARE WORKERS SHOULD HAVE IN POSSESSION A HONG KONG SCHOOL CERTIFICATE= OR HAVE COMPLETED FORM II OR JUNIOR MIDDLE II IN EDUCATION PLUS THREE YEARS CHILD CARE EXPERIENCE. THEY SHOULD COMPLETE A TRAINING COURSE ON CHILD CARE WITHIN THE NEXT THREE YEARS.

+A SUPERVISOR SHOULD HAVE A HONG KONG SCHOOL CERTIFICATE OR ANY OTHER EQUIVALENT IN EDUCATION PLUS FIVE YEARS CHILD CARE EXPERIENCE. HE OR SHE IS ALSO REQUIRED TO COMPLETE THE TRAINING COURSE WITHIN THE NEXT THREE YEARS.+

/THE TRAINING

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THE TRAINING SECTION OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR RUNNING COURSES FOR CHILD CARE WORKERS.

+AT PRESENT, SIX COURSES ARE BEING RUN ANNUALLY FOR ABOUT 150 IN-SERVICE CHILD CARE WORKERS. THE FIVE-WEEK COURSE IS CONDUCTED OVER A PERIOD OF FIVE MONTHS AND TUITION IS FREE,+ THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

+WITH THE ORDINANCE COMING INTO EFFECT ON JUNE 1, MORE COURSES WILL BE RUN AND THESE COURSES WILL BE EXTENDED TO STAFF OF COMMERCIAL NURSERIES AND EXPANDED ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF APPLICANTS,+

DETAILED INFORMATION ON THE ORDINANCE AND THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR CHILD CARE CENTRE OPERATORS ARE AVAILABLE AT THE CHILD CARE CENTRE ADVISORY INSPECTORATE, 21, HOSPITAL ROAD, SAI YING PUN (TELEPHONE NO. 5-404736 OR 5-404669).

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SEVERANCE PAY DISPUTE SETTLED
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THE SEVERANCE PAY DISPUTE INVOLVING 316 DAILY RATED WORKERS AND THE MANAGEMENT OF THE OVERSEAS SHIPYARD COMPANY LIMITED IN CHEUNG SHA WAN WAS SETTLED TODAY (FRIDAY) THROUGH CONCILIATION EFFORTS OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT'S LABOUR RELATIONS SERVICE.

FOUR CONCILIATION MEETINGS WERE HELD IN THE PAST TWO WEEKS IN THE SAN PO KONG LABOUR RELATIONS SERVICE OFFICE.

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE WORKERS AND THE MANAGEMENT THIS AFTERNOON SIGNED IN THE PRESENCE OF A LABOUR OFFICER AN AGREEMENT TO THE EFFECT THAT EACH WORKER WOULD RECEIVE A SUM OF \$500 AS EX-GRATIA PAYMENT IN ADDITION TO THE TERMS OFFERED BY THE MANAGEMENT ON MAY 3 WHEN THE SHIPYARD CEASED OPERATION AND LAID OFF THE WORKERS.

THE MANAGEMENT ORIGINALLY OFFERED TO PAY EACH WORKER WAGES EARNED UP TO THE DATE OF TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT, SEVEN DAYS' WAGES IN LIEU OF NOTICE, 19 DAYS' WAGES AS SPECIAL ALLOWANCE AND SEVERANCE PAY CALCULATED AT THE RATE OF 10 DAYS' WAGES FOR EACH COMPLETED YEAR'S SERVICE.

PAYMENTS TOTALLING ABOUT \$1.23 MILLION WILL BE MADE TO THE WORKERS EARLY NEXT WEEK.

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COLONIAL SECRETARY'S REPLY TO SHA TIN SHOPPERS

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OPERATORS OF 28 SHOPS AND RESTAURANTS IN SHA TIN, DUE TO BE CLEARED IN LESS THAN FOUR WEEKS TO MAKE WAY FOR THE WIDENING OF TAI PO ROAD, HAVE BEEN URGED BY THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, SIR DENYS ROBERTS, TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF GOVERNMENT'S OFFER OF COMMERCIAL PREMISES IN THE NEARBY LEK YUEN ESTATE.

SIR DENYS WAS REPLYING TO A LETTER THE OPERATORS SENT TO THE GOVERNOR ON APRIL 8 IN WHICH THEY REQUESTED +REASONABLE COMPENSATION AND RE-LOCATION OF SHOP UNITS.+

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS INVESTING MANY MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SHA TIN NEW TOWN AS A SELF-CONTAINED COMMUNITY, PROVIDING EMPLOYMENT, HOMES, SCHOOLS, WELFARE AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES FOR OVER HALF A MILLION PEOPLE.

+I CAN ASSURE YOU,+ HE WROTE, +THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL DO ALL IT CAN TO MITIGATE THE SUBSTANTIAL INCONVENIENCE AND THE DISRUPTION TO THE LIVELIHOOD CAUSED TO RESIDENTS OF THE AREA AND TO ASSIST THOSE MOST SERIOUSLY AFFECTED.+

SIR DENYS SAID THAT PART OF THE SITE NOW OCCUPIED BY SHA TIN MARKET WAS URGENTLY REQUIRED FOR THE WIDENING OF THE MAIN TAI PO ROAD AND ULTIMATELY THE AREA WOULD FORM PART OF THE TOWN CENTRE, CONTAINING THE MAIN COMMERCIAL AND CULTURAL AMENITIES FOR THE NEW TOWN.

HE CONTINUED: +GOVERNMENT IS FULLY AWARE OF THE HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SHA TIN MARKET. IT WAS IN RECOGNITION OF THIS THAT EXCEPTIONAL CLEARANCE TERMS WERE AGREED BY THE SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES AND THE HOUSING AUTHORITY. THESE WILL ENABLE SHOPKEEPERS TO RECEIVE CASH COMPENSATION IN EXCESS OF THE NORMAL CEILING ADOPTED IN CLEARANCE OPERATIONS AND, FURTHER, TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESTRICTED TENDER FOR COMMERCIAL UNITS IN THE NEW LEK YUEN ESTATE.+

THESE TERMS, HE ADDED, WERE FAR MORE GENEROUS THAN THOSE NORMALLY OFFERED TO THE OCCUPANTS OF TEMPORARY STRUCTURES ON PRIVATE AGRICULTURAL LAND AND REFLECTED THE SPECIAL POSITION OF SHA TIN MARKET.

+I AM TO SAY, THEREFORE, THAT IT IS CONSIDERED THAT THE REQUESTS YOU HAVE MADE IN YOUR LETTER HAVE ALREADY BEEN MET AND THAT ALL REASONABLE STEPS HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO ALLEVIATE THE PROBLEMS FACED BY SHOPKEEPERS IN THE AREA.

+IN PARTICULAR, I REGRET THAT IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO ALLOCATE LAND WITHIN THE LAYOUT AREA OF SHA TIN NEW TOWN FOR THE TEMPORARY RELOCATION OF THE SHOPS AND RESTAURANTS. I THEREFORE URGE YOU, UNLESS YOU ARE ABLE TO MAKE YOUR OWN ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS ELSEWHERE, TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE OFFER OF COMMERCIAL PREMISES IN THE NEW LEK YUEN ESTATE.

+I AM AFRAID THAT IT WILL BE NECESSARY FOR THE SITE TO BE CLEARED ON JUNE 16, 1976,+ SIR DENYS CONCLUDED.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION SAID THERE WAS NO POSSIBILITY OF THE CLEARANCE BEING POSTPONED BEYOND JUNE 16 AS THE GOVERNMENT WAS COMMITTED TO HANDING THE AREA OVER TO THE CONTRACTOR BY THE BEGINNING OF JULY.

CHANGES TO LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ORDINANCE
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NON-BRITISH SUBJECTS WILL IN FUTURE QUALIFY FOR ADMISSION AS SOLICITORS IN HONG KONG IF THEY HAVE LIVED HERE FOR AT LEAST SEVEN YEARS.

THIS IS ONE OF A NUMBER OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ORDINANCE PUBLISHED TODAY IN THE LEGAL PRACTITIONERS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976 AND FOLLOWS RECENT SIMILAR DEVELOPMENTS IN ENGLAND.

ALSO AS FROM JULY 1, 1976 NEWLY QUALIFIED SOLICITORS AND SOLICITORS QUALIFIED IN BRITAIN WILL HAVE TO SPEND A PERIOD OF UP TO TWO YEARS AS ASSISTANT SOLICITORS BEFORE THEY WILL BE ABLE TO PRACTISE ON THEIR OWN OR IN PARTNERSHIP.

THIS MEASURE IS TO ALLOW THEM TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE LOCAL SITUATION BECAUSE, ALTHOUGH MANY HONG KONG LAWS FOLLOW THOSE OF BRITAIN, THERE ARE MANY IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES BOTH IN LAW AND IN THE MANNER IN WHICH BUSINESS AND LEGAL PRACTICE IS CARRIED OUT IN HONG KONG. HOWEVER, IN THE CASE OF A SOLICITOR WHO HAS ACQUIRED SUBSTANTIAL EXPERIENCE IN THE LAW OVER A CONSIDERABLE PERIOD OF TIME, THIS RESTRICTION CAN BE WAIVED.

ANOTHER PROPOSAL IS TO AUTHORISE THE LAW SOCIETY TO ISSUE ANNUAL PRACTISING CERTIFICATES TO SOLICITORS AND COLLECT THE FEE FOR SUCH CERTIFICATES. AT PRESENT CERTIFICATES ARE ISSUED BY THE REGISTRAR OF THE SUPREME COURT AND THE CHANGE WILL MEAN A SAVING OF WORK AND TIME.

THE TRANSFER OF POWERS, FROM THE CHIEF JUSTICE TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE LAW SOCIETY, TO MAKE RULES RELATING TO THE ISSUE OF PRACTISING CERTIFICATES TO SOLICITORS IS ALSO EFFECTED BY TWO CLAUSES IN THE BILL.

SEVERAL AMENDMENTS IN THE BILL RELATE TO BARRISTERS AND REVISE THE LAW CONCERNING QUALIFICATIONS FOR ADMISSION AND PRACTICE.

ADMISSION OF A BARRISTER IN FUTURE WILL DEPEND ON ACADEMIC AND RESIDENTIAL QUALIFICATIONS. IN ORDER TO PRACTISE A BARRISTER WILL HAVE TO COMPLETE A QUALIFYING PERIOD OF FURTHER TRAINING, BUT AFTER THE FIRST SIX MONTHS, HE WILL BE ALLOWED TO PRACTISE TO SUCH LIMITED EXTENT AS THE BAR COMMITTEE MAY DECIDE.

OTHER AMENDMENTS DEAL WITH ADDITIONAL MATTERS WHICH MAY BE INCLUDED IN RULES MADE BY THE CHIEF JUSTICE IN RELATION TO PERSONS SEEKING TO BECOME BARRISTERS.

ADMISSION OF SOLICITORS AND BARRISTERS ARE AT PRESENT CONDUCTED IN OPEN COURT, BUT BECAUSE THESE ARE PURELY DOMESTIC AFFAIRS, THE BILL PROPOSES THAT ADMISSIONS MAY BE HELD IN CHAMBERS.

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DUTY FOR METHYL ALCOHOL PROPOSED

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THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSES TO RE-IMPOSE A DUTY ON METHYL ALCOHOL AS A FINANCIAL DISINCENTIVE FOR ITS USE IN VIEW OF LAST YEAR'S OUTBREAK OF METHYL ALCOHOL POISONING CAUSING THE DEATH OF A NUMBER OF PEOPLE.

A BILL TO THIS EFFECT WAS PUBLISHED IN TODAY'S GAZETTE. KNOWN AS THE DUTIABLE COMMODITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976, IT WILL BE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SHORTLY. IF ENACTED, A RATE OF DUTY AT \$9.90 PER GALLON WILL BE IMPOSED ON METHYL ALCOHOL AND THAT AN ADDITIONAL RATE OF 40 CENTS FOR EVERY ONE PER CENT BY WHICH THE ALCOHOLIC STRENGTH BY VOLUME EXCEEDS 25 PER CENT.

HOWEVER, IF PURE METHYL ALCOHOL IS USED TO TEST AIRCRAFT ENGINES AN EXEMPTION FROM DUTY MAY BE GRANTED.

COMMENTING ON THE BILL, A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID: +THE PREVENTIVE SERVICE KNOW OF NO OTHER INDIVIDUAL END USERS WHO REQUIRE METHYL ALCOHOL IN SUCH LARGE QUANTITIES AS TO MAKE ITS USE PROHIBITIVE BY REASON OF THE RE-IMPOSITION OF DUTY.

+IF THERE WERE, THEY COULD PROBABLY USE LESS TOXIC SUBSTANCES SUCH AS BUTYL ALCOHOL OR ETHYL ALCOHOL.

+THE LATTER IS EXEMPT FROM DUTY IF IT IS DENATURED BY MEANS OF AN APPROVED DENATURANT AND CERTIFIED IN WRITING AS SUCH BY THE GOVERNMENT CHEMIST,+ HE ADDED.

THE BILL ALSO CONTAINS AN AMENDMENT TO THE DUTIABLE COMMODITIES ORDINANCE BY MAKING IT AN OFFENCE TO EXPOSE FOR SALE OR TO POSSESS FOR SALE ANY ADULTERATED LIQUOR.

IT IS PROPOSED THAT THE PENALTY, WHERE ADULTERATED LIQUOR IS FOUND TO BE INJURIOUS TO HEALTH, BE INCREASED FROM 12 MONTHS TO TWO YEARS IMPRISONMENT.

THE SPOKESMAN RECALLED THAT THE PREVIOUS OCCASION WHERE A DUTY WAS IMPOSED ON METHYL ALCOHOL WAS IN 1957 FOLLOWING AN OUTBREAK OF METHYL ALCOHOLIC POISONING.

AS NO FURTHER OUTBREAKS OF METHYL ALCOHOL POISONING HAD BEEN REPORTED IN THE FOLLOWING 15 YEARS THE DUTY WAS REMOVED IN 1972.

IN 1974, METHYL ALCOHOL WAS REMOVED ENTIRELY FROM THE SCOPE OF THE DUTIABLE COMMODITIES ORDINANCE, BUT IMPORT CONTROL WAS MAINTAINED.

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BOOKS REGISTRATION BILL 1976

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A BILL AIMED AT ENSURING THAT AN ADEQUATE MINIMUM NUMBER OF COPIES IS RETAINED IN HONG KONG OF ANY BOOK OR SIMILAR PUBLICATION PRODUCED HERE WAS PUBLISHED IN TODAY'S GOVERNMENT GAZETTE.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT SAID TODAY HE EXPECTED THAT THE INTENTION BEHIND THE MEASURE WOULD BE WELCOMED BY ALL THOSE CONCERNED WITH GOOD PUBLIC RECORDS IN HONG KONG, SUCH AS SCHOLARS, STUDENTS, HISTORIANS AND NEWSPAPERS EDITORS.

THE BILL, KNOWN AS THE BOOKS REGISTRATION BILL 1976 AND TO BE PRESENTED TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AT A DATE TO BE DECIDED, REPEALS AND REPLACES THE EXISTING BOOKS REGISTRATION ORDINANCE.

AMONG THE MAIN CHANGES PROPOSED ARE THE FOLLOWING :-

1. THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAKING COPIES OF NEW BOOKS AVAILABLE TO THE GOVERNMENT IS PUT ON THE PUBLISHER OF THE BOOKS, AND NOT THE PRINTER.
2. FIVE COPIES, IN PLACE OF THREE, WILL HAVE TO BE GIVEN TO THE DIRECTOR OF URBAN SERVICES, REPRESENTING THE GOVERNMENT.
3. THE FINE FOR FAILING TO MAKE COPIES AVAILABLE IS RAISED FROM \$500 TO \$5,000.

THE SPOKESMAN COMMENTED THAT MAKING THE PUBLISHER RESPONSIBLE FOR HANDING OVER COPIES, AND NOT THE PRINTER, SHOULD ENSURE A MORE REGULAR AND CERTAIN DELIVERY OF SUCH BOOKS. IN THE PAST THERE HAD BEEN MISUNDERSTANDINGS IN CASES WHERE MORE THAN ONE PRINTER HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN THE PRODUCTION OF A BOOK.

HE ALSO EXPLAINED THAT THE NEW BILL WOULD BRING CERTAIN PROVISIONS UP-TO-DATE.

FOR EXAMPLE, THE EXISTING LAW PROVIDED FOR THE SENDING OF ONE COPY OF EVERY BOOK TO THE "KEEPER OF PRINTED BOOKS AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM", WHOSE AUTHORITY IN THIS MATTER HAS NOW BEEN TRANSFERRED TO THE BRITISH LIBRARY BOARD, LONDON. THE NEW BILL UPDATES SUCH TERMS.

THE SPOKESMAN CONCLUDED THAT THE NEW MEASURE FULLY REFLECTS THE CONCERN OF THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT THAT COPIES OF ALL SUCH NEW PUBLICATIONS SHALL BE KEPT HERE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG.

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CONSUMER PRICE INDEX FOR APRIL

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THE NEW CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (A) FOR APRIL 1976 WAS 110, THE SAME AS THAT FOR THE PREVIOUS MONTH.

A FRACTIONAL DECREASE WAS RECORDED IN THE INDEX FOR FOODSTUFFS. THE AVERAGE RETAIL PRICES OF PORK, FRESH VEGETABLES AND FRESH FRUITS DECLINED WHILE THOSE OF SALT WATER FISH, FRESH WATER FISH AND LIVE POULTRY ADVANCED.

THE INDEX FOR FUEL AND LIGHT ALSO FELL BY ONE POINT.

ON THE OTHER HAND, THE INDEX FOR HOUSING ROSE BY ONE POINT AS A RESULT OF THE UPWARD REVISION IN THE RENTS OF SOME HOUSING SOCIETY AND HOUSING AUTHORITY GROUP A ESTATES.

MOVEMENTS IN THE INDEXES FOR OTHER SECTIONS OF COMMODITY AND SERVICE WERE INSIGNIFICANT.

THE NEW CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (B) FOR APRIL 1976 WAS 110, THE SAME AS THAT FOR THE PREVIOUS MONTH.

THE INDEX FOR FOODSTUFFS WAS THE SAME AS THAT FOR THE PREVIOUS MONTH. HOWEVER, THE AVERAGE RETAIL PRICES OF PORK AND FRESH VEGETABLES DECLINED WHILE THOSE OF SALT WATER FISH, FRESH WATER FISH AND LIVE POULTRY ADVANCED.

THE INDEX FOR HOUSING ROSE BY ONE POINT, DUE MAINLY TO HIGHER OTHER HOUSING CHARGES.

A RISE OF ONE POINT WAS ALSO RECORDED IN THE INDEX FOR MISCELLANEOUS GOODS AS A RESULT OF HIGHER PRICES FOR MEDICINES AND OTHER HOUSEHOLD GOODS.

ON THE OTHER HAND, THE INDEX FOR CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR FELL BY ONE POINT.

MOVEMENTS IN THE INDEXES FOR OTHER SECTIONS OF COMMODITY AND SERVICE WERE INSIGNIFICANT.

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LEGISLATION TO IMPLEMENT THREE BUDGET PROPOSALS

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AMENDING LEGISLATION IS PUBLISHED TODAY TO IMPLEMENT THREE REVENUE PROPOSALS MADE BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY IN HIS BUDGET SPEECH IN FEBRUARY THIS YEAR.

THE AMENDMENTS ARE CONTAINED IN THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1976= THE ESTATE DUTY (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1976 AND THE STAMP (AMENDMENT) (NO.2) BILL, 1976, WHICH WILL ALL GO BEFORE THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SHORTLY.

THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) BILL, INCREASES FROM 16-1/2 PER CENT TO 17 PER CENT THE RATE OF PROFITS TAX ON CORPORATIONS FOR THE 1976-77 YEAR OF ASSESSMENT AND ALL SUBSEQUENT YEARS.

ONE OF THE CLAUSES IN THE ESTATE DUTY (AMENDMENT) BILL GIVES EFFECT TO INCREASED RATES OF DUTY CHARGEABLE ON ESTATES IN EXCESS OF \$1.5 MILLION. THE NEW RATES WILL BE 16 PER CENT FOR ESTATES VALUED BETWEEN \$1.5 AND \$2 MILLION= 17 PER CENT FOR THOSE BETWEEN \$2 MILLION AND \$3 MILLION, AND 18 PER CENT ON ESTATES VALUED OVER \$3 MILLION. THEY WILL COME INTO EFFECT AFTER THE BILL HAS BEEN PASSED. THE RATES ON ESTATES BELOW \$1.5 MILLION REMAIN UNCHANGED.

TWO OTHER AMENDMENTS TO THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE ARE ALSO PROPOSED IN CONNECTION WITH ACTION IN THE DISTRICT COURT TO RECOVER ESTATE DUTY.

THE STAMP (AMENDMENT)(NO.2) BILL IMPLEMENTS THE BUDGET PROPOSAL TO INCREASE THE BASIC RATE OF AD VALOREM DUTY ON ASSIGNMENTS AND ALLIED DOCUMENTS FROM 2-1/4 PER CENT TO 2-3/4 PER CENT ON DOCUMENTS EXECUTED ON OR AFTER APRIL 1, 1976. THE CONCESSIONARY RATES APPLICABLE TO CONVEYANCES OF LAND NOT EXCEEDING \$150,000 IN VALUE ARE NOT AFFECTED.

ALSO, UNDER ANOTHER AMENDMENT, CRIMINAL LIABILITY FOR FAILING TO STAMP A DOCUMENT IS DROPPED AS IT IS FELT THAT PROVISIONS ALREADY IN THE ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR RECOVERY OF STAMP DUTY BY CIVIL ACTION IS SUFFICIENTLY EFFECTIVE.

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BALANCED DEVELOPMENT IN NEW TOWNS

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BALANCED DEVELOPMENT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S AIM IN BUILDING THE THREE NEW TOWNS OF TSUEN WAN, TUEN MUN AND SHA TIN, MR. BARRIE WIGGHAM, DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, SAID TODAY.

HE WAS SPEAKING AT THE LUNCHEON MEETING OF THE HONG KONG BRANCH OF THE ROYAL INSTITUTION OF CHARTERED SURVEYORS.

MR. WIGGHAM SAID THAT THE AIM WAS TO PROVIDE THE NEW TOWNS WITH THE RIGHT NUMBER OF SCHOOLS, THE RIGHT NUMBER OF HOSPITAL BEDS, THE PROPER AMOUNT OF OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION AREA, ENOUGH POLICEMEN ON THE BEAT, FIRE SERVICES COVER AND SO ON TO SERVE THE GROWING POPULATION.

+BUT EVEN ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT ALL THE FACILITIES PLANNED WILL ACTUALLY MATERIALISE ON TIME,+ HE CONTINUED, +THESE FACILITIES WILL NOT BEAR FRUIT UNLESS WE ENSURE THAT THE APPROPRIATE COMMUNITY SERVICES ARE PROVIDED IN STEP WITH THE PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT= AND ENSURE ALSO THAT THE COMMUNITY FOR WHOM THESE SERVICES ARE PROVIDED ARE AWARE OF THEMSELVES AND OF THEIR NEW OPPORTUNITIES.+

MR. WIGGHAM SAID THAT, WHEN NEW TOWNS WERE BUILT ELSEWHERE, THE AUTHORITIES ENJOYED THE LUXURY OF BEING ABLE TO CHOOSE VIRGIN TERRITORY SO AS TO AVOID EXISTING DEVELOPMENT AND POPULATION. THIS WAS JUST NOT POSSIBLE IN HONG KONG.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE POPULATION OF TSUEN WAN WOULD GROW BY HALF A MILLION TO ONE MILLION= THE POPULATIONS OF TUEN MUN AND SHA TIN WOULD BE BUILT UP FROM THEIR PRESENT 30,000 - 40,000 TO SOME HALF A MILLION EACH.

+THESE ARE STAGGERING FIGURES,+ HE SAID. +THEY ARE THE EQUIVALENT IN UNITED KINGDOM TERMS OF LEEDS, MANCHESTER AND SHEFFIELD= OR, IN THE CASE OF TSUEN WAN WITH ITS FUTURE POPULATION OF 1,000,000, SOMETHING LIKE THE SIZE OF GLASGOW OR BIRMINGHAM.

+NEW TOWNS HAVE BEEN BUILT IN BRITAIN AND ELSEWHERE, OF COURSE, BUT NOTHING ON THE SAME SCALE AS WE ARE CONTEMPLATING HERE : EACH TIME WE OPEN ONE OF OUR NEWER GENERATION PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES IN HONG KONG WITH A POPULATION OF 30,000 - 40,000, IT'S THE EQUIVALENT OF THE AVERAGE UNITED KINGDOM TOWN.+

HE SAID THAT A DELIBERATE POLICY OF DECENTRALISATION ON THIS SCALE MEANT THAT WE HAD TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THESE NEW TOWNS TO MAKE SURE THEY WERE AS WELL EQUIPPED AND ATTRACTIVE AS POSSIBLE, +CERTAINLY MORE SO THAN THE AREAS FROM WHICH OUR FAMILIES ARE BEING UPROOTED.+

TURNING TO THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES FOR THE THREE NEW TOWNS, MR. WIGGHAM SAID THEY PROVIDED A GOOD FORUM FOR AN INTERCHANGE OF INFORMATION BETWEEN MEMBERS, AS WELL AS FEED-BACK OF LOCAL KNOWLEDGE AND ADVICE TO DEPARTMENTAL HEADQUARTERS AND PLANNING BRANCHES.

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+THE NEW TOWNS ARE BOUND TO INHERIT MANY OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS OF THE URBAN AREA, SUCH AS THE PROLIFERATION OF UNLICENSED HAWKERS, DUMPING OF REFUSE, ILLEGAL PARKING.

+THE AIM, HOWEVER, IS TO ATTEMPT WHERE POSSIBLE TO CONTROL THESE ACTIVITIES FROM THE OUTSET AND IN THE 'NEWER' NEW TOWNS OF SHA TIN AND TUEN MUN A PARTICULAR EFFORT IS BEING MADE TO PREVENT ABUSES OF LEASE CONDITIONS IN NEW MULTI-STOREY COMMERCIAL/RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS.+

THEREFORE, HE SAID THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES STRONGLY FELT THAT UNLESS SUCH MEASURES WERE TAKEN FROM THE OUTSET, IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO CONTROL THE SITUATION LATER WHEN THE PACE OF DEVELOPMENT HAS INCREASED.

IN CONCLUSION, MR. WIGGHAM SAID THE CHALLENGE OF THE NEW TOWN PROJECTS SHOULD NOT BE UNDERESTIMATED - IN THE SPACE OF A FEW SHORT YEARS, SMALL RURAL COMMUNITIES WERE BEING TRANSFORMED INTO SELF-SUFFICIENT SATELLITE TOWNS WITH POPULATIONS OF HALF A MILLION OR MORE.

+BUT I BELIEVE GOVERNMENT IS NOW, ORGANISATIONALLY SPEAKING, BETTER EQUIPPED TO MEET THESE CHALLENGES THAN HITHERTO AND WE ARE STILL EVOLVING. WE NEED BODIES OUTSIDE THE GOVERNMENT ALSO TO FOCUS THEIR ATTENTION ON THE NEEDS OF OUR GROWING TOWNSHIPS SO THAT, BY WORKING TOGETHER IN TANDEM, WE CAN ENSURE THAT THE BUILDING UP OF THESE NEW COMMUNITIES WILL BE SOMETHING OF WHICH HONG KONG WILL BE ABLE TO FEEL PROUD,+ HE SAID.

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SHA TIN PERMANENT SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS
TENDERS INVITED
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THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT IS INVITING TENDERS FOR TWO MORE CONTRACTS FOR THE GIANT PERMANENT SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT AT SHA TIN NEW TOWN.

THE LATEST CONTRACTS ARE FOR THE SUPPLY AND ERECTION OF PUMPS FOR PUMPING THE SEWAGE SLUDGE AND FOR EQUIPMENT USED IN THE TREATMENT OF THE SLUDGE.

THE PERMANENT SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS WILL BE THE BIGGEST OF ITS KIND IN HONG KONG AND WILL INITIALLY PROVIDE SEWAGE TREATMENT FACILITIES FOR SOME 230,000 PEOPLE IN THE NEW TOWN BY 1980, BUT EVENTUALLY IT WILL HAVE A MAXIMUM CAPACITY TO SERVE 500,000 PEOPLE.

IT IS TO BE BUILT ON A 17-HECTARE (42-ACRE) SITE OF RECLAIMED LAND AT TIDE COVE NEAR THE SHA TIN RACECOURSE, AND IS BEING PARTLY FINANCED FROM A US\$20 MILLION LOAN FROM THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK.

TENDERS FOR THE CONTRACTS ARE BEING INVITED ON AN INTERNATIONAL BASIS FROM MANUFACTURERS IN ALL MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, AS WELL AS FROM LUXEMBOURG.

MR. WONG KWOK-CHOY, CHIEF ENGINEER OF THE P.W.D.'S CIVIL ENGINEERING CONSULTANTS MANAGEMENT DIVISION, SAID TODAY FURTHER CONTRACTS WOULD BE INVITED DURING THE NEXT THREE MONTHS.

+INTERNATIONAL INTEREST IN THE PROJECT HAS BEEN VERY KEEN,+ SAID MR. WONG, +AND MANY ENQUIRIES HAVE BEEN RECEIVED FROM OVERSEAS MANUFACTURERS.

+A LARGE NUMBER OF TENDERS HAVE ALREADY BEEN RECEIVED FOR THE FIRST THREE CONTRACTS PUT UP FOR TENDER LAST MONTH FOR THE SUPPLY AND ERECTION OF SOME OF THE MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT FOR THE FIRST STAGE OF THE TREATMENT WORKS.

+AND WE EXPECT TO RECEIVE A LOT MORE BEFORE TENDERS CLOSE ON JULY 2.+

MR. WONG SAID IT WAS ENVISAGED THAT CIVIL ENGINEERING WORKS IN CONNECTION WITH THE PROJECT WOULD BEGIN TOWARDS THE MIDDLE OF NEXT YEAR, AND IT WAS HOPED THAT DELIVERY OF THE MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL PLANT AND EQUIPMENT FOR INSTALLATION WOULD BEGIN IN APRIL 1978.

+ALL THINGS BEING EQUAL, THE NEW PERMANENT TREATMENT WORKS SHOULD BEGIN INITIAL OPERATION IN THE SECOND HALF OF 1979,+ HE SAID.

/MEANWHILE,

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MEANWHILE, WORK HAS JUST BEGUN ON A SMALLER INTERIM SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS AT FO TAN TO HELP PREVENT ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION AT SHA TIN BEFORE THE NEW PERMANENT TREATMENT WORKS COMES ON STREAM.

THE INTERIM PLANT IS BEING PROVIDED AS AN ADDITIONAL SAFEGUARD AND WILL BE IN ADDITION TO AN EXISTING TEMPORARY PLANT WHICH NOW HANDLES SEWAGE WASTE IN SHA TIN.

WHEN COMPLETED IN APRIL NEXT YEAR, THE INTERIM PLANT WILL TRIPLE EXISTING SEWAGE TREATMENT FACILITIES AT SHA TIN AND ENSURE THAT TOLO HARBOUR IS NOT POLLUTED BEFORE THE HUGE PERMANENT SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS IS READY.

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FIRST MINERAL EXHIBITION IN HONG KONG

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THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, MR. KENNETH TOPLEY OPENED AN EXHIBITION OF MINERALS AT THE CITY HALL TODAY.

HE HOPED THE EXHIBITION WOULD GENERATE GREATER INTEREST AND ENTHUSIASM IN THE STUDY OF GEOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY, EARTH SCIENCE AND MINERAL ENGINEERING IN HONG KONG.

+IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT THIS EXHIBITION IS THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN HONG KONG AND I AM SURE THAT IT WILL ENABLE THE GENERAL PUBLIC TO VIEW AND PERCEIVE NATURE'S OWN WONDERS AND BEAUTY IN THE FORM OF MINERALS, ROCK SPECIMENS AND CRYSTALS,+ MR. TOPLEY SAID.

THE DIRECTOR COMMENDED MR. STEPHEN HUI, A MINING ENGINEER, FOR ASSEMBLING THE COLLECTION OVER A PERIOD OF 35 YEARS AND IN MOUNTING THE FIVE-DAY EXHIBITION FOR PEOPLE WHO WANTED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT AN ASPECT OF THE NATURAL WORLD ESSENTIAL TO MAN.

MINERALS HAVE PROVIDED MAN NOT ONLY WITH THE ESSENTIAL MATERIALS OF CIVILISATION BUT ALSO WITH THE MOST BEAUTIFUL AND PRECIOUS ORNAMENTS.

MR. TOPLEY POINTED OUT THAT MINERALS HAVE A FAR GREATER IMPORTANCE TO MAN THAN THEIR AESTHETIC APPEAL.

+THROUGHOUT HISTORY MAN HAS USED THEM FOR A VARIETY OF PURPOSES. WITH EACH SUCCEEDING GENERATION MAN'S DEPENDENCE ON MINERALS HAS BECOME GREATER.

+THEY MAKE OUR MODERN CIVILISATION POSSIBLE FOR ALL INORGANIC MATERIALS USED IN MODERN LIFE THAT ARE NOT MINERALS THEMSELVES ARE MINERAL IN ORIGIN, FOR EXAMPLE STAINLESS STEEL AND FIBRE GLASS.

+IT IS EVIDENT THAT MAN'S PROGRESS WOULD NOT HAVE COME ABOUT WITHOUT THE EXTENSIVE USE OF MINERAL PRODUCTS, AND IT IS LIKELY THAT THEY WILL BE INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT IN FUTURE YEARS,+ HE SAID.

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