



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8, 1975

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MONORAIL AND TUBE COMPLEMENTARY TO EACH OTHER

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THE PROPOSED MONORAIL SYSTEM AND THE UNDERGROUND RAILWAY ARE BASICALLY COMPLEMENTARY IN BOTH THE SHORT AND LONG TERM, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. JAMES ROBSON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM DR. THE HON. HARRY FANG ON WHETHER THE MONORAIL COULD TAKE THE PLACE OF THE TUBE, MR. ROBSON NOTED THAT THE MONORAIL IS A RAPID TRANSIT - NOT A MASS TRANSIT SYSTEM - AND IT IS NOT CONSIDERED AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE UNDERGROUND RAILWAY.

ALTHOUGH THE MONORAIL'S CARRYING CAPACITY OF AROUND 8,000 PEOPLE AN HOUR IS SMALL IN RELATION TO THE 45,000 HOURLY CAPACITY OF THE UNDERGROUND SYSTEM'S EAST KOWLOON LINE, HE SAID, IT COULD BE BUILT QUICKLY -- PROBABLY AT LEAST EIGHT TO TEN YEARS BEFORE THE TUBE LINE.

+IT WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE AN INVALUABLE SERVICE EVEN IF THE EAST KOWLOON LINE IS COMPLETED. IT ALSO SEEMS PROBABLE THAT THE CARRYING CAPACITY OF THE MONORAIL COULD BE EXPANDED IF THE DEMAND JUSTIFIED THIS.+

IN ADDITION, MR. ROBSON SAID THE MONORAIL PASSENGERS WOULD TEND TO BE TOURISTS - PEOPLE USING THE AIRPORT AND PEOPLE FROM AREAS IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT TO THE ROUTE - WHEREAS THE UNDERGROUND RAILWAY WOULD CATER MAINLY FOR COMMUTERS.

IT WAS HOPED, HE ADDED, THAT A FEASIBILITY STUDY WOULD CONFIRM PRELIMINARY INDICATIONS THAT THE PROPOSED MONORAIL SYSTEM, KNOWN AS THE ROMAG SYSTEM, WOULD BE CAPABLE OF PROVIDING SERVICES TO AREAS, SUCH AS THE MID-LEVELS, WHICH ARE INACCESSIBLE FROM TRADITIONAL MASS TRANSIT SYSTEM.

REFERRING TO ANOTHER QUESTION BY DR. FANG, MR. ROBSON SAID THE PROPOSAL FOR THE MONORAIL WAS RECENTLY SUBMITTED TO THE GOVERNMENT AND CONSIDERED BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

NO STUDY OF THE PROJECT WAS CURRENTLY BEING CARRIED OUT IN THE SECRETARIAT, BUT IT HAD BEEN AGREED THAT THE PROMOTERS COULD DO SO, AND THAT IF THE STUDY WOULD DEMONSTRATE THE FEASIBILITY OF THE SYSTEM THE COMPANY WOULD THEN BE PERMITTED TO DESIGN, CONSTRUCT AND OPERATE THE SYSTEM AS A PRIVATE VENTURE WITHOUT GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

THE SUGGESTED AND TENTATIVE ALIGNMENT FOR THE MONORAIL SYSTEM IS FROM TSIM SHA TSUI TO THE AIRPORT VIA THE NEW HUNG HOM RAILWAY STATION WITH POSSIBLE EXTENSIONS TO CHOI HUNG AND KWUN TONG.

MR. ROBSON POINTED OUT

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MR. ROBSON POINTED OUT THAT A FEASIBILITY STUDY WAS NECESSARY TO APPRAISE, IN PARTICULAR, WHETHER THE ALIGNMENT OF THE MONORAIL WAS PHYSICALLY COMPATIBLE WITH OTHER ACTIVITIES ALONG ITS ROUTE- WHETHER THE TECHNICAL PERFORMANCE WOULD BE SATISFACTORY- AND HOW THE SERVICE COULD BEST BE INTEGRATED WITH THAT PROVIDED BY SURFACE BUSES AND THE TUBE.

IN SUBMITTING ITS PROPOSALS, HE SAID, THE COMPANY HAD INDICATED ITS WILLINGNESS TO HAVE SUCH A FEASIBILITY STUDY CONDUCTED BY CONSULTING ENGINEERS ACCEPTABLE TO THE GOVERNMENT.

BUT THE COMPANY HAD MADE IT CLEAR THAT BEFORE IT WOULD BE PREPARED TO EMBARK UPON THIS COSTLY STUDY, IT WOULD REQUIRE CERTAIN ASSURANCES FROM THE GOVERNMENT.

+ I HAVE WRITTEN CONVEYING THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL'S DECISION TO THE COMPANY AND I NOW AWAIT A LETTER FROM THE COMPANY INDICATING WHETHER, ON THE STRENGTH OF THE ASSURANCES WHICH GOVERNMENT IS PREPARED TO GIVE, IT PROPOSES TO GO AHEAD WITH THE FEASIBILITY STUDY,+ MR. ROBSON SAID.

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COMMEMORATIVE STAMPS TO MARK THE QUEEN'S VISIT
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COMMEMORATIVE STAMPS WILL BE ISSUED TO MARK THE QUEEN'S VISIT TO HONG KONG IN MAY.

THIS WAS REVEALED BY THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON. DENIS BRAY AT TODAY'S LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. MRS JOYCE SYMONS.

MR BRAY SAID THE ROYAL VISIT STAMPS WOULD BE DONE IN LONDON BECAUSE OF TIME, AND THE FACT THAT MUCH APPROVED MATERIAL FOR USE IN STAMPS OF THIS NATURE WAS NOT AVAILABLE IN HONG KONG.

HOWEVER, HE STRESSED THAT THE QUEEN'S VISIT STAMPS WOULD BE DESIGNED IN ACCORDANCE WITH GUIDELINES PREPARED HERE.

MR BRAY ALSO DISCLOSED THAT THE POST OFFICE WOULD ISSUE THREE MORE SETS OF SPECIAL STAMPS IN 1975.

OF THESE, ONE SET WILL BE ISSUED TO MARK THE LUNAR NEW YEAR, WHILE THE OTHER TWO SPECIAL ISSUES WILL BE ON HONG KONG'S TRADITIONAL FESTIVALS AND BIRDS.

THESE THREE ISSUES, MR BRAY SAID, WERE ALL OF LOCAL DESIGN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE POLICY LAID DOWN BY THE STAMP ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

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H.K. TO SEEK BENEFICIARY STATUS
UNDER NEW AMERICAN GENERALISED SCHEME OF PREFERENCES
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HONG KONG INTENDS TO APPLY FOR BENEFICIARY STATUS TO EXPORT CERTAIN PRODUCTS DUTY FREE TO THE UNITED STATES UNDER A GENERALISED SCHEME OF PREFERENCES WHICH MAY BE SET UP UNDER THE NEW AMERICAN TRADE ACT.

THE DIRECTOR OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, THE HON. DAVID JORDAN, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, HOWEVER, THAT THE EFFECT OF SUCH A SCHEME COULD NOT YET BE ASSESSED AS IT HAD NOT YET BEEN ANNOUNCED WHICH PRODUCTS WOULD BE INCLUDED. HOWEVER, IT WAS KNOWN THAT ALL TEXTILES, AND CLOTHING AND MOST FOOTWEAR WOULD BE EXCLUDED, HE ADDED.

THE GENERALISED PREFERENCES SCHEME MAY BE SET UP UNDER ONE SECTION OF THE TRADE ACT TO PERMIT DUTY FREE ENTRY TO THE UNITED STATES OF CERTAIN PRODUCTS EXPORTED BY COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES ACCORDED BENEFICIARY STATUS.

MR. JORDAN TOLD COUNCIL IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. FRANCIS TIEN THAT FULL DETAILS OF THE NEW ACT WERE NOT YET AVAILABLE, BUT HONG KONG'S COUNSELLOR FOR COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS IN WASHINGTON HAD BEEN ASKED TO SEND A COPY OF THE NEW LAW AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

IN VIEW OF THIS, MR. JORDAN COULD NOT SAY AT THIS STAGE WHAT THE PRECISE EFFECTS WERE LIKELY TO BE ON HONG KONG'S TRADE AND INDUSTRY.

COMMENTING GENERALLY, MR. JORDAN SAID THAT ACT AUTHORISES THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION TO NEGOTIATE REDUCTIONS IN TARIFFS AND OTHER OBSTACLES TO TRADE, AND THE GATT MULTILATERAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS COULD NOW GET UNDER WAY.

HE EXPLAINED THAT THE AIM OF GATT TALKS WAS TO ACHIEVE FURTHER EXPANSION AND LIBERALISATION OF WORLD TRADE BY REDUCING TARIFFS AND OTHER TRADE BARRIERS.

+SINCE THE CONCESSIONS MADE IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS WILL BE MADE ON THE 'MOST-FAVOURLED-NATION' BASIS, THAT IS THEY MUST BE APPLIED TO ALL GATT MEMBERS WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION, HONG KONG WILL BENEFIT FROM THEM TOO, AS WE BENEFITTED FROM THE TRADE EXPANSION GENERATED BY THE TARIFF REDUCTIONS AGREED IN THE KENNEDY ROUND IN 1967,+ MR. JORDAN SAID.

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MORE FLEXIBILITY IN ALLOCATION OF ESTATE FLATS

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THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT HAS ADOPTED MORE FLEXIBLE AND CENTRALISED ARRANGEMENTS FOR ALLOCATING FLATS RESERVED FOR PEOPLE IN VARIOUS ELIGIBILITY CATEGORIES.

THIS IS PART OF THE DEPARTMENT'S EFFORT TO KEEP THE VACANCIES TO A MINIMUM AND SHOULD HELP IN IDENTIFYING RESERVED FLATS AVAILABLE FOR RE-ALLOCATION. THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON. IAN LIGHTBODY TOLD LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN WHO WANTED TO KNOW WHAT PLANS THERE WERE TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF THESE VACANT FLATS WHICH ARE A POTENTIAL LOSS IN REVENUE.

MR. LIGHTBODY SAID HE HAD PREVIOUSLY EXPLAINED THAT THE RESERVATIONS HAVE TO BE MADE TO MEET VARIOUS REHOUSING COMMITMENTS, AND HE HAD GIVEN AN ASSURANCE THAT THEY WOULD BE CAREFULLY WATCHED TO ENSURE THAT ANY EMPTY UNITS NOT NEEDED BECAUSE OF CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD BE ALLOCATED WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY.

THE NEW SYSTEM IS STILL SETTLING DOWN AND WOULD DEMONSTRATE ITS FULL CAPABILITIES IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, HE SAID.

HE NOTED THAT THE LESS THAN 8,000 FLATS STANDING VACANT TODAY HAD ALREADY BEEN SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED FROM THE FIGURE OF 11,000 MENTIONED BY MR. CHEONG-LEEN IN HIS QUESTION.

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NEW RULES FOR REPORTING INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY APPROVED NEW REGULATIONS MADE BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON. IAN PRICE, TO PROVIDE A STANDARD PROCEDURE FOR THE REPORTING OF INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS.

THE NEW REGULATIONS STREAMLINE THE FORMER REPORTING PROCEDURES UNDER WHICH TWO SEPARATE WRITTEN REPORTS OF AN ACCIDENT TO AN INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYEE WERE REQUIRED TO BE MADE TO TWO SEPARATE UNITS OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT UNDER TWO DIFFERENT ORDINANCES.

UNDER THE NEW REGULATIONS - THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 1975 - IN THE CASE OF THE DEATH OF, OR SERIOUS BODILY INJURY TO, AN INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYEE EITHER A WRITTEN OR ORAL REPORT MUST BE MADE WITHIN 24 HOURS TO A FACTORY INSPECTOR.

IF AN ORAL REPORT IS MADE, IT MUST BE FOLLOWED BY A WRITTEN REPORT UNDER SECTION 15 OF THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ORDINANCE WITHIN SEVEN DAYS OF THE ACCIDENT.

FATALITIES, AS PREVIOUSLY, MUST ALSO BE REPORTED TO THE POLICE WITHIN 24 HOURS.

A LEAFLET WILL BE ISSUED BY THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT TO INFORM FACTORY PROPRIETORS AND OTHER EMPLOYERS OF THEIR OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE NEW REGULATIONS WHICH WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE FROM APRIL 1, 1975.

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CONCERTED EFFORT TO PROMOTE RECREATION AND SPORTS ACTIVITIES

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THREE MAJOR GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS -- THE HOME AFFAIRS, SOCIAL WELFARE AND EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS -- ARE WORKING CLOSELY WITH EACH OTHER IN A COMBINED EFFORT TO PROMOTE RECREATION AND SPORTS ACTIVITIES AT DISTRICT LEVEL.

SPEAKING IN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON. DENIS BRAY, SAID THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT HAD SO FAR APPOINTED SIX RECREATION AND SPORTS OFFICERS TO SIX DISTRICTS TO ORGANISE AND CO-ORDINATE PHYSICAL RECREATION AND SPORTS ACTIVITIES AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL.

+MORE MAY BE APPOINTED WHEN FUNDS BECOME AVAILABLE,+ HE SAID IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN.

THE RECREATION AND SPORTS OFFICERS, SAID MR. BRAY, WORK CLOSELY WITH THE CITY DISTRICT OFFICERS OF THE HOME AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT AND THE COMMUNITY YOUTH OFFICERS OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT TO ENSURE THAT THERE IS NO DUPLICATION OF EFFORTS WITHIN A DISTRICT IN ORGANISING THESE TYPES OF ACTIVITIES.

HE SAID OFFICERS OF THE THREE DEPARTMENTS ALSO MAINTAIN CORDIAL WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH VOLUNTARY SPORTS ASSOCIATIONS OR YOUTH COUNCILS WITHIN THEIR DISTRICT TO ENCOURAGE AS WIDE A LOCAL COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AS POSSIBLE IN THE WORK OF THESE VOLUNTARY BODIES.

AS TO THE ADVICE ON THE FORMULATION OF POLICIES RELATING TO THE PROMOTION OF RECREATION AND SPORTS, MR. BRAY SAID THIS WAS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COUNCIL OF RECREATION AND SPORT OF WHICH HE IS CHAIRMAN.

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TALKS ON H.K. SHIPPING REGISTER CONTINUE
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DISCUSSIONS ARE CONTINUING WITH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO FIND OUT WHETHER THE CONDITIONS FOR SHIPPING REGISTRATION CAN BE MADE MORE FLEXIBLE IN CERTAIN RESPECTS TO REFLECT THE DIFFERENT SITUATION IN HONG KONG AS COMPARED WITH THE U.K., WHILE MAINTAINING THE ESSENTIAL STANDARDS, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, SAID TODAY.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. JAMES WU WHO WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT THE PRESENT POSITION REGARDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A HONG KONG SHIPPING REGISTER.

MR. HADDON-CAVE NOTED THAT HONG KONG, ALREADY MAINTAINS A REGISTER OF SHIPPING AS A BRITISH PORT OF REGISTRY. IT WAS THE AIM OF THE GOVERNMENT, HE SAID, TO PERSUADE MORE HONG KONG SHIPOWNERS TO REGISTER THEIR SHIPS IN HONG KONG RATHER THAN UNDER FLAGS OF CONVENIENCE.

DISCUSSIONS WERE CONTINUING ON VARIOUS ISSUES WHICH IT WAS NECESSARY TO RESOLVE BEFORE AGREEMENT COULD BE REACHED ON THE NEW CONDITIONS TO BE APPLIED. THERE WERE TWO MAIN ISSUES INVOLVED IN THE DISCUSSIONS.

THE FIRST, HE EXPLAINED, WAS THE POSSIBILITY OF EXAMINATIONS WHICH MIGHT BE INTRODUCED TO TEST SERVING OFFICERS ON HONG KONG OWNED SHIPS WHO WERE HOLDING FOREIGN CERTIFICATES OF COMPETENCY IN ORDER TO QUALIFY THEM TO SERVE ON SHIPS REGISTERED IN HONG KONG.

THE SECOND ISSUE CONCERNED THE PROCEDURE FOR APPROVAL OF CERTAIN TYPES OF SHIPS EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS, MAINLY SAFETY EQUIPMENT, ON SHIPS BUILT FOR HONG KONG OWNERS.

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NEW LANDLORD AND TENANT LEGISLATION PROPOSED
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LANDLORDS AND PRINCIPAL TENANTS OF PRE-WAR PREMISES WILL BE ABLE TO RECOUP FROM THEIR TENANTS AND SUB-TENANTS ANY INCREASE IN RATES IMPOSED UNDER THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1975 INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

IN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON. IAN LIGHTBODY, SAID THE BILL WOULD BRING PRE-WAR PREMISES INTO LINE WITH OTHER RATED PREMISES.

HOWEVER, HE EMPHASISED THAT AN INCREASE THIS YEAR WOULD ARISE ONLY IF THERE WAS AN INCREASE IN THE PERCENTAGE RATE.

HE RECALLED THAT THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY GAVE NOTICE IN HIS 1974 BUDGET SPEECH THAT, BECAUSE OF THE DEFERMENT OF THE REVALUATION, HE INTENDED TO PROPOSE AN INCREASE IN THE GENERAL RATE FOR 1975-76.

+RATES BASICALLY ARE A TAX ON OCCUPIERS OF PREMISES AND SO PROVISION WAS MADE IN THE 1973 TENURE AND RENT CONTROLS - WHICH APPLY TO POST-WAR DOMESTIC PREMISES - FOR LANDLORDS TO INCREASE THE RENT BY AN AMOUNT EQUAL TO ANY INCREASE IN RATES,+ MR. LIGHTBODY SAID.

+HOWEVER, IN THE CASE OF PRE-WAR PREMISES NO SUCH PROVISION EXISTS AND, THEREFORE, SHOULD THERE BE AN INCREASE IN RATES FOR THE COMING FINANCIAL YEAR, THOSE LANDLORDS WHO ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PAYMENT OF RATES WOULD BE UNABLE TO PASS THE INCREASE ON TO THEIR TENANTS.+

MUCH OF THE BILL, HE POINTED OUT, COVERED THE ADMINISTRATIVE MACHINERY NECESSARY TO GIVE EFFECT TO ANY INCREASES IN RENT OF TENANCIES OR SUB-TENANCIES STEMMING FROM AN INCREASE IN RATES.

PROVISION WAS MADE FOR THE COMMISSIONER OF RATING AND VALUATION TO ASSIST BY APPORTIONING OR AGGREGATING RATEABLE VALUES WHERE PREMISES WERE SUB-LET OR IN MORE THAN ONE OCCUPATION.

THE BILL, MR. LIGHTBODY ADDED, ALSO COVERED THE POSITION WHERE RATES WERE IMPOSED FOR THE FIRST TIME, AS, FOR INSTANCE, IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

IN ADDITION, THE OPPORTUNITY HAD BEEN TAKEN TO EXPAND AND CLARIFY THE EXISTING SIMILAR PROVISIONS IN PART II OF THE ORDINANCE DEALING WITH POST-WAR DOMESTIC PREMISES.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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UPPER LIMIT ON ANNUAL INTEREST RATE REDUCED

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY APPROVED A MOTION TO REDUCE FROM FIVE PER CENT TO FOUR AND A HALF PER CENT THE UPPER LIMIT ON THE ANNUAL RATE OF INTEREST WHICH CAN BE PAID BY BANKS FREE OF INTEREST TAX.

IN MOVING THE MOTION, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, SAID THAT THE EXEMPT RATE HAD HISTORICALLY BEEN LINKED WITH THE RATE PAID BY LICENSED BANKS ON SAVINGS ACCOUNTS.

+THIS IS BECAUSE THE PURPOSES OF THE EXEMPTION ARE TO ENCOURAGE SMALL SAVINGS AND TO AVOID THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEM, AND COST, OF DEALING WITH TAX ON A VERY LARGE NUMBER OF SMALL INTEREST PAYMENTS, THE RECIPIENTS OF WHICH WOULD ALMOST ALL BE ELIGIBLE FOR REFUNDS UNDER THE PROVISIONS FOR PERSONAL ASSESSMENT.+ HE SAID.

MR. HADDON-CAVE RECALLED THAT THE EXCHANGE BANKS' ASSOCIATION REDUCED THE INTEREST RATE ON SAVINGS ANCOUNTS FROM FIVE PER CENT TO FOUR AND A HALF PER CENT PER ANNUM WITH EFFECT FROM JANUARY 1 THIS YEAR.

HE SAID: +IT IS DESIRABLE THAT THE EXEMPTION RATE FOR INTEREST TAX SHOULD FOLLOW SUIT, BECAUSE OTHERWISE SOME BANKS MIGHT CONTINUE TO PAY INTEREST ON SAVINGS ACCOUNTS AT FIVE PER CENT, AND THIS WOULD STRENGTHEN ANY TENDENCY FOR SAVINGS ACCOUNTS TO ATTRACT FUNDS FOR WHICH THE EXEMPTION IS NOT INTENDED.+

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REVENUE REWARD FUND
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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY APPROVED A MOTION TO ENABLE A MONTHLY TRANSFER FROM THE REVENUE REWARD FUND OF ANY SUM IN EXCESS OF \$200,000 TO THE DEVELOPMENT LOAN FUND RATHER THAN TO GENERAL REVENUE SO AS TO ENABLE SUCH EXCESS TO BE USED BY THE DEVELOPMENT LOAN FUND AS AND WHEN REQUIRED.

IN MOVING THE MOTION, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE SAID AS THE REVENUE REWARD FUND COULD BE REGARDED AS A WINDFALL TO PUBLIC REVENUE AND AS THE DEVELOPMENT LOAN FUND WAS IN NEED OF FUNDS FROM VARIOUS SOURCES, IT WAS BOTH LOGICAL AND CONVENIENT TO TRANSFER EXCESS SUMS TO THE FUND.

THE OPPORTUNITY WAS ALSO TAKEN TO UPDATE AND TO TIDY UP OTHER PROVISIONS IN THE CURRENT RESOLUTION.

+FIRSTLY, THE WORD +CONTRABAND+ IS REDEFINED AS ANY GOODS LIABLE TO FORFEITURE UNDER THE IMPORT AND EXPORT ORDINANCE OR THE DUITABLE COMMODITIES ORDINANCE,+ MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID.

+SECONDLY, THE LIMITS FOR REWARDS FOR INFORMATION ARE REVISED SO THAT REWARDS PAID IN ANY ONE CASE MAY NOT EXCEED \$25,000 WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY AND \$50,000 WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THIS COUNCIL.+

THE PRESENT LIMITS OF \$250 AND \$10,000 RESPECTIVELY WERE SET 25 YEARS AGO IN 1949.

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BILLS PASSED
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FIVE BILLS WERE PASSED INTO LAW IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THEY WERE : THE RATING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1975, THE INTERPRETATION AND GENERAL CLAUSES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1975, THE MARRIAGE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1975, THE FIXED PENALTY (TRAFFIC CONTRAVENTIONS) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1975 AND THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1975.

AN UNOFFICIAL MEMBER'S BILL, THE GIRL GUIDES ASSOCIATION (HONG KONG BRANCH) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1975, WAS ALSO PASSED.

THREE OTHER BILLS WERE INTRODUCED INTO THE COUNCIL FOR THE FIRST AND SECOND READING. THEY WERE : THE EXCHANGE FUND (AMENDMENT) BILL 1975, THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1975 AND THE ACETYLATED SUBSTANCES (CONTROL) BILL 1975.

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BANKING POLICY
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NOTE TO EDITORS:

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, MADE A STATEMENT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTIONS IN THE RELATED AREAS OF BANK LICENSING POLICY, PROTECTION OF DEPOSITORS AND THE CONTROL OF FINANCE COMPANIES.

BRIEFLY, HE SAID THAT IT WAS PRESSED ON HIM, AND HE RELUCTANTLY ACCEPTED, THAT THIS WAS NOT A TIME TO BRING ABOUT RADICAL CHANGE IN HONG KONG'S FINANCIAL STRUCTURE.

HE ANNOUNCED THAT HE DID NOT INTEND TO PROCEED AT PRESENT TO SEEK AUTHORITY FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF A NEW, LIMITED CLASS OF BANKING LICENCE AND IT WAS NOT INTENDED TO GRANT ANY NEW LICENCES AT ALL FOR THE TIME BEING.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY DESCRIBED THIS AS AN UNHAPPY OUTCOME OF MONTHS OF THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION, FOR THE GOVERNMENT AND EVEN MORE FOR THOSE WHO HAD HOPED TO BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE MORE FULLY IN HONG KONG'S FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT.

THE FULL TEXT OF THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S STATEMENT IS BOXED FOR COLLECTION.

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PRESS CONFERENCE ON TEXTBOOKS, SCHOOL UNIFORMS SALES
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NOTE TO EDITORS :

THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, MR. KENNETH TOPLEY WILL HOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE TOMORROW (THURSDAY) TO GIVE DETAILS OF A CODE OF PRACTICE RELATING TO PURCHASE BY STUDENTS OF TEXTBOOKS, UNIFORMS AND OTHER ITEMS TO PURSUE THEIR COURSE OF STUDY IN KINDERGARTEN, PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND OTHER SCHOOLS. COPIES OF THE CODE ARE BEING SENT TO THE HEADS OF ALL SCHOOLS.

YOU ARE INVITED TO HAVE THE PRESS CONFERENCE COVERED.

IT WILL BEGIN AT 11 A.M. IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, LEE GARDENS, 3RD FLOOR, HYSAN AVENUE, CAUSEWAY BAY, HONG KONG.

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FIRES DOWN 16 PER CENT IN 1974

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THE NUMBER OF FIRE CALLS RECEIVED BY THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT IN 1974 WAS 6,971, A DECREASE OF 1,385 CALLS (OR 16.6 PER CENT) COMPARED WITH THE PREVIOUS YEAR.

THESE FIGURES WERE RELEASED BY THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT TODAY.

DESPITE THE SUBSTANTIAL DROP, WHICH A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT DESCRIBED AS +OBVIOUSLY WELCOME+, MONETARY LOSSES FROM FIRE LAST YEAR, AT ALMOST \$50 MILLION, WERE NOT SIGNIFICANTLY DOWN ON THE FIGURE OF \$51.8 MILLION FOR 1973. +THIS INDICATES,+ STATED THE SPOKESMAN, +THAT, LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE, THE COST OF HAVING A FIRE IS GOING UP.+

AS IN PREVIOUS YEARS, THE MAIN CAUSES OF FIRE WERE CARELESS HANDLING OR DISPOSAL OF CIGARETTE ENDS AND MATCHES (1,685 FIRES) AND ELECTRICAL FAULTS (1,183 FIRES). TOGETHER THESE TWO CAUSES ACCOUNTED FOR 41 PER CENT OF ALL FIRES IN HONG KONG IN 1974. THERE WERE 377 INDUSTRIAL FIRES, COSTING A TOTAL OF \$38 MILLION. THIS MEANS THAT ALTHOUGH ONLY 5.4 PER CENT OF FIRES OCCURRED IN THIS SECTOR, THEY ACCOUNTED FOR 76 PER CENT OF THE LOSSES. TEN FIRES COST MORE THAN \$1 MILLION= THE MOST EXPENSIVE FIRE OCCURRED LAST JANUARY IN A TEXTILE MILL AT TSUEN WAN AND COST AN ESTIMATED \$11 MILLION.

TWENTY-FIVE PEOPLE DIES AS A RESULT OF FIRE AND 417, INCLUDING 33 FIREMEN, WERE INJURED.

A TOTAL OF 1,565 GRASS FIRES WAS REPORTED DURING THE YEAR AND THERE WERE 34 SHIP FIRES.

THE BUSIEST MONTH FOR FIREMEN WAS JANUARY, WHEN 1,000 CALLS WERE DEALT WITH, FOLLOWED BY OCTOBER (723 CALLS). OF THE 6,971 FIRE CALLS, 1,475 WERE FALSE ALARM, 5,311 FIRST ALARM, 137 SECOND ALARM, 42 THIRD ALARM AND SIX FOURTH ALARM. THERE WERE NO FIFTH OR DISASTER ALARMS.

THE DIRECTOR OF FIRE SERVICES, MR. HARRY WOOD, SAID THAT, ALTHOUGH THERE HAD BEEN A 16 PER CENT DROP IN THE NUMBER OF FIRES REPORTED IN 1974, THERE WAS NO ROOM FOR COMPLACENCY. +THERE IS TOO MUCH OF THIS 'FIRE CAN NEVER HAPPEN TO ME' FEELING IN HONG KONG,+ HE STATED. +FIRE CAN STRIKE ANYWHERE, AT ANY TIME, WHEN IT IS LEAST EXPECTED. AND, IF YOU ARE UNFORTUNATE ENOUGH TO HAVE A FIRE, REMEMBER THAT IT IS BECOMING AN INCREASINGLY COSTLY BUSINESS.+

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8, 1975.

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REMINDER ON PAYMENT OF RATES
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RATE PAYERS ARE REMINDED THAT RATES FOR THE FIRST QUARTER OF THIS YEAR SHOULD BE PAID BY THE END OF THIS MONTH, PREFERABLY BY CHEQUE OR MONEY ORDER THROUGH THE POST.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT SAID TODAY THAT RATE PAYERS SHOULD HAVE RECEIVED DEMAND NOTES BY NOW. IF NOT, THEY SHOULD APPLY IMMEDIATELY TO THE TREASURY (REVENUE BRANCH) AT THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES (WEST WING), 2ND FLOOR, ICE HOUSE STREET, FOR A COPY OF THE DEMAND NOTE.

+NON-RECEIPT OF THE DEMAND NOTE DOES NOT ALTER THE REQUIREMENT THAT THE RATES MUST BE PAID BY 4 PM ON JANUARY 31, 1975,+ THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

+RATES NOT PAID BY THEN WILL BE SUBJECT TO A SURCHARGE OF FIVE PER CENT. A FURTHER 10 PER CENT WILL BE ADDED TO AMOUNTS, INCLUDING THE FIVE PER CENT SURCHARGE, WHICH REMAIN UNPAID SIX MONTHS AFTER THE DUE DATE.+

WHEN MAKING PAYMENT, RATEPAYERS ARE REMINDED THAT THE AMOUNT TO BE PAID IS INDICATED ON THE DEMAND NOTE BY AN ARROW-HEAD IN THE 'TOTAL AMOUNT NOW DUE' BOX.

RATES ARE PAYABLE ON VACANT PROPERTIES BUT ARE REFUNDABLE UNDER CONDITIONS SPECIFIED IN THE RATING ORDINANCE.

HOWEVER, NO REFUNDS WILL BE PAYABLE IN THE CASE OF A VACANT TENEMENT LAST USED OR INTENDED TO BE USED WHOLLY OR PRIMARILY FOR DOMESTIC PURPOSES, UNLESS IT IS VACANT BY AN ORDER OF THE GOVERNMENT.

RATES CAN BE PAID PERSONALLY AT ANY OF THE OFFICES LISTED ON THE BACK OF THE DEMAND NOTE, OR AT THE NEW KOWLOON CITY SUB-TREASURY ON THE 1ST FLOOR OF MAN SANG COMMERCIAL BUILDING AT 348-352 PRINCE EDWARD ROAD.

TO AVOID INCONVENIENCE, RATEPAYERS ARE URGED TO PAY BY CHEQUE OR MONEY ORDER THROUGH THE POST.

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WATER CUT
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WATER SUPPLY TO A NUMBER OF PREMISES IN SHAM SHUI PO WILL BE INTERRUPTED FOR FIVE HOURS AS FROM 1 A.M. ON FRIDAY (JANUARY 10) TO FACILITATE TESTS FOR LEAKAGE IN THE AREA.

AFFECTED WILL BE PREMISES BOUNDED BY CHEUNG SHA WAN ROAD, NAM CHEONG STREET, LAI CHI KOK ROAD, BOUNDARY STREET, AND POPLAR STREET.

NORMAL SUPPLY TO THIS AREA WILL BE RESTORED AFTER THE TESTS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8, 1975

TRANSPORTATION COMPANY SEVERANCE PAY DISPUTE SETTLED
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THE SEVERANCE PAY DISPUTE INVOLVING 46 STEVEDORES OF A TRANSPORTATION COMPANY WAS SETTLED TODAY.

THE HONG KONG STEVEDORING CO. LTD CLOSED DOWN ITS BUSINESS AT THE END OF DECEMBER LAST YEAR. AS A RESULT, 46 STEVEDORES WHO HAD MORE THAN 10 YEARS' SERVICE WITH THE COMPANY WERE RENDERED REDUNDANT.

AT THE THIRD MEETING AT THE SAN PO KONG LABOUR RELATIONS OFFICE TODAY, THREE REPRESENTATIVES OF WORKERS AND TWO MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATIVES FINALLY AGREED ON THE TERMS OF SETTLEMENT.

AN AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT CONCILIATOR, MR. NG PING-TIM. UNDER THE AGREEMENT, MANAGEMENT WILL PAY THE WORKERS A LUMP SUM OF \$93,000 COVERING SEVERANCE PAYMENTS AND WAGES IN LIEU OF NOTICE.

PAYMENT WILL BE MADE IN THE LAST WEEK OF JANUARY IN THE COMPANY OFFICE.

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PRESENTATION OF COLONIAL FIRE BRIGADES MEDALS
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NOTE TO EDITORS:

THE DIRECTOR OF FIRE SERVICES, MR. HARRY WOOD, WILL PRESENT COLONIAL FIRE BRIGADES LONG SERVICE MEDALS AND CLASPS TO 46 SERVING AND RETIRED MEMBERS OF THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT AT A CEREMONY TO TAKE PLACE AT CENTRAL FIRE STATION, DES VOEUX ROAD CENTRAL, AT 10 A.M. ON FRIDAY (JANUARY 10).

YOU ARE INVITED TO HAVE THE CEREMONY COVERED. MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES ARE ASKED TO MEET MR. DONALD STRANGE, PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER OF THE DEPARTMENT, AT THE CENTRAL FIRE STATION BY NOT LATER THAN 9.45 A.M.

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