



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1975

<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
FURTHER PROGRESS IN MEDICAL DEVELOPMENT EXPECTED .....	1
DROP IN NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED FAMILIES SEEKING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE .....	3
HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME FOR LOW-INCOME GROUPS CONSIDERED IMPRACTICABLE .....	5
LABOUR DEPARTMENT TO EXPAND SERVICES .....	8
DEBATE ON EDUCATION : QUANTITY AND QUALITY .....	11
BOOM-TIME IN NEW TERRITORIES .....	14
PROPOSED FARE REVISION FOR STAR FERRY AND TRAMWAYS TABLED IN LEGCO .....	16
DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES BILL TABLED IN LEGCO .....	18
SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL .....	20
BILLS PASSED .....	21
NEW TERRITORIES LAND SALES .....	21

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1975

- 1 -

FURTHER PROGRESS IN MEDICAL DEVELOPMENT EXPECTED

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THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES, DR. THE HON. K.L. THONG, HAS SPOKEN OF THE NEED TO PROCEED WITH DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES EVEN AT THIS +PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT PERIOD.+

SPEAKING AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING THIS AFTERNOON, HE SAID EVERY EFFORT HAD BEEN MADE TO ENSURE THAT AVAILABLE RESOURCES ARE EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY UTILISED WITHOUT AFFECTING THE STANDARD AND QUALITY OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE DIFFICULTIES AHEAD HAD NOT BEEN UNDER-ESTIMATED.

+WE SHALL KEEP UP OUR EFFORTS BUT WE ARE AWARE OF THE LIMITATIONS WHICH MUST INEVITABLY COME ABOUT IN SPITE OF OUR GOOD INTENTIONS,+ HE SAID.

GIVEN THE RESOURCES FURTHER PROGRESS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES WILL PROCEED AS MENTIONED BY THE GOVERNOR IN HIS ADDRESS AT THE OPENING SESSION OF THE COUNCIL, HE ASSURED.

THE DIRECTOR OUTLINED STEPS HE PROPOSED TO TAKE IN DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM OF DRUG ADDICTION, IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PHARMACY AND POISONS REGULATIONS AND IN THE PROVISION OF DENTAL HEALTH CARE.

ON THE PROBLEM OF NARCOTICS, DR. THONG SAID A NEW DETOXIFICATION TREATMENT PROGRAMME WOULD BE INTRODUCED TO SUPPLEMENT, AND NOT SUBSTITUTE, THE METHADONE MAINTENANCE SCHEME.

HE EXPLAINED THAT DETOXIFICATION TREATMENT INVOLVED THE USE OF METHADONE FOR THE DETOXIFICATION OF ADDICTS OVER THE COURSE OF A FEW WEEKS WHILE THE METHADONE MAINTENANCE SCHEME CALLED FOR DISPENSING OF A CONSTANT DOSE OF METHADONE DAILY WITHOUT HOSPITALISATION TO AN ADDICT AND FOR AN INDETERMINABLE PERIOD.

THE DETOXIFICATION PROGRAMME, HE SAID, WOULD BE ABLE TO ELIMINATE THE ADDICT'S CURRENT DEPENDENCE ON NARCOTICS THROUGH THE ADMINISTRATION OF GRADUALLY DECREASING DOSES OF METHADONE.

IT MIGHT EVENTUALLY HELP TO CREATE OR REINFORCE MOTIVATION FOR HIM TO SEEK LONGER TERM TREATMENT SUCH AS OFFERED IN A METHADONE MAINTENANCE TREATMENT CLINIC, HE SAID.

ABOVE ALL THE SCHEME, ESSENTIALLY DIRECTED AT A GROUP OF ADDICTS NOT PREPARED FOR LONG TERM METHADONE MAINTENANCE, WOULD PROVIDE YET ANOTHER +SAFE, EFFECTIVE AND LEGAL+ ALTERNATIVE TO THOSE WHO WOULD OTHERWISE TAKE TO ILLICIT NARCOTICS, HE ADDED.

ON DENTAL HEALTH, DR. THONG SAID PLANS WERE IN HAND FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SCHOOL FOR THE TRAINING OF DENTAL NURSES AND A SCHOOLCHILDREN'S DENTAL CLINIC IN MORRISON HILL.

HE RECALLED THAT THE DENTAL NEEDS OF HONG KONG WERE OUTLINED IN THE MEDICAL WHITE PAPER PUBLISHED IN 1974, IN WHICH THE GOVERNMENT ACKNOWLEDGED THE IMPORTANCE OF DENTAL HEALTH IN OUR COMMUNITY.

IN THE PROVISION OF DENTAL HEALTH CARE, THE WHITE PAPER INDICATED THAT STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN IN TWO DIRECTIONS -- THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SCHOOL DENTAL CARE SERVICE FOR SCHOOLCHILDREN AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A DENTAL SCHOOL TO PROVIDE MORE DENTISTS FOR HONG KONG.

THE SCHOOL DENTAL CARE SCHEME COULD PROVIDE PARTICIPANTS AT PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL WITH REGULAR EXAMINATION AND SIMPLE CONSERVATIVE TREATMENT.

+THIS IS A MODERN, EFFECTIVE AND ECONOMICAL APPROACH TO THE PROVISION OF DENTAL SERVICES ON A WIDE SCALE, WHICH HAS VERY MUCH PROVEN ITS WORTH IN OTHER COUNTRIES,+ SAID DR. THONG.

SUCH A SCHEME INVOLVING THE USE OF DENTAL NURSES UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF QUALIFIED DENTISTS WILL HAVE THE ADDITIONAL ADVANTAGE OF ENSURING THE MAXIMUM UTILISATION OF PRECIOUS MANPOWER IN REGARD TO QUALIFIED DENTISTS, WHO WILL BE ABLE TO DEVOTE THEIR TIME TO MORE COMPLICATED DENTAL PROBLEMS, HE SAID.

AT THE SAME TIME, SAID DR. THONG, THE UNIVERSITY AND POLYTECHNIC GRANTS COMMITTEE HAD INITIATED PRELIMINARY ACTION FOR THE PLANNING OF THE DENTAL SCHOOL TO PROVIDE QUALIFIED DENTISTS.

TURNING TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PHARMACY AND POISONS REGULATIONS, THE DIRECTOR SAID THE PHARMACY AND POISONS BOARD HAD RECEIVED REPRESENTATIONS FROM INTERESTED PARTIES CONCERNING CERTAIN PROVISIONS IN THE REGULATIONS.

THESE REPRESENTATIONS WERE BEING CONSIDERED IN DETAIL BY THE BOARD, AND NO DATE HAD BEEN SET FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGULATIONS, HE ADDED.

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1975

- 3 -

DROP IN NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED FAMILIES  
SEEKING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE  
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THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE FROM UNEMPLOYED FAMILIES SEEKING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE HAS +FALLEN QUITE SUBSTANTIALLY IN THE LAST TWO MONTHS+ DESPITE AN INCREASE IN THE CASELOAD.

THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, THE HON. LEE FOOK-KOW, SAID TODAY THAT IN RECENT MONTHS THE CASELOAD HAS BEEN INCREASING AT THE RATE OF ABOUT 1,000 CASES MONTHLY. HALF OF THESE ARE SINGLE PEOPLE AND THE BALANCE COMPRISES FAMILIES AVERAGING FIVE MEMBERS.

+ON THIS BASIS, A CASELOAD INCREASE OF 1,000 REPRESENTS ABOUT 3,000 ADDITIONAL ELIGIBLE PEOPLE BEING ASSISTED EACH MONTH.+

MR. LI STRESSED, HOWEVER, THAT THE GREAT MAJORITY OF NEW APPLICATIONS COME FROM THE ELDERLY, THE SICK AND DISABLED AND WIDOWS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN.

HE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOW PAYING OUT ABOUT THREE-QUARTERS OF A MILLION DOLLARS A DAY IN PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND IN DISABILITY AND INFIRMITY ALLOWANCES.

IN 1973, IT WAS ENVISAGED THAT THE TWO SCHEMES WOULD COST ONLY ABOUT \$80 MILLION IN THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR, BUT THE ACTUAL COST IS NOW LIKELY TO BE OVER THREE TIMES THIS FIGURE.

MR. LI EMPHASISED THAT THIS, IN PART, ANSWERS CRITICS WHO SAY THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS NOT HELPING THOSE PEOPLE WHO ARE WORSE OFF FINANCIALLY AND THOSE WHO HAVE SUFFERED GREATEST DURING THE PRESENT RECESSION.

+DESPITE THE SLOWDOWN IN THE GROWTH OF PUBLIC REVENUE, THESE ASSISTANCE SCHEMES HAVE NOT SUFFERED AND I CONSIDER THAT THIS IS AN ACHIEVEMENT WORTH EMPHASISING,+ HE SAID.

ON OTHER TOPICS RAISED BY UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS, THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES SAID HE WOULD BE DISCUSSING WITH THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE THE POSSIBILITY OF IMPLEMENTING THE CHILD CARE CENTRES ORDINANCE SOME TIME NEXT YEAR. IN THE MEAN TIME, THE REGULATIONS HAVE BEEN PREPARED AND THE CODE OF PRACTICE IS ALMOST READY.

THE PARTNERSHIP ESTABLISHED BETWEEN THE HONG KONG COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE AND THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT CONTINUES TO +FLOURISH+. THIS, HE SAID, IS DEMONSTRATED IN THE COMBINED EFFORTS TO PRODUCE THE ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE FIVE YEAR PLAN AND IN THE SEVERAL JOINT WORKING PARTIES WHICH NOW EXIST TO EXAMINE A WHOLE SPECTRUM OF SOCIAL WELFARE NEEDS.

ON SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK, MR. LI SAID THAT THE PILOT PROJECT INAUGURATED BY THE EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENTS IN FIVE SCHOOLS IN NOVEMBER LAST YEAR, WAS RECENTLY REVIEWED AND EXTENDED TO EMBRACE ON A REFERRAL BASIS 11 SCHOOLS.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1975

- 4 -

THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT CO-ORDINATES THE SCHEME AND REFERRALS FROM SCHOOLS OTHER THAN THE SELECTED 11 ARE ALSO ENCOURAGED. IN ADDITION, SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK WHICH HELPS TO SPOT POTENTIAL SOCIAL AND FAMILY PROBLEMS AT AN EARLY STAGE, IS UNDERTAKEN IN A FURTHER 46 SCHOOLS BY SEVEN VOLUNTARY AGENCIES. BUT THE COVERAGE IS RELATIVELY SMALL AND THE AIM SHOULD BE TO EXPAND THE SERVICE.

A TWO-YEAR EXPERIMENTAL YOUTH GUIDANCE SCHEME DESIGNED TO INCLUDE SCHOOL DROPOUTS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 11 AND 15 AND THOSE WITH BEHAVIOURAL AND EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS WAS LAUNCHED AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS YEAR.

IT IS BEING CARRIED OUT BY FOUR VOLUNTARY AGENCIES IN SAU MAU PING, SHAM SHUI PO, CHAI WAN AND WONG TAI SIN. IF IT IS SUCCESSFUL, THE SCHEME MIGHT BE EXTENDED TO OTHER AREAS IN DUE COURSE.

MR. LI ALSO SAID THAT A PLAY LEADERSHIP SCHEME PRIMARILY FOR 8 TO 14 YEAR OLD CHILDREN IS OPERATING AT 26 PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS IN THE URBAN AREAS AND TEHE NEW TERRITORIES.

A SURVEY TO DETERMINE THE SUITABILITY OF OTHER PARKS IN WHICH TO EXTEND THE PROGRAMME WILL BE UNDERTAKEN SOON.

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HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME FOR LOW-INCOME GROUPS  
 CONSIDERED IMPRACTICABLE  
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THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON. IAN LIGHTBODY, BELIEVES IT WOULD BE IMPRACTICABLE FOR THE LOW INCOME GROUPS, CURRENTLY CATERED FOR BY THE HOUSING AUTHORITY, TO BUY THEIR OWN FLATS AS INSURANCE, RATES AND MANAGEMENT CHARGES COULD ADD UP TO 25 PER CENT TO THE MONTHLY MORTGAGE PAYMENT.

MR. LIGHTBODY WAS SPEAKING ON THE FEASIBILITY OF A HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME AT TODAY'S RESUMED DEBATE AT LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

AS AN EXAMPLE, HE SAID THE SMALLEST FLAT COSTS ABOUT \$100,000 AND IF A 20 PER CENT DOWNPAYMENT WERE MADE THE MONTHLY OUTGOINGS ON SUCH A FLAT FOR MORTGAGE REPAYMENTS AND OTHER CHARGES WOULD BE ABOUT \$1,200.

HE ASSURED DR. THE HON. HARRY FANG, WHO RAISED THIS ISSUE AT THE LAST MEETING OF THE COUNCIL THAT +THE QUESTION OF THE SALE OF FLATS TO SUITABLE FAMILIES WHO CAN'T AFFORD TO MAKE THEIR OWN WAY IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR IS VERY MUCH A LIVE ISSUE.+

ONE GROUP, THE SECRETARY SAID WHICH HE WOULD WISH TO SEARCH OUT WAYS OF HELPING ARE THOSE WHO EARN ABOUT \$3,000 MONTHLY OR BELOW BUT WHO ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR AUTHORITY'S RENTED FLATS IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER AND WHOSE FAMILY COMMITMENTS PRECLUDE THEM FROM BUYING A FLAT IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

SPEAKING ON DR. FANG'S OTHER SUGGESTION OF DEVISING A SALES SCHEME AIMED AT BETTER-OFF FAMILIES LIVING IN PUBLIC HOUSING THUS RELEASING PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS FOR RE-ALLOCATION TO LESS WELL-OFF FAMILIES WITHIN THE INCOME-ELIGIBILITY LIMITS, MR. LIGHTBODY SAID:

+DISCUSSIONS HAVE BEEN HELD WITH THE HONG KONG BUILDING AND LOAN AGENCY RECENTLY ON MORTGAGE LOAN TERMS AND I AM HOPEFUL THAT IT MIGHT PROVE POSSIBLE TO DEVISE TERMS FOR SUCH A SCHEME RATHER MORE FAVOURABLE THAN ARE NORMALLY AVAILABLE.+

HOWEVER, HE POINTED OUT THAT THE PRINCIPAL FACTORS IN ANY SUCH SCHEME - AND THE AUTHORITY IS STUDYING THEM CLOSELY NOW - ARE MORTGAGE LOAN TERMS, THE LAND-VALUE COMPONENT IN ANY SALES PRICE SPECIALLY DETERMINED FOR A GROUP SUCH AS HE HAD DESCRIBED= AND THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS FOR CONSTRUCTION.

THE SECRETARY SAID THAT THE QUESTION OF LAND CHARGE RAISED VERY REAL PROBLEMS SINCE ANY SUBSTANTIAL SUBSIDY GIVEN IN THIS DIRECTION COULD EASILY BE ABUSED UNLESS VERY TIGHT MANAGEMENT CONTROL OVER SUBSEQUENT SALES IS MAINTAINED.

/+ONE POSSIBILITY .....

+ONE POSSIBILITY WOULD BE TO ALLOCATE LAND AT THE RESERVE PRICE, IN WHICH EVENT WE COULD CONTEMPLATE IMPOSING NO RESTRICTIONS ON SUBSEQUENT RESALE= THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THIS WOULD BE THAT A NEW FLAT HAS BEEN ADDED TO THE HOUSING STOCK AND AN OLD FLAT HAS BEEN RECOVERED BY THE HOUSING AUTHORITY FOR RE-ALLOCATION,+ MR. LIGHTBODY ADDED.

ON DR. FANG'S CONTENTION OF A COMMUNICATION GAP BETWEEN THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT AND THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE, IN WHICH HE BASED HIS ASSERTION ON THE FACT THAT A SUBSTANTIAL PERCENTAGE OF URBAN COUNCIL WARD CASES AS WELL AS CITY DISTRICT OFFICE AND UMELCO CASES CONCERN HOUSING MATTERS, MR. LIGHTBODY SAID:

+I WOULD SUGGEST THAT THIS DEMONSTRATES NOT A LACK OF COMMUNICATION ON THE DEPARTMENT'S PART BUT RATHER THE FACT THAT THE GREATEST SINGLE GOOD THAT ANY LOW-INCOME FAMILY CAN HOPE FOR IN HONG KONG IS A PUBLIC HOUSING FLAT, OR ADDITIONAL PUBLIC HOUSING ACCOMMODATION, PARTICULARLY AT THE VERY MODEST RENTS CHARGED.+

HE ADDED THAT IT WAS NOT SURPRISING THAT UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS WOULD PURSUE THEIR CLAIM THROUGH ALL AVAILABLE CHANNELS.

MR. LIGHTBODY WENT ON: +IN THIS SITUATION IT IS VERY UNFAIR TO THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT, WHICH DOES A MOST DIFFICULT AND THANKLESS JOB WITH MARKED COMPETENCE AND DEDICATION, TO ASSERT THAT COMPLAINTS IMPLY A FAILURE OF SOME SORT ON THEIR PART.+

SPEAKING ON THE PROVISION OF ELECTRICITY AND MAINS WATER SUPPLY TO SQUATTER AND LICENSED AREAS, THE SECRETARY SAID THAT A WORKING PARTY HAD RECENTLY BEEN SET UP JOINTLY WITH THE CHINA LIGHT AND POWER COMPANY TO STUDY THE PRACTICAL PROBLEMS.

+THE SITUATION REGARDING ELECTRICITY IN LICENSED AREAS IS WELL IN HAND, AND THE HOUSING AUTHORITY LAST YEAR SECURED THE PROMISE OF FUNDS FROM GOVERNMENT TO ALLOW A START TO BE MADE ON A PROGRAMME FOR ELECTRIFYING ALL 30 LICENSED AREAS.

+SO FAR, 19 OF THE 30 HAVE BEEN PROVIDED WITH ELECTRICITY AND WE HOPE TO CONTINUE WITH THIS PROGRAMME IN THE COMING FINANCIAL YEAR. ALL NEW LICENSED AREAS ARE AUTOMATICALLY PROVIDED WITH ELECTRICITY,+ THE SECRETARY EXPLAINED.

AS TO MAINS WATER, MR. LIGHTBODY SAID THIS WAS ALREADY PROVIDED IN SQUATTER AND OLDER LICENSED AREAS, ON A PUBLIC STANDPIPE BASIS.

HE ADDED THAT ALL NEW LICENSED AREAS HAVE INDIVIDUAL TAP SUPPLIES AND FOR THE OLDER LICENSED AREAS, THE POLICY IS TO INSTALL INDIVIDUAL TAPS AS AND WHEN AN AREA IS CLEARED FOR RE-ALLOCATION AND SO FAR, SEVEN SUCH AREAS HAVE BEEN MODERNISED IN THIS WAY.

FINALLY, MR. LIGHTBODY GAVE AN ACCOUNT OF THE AUTHORITY'S REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME OF ITS MARK I AND II ESTATES, WHICH IS GATHERING MOMENTUM.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1975

- 7 -

+IN 1974, SHEK KIP MEI WAS THE ONLY ESTATE UNDERGOING MODERNISATION, BUT THIS YEAR WORK IS GOING AHEAD AT SHEK KIP MEI AND THE FIRST PHASE OF TAI HANG TUNG ESTATES,+ MR. LIGHTBODY POINTED OUT.

+NEXT YEAR,+ HE WENT ON, +THE AUTHORITY WILL LET FURTHER CONTRACTS AT TAI HANG TUNG AND WORK WILL START ON THE ACTUAL CLEARANCE OF TENANTS FROM SEVERAL OTHER ESTATES WHICH ARE SCHEDULED FOR REDEVELOPMENT.+

SPEAKING ON THE POSSIBILITY OF OBTAINING ASSISTANCE FROM PRIVATE DEVELOPERS IN THE REDEVELOPMENT SCHEMES, THE SECRETARY SAID THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE IF THE NEW ACCOMMODATION WERE TO CONCENTRATE IN A REDUCED LAND AREA, THUS RELEASING PART OF THE OLD ESTATE SITE FOR ASSIGNING TO PRIVATE DEVELOPERS IN EXCHANGE FOR THE CONSTRUCTION, AT THEIR EXPENSE, OF PART OR WHOLE OF THE NEW ESTATE.

MR. LIGHTBODY SAID THIS, HOWEVER, IS CONTRARY TO THE BASIC CONCEPT OF THE REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME AND THE NEED TO REDUCE DENSITIES OF THE OLDER ESTATES REQUIRES MORE AND NOT LESS LAND.

HOWEVER, HE ASSURED THE COUNCIL THAT THE AUTHORITY WOULD KEEP AN OPEN MIND AND LOOK FOR WAYS OF GAINING THEIR ENDS MORE QUICKLY WITH LESS DEMANDS ON THE PUBLIC PURSE.

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1975

- 8 -

LABOUR DEPARTMENT TO EXPAND SERVICES

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PLANS FOR FUTURE PROGRAMME AND DEVELOPMENT IN SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT WERE ANNOUNCED IN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON. IAN PRICE.

HE SAID THE BASIS OF THE DEPARTMENT'S SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC LIES IN ITS STAFF WHICH HAD INCREASED BY OVER 400 PER CENT IN THE PAST TEN YEARS, COMPARED TO AN INCREASE OF SOME 77 PER CENT IN THE CIVIL SERVICE AS A WHOLE DURING THE SAME PERIOD.

HE ATTRIBUTED THE LARGE INCREASE TO THE ENFORCEMENT OF NEW LABOUR LEGISLATION, THE EXPANSION OF THE LABOUR RELATIONS SERVICE, THE PROVISION OF THE INFRA-STRUCTURE FOR THE HONG KONG TRAINING COUNCIL, AND THE INCREASED EMPHASIS ON INDUSTRIAL SAFETY REQUIRING A RAPID GROWTH IN THE FACTORY INSPECTORATE.

SUCH A RAPID EXPANSION POSED PROBLEMS, AND THE COMMISSIONER SAID HE HAD TAKEN THE OPPORTUNITY DURING THE CURRENT FINANCIAL PAUSE TO TAKE A HARD LOOK AT THE USE OF MANPOWER.

HE HAD INITIALLY FOCUSED ATTENTION ON THE FACTORY INSPECTORATE BECAUSE INDUSTRIAL SAFETY LEGISLATION COULD ONLY ACHIEVE ITS PURPOSE WHEN ADMINISTERED EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY.

MR. PRICE SAID HE HAD EXAMINED PARTICULARLY THE RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF INSPECTORS, THEIR ORGANISATION, STRUCTURE AND WORKING PROCEDURES. HE PROPOSED A RADICAL CHANGE IN THE BASIC TRAINING OF INSPECTORS, WITH MORE EMPHASIS ON THE PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF THEIR WORK.

THE COMMISSIONER HOPED TO EVENTUALLY PRODUCE AN INSPECTION SERVICE FOR INDUSTRY, +WITH OFFICERS WHO WILL NOT ONLY DISCOVER WHERE THINGS ARE GOING WRONG, BUT WHO WILL HAVE THE ABILITY, AND THE TIME, TO OFFER PRACTICAL ADVICE ON HOW TO PUT THINGS RIGHT.+

HE ADDED THAT HE PROPOSED IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS TO WELD TOGETHER INTO ONE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF ACTION FOR A TOTAL ATTACK ON INDUSTRIAL SAFETY, THE LABOUR ADVISER'S RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE FIVE-YEAR INDUSTRIAL SAFETY PROGRAMME.

TURNING TO THE FUTURE MR. PRICE SAID HE PROPOSED TO IMPROVE LABOUR STANDARDS IN RESPECT OF PAID STATUTORY HOLIDAYS AND REDUCING OVERTIME WORK FOR YOUNG PEOPLE. HONG KONG, HE SAID, LAGGED BEHIND OTHER SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES IN THE PROVISION OF PAID STATUTORY HOLIDAYS.

+AT PRESENT THERE ARE ONLY SIX. I WOULD LIKE TO SEE THIS INCREASED TO TEN, AND THE LABOUR ADVISORY BOARD HAS RECENTLY GIVEN ITS SUPPORT TO THIS.

/+HOWEVER, .....

+HOWEVER, I REALISE THAT THIS MODEST ADVANCE WILL NEED TO BE STUDIED FURTHER IN THE LIGHT OF THE CURRENT ECONOMIC SITUATION,+ HE SAID.

ON OVERTIME WORK FOR YOUNG PERSONS AND WOMEN, THE COMMISSIONER POINTED OUT THAT THE MAXIMUM YEARLY PERMISSIBLE OVERTIME FOR THEM HAD BEEN REDUCED FROM 300 TO 250 HOURS SINCE LAST JANUARY, AND THIS WOULD BE REDUCED AGAIN TO 200 HOURS FROM JANUARY NEXT YEAR.

+HOWEVER, IT IS SOCIALLY UNDESIRABLE FOR YOUNG PERSONS TO WORK OVERTIME BECAUSE MANY OF THEM STRONGLY DESIRE TO FURTHER THEIR EDUCATION IN THEIR SPARE TIME.

+THE LABOUR ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORTS THIS VIEW AND INDEED WAS LARGELY INSTRUMENTAL IN PRESSING FOR THE ABOLITION OF ALL OVERTIME FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

+BUT BOTH ITS MEMBERS AND I REALISE THAT THIS WILL TAKE SOME TIME IF WE ARE TO AVOID CAUSING DISRUPTION IN SOME INDUSTRIES. THEREFORE, I AM CONTINUING TO STUDY THE ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF SUCH A MOVE,+ HE ADDED.

ON EMPLOYMENT, HE SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THE SITUATION THIS YEAR HAD BEEN DOMINATED BY SOME ECONOMIC GLOOM, REDUNDANCIES HAD DROPPED MARKEDLY SINCE THE FIRST QUARTER, AND THE TIMELY ENACTMENT OF THE SEVERANCE PAYMENT AMENDMENT TO THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE HAD GREATLY HELPED REDUNDANT WORKERS OVER THE DIFFICULT PERIOD.

DURING THE PAST YEAR, THE LABOUR RELATIONS SERVICE (LRS) HAD CONTRIBUTED DIRECTLY TO THE SETTLEMENT AND PROMPT PAYMENT OF SEVERANCE PAY TOTALLING NEARLY \$7 MILLION. THE LRS, WITH A STRENGTHENED STAFF, HAD BECOME MORE QUICKLY INVOLVED IN DISPUTES AND BY DEALING PROMPTLY WITH THE 35,000 ENQUIRIES RECEIVED DURING THE FIRST TEN MONTHS OF THIS YEAR.

THE COMMISSIONER EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES WOULD GENERALLY CONTINUE TO EXTEND TO EACH OTHER THEIR TRADITIONAL GOODWILL AND CONCERN WHICH HAD RESULTED IN A VERY LOW RECORD OF WORKING DAYS LOST LAST YEAR THROUGH INDUSTRIAL ACTION.

HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE LRS WORKED CLOSELY WITH THE LEGAL AID DEPARTMENT WHICH DID MUCH UNCUNG WORK IN HELPING EMPLOYEES SEEK THEIR RIGHTS, PARTICULARLY IN THE PERPLEXING WILDERNESS OF COMPANY BANKRUPTCY OR INSOLVENCY.

+IT IS A TRIBUTE TO THE SYMPATHETIC AND CONSIDERATE APPROACH OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AID AND HIS STAFF THAT MORE AND MORE WORKERS ARE NOW TURNING TO THEM FOR HELP IN THIS RESPECT,+ HE SAID.

ON THE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT ADVISORY SERVICE (YEAS), HE SAID IT COULD EXPAND ONLY BY ENTERING THE LABOUR-INTENSIVE FIELD OF INDIVIDUAL CAREERS GUIDANCE. +SUCH WORK IS COSTLY IN TRAINED STAFF, AND THE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES REQUIRED ARE LIKELY, FOR SOME TIME, TO BE OUTSIDE FINANCIAL RESTRAINTS,+ HE SAID.

+INITIALLY,+ HE CONTINUED, +I PROPOSE TO EXAMINE THE SPARSE RESOURCES ALREADY EXISTING IN THIS FIELD, AND THEN ASSESS WHETHER THE CREATION OF A SMALL TRAINED NUCLEUS WITHIN THE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT ADVISORY SERVICE, COULD HAVE AN IMPACT, BY WORKING THROUGH THE MULTIPLICITY OF AGENCIES IN CONTACT WITH YOUNG PEOPLE.+

THE YEAS WAS CREATED TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE COMPLEX SOCIETY TO MAKE THE RIGHT DECISION IN CHOOSING A CAREER. SINCE SEPTEMBER, THE METHODS OF DISSEMINATING CAREERS INFORMATION HAS BEEN IMPROVED BY THE USE OF A SPECIAL VEHICLE DONATED TO THE DEPARTMENT BY THE ROTARY CLUB OF KOWLOON.

THIS VEHICLE, WHOSE SIDES COULD BE UNFOLDED TO FORM A LARGE ROOFED EXHIBITION AREA, WOULD ENABLE THE YEAS TO STAGE +MINI CAREERS+ EXHIBITIONS IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF HONG KONG AND BRING THE MESSAGE OF CAREERS TO YOUNG PEOPLE IN SCHOOLS AND THOSE LIVING IN THE MORE REMOTE AREAS.

IN ADDITION, A MAJOR CAREERS EXHIBITION WOULD BE STAGED AT THE CITY HALL NEXT MONTH. +THIS ANNUAL FUNCTION MUST, I BELIEVE, BE MAINTAINED AS SUCH, BECAUSE EACH YEAR A NEW CROP OF POTENTIAL SCHOOL-LEAVERS NEEDS TO HAVE ITS EYES OPENED TO FUTURE CAREERS POSSIBILITIES,+ HE SAID.

ON INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONVENTIONS, MR. PRICE SAID PROGRESS WAS STEADILY BEING MADE IN IMPROVING HONG KONG'S POSITION RELATIVE TO THE APPLICATION OF THE MORE FUNDAMENTAL CONVENTIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION.

IN THE LAST TWO YEARS, THE POSITION HAD BEEN IMPROVED IN RESPECT OF TWO CONVENTIONS, NOS. 12 AND 17, CONCERNING WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION.

IN ADDITION, CONVENTION 98 DEALING WITH THE RIGHT TO ORGANISE AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND CONVENTION 124 REGARDING THE PROHIBITION OF YOUNG PERSONS WORKING UNDERGROUND HAD BOTH BEEN APPLIED WITHOUT MODIFICATION.

+REQUESTS HAVE ALREADY BEEN MADE FOR IMPROVED DECLARATIONS IN RESPECT OF REST DAYS IN INDUSTRY AND PROTECTION OF WAGES, AND I SHALL CONTINUE TO SEEK ADDITIONAL IMPROVED DECLARATIONS WHENEVER POSSIBLE,+ HE SAID.

FROM HIS ATTENDANCE AT THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE, THE COMMISSIONER SAID: +I AM CERTAIN THAT SUCH IMPROVEMENTS, IF SUSTAINED, CONTRIBUTE CONSIDERABLY TO A MORE FAVOURABLE VIEW BEING TAKEN BY OUR TRADING PARTNERS, BECAUSE AS INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTED STANDARDS THEY INDICATE OUR PROGRESS IN IMPROVING LABOUR CONDITIONS.

+THEY ARE IMPORTANT TOO, IN COMBATING THE SCATHING AND UNFOUNDED ATTACKS MADE FROM TIME TO TIME BY ILL-DISPOSED PERSONS WHO RESENT HONG KONG'S ECONOMIC PROGRESS, OR WHO ARE TRYING TO PROTECT THEIR OWN NARROW INTERESTS AGAINST OUR TRADING COMPETITIVENESS.

+HONG KONG HAS NOTHING TO FEAR IN AN OVERALL COMPARISON OF ITS LABOUR STANDARDS IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA IN WHICH WE MUST BE PREPARED TO BE JUDGED. INDEED, HONG KONG IS IN THE TOP HALF OF THE WORLD LEAGUE TABLE WITH 31 CONVENTIONS APPLIED,+ HE SAID.

FINALLY, MR. PRICE SAID HE SUPPORTED AND FULLY ENDORSED THE VIEW OF THE HON. FRANCIS TIEN ABOUT THE NEED FOR AN APPRENTICESHIP BILL.

+I AM GLAD TO REPORT THAT THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ADVISED YESTERDAY THAT THIS BILL SHOULD BE INTRODUCED INTO THIS COUNCIL. I ASSURE MY HONOURABLE FRIEND THAT I SHALL MOVE AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE IN THIS MATTER.+

DEBATE ON EDUCATION: QUANTITY AND QUALITY

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THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, THE HON. KENNETH TOPLEY THIS AFTERNOON SPOKE ABOUT THE CONSIDERATIONS WHICH MUST GUIDE THE TACTICAL MOVEMENTS IN DEVELOPING SECONDARY EDUCATION FOR THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PUPILS WITH WHATEVER RESOURCES WERE AVAILABLE.

REPLYING TO POINTS RAISED BY UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR. TOPLEY SAID THE KEY QUESTION ABOUT EDUCATION POSED IN THIS DEBATE WAS THAT OF QUANTITY AGAINST QUALITY, BUT IN A FRESH FORM.

PERSONALLY MR. TOPLEY BELIEVED THAT STANDARDS SHOULD BE RELAXED TEMPORARILY SO THAT THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PUPILS COULD BE HELPED WITH THEIR EDUCATION.

HE REFERRED TO THE REAL UNCERTAINTY ABOUT FINANCIAL RESOURCES - READY MONEY - AVAILABLE FOR SPENDING BY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

+IF WE CAN EXPECT A LOT RATHER QUICKLY WE SHOULD HARDLY MODIFY OUR EDUCATIONAL PLANS AT ALL BUT WAIT FOR THE REVENUE UPTURN.

+IF, AT THE OTHER EXTREME, THERE WERE REALLY SOUND REASON FOR PESSIMISM - A LITTLE AND LATE - THEN WE SHOULD THOROUGHLY RESTRUCTURE OUR EXPANSION PLANS TO SUIT OUR ASSUMED RESOURCES.+

THE DIRECTOR STATED THAT HE WAS PLANNING FOR VARIOUS CONTINGENCIES.

HE SAID: +FIRST OF ALL IT WOULD BE QUITE UNJUSTIFIED TO TAKE A PESSIMISTIC VIEW FOR THE MEDIUM TERM, AND IT FOLLOWS FROM THIS THAT WE SHOULD NOT THROW AWAY OR COMPLETELY REVAMP OUR CONCEPTS AND PLANS FOR SECONDARY EDUCATION EXPANSION ARRIVED AT WITH SO MUCH PAIN AND SWEAT AND ENSHRINED AT LAST IN THE WHITE PAPER.

+IF THE SITUATION DEVELOPS FAVOURABLY, AS WE ALL DEVOUTLY HOPE, WE MAY BE ABLE TO MAKE A START NEXT YEAR, AS IT STANDS.

+HOWEVER IF THE SITUATION FAILS TO DEVELOP AS FAVOURABLY AS THIS, THERE ARE A VARIETY OF WAYS OF EXPANDING SECONDARY EDUCATION, ALL WITH DIFFERENT PRICE TAGS, ALL WITH DIFFERENT CHARACTERISTICS CARRYING DIFFERENT DEGREES OF ADVANTAGE DEPENDING ON CIRCUMSTANCES, WHICH COULD BE USED TO KEEP THINGS MOVING UNTIL THE WHITE PAPER CAN BE IMPLEMENTED IN FULL. THAT IS TO SAY UNTIL WE CAN AFFORD TO GO FOR EXTENDED DAY IN ALL AIDED AND GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS, BUYING AS MANY GOOD PLACES AS ARE AVAILABLE IN THE PRIVATE SCHOOLS, MEANWHILE BUILDING AS HARD AS WE CAN.+

/THE DIRECTOR .....

THE DIRECTOR STRESSED THAT THE MINIMUM THING TO TACKLE WAS TO ENSURE THAT AT LEAST AS HIGH A PROPORTION OF CANDIDATES AS IN FORMER YEARS WOULD RECEIVE AN AIDED PLACE AS A RESULT OF TAKING THE SECONDARY SCHOOL ENTRANCE EXAMINATION.

+THIS AIM REQUIRES AN ADDITION OF SOME 4,000 TO THE NUMBER OF FORM 1 PLACES. THE QUICKEST WAY OF DOING THIS IS, AS MR. Q.W. LEE RIGHTLY POINTS OUT, TO PERMIT A TEMPORARY INCREASE IN CLASS SIZE. THAT WILL COST PRACTICALLY NOTHING TO THE TREASURY.

+I CAN HOPE ALSO TO REDEPLOY SOME GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS TO ACHIEVE A MEASURE OF FLOTATION - MEANING EXTRA CLASSES - IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS.

+THESE TWO MEASURES TOGETHER SHOULD ENABLE ME TO KEEP UP THE PROPORTION OF S.S.E.E. SUCCESSES SO THAT COMPETITION FOR PLACES IF NOT MADE Milder AT LEAST BECOMES NO MORE FIERCE.

+AT THE WORST THESE PROPOSALS CAN BE PLACED BEFORE THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AS EMERGENCY MEASURES WHICH PROVIDE ADDITIONAL PLACES, ALL OF THEM AIDED AND IN GOOD SCHOOLS,+ HE SAID.

THIS DID NOT MEAN THAT MR. TOPLEY BELIEVED IT A GOOD THING TO INCREASE CLASS SIZE, BUT IT WAS BETTER THAN LEAVING CHILDREN WITHOUT A SCHOOL PLACE.

+BUT I AM PRETTY CONFIDENT THAT BY BUDGET TIME WE WILL FIND WE HAVE RESOURCES FOR RATHER MORE THAN THIS.

+IN THIS CASE A POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL OPTION IS TO IMPROVE AND EXTEND THREE AND FIVE YEAR EVENING SECONDARY COURSES FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL LEAVERS UNABLE TO FIND A PLACE IN A DAY SCHOOL,+ THE DIRECTOR SAID.

+THESE WOULD BE NEW PLACES,+ HE SAID. +THEY WOULD ALSO BE LESS EXPENSIVE THAN A BOUGHT PLACE SO WE SHOULD GET GOOD VALUE FOR MONEY HERE, BUT UNLESS WE ARE ABLE TO IMPROVE THE PLACES A GREAT DEAL AND UNTIL THEY GAIN SUBSTANTIAL PUBLIC APPROVAL IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE TO REGARD THESE AS PLACES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR.

THE DIRECTOR SAID THAT THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WAS ALSO STUDYING CRITICALLY PLANS TO CONVERT SURPLUS PRIMARY SCHOOLS FOR USE WITHIN SECONDARY EDUCATION.

HE SAID: +I AM SURE THAT THE WHITE PAPER HAS SET OUT MORE OR LESS THE LINE WE SHOULD FOLLOW, AND IN THE MEDIUM TERM WILL BE ABLE TO FOLLOW. THE EXPEDIENTS I HAVE OUTLINED ABOVE SHOULD ONLY BE ADOPTED IF, AND ONLY IF, IN THE SHORT TERM WE HAVE NOT THE RESOURCES= WE MUST NOT IGNORE THE CLAIMS OF THE PRESENT GENERATION BECAUSE THEY MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO BECOME LOST. PLEASE DO NOT MISUNDERSTAND ME.+

MR. TOPLEY .....

MR. TOPLEY STATED EMPHATICALLY THAT HE DID NOT THINK IT APPROPRIATE TO CONSIDER A CHANGE OF STRATEGY AND ABANDON THE WHITE PAPER.

HE ADDED: +I SENSE THERE IS GENERAL AGREEMENT ON THIS IN THIS COUNCIL. WHAT IS MORE WE MUST NOT FORGET THE TEACHERS BOTH SERVING AND IN TRAINING UPON WHOM THE FRONT-LINE WORK OF EDUCATION FALLS AND ON WHOM WE RELY IN THE LAST ANALYSIS TO CARRY ALL OUR PLANS TO FRUITION. WE MUST TAKE ACCOUNT OF THEIR REASONABLE EXPECTATION OF A WORKING CAREER AND IT MUST ALWAYS BE A MATTER OF CONCERN THAT THEIR ENTHUSIASM IS NOT BLUNTED BEFORE THEY HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO BRING IT FULLY TO BEAR.+

MR. TOPLEY INDICATED SUBSTANTIAL AGREEMENT WITH POINTS RAISED BY MR. Q.W. LEE.

+AND I WILL NOT DENY OUR DUTY TO EDUCATE OUR CHILDREN WHICH BOTH MRS. SYMONS AND MISS KO SIU-WAH UNDERSCORE.

+MR. CHEONG-LEEN OFFERS ME AN ECONOMY VERSION OF A SCHEME WHICH HE PRESENTED A FEW MONTHS AGO FOR SUBSIDIZING CHILDREN WHEREVER THEY SIT. HIS ECONOMIES ARE REAL BUT THEY ARE MADE AT THE EXPENSE OF ADMINISTRATIVE SIMPLICITY. IT IS OF COURSE STILL A PURELY MONEY TRANSFER. NO EXTRA SCHOOL PLACES WOULD BE CREATED.

+HIS PROPOSALS FOR FINANCING ARE INTERESTING. HE WISHES TO MODIFY THE SCHEME FOR SUBSIDIZING STUDENT FARES IN ORDER TO SUBSIDIZE AN OVERLAPPING POPULATION OF SCHOOL FEE PAYERS. IT IS AS I HAVE INDICATED MORE OF AN INCOME REDISTRIBUTION SCHEME THAN AN EDUCATIONAL ONE.+

ON MR. ALEX WU'S REQUEST TO DEEPEN THE CULTURAL CONTENT OF EDUCATION IN ORDER TO ENRICH AND STABILIZE SOCIETY BY THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-DIRECTING INDIVIDUALS, MR. TOPLEY SAID: +IT IS A PROFOUND BUSINESS.+

HE ADDED: +LIKE MR. WU I AM CONCERNED THAT WE MAY BE TOO DOMINATED BY SHORT TERM CONCERNS. I AM ANXIOUS LEST WE PRODUCE MANY GOOD ROLE-PLAYERS BUT FEW IF ANY ROLE CREATORS.

+AND I WILL ON AN APPROPRIATE OCCASION DISCUSS AT GREATER LENGTH OUR DOINGS IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION THROUGH ARTS AND CRAFTS AND HOW WE ARE PREPARING THE TEACHERS OF TOMORROW FOR THEIR ROLE IN THIS.+

BOOM-TIME IN NEW TERRITORIES  
X X X X X

THE SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, THE HON. DAVID AKERS-JONES, TODAY SPOKE ABOUT THE RAPID DEVELOPMENTS TAKING PLACE IN THE RURAL AREAS AND SAID +IT IS CERTAINLY BOOM-TIME IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.+

+THE MAGNITUDE AND VARIETY OF DEVELOPMENT MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT THERE IS RECESSION ELSEWHERE,+ HE TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

SINCE LAST NOVEMBER, HE SAID, 66 ACRES OF LAND HAVE BEEN SOLD OR GRANTED FOR INDUSTRY, REALISING REVENUE OF \$82 MILLION.

THIS DOES NOT INCLUDE THE RECLAMATION OF ANOTHER 65 ACRES OF SEABED TO EXTEND THE CONTAINER PORT AT KWAI CHUNG, WHICH HE SAID, WAS PROCEEDING AT AN UNBELIEVABLE PACE.

WORK ON THE FIRST STAGE OF THE 120-ACRE TAI PO INDUSTRIAL ESTATE WILL START AT THE END OF THIS MONTH AND SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY THE END OF 1977, HE ADDED.

IN TUEN MUN, SEVEN FLATTED FACTORIES ARE UNDER CONSTRUCTION AND TWO TOY MANUFACTURERS, WHO TOGETHER WILL EMPLOY OVER 2,000 WORKERS, WILL START BUILDING WITHIN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS AND ARE EXPECTED TO BE IN PRODUCTION BY THE END OF NEXT YEAR.

MR. AKERS-JONES CONTINUED :+ A TOTAL OF 340 ACRES OF LAND FOR RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL USE HAVE ALSO BEEN EXCHANGED, GRANTED OR SOLD SINCE NOVEMBER LAST, AT A PREMIUM OF \$182 MILLION.

+THIS INCLUDES THE LARGE SITE AT YUEN LONG OF 285 ACRES TO PROVIDE HOUSING FOR 25,000 PEOPLE IN INDIVIDUAL HOUSES.

+IN SHA TIN, THE RECENT SALE OF THE RIGHT TO RECLAIM AND DEVELOP PART OF THE SEABED PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY TO THE DEVELOPER TO BUILD HOUSES, SHOPS AND SCHOOLS FOR A COMMUNITY OF 30,000 PEOPLE.

+NEXT YEAR, THERE WILL BE AN ADDITIONAL AREA OF SEABED FOR SALE AT SHA TIN, AND I HOPE THAT 40 ACRES OF LAND IN THE HILLS ABOVE KWAI CHUNG, NOW BEING TERRACED BY THE DEVELOPERS OF THE CONTAINER TERMINALS, WILL ALSO BECOME AVAILABLE FOR PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT AT THE END OF NEXT YEAR.+

/THE SECRETARY .....

THE SECRETARY ALSO DISCLOSED THAT NEXT YEAR SOME 400,000 SQUARE FEET OF COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL LAND WOULD BE OFFERED TO HOLDERS OF LAND EXCHANGE ENTITLEMENTS, AND IN ADDITION, THERE WERE AREAS OF INDUSTRIAL AND LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL LAND WHICH MAY BE EXCHANGED.

MR. AKERS-JONES SAID THAT LAST YEAR HIS DEPARTMENT HAD BEEN HANDLING PROPOSALS TO BUILD A 40-STORY WAREHOUSE, AN AERIAL ROPEWAY, A 200-FOOT HIGH BUDDHA AND A SAFARI PARK.

+IF WE CAN FIND A SUITABLE AREA OF LAND, I DO NOT SEE WHY WE CANNOT COPE WITH A ZOO IF THAT IS THOUGHT TO BE A USEFUL AND INTERESTING ADDITION TO THE SCOPE OF LIFE IN HONG KONG,+ HE ADDED.

TURNING TO THE CRIME SITUATION, MR. AKERS-JONES SAID THAT BY AND LARGE THE NEW TERRITORIES, APART FROM TSUEN WAN, HAD NOT BEEN INFESTED WITH THIS PROBLEM AND THE PEOPLE OF THE MARKET TOWNS AND VILLAGES WERE DETERMINED TO KEEP IT THAT WAY.

THE SECRETARY DESCRIBED AS UNNECESSARY AND ALARMING PRESS REPORTS WHICH SAID THAT HE WAS ORGANISING 'POSSES OF VIGILANTES'.

HE SAID THE HEUNG YEE KUK, THE DISTRICT FIGHT VIOLENT CRIME COMMITTEES, THE POLICE AND THE NTA WERE RE-EXAMINING THE FUNCTION OF THE WELL-ESTABLISHED RURAL SYSTEM OF VILLAGE GUARDS, WHICH HAD ALL ALONG BEEN, AND IS STILL MAINTAINED IN THE NEW TERRITORIES TO SEE HOW THE SYSTEM COULD BE ADAPTED AND IMPROVED TO HELP IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES.

+IN TOWN AND COUNTRY, THE PEOPLE ARE ORGANISING THEMSELVES TO ASSIST THE POLICE TO DRIVE OUT THIS THREAT TO OUR SOCIETY AND WE WILL DO SO,+ MR. AKERS-JONES SAID.

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## PROPOSED FARE REVISION FOR STAR FERRY AND TRAMWAYS

TABLED IN LEGCO

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THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. JAMES ROBSON, TODAY INTRODUCED LEGISLATIVE MEASURES AIMED AT INCREASING THE FARES AND WAIVING ROYALTY FOR THE STAR FERRY COMPANY AND THE HONG KONG TRAMWAYS COMPANY.

ANOTHER BILL WHICH SEEKS TO CHARGE ONLY A NOMINAL PERMIT FEE FOR THE PEAK TRAMWAYS WAS ALSO INTRODUCED. THE FARE INCREASE FOR THIS COMPANY IS BEING MADE BY AN ORDER OF THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL.

IN THE CASE OF THE HONG KONG TRAMWAYS IT IS PROPOSED THAT THE NEW FARE STRUCTURE OF 30 CENTS AND THE WAIVING OF THE ROYALTY FOR THE FUTURE SHOULD BE COUPLED WITH A REQUIREMENT THAT THE COMPANY ESTABLISH A PROFIT EQUALISATION FUND.

MR. ROBSON EXPLAINED THAT PROFITS IN EXCESS OF 15 PER CENT PER ANNUM ON THE FIXED ASSETS EMPLOYED WOULD BE PAID INTO THE FUND. WHEN PROFITS FELL BELOW THE PERMITTED LEVEL, FUNDS COULD BE DRAWN, WHEN NECESSARY, TO BRING THE COMPANY'S PROFITS BACK UP TO 15 PER CENT.

HE SAID NEGOTIATIONS WITH HONG KONG TRAMWAYS ON THE FORM OF THE PROFIT EQUALISATION FUND, THE VALUATION OF THE ASSETS AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS WOULD TAKE PLACE IF THE BILL BEFORE THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WERE PASSED.

MR. ROBSON INDICATED THAT THE NEW FARE STRUCTURE FOR THE TRAMWAYS COMPANY AND THE WAIVING OF THE ROYALTY SHOULD "AVOID FURTHER FARE INCREASES IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE".

IN INTRODUCING A RESOLUTION TO WAIVE ROYALTY FOR THE STAR FERRY COMPANY AND TO INCREASE THE FIRST CLASS FARES TO 30 CENTS AND SECOND CLASS TO 15 CENTS, MR. ROBSON SAID IT WAS INAPPROPRIATE IN THE CASE OF THIS COMPANY TO ASSESS A FAIR RETURN BASED ON A PERCENTAGE OF FIXED ASSETS.

THIS IS BECAUSE THE COMPANY'S ASSETS ARE BASICALLY THE FERRIES IT OWNS AND DUE TO PAST DEPRECIATION THESE HAVE A VERY LOW ASSET VALUE. THIS VALUE IS DIMINISHING RAPIDLY AND THERE IS NO NEED AT PRESENT FOR FURTHER CAPITAL INVESTMENT AS THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE COMPANY ARE "PERFECTLY ADEQUATE".

MR. ROBSON ADDED THAT IF THE RETURN WERE BASED ON A PERCENTAGE OF FIXED ASSETS IT WOULD LIMIT THE ALLOWABLE PROFIT TO LOWER AND LOWER LEVELS HARDLY JUSTIFYING THE MANAGERIAL EFFORT REQUIRED TO RUN THE COMPANY.

"A PROFIT BEARING SOME RELATION TO THE AVERAGE PROFITS OVER THE PREVIOUS FIVE-YEAR PERIOD IS PROBABLY A MORE REALISTIC MEANS OF ASSESSING FAIR RETURNS," HE SAID.

UNDER THIS METHOD .....

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1975

- 17 -

UNDER THIS METHOD AND ASSUMING THAT THE NEW FARE STRUCTURE IS AGREED AND THAT NO ROYALTY PAYMENTS ARE MADE, A PROJECTION OF THE PROFITS EXPECTED OVER THE FIVE YEARS 1974-78 INDICATE AN AVERAGE ANNUAL PROFIT OF LESS THAN \$800,000. THIS COMPARES WITH AN ANNUAL AVERAGE OF \$1.4 MILLION OVER THE PREVIOUS FIVE YEARS - 1969-73 - AFTER PAYMENT OF ROYALTY.

IN APPLYING FOR A FARE INCREASE, THE COMPANY PROJECTED ON EXISTING FARES THAT BEFORE THE PAYMENT OF ROYALTY AND TAX IT WOULD LOSE MONEY ON ITS OPERATIONS OVER THE YEARS 1975 TO 1978 AND PROGRESSIVELY AFTER THAT. IN FACT, EVEN WITH THE NEW FARE STRUCTURE AND NO ROYALTY, THE COMPANY WILL STILL MAKE A LOSS OF SOME \$264,000 IN 1975.

REFERRING TO THE PEAK TRAMWAYS COMPANY, MR. ROBSON SAID THAT THE FORECAST RATE OF RETURN FOR 1975 WAS ONLY 3.29 PER CENT IF THE FULL PERMIT FEE WERE PAID.

+THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT IF NOTHING WERE DONE TO ASSIST THE COMPANY THIS LOW PROFITABILITY POSITION WOULD DETERIORATE INTO A LOSS EARLY IN 1977. THE COMPANY HAS ALSO HAD TO EMBARK ON A RELATIVELY COSTLY CAPITAL REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME TO MEET THE HIGH SAFETY STANDARDS REQUIRED FOR SUCH A SYSTEM.

THEREFORE, THE COMPANY APPLIED FOR A FARE INCREASE AND WAIVER OF THE PERMIT FEE TO IMPROVE PROFITABILITY AND ENABLE IT TO ACQUIRE THE NECESSARY CASH FOR THE REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME. THE FARE INCREASE HAS BEEN APPROVED AND THE BILL BEFORE THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SEEKS TO CHARGE ONLY A NOMINAL \$25,000 PERMIT FEE FOR 1974 AND 1975.

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1975

- 18 -

DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES BILL  
TABLED IN LECCO  
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THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, SAID TODAY THAT WHILE HE DID NOT THINK IT RIGHT AT PRESENT TO ENLARGE THE LICENSED BANKING SECTOR BY ISSUING NEW LICENCES, THE PROPOSAL FOR A FORM OF LIMITED BANKING LICENCE HAS NOT BEEN ABANDONED AND WILL BE KEPT UNDER REVIEW.

HE GAVE THIS ASSURANCE IN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WHEN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES BILL WHICH AIMS AT PROTECTING THE INTERESTS OF DEPOSITORS.

MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID THAT ONE IMPORTANT OUTCOME OF THE BILL, IF ENACTED, WOULD BE THAT INFORMATION WOULD BECOME AVAILABLE ABOUT THE NUMBER OF DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES AND THE SCALE OF THEIR ACTIVITIES. AT PRESENT, THIS INFORMATION IS ALMOST ENTIRELY LACKING.

+ONCE IT IS AVAILABLE, THE NEED FOR MORE COMPREHENSIVE CONTROLS AND SUPERVISION CAN BE ASSESSED,+ HE SAID.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY EXPLAINED THAT THE BILL HAD TWO MAIN PURPOSES - TO ENSURE THAT THE RISKS TO SMALL DEPOSITORS ARE MINIMISED BY REQUIRING THAT SMALL DEPOSITS BE HELD ONLY WITH THOSE FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS WHICH ARE SUBJECT TO CLOSE SUPERVISION AND CONTROL= AND TO ENSURE THAT OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS ACCEPTING DEPOSITS FROM THE PUBLIC ARE OF REASONABLE SUBSTANCE, THAT THEIR ANNUAL ACCOUNTS BE OPEN TO THEIR DEPOSITORS, AND THAT THEIR ASSETS BACKING THE DEPOSITS ARE NOT UNDULY CONCENTRATED WITH ANY BORROWER.

HE STRESSED, HOWEVER, THAT THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION WAS NOT AN ATTEMPT TO +LEGISLATE FOR THE COMPLETE PROTECTION OF ALL FOOLS.+

THE BILL REQUIRES A COMPANY TO PAY \$10,000 ON REGISTRATION AND ANNUALLY THEREAFTER. ONE OF THE CONDITIONS FOR REGISTRATION IS THAT COMPANIES MUST HAVE A MINIMUM ISSUED CAPITAL OF \$5 MILLION, OF WHICH AT LEAST \$2-1/2 MILLION MUST HAVE BEEN PAID FOR.

BUSINESSES ALREADY IN EXISTENCE AT THE COMMENCEMENT DATE OF THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION ARE TO BE ALLOWED TWO YEARS TO MEET THIS PROVISION.

COMPANIES WILL ALSO BE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE THE COMMISSIONER ANNUALLY WITH THEIR LATEST ACCOUNTS AND THESE ARE TO BE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION.

THE BILL STIPULATES THAT REGISTERED COMPANIES WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO ACCEPT DEPOSITS SMALLER THAN \$50,000.

/THE BILL ALSO .....

1975  
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1975

- 19 -

THE BILL ALSO PROPOSES THE SETTING UP OF A DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE, WITH FUNCTION SIMILAR TO THOSE OF THE BANKING ADVISORY COMMITTEE UNDER THE BANKING ORDINANCE.

IT IS ALSO PROPOSED THAT ONLY LICENSED BANKS AND REGISTERED DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO ADVERTISE IN HONG KONG FOR DEPOSITS. THIS IS MAINLY DIRECTED AGAINST THE SOLICITING OF DEPOSITS BY OVERSEAS CONCERNS WHICH ARE NOT OTHERWISE SUBJECT TO SUPERVISION HERE.

PROVISIONS ARE ALSO MADE AGAINST THE SOLICITING OF DEPOSITS BY FRAUDULENT, RECKLESS OR NEGLIGENT MISINTERPRETATION.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1975

- 20 -

SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL  
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THE PROPOSED SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL TO HEAR MONETARY CLAIMS OF NOT MORE THAN \$3,000 IS TO BE SET UP FOR AN INITIAL PERIOD OF THREE YEARS, IF A SUGGESTION BY THE HON. OSWALD CHEUNG IS ACCEPTED.

MR. CHEUNG GAVE NOTICE AT TODAY'S LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING THAT HE WOULD TABLE THIS AMENDMENT, WHICH IS SUPPORTED BY HIS UNOFFICIAL COLLEAGUES, AT THE COMMITTEE STAGE OF THE SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL BILL.

MR. CHEUNG TOLD COUNCIL THAT IT WOULD BE WISE TO LIMIT THE LIFE OF THE TRIBUNAL UNTIL IT HAD PROVED SUCCESSFUL, IN WHICH CASE ITS LIFE COULD BE EXTENDED.

HE PERSONALLY REGRETTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD FOUND IT NECESSARY TO CREATE THIS TRIBUNAL, AND HE FELT REASSURED THAT NO FURTHER COURTS OF THIS NATURE WOULD BE CREATED.

ANOTHER UNOFFICIAL MEMBER, THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN, SUPPORTED THE PROPOSED TRIBUNAL AND SAID IT WOULD ENABLE THOSE WHO DID NOT SPEAK ENGLISH TO BRING CLAIMS BEFORE IT WITHOUT MUCH DIFFICULTY.

HE STRESSED, HOWEVER, THAT PUBLIC REACTION TO THE TRIBUNAL MUST BE CAREFULLY WATCHED AS IT HAD BEEN SUGGESTED THAT THE TRIBUNAL COULD EASILY BECOME ANOTHER TOOL FOR GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND BUSINESS COMPANIES TO EXTRACT EVERY CENT DUE FROM THE LOWER INCOME SECTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY.

+HOPEFULLY,+ HE ADDED, +THE SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL SHOULD BE RECOGNISED AS BEING FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE, AND NOT TO BE THOUGHT OF AS BEING USED PREDOMINANTLY TO OPPRESS THE SMALL MAN.+

MR. CHEONG-LEEN ALSO HOPED THAT THE CITY DISTRICT OFFICES WOULD ASSIST MULTI-STOREY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES TO USE THE TRIBUNAL TO ENFORCE REASONABLE DISCIPLINE AND CO-OPERATION IN MULTI-STOREY BUILDINGS FOR THE GOOD OF ALL RESIDENTS.

HE ADDED: +I WOULD EVEN GO FURTHER BY SAYING THAT WITH THE PASSAGE OF THIS BILL THE CDO'S SHOULD NOW REDOUBLE THEIR EFFORTS TO HAVE ALL LARGE MULTI-STOREY BUILDINGS WHICH HAVE LITTLE OR NO MANAGEMENT TO SET UP MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES WITH THE LEAST POSSIBLE DELAY.+

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1975

- 21 -

**BILLS PASSED**

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TWO BILLS -- THE RAILWAYS (AMENDMENT) BILL AND THE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) (NO.3) BILL -- COMPLETED THEIR PASSAGE THROUGH THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY TO BECOME LAW.

TWO OTHERS, THE SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL BILL AND THE SUPREME COURT BILL, PASSED THEIR SECOND READING, WHILE SIX OTHERS WERE INTRODUCED IN COUNCIL FOR THE FIRST TIME. THESE WERE: THE PENSIONS (INCREASE) BILL, THE DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES BILL, THE BANKING (AMENDMENT)(NO.2) BILL, THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) (NO. 6) BILL, THE PEAK TRAMWAY (AMENDMENT) BILL, AND THE TRAMWAY (AMENDMENT) BILL.

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**N.T. LAND SALES**

**\* \* \* \***

A PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL LOT SITUATED AT SILVERSTRAND, CLEARWATER BAY, WILL BE PUT UP FOR SALE BY AUCTION LATER THIS MONTH.

THE LOT HAS AN AREA OF ABOUT 75,700 SQUARE FEET.

THE AUCTION WILL BE HELD IN THE SAI KUNG DISTRICT OFFICE, SAN PO KONG GOVERNMENT OFFICES ON NOVEMBER 25 STARTING AT 2.30 P.M.

FULL PARTICULARS AND CONDITIONS OF SALE MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION, NORTH KOWLOON MAGISTRACY, TAI PO ROAD, AND AT THE DISTRICT OFFICES OF YUEN LONG, TUEN MUN, TSUEN WAN, TAI PO, SHA TIN, SAI KUNG AND ISLANDS. SALES PLANS MAY ALSO BE INSPECTED AT THE VARIOUS OFFICES.

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