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SIR PHILIP THANKS UNOFFICIALS FOR LEGCO WORK

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THE ACTING GOVERNOR, SIR PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, THANKED UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL FOR THE MANY HOURS OF HARD WORK THAT THEY PUT INTO THE 1981-82 SESSION WHICH ENDED TODAY.

SIR PHILIP SAID THAT THE GOVERNOR, SIR EDWARD YOUDE, HAD EXPRESSED REGRET THAT ANOTHER IMPORTANT COMMITMENT HAD PREVENTED HIM FROM PRESIDING AT TODAY'S MEETING OF THE COUNCIL.

THE SESSION JUST ENDED WAS +MOST IMPRESSIVE, CONSTRUCTIVE AND PRODUCTIVE,+ SIR PHILIP SAID.

HE ALSO SPOKE OF THE +MANY HOURS OF CLOSE SCRUTINY AND CONSIDERATION BY AD HOC GROUPS OF UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS UNDER THE AEGIS OF UMELCO.+

HE WISHED THEM A +WELL DESERVED AND RESTFUL RECESS.+

AT TODAY'S MEETING, 16 BILLS WERE PASSED INTO LAW, AND THREE OTHERS WERE INTRODUCED AND READ A SECOND TIME, WITH DEBATE ADJOURNED.

THE NEXT SESSION OF THE COUNCIL WILL START ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 6, WITH AN ADDRESS BY THE GOVERNOR.

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ANTI-SMOKING MEASURES SUPPORTED

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A SUBSTANTIAL BODY OF MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE POINTED TO A LINK BETWEEN SMOKING AND LUNG CANCER, DR THE HON HO KAM-FAI, UNOFFICIAL MEMBER, SAID AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THIS, AND THE FACT THAT MOST OF THE COMMUNITY WERE AGAINST SMOKING, MADE IT APPROPRIATE FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE ACTION TO RESTRICT SMOKING IN THE INTEREST OF PUBLIC HEALTH, DR HO SAID, IN SUPPORTING THE SMOKING (PUBLIC HEALTH) BILL, 1982.

DR HO DESCRIBED THE LEGISLATION AS BEING +FAIRLY WELL BALANCED IN THAT IT SEEKS TO PROTECT NON-SMOKERS AND STILL LEAVE SMOKERS WITH CERTAIN PLACES TO SMOKE.+

HE URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO ENGAGE IN MORE AGGRESSIVE LONG-TERM EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY, ESPECIALLY DIRECTED AT THE YOUNGER PEOPLE.

+THE PURPOSE IS TO EDUCATE THE SMOKERS TO BE MORE CONSIDERATE AND TO DISCOURAGE YOUNG PEOPLE AND STUDENTS FROM STARTING THIS HEALTH-DAMAGING HABIT,+ HE SAID.

DR HO SAID THAT THE CODE OF PRACTICE ON TOBACCO ADVERTISING ON RADIO, TELEVISION AND CINEMA SCREENS SHOULD BE TIGHTENED +SO THAT ANY ADVERTISEMENT PURPORTED TO PROJECT THE IMAGE OF A SUCCESSFUL OR POPULAR PERSONALITY ASSOCIATED WITH SMOKING SHOULD BE PROHIBITED.+

/HE URGED .....

HE URGED ALSO THAT MORE PUBLIC FINANCIAL SUPPORT BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR SPORTS ACTIVITIES FOR THE YOUNG, TO OFFSET THE POSSIBLE +MISLEADING+ INFLUENCE OF TOBACCO-COMPANY SPONSORED SPORTING EVENTS.

ANOTHER UNOFFICIAL MEMBER, THE HON SELINA CHOW, DECLARING HER INTEREST AS A REFORMED SMOKER, SUPPORTED THE MOTION +WITH A DEEP SENSE OF APOLOGY TO FR MCGOVERN AND ALL SMOKERS.+

STATING THAT SHE HAD TO SAY +JUST A FEW WORDS ON THE 'PCSP' (PERSECUTION OF CIGARETTE SMOKERS PACKAGE)+, SHE NOTED THAT CIGARETTE SMOKING HAD NEVER BEEN BRANDED AS A SOCIALLY UNACCEPTABLE ACT, BUT WAS, ON THE CONTRARY, +VERY MUCH A STATUS SYMBOL,+ AND THAT IMAGE WAS USED +TO ENTICE NEW CONVERTS.+

THINGS HAD CHANGED TODAY. +CLEAN AIR IS THE FASHION, THE PURSUIT OF HEALTH THE STATUS SYMBOL,+ SHE SAID, ADDING THAT +NON-SMOKERS SHOULD REMEMBER THAT SMOKERS ARE JUST AS ENTITLED TO THE AIR AS THEY ARE.+

THERE WERE AN ESTIMATED 888 400 SMOKERS AND THIS WAS NOT A SMALL MINORITY, SHE SAID.

+THE SHEER NUMBER JUSTIFIES SOME CONSIDERATION IN THE DEGREE OF PERSECUTION TO BE EXECUTED,+ SHE CONCLUDED.

TWO OTHER UNOFFICIALS SUPPORTED THE MOTION, AND SPOKE OF THE HAZARDS OF SMOKING.

THE HON WONG LAM, IN HIS SPEECH, ALSO CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE HELP IN HOSPITALS FOR PEOPLE WHO WISH TO RID THEMSELVES OF THE SMOKING HABIT.

THE HON CHAN KAM CHUEN, POINTING TO THE HEALTH AND FIRE DANGER, AS WELL AS THE HEAVY COST OF SMOKING TO SOME PEOPLE, CALLED FOR SUBSTANTIALLY HIGHER TAX ON TOBACCO. HE SAID ALSO THAT POLICE ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN AGAINST PEOPLE VIOLATING THE PROVISIONS OF THE LEGISLATION, AND CALLED FOR GREATER PUBLICITY ON THE SUBJECT.

THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, THE HON E.P. HO, THANKED MEMBERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT AND SAID ENFORCEMENT WOULD CERTAINLY BE ASSISTED IF THERE WAS ACTIVE PUBLIC SUPPORT, AND IT WAS INTENDED THAT THIS WOULD BE ACHIEVED BY MORE POSITIVE PROMOTION OF PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION.

PARTICULAR ATTENTION WOULD BE PAID TO THE YOUNGER MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS WAS NOT TO PERSECUTE SMOKERS, BUT RATHER TO EDUCATE AND EVENTUALLY CONVERT THEM, HE SAID.

+THE CONTENT AND MANNER OF CIGARETTE ADVERTISING ON RADIO, TELEVISION AND ON CINEMA SCREENS HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF CLOSE EXAMINATION BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR TELEVISION AND ENTERTAINMENT LICENSING AND A TIGHTER CODE OF PRACTICE HAS BEEN PRODUCED. THIS WILL BE BROUGHT INTO EFFECT ON JANUARY 1, 1983.

/+I ENDORSE .....

+I ENDORSE DR HO'S COMMENTS ON COMMERCIAL SPONSORSHIP AND THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CERTAINLY BE PLEASED TO SEE MORE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM OTHER SOURCES FOR SPORTS EVENTS,+ HE SAID.

THE BILL WAS GIVEN FINAL APPROVAL, AFTER MR HO MOVED AN AMENDMENT TO ENABLE SAMPLES OF CIGARETTES TO BE WITHDRAWN FROM BOND FOR ANALYSIS BY THE GOVERNMENT CHEMIST.

+I NEED ONLY ADD THAT THIS SAMPLING METHOD HAS THE AGREEMENT OF THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY, FOR WHOSE CO-OPERATION GENERALLY DURING THE PREPARATION OF THIS BILL, I AM MOST GRATEFUL,+ MR HO SAID.

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PUBLICITY DRIVE PLANNED FOR CHANGES IN ROAD TRAFFIC LAW

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THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON ALAN SCOTT, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT ESPECIAL CARE WOULD BE TAKEN TO PUBLICISE THE CHANGES IN ROAD TRAFFIC LEGISLATION SO THAT THE PUBLIC WOULD BE FULLY AWARE OF THEIR PART IN IMPROVING SAFETY AND BEHAVING SENSIBLY ON OUR ROADS.

SPEAKING AT THE SECOND READING OF THE ROAD TRAFFIC BILL 1982 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR SCOTT ASSURED MEMBERS THAT THE BILL HAD BEEN PREPARED WITH GREAT CARE, AND CONGRATULATED THE WORKING PARTY AND THE LEGAL DRAFTSMEN FOR PRODUCING A +WELL ORDERED, UNDERSTANDABLE AND PRACTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF ROAD TRAFFIC IN HONG KONG+.

HE ESTIMATED THAT THE NEW MEASURES COULD BE BROUGHT INTO OPERATION 18 MONTHS AFTER ENACTMENT OF THE BILL.

THIS WOULD ALLOW MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, INVOLVED ORGANISATIONS AND GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS TO PREPARE FULLY FOR THE CHANGES.

+PRACTICAL PROBLEMS WHICH COULD NOT BE FORESEEN DURING THE DRAFTING WILL NO DOUBT SURFACE IN THIS PERIOD, AND NECESSARY AMENDMENTS CAN BE MADE BEFORE IMPLEMENTATION,+ HE SAID.

MR SCOTT ALSO SAID THAT INTRODUCTION OF +RECKLESS DRIVING+ TO REPLACE +DANGEROUS DRIVING+ DID NOT MEAN A SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE IN THE EXISTING STANDARDS OF CONDUCT REQUIRED OF A DRIVER AND IT WOULD NOT BE ANY EASIER TO PROVE AN OFFENCE.

+AS IN THE PAST,+ HE SAID, +ONLY A MINORITY OF MOTORISTS ARE LIKELY TO BE AFFECTED.

+IN 1981, FOR INSTANCE, THERE WERE 77 PROSECUTIONS FOR DANGEROUS DRIVING CAUSING DEATH, FIVE FOR DANGEROUS DRIVING CAUSING GRIEVOUS BODILY INJURIES AND 1 672 FOR DANGEROUS DRIVING.

+THERE MUST BE STIFF PENALTIES FOR MOTORISTS WHO ENDANGER THE LIVES OF OTHER ROAD USERS; HENCE THE INCREASED PENALTIES INCLUDED IN THE BILL.+

/MR SCOTT .....

MR SCOTT EXPRESSED HOPE THAT BY TACKLING RECKLESS DRIVING, WHICH REFERS TO THE MANNER OR ACT OF DRIVING IN PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES, AND NOT WHETHER ANYONE WAS IN DANGER, INROADS COULD BE MADE INTO THE TRAGIC TOLL OF ACCIDENTS ON OUR ROADS. IN 1981, HE SAID, 478 PEOPLE DIED AND 23 602 PEOPLE WERE INJURED ON OUR ROADS.

MR SCOTT SAID RECKLESS DRIVERS WERE NOT BEING SINGLED OUT FOR ATTENTION. THE BILL ALSO PROVIDED THAT PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS WHO ACTED RECKLESSLY WERE SUBJECT TO FINES.

HE HAD GONE INTO THIS POINT AT SOME LENGTH BECAUSE IT HAD AROUSED FEARS AMONG PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS IN PARTICULAR THAT THE LAW WAS TO BE UNNECESSARILY STRENGTHENED TO THEIR DETRIMENT.

+I DO NOT THINK THAT LAW-ABIDING, SENSIBLE DRIVERS HAVE ANYTHING TO FEAR AND HOPE THAT MEMBERS WILL AGREE THAT ANY DRIVER, PROFESSIONAL OR OTHERWISE, WHO DRIVES RECKLESSLY SHOULD BE CALLED TO ACCOUNT BEFORE A COURT,+ HE SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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MEDIA HAVE IMPORTANT PART TO PLAY : HAYE

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THE MASS MEDIA HAVE AN IMPORTANT PART TO PLAY IN KEEPING STUDENT SUICIDE IN PERSPECTIVE, THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, THE HON COLVYN HAYE, SAID AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LYDIA DUNN, MR HAYE SAID THAT FOR EVERY TRAGIC BREAKDOWN THERE WERE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF HAPPY, HEALTHY CHILDREN WHO HAVE LEARNT TO HANDLE STRESS IN THEIR HOMES, SCHOOLS AND IN OUR BUSTLING, BUSY WORLD.

+THEY HAVE DONE THIS WITH THE HELP OF LOVING PARENTS, CARING TEACHERS AND A CONCERNED SOCIETY. BUT THEY HAVE DONE IT MOST OF ALL, I WOULD SUGGEST, BY COURAGE AND COMMON SENSE AS INDIVIDUALS,+ HE SAID.

MR HAYE SAID THE GOVERNMENT, AS A CARING AND COMPASSIONATE ADMINISTRATION, IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE INCIDENCE OF SUICIDES AMONG STUDENTS.

HE ADDED: +ONE STUDENT SUICIDE IS ONE TOO MANY, BUT WITHOUT DETRACTING IN ANY WAY FROM THE TRAGEDY, I WOULD SAY THAT THE VERY FEW STUDENT SUICIDES WE HAVE HAD IN RECENT YEARS DO NOT REPRESENT AN INCIDENCE IN THE SENSE OF TREND OR GROWTH.+

/HE SAID .....

HE SAID HE WAS TOLD BY A PRACTISING PSYCHIATRIST THAT THE TREND WAS FOR FEWER SUCH CASES IN HONG KONG.

COMMENTING ON THE MAJOR CAUSES OF THESE TRAGEDIES AS ASKED BY MISS DUNN, MR HAYE SAID IT WAS VERY DIFFICULT TO SAY WITH ANY CERTAINTY WHAT WERE THE MAJOR CAUSES. HE ADDED THAT THERE MIGHT BE A COMBINATION OF FACTORS, AMONG THEM A PREDISPOSITION OF CHARACTER, AND STRESS IN THE HOME, AT SCHOOL AND IN THE WAY OF LIFE IN HONG KONG.

HE SAID HE WAS TOLD BY HIS EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS AND MEDICAL ADVISERS THAT PREDISPOSITION WAS THE KEY TO ANY STUDENT BREAKDOWN - OF WHICH SUICIDE WAS THE EXTREME AND SADLY IRRETRIEVABLE FORM.

+HIGHLY SENSITIVE, IMAGINATIVE CHILDREN ARE PARTICULARLY PRONE TO PRESSURES, WHEREVER THEY COME FROM. AND IF THESE ARE COMPOUNDED BY AN UNHAPPY HOME, THEY WILL NOT BE HELPED BY THE MORE IMPERSONAL ENVIRONMENT OF SCHOOL.

+A CAREFUL ANALYSIS OF RECENT CASES HAS PROMPTED MY EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST TO REMARK THAT IN VERY, VERY FEW INSTANCES HAS ACADEMIC PRESSURE AT SCHOOL APPEARED TO BE THE PRECIPITATING CAUSE OF STUDENT SUICIDE. IN ALL CASES THERE HAVE BEEN CONTRIBUTING FACTORS, AND, IN SADLY TOO MANY, PRESSURES AT HOME,+ MR HAYE NOTED.

HE SAID THIS WAS NOT TO SAY THAT STUDENT BREAKDOWNS COULD NOT BE CHECKED. +ALERT AND RESPONSIVE PARENTS AND TEACHERS CAN SEE TROUBLE COMING AND WITH LOVE AND COMMONSENSE OFTEN MEET AND TREAT TEENAGE PROBLEMS BEFORE THEY GET OUT OF HAND.

+IF BEHAVIOURAL TROUBLE ESCALATES, THERE ARE THE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES OF COUNSELLING AND GUIDANCE TEACHERS, SOCIAL WORKERS, PSYCHOLOGISTS AND PSYCHIATRISTS AVAILABLE; BUT THE PROBLEM IS AND ALWAYS HAS BEEN DIAGNOSIS.

+IF THE APPROACH OF TEENAGE BREAKDOWN IS HARD TO DIAGNOSE, ANTICIPATING A STUDENT SUICIDE IS OFTEN IMPOSSIBLE. A COMMON FACTOR IN THESE SAD CASES IS THE UTTER SURPRISE OF PARENTS, FAMILY, TEACHERS AND FRIENDS OF VICTIMS.+

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UPGRADING OF LANDS TRIBUNAL SUPPORTED

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IT WAS RIGHT THAT STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN TO UPGRADE THE CONSTITUTION OF THE LANDS TRIBUNAL, AND THIS WAS ONE OF THE MAJOR AIMS OF THE LANDS TRIBUNAL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1982, THE HON J.J. SWAINE, SAID AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

IN SUPPORTING THE BILL, MR SWAINE EXPLAINED THAT A THREE-TIER SYSTEM WAS PROPOSED, WITH A PRESIDENT WHO WILL BE A SUPREME COURT JUDGE, PRESIDING OFFICERS WHO WILL BE DISTRICT JUDGES, AND MEMBERS WHO WILL BE EITHER LEGALLY QUALIFIED OR WITH RELEVANT EXPERIENCE, SUCH AS IN LAND VALUATION.

+THIS WILL SUPERSEDE THE PRESENT TWO-TIER SYSTEM OF PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS, IN WHICH THE PRESIDENT IS AT DISTRICT COURT LEVEL. APPOINTMENTS UNDER THE NEW SYSTEM WILL BE MADE BY THE GOVERNOR UPON THE ADVICE OF THE JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION.

+THERE IS THUS NO CHANGE FROM THE PRESENT SYSTEM IN WHICH THE PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS ARE APPOINTED IN THE SAME WAY,+ HE SAID.

MR SWAINE REFERRED TO FEARS EXPRESSED THAT THE SCHEME OF APPOINTMENTS MIGHT BE CONSTRUED AS UNDERMINING THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE JUDICIARY, BUT SAID THE LEGISLATION SCRUTINY GROUP OF UNOFFICIALS HAD NOT BEEN PERSUADED BY THE ARGUMENT.

+WE WOULD PREFER TO REGARD THE PROPOSALS IN THEIR CORRECT PERSPECTIVE, NAMELY AS AN EFFORT TO UPGRADE THE LANDS TRIBUNAL, WITHIN THE PRESENT SYSTEM,+ HE SAID.

THE UNOFFICIALS HAD ALSO RECEIVED VERY USEFUL COMMENTS ON THE MECHANICS OF THE BILL AND HAD ADOPTED TWO OF THE SUGGESTIONS, WITH THE CONCURRENCE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL. THESE WERE TO ENABLE PRESIDING OFFICERS, AS WELL AS THE PRESIDENT, TO DETERMINE POINTS OF LAW WHICH MIGHT BE REFERRED TO THEM BY A LAY MEMBER OF THE TRIBUNAL, AND TO PROVIDE THAT THE TRIBUNAL MIGHT REVIEW ITS OWN DECISIONS, BOTH AS TO LAW AND FACT, HE SAID.

THE BILL WAS PASSED WITH AMENDMENTS.

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REASSURANCE FOR KINDERGARTEN OPERATORS

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THE HON COLVYN HAYE, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION TODAY (WEDNESDAY) REMINDED THE OPERATORS OF KINDERGARTEN SCHOOLS WITH BABY OR NURSERY CLASSES THAT THE INTENTION OF THE EDUCATION (AMENDMENT) BILL WAS NOT TO PUT THEM OUT OF BUSINESS, BUT TO IMPROVE THEIR STANDARDS OF OPERATION.

WINDING UP THE DEBATE ON THE EDUCATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1982 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING, MR HAYE SAID HE HAD EARLIER MET WITH THE INTERESTED PARTIES CONCERNED.

+I WAS RELIEVED TO FIND THAT THERE WAS NO REAL QUARREL WITH THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE WHITE PAPER AND THE CONCEPT OF COMPLEMENTARY CHILD CARE AND EDUCATION.

+FEARS, SUCH AS THEY WERE, STEMMED FROM A MISUNDERSTANDING OF OFFICIAL INTENTION, AND APPREHENSIONS RELATED TO THE PRACTICAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE RESPECTIVE ORDINANCES,+ HE SAID.

A START HAD BEEN MADE TO CLEAR UP THIS MISUNDERSTANDING, AND THE AUTHORITIES WERE LOOKING INTO THE PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES RELATING TO REGISTRATION AND ADMINISTRATION.

+THE SUGGESTIONS MADE BY DR FANG AND HIS COLLEAGUES WILL CERTAINLY BE BORNE IN MIND AS TALKS WITH SCHOOL OPERATORS CONTINUE, AND I HOPE THAT WE WILL HAVE SOLVED MOST OF OUR PROBLEMS BY THE END OF THE YEAR,+ HE SAID.

MR HAYE WAS SPEAKING AFTER THREE UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS HAD EXPRESSED THEIR VIEWS ON THE BILL AND THE RELATED CHILD CARE CENTRES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1982.

THE HON SELINA CHOW SAID THAT KINDERGARTEN OPERATORS WERE CONCERNED WITH THE BILLS AS THEY APPLIED TO THE BABY OR NURSERY CLASSES, WHICH EXISTED IN MOST KINDERGARTENS.

SHE NOTED THAT WITH THE PASSING OF THE EDUCATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1982, CHILDREN WHO ARE UNDER THREE YEARS EIGHT MONTHS WILL NOT BE ADMITTED INTO THESE CLASSES IN SEPTEMBER 1985 UNLESS THE CLASSES ARE RE-REGISTERED AS CHILD CARE CENTRES THAT MUST MEET, MORE STRINGENT REQUIRMENTS.

THE HON DR HARRY FANG AND THE HON MR CHAN KAM CHUEN URGED THAT AN ADVISORY BODY BE SET UP TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMS THAT MIGHT ARISE IN THE TRANSITION PERIOD. SPEAKING ON THE CHILD CARE CENTRES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1982, THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, THE HON ANSON CHAN, SAID THAT THE INTENTION OF IMPROVING STANDARDS IN KINDERGARTENS WAS TO BRING SOME OF THEIR PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES CLOSER TO THOSE IN CHILD CARE CENTRES.

I BELIEVE WE CAN TAKE SOME PRIDE IN THE QUALITY OF SERVICE AVAILABLE IN OUR CHILD CARE CENTRES AND I AM SURE THAT THE PUBLIC AND PARENTS READILY ACKNOWLEDGE THE POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION SUCH SERVICES MAKE TO THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF OUR YOUNG CHILDREN,+ SHE SAID.

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ACTION AGAINST ILLEGAL USE OF TOXIC PRESERVATIVES

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WHEN THE ILLEGAL USE OF TOXIC PRESERVATIVES, SUCH AS SALICYLIC ACID, IS DISCOVERED, THE DIRECTOR OF URBAN SERVICES IS EMPOWERED BY THE LAW TO AUTHORISE OFFICERS TO MARK, SEAL AND SEIZE ANY FOOD UNFIT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION.

AND WHERE NECESSARY, ACTION IS ALSO TAKEN AGAINST SPECIFIC FOOD FACTORIES AND RETAIL OUTLETS, THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, THE HON E.P. HO, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON PETER C. WONG.

MR HO SAID THAT THE PRESERVATIVES IN FOOD REGULATIONS UNDER THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND URBAN SERVICES ORDINANCE PRESCRIBE THE MAXIMUM CONCENTRATION OF SPECIFIC PRESERVATIVES PERMISSIBLE IN SOME FOOD ITEMS.

ANY PERSON WHO SELLS OR POSSESSES FOR SALE ANY FOOD CONTRARY TO THE PROVISIONS OF THESE REGULATIONS IS LIABLE TO A FINE OF $2 000 AND THREE MONTHS' IMPRISONMENT, HE WARNED.

+THE USE OF PRESERVATIVES IN FOOD IS AT PRESENT EFFECTIVELY CONTROLLED BY THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT LABORATORY, AND THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT THE SITUATION IS GETTING OUT OF HAND,+ MR HO ASSURED.

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POWS ENTITLED TO PENSIONS

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ALL FORMER POWS (PRISONERS OF WAR), WHO WERE MEMBERS OF THE HONG KONG VOLUNTEER DEFENCE CORPS OR THE HONG KONG NAVAL VOLUNTEER FORCE DISABLED IN ACTION OR CAPTIVITY, ARE ENTITLED TO PENSIONS UNDER THE VOLUNTEER AND NAVAL VOLUNTEER PENSIONS ORDINANCE AT RATES DETERMINED BY HER MAJESTY IN COUNCIL AS THE NAVAL, MILITARY AND AIR FORCES ETC. (DISABLEMENT AND DEATH) SERVICE PENSIONS ORDERS, THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, THE HON E.P. HO SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ANDREW SO IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR HO SAID ALL FORMER POWS WHO SERVED IN UNITS LISTED IN THE FIRST SCHEDULE TO THE HONG KONG WAR MEMORIAL FUND ORDINANCE AND ARE IN NEED, INCLUDING THOSE VOLUNTEER POWS, WHO DO NOT QUALIFY FOR DISABILITY PENSIONS, ARE ELIGIBLE FOR ASSISTANCE FROM THE WAR MEMORIAL FUND.

/OTHER FORMER .....

OTHER FORMER FAR EAST POWS WHO DID NOT SERVE IN ANY OF THE UNITS LISTED IN THE FIRST SCHEDULE TO THE HONG KONG WAR MEMORIAL FUND ORDINANCE, BUT WHO ARE NOW IN NEED, MAY APPLY TO THE FAR EAST RELIEF FUND ADMINISTERED SEPARATELY BY THE WAR MEMORIAL FUND COMMITTEE.

FORMER POWS AND OTHER VICTIMS OF THE LAST WAR ALSO RECEIVE ADDITIONAL SERVICES AND BENEFITS IN RECENT YEARS FOLLOWING A GOVERNMENT REVIEW OF THEIR NEEDS, MR HO SAID.

THESE INCLUDE A FREE MEDICAL SCHEME ANNOUNCED IN JULY 1977 FOR CIVILIANS IMPRISONED AND TORTURED BY THE ENEMY AND FOR ALL FORMER HONG KONG POWS; A NON-MEANS-TESTED SPECIAL NEEDS ALLOWANCE INTRODUCED BY THE WAR MEMORIAL FUND COMMITTEE IN DECEMBER 1980; THE AMENDMENT IN 1979 OF THE WAR MEMORIAL FUND ORDINANCE TO ENABLE POWS IN NEED TO QUALIFY FOR ASSISTANCE WITHOUT THEIR HAVING TO PROVE INCAPACITY ARISING OUT OF THE ENEMY ATTACK ON HONG KONG IN 1941 AND ITS AFTERMATH; AND THE GOVERNMENT'S UNDERWRITING OF THE WAR MEMORIAL FUND TO GUARANTEE THE DISCHARGE OF ITS COMMITMENTS TO ALL POTENTIAL BENEFICIARIES.

MR HO SAID 133 VOLUNTEER PENSIONS ARE IN PAYMENT TO 63 WIDOWS AND 70 DISABLED VOLUNTEERS (64 OF THEM ARE NOW LIVING OVERSEAS AND SIX ARE RESIDENTS IN HONG KONG). THERE ARE 167 FAMILIES (COMPRISING 223 PERSONS) WHO ARE BENEFICIARIES OF THE WAR MEMORIAL FUND, INCLUDING 84 FORMER POWS OF WHOM 37 ARE LIVING OVERSEAS AND 47 IN HONG KONG.

HE SAID THE GRANTS AND ALLOWANCES PAYABLE BY THE WAR MEMORIAL FUND ARE REVIEWED REGULARLY IN THE LIGHT OF CHANGES IN THE COST OF LIVING, AND ANY CASE OF HARDSHIP BROUGHT TO THE NOTICE OF THE WAR MEMORIAL FUND COMMITTEE WILL BE GIVEN THE MOST SYMPATHETIC CONSIDERATION.

ON THE QUESTION OF PENSIONS FOR THE EX-POWS AS OF RIGHT WHICH SOME OF THEM SEEM TO BE CLAIMING, MR HO SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION REMAINS AS STATED IN HIS REPLY TO THE HON LYDIA DUNN IN THE COUNCIL ON NOVEMBER 28, 1979: UNLESS HER MAJESTY IN COUNCIL INCLUDES PROVISION FOR SUCH POW PENSIONS IN THE NAVAL, MILITARY AND AIR FORCES ETC (DISABLEMENT AND DEATH) SERVICE PENSIONS ORDERS, THERE IS NO CASE FOR SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS TO BE MADE FOR THEM IN HONG KONG BEYOND THE MEASURES ALREADY DESCRIBED.

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BIG GROWTH IN EDUCATION

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THERE HAS BEEN A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN THE PROVISION OF PUBLIC SECTOR PLACES IN FORMS IV AND V SINCE THE PUBLICATION OF THE WHITE PAPER ON SENIOR SECONDARY AND TERTIARY EDUCATION IN 1978, THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION, THE HON COLVYN HAYE SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON S.L. CHEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR HAYE SAID THE NUMBER OF THESE PLACES IN SEPTEMBER 1981 HAD MORE THAN DOUBLED THOSE AVAILABLE IN 1978.

+THIS SEPTEMBER, 21 NEW SECONDARY SCHOOLS WILL COME INTO FULL OPERATION, RAISING SUBSIDISED FORM IV PLACES STILL FURTHER, AND IT IS EXPECTED THAT BY 1985, WITH THE COMPLETION OF THE SCHOOL BUILDING PROGRAMME, THE WHITE PAPER TARGET OF 57 000 SENIOR SECONDARY PLACES WILL HAVE BEEN MET,+ HE SAID.

AT THE SIXTH FORM LEVEL, HE ADDED, THE TARGET PLACES FOR UP TO ONE-THIRD OF STUDENTS ENTERING SUBSIDISED FORM IV PLACES TWO YEARS PREVIOUSLY HAD ALREADY BEEN ACHIEVED.

THE SCHOOL SYSTEM HAD ALSO BEEN SIMPLIFIED, AS ENVISAGED IN THE WHITE PAPER, BY CONVERTING SECONDARY MODERN SCHOOLS INTO SECONDARY TECHNICAL SCHOOLS. FIFTY-SEVEN NON-PROFIT MAKING SCHOOLS WITH CAPUT GRANT WILL ALSO BECOME FULLY AIDED THIS SEPTEMBER.

+MEASURES HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO ENCOURAGE SCHOOLS TO BROADEN THEIR CURRICULUM, WITH GREATER EMPHASIS ON PRACTICAL AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS,+ MR HAYE SAID.

ON TERTIARY EDUCATION, HE SAID THE COMMISSIONING OF A DENTAL SCHOOL AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG AND A MEDICAL SCHOOL AT THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY HAD BEEN NOTABLE DEVELOPMENTS.

AT THE SAME TIME, HE ADDED, THE NUMBER OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS HAS SEEN HEALTHY GROWTH.

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE POLYTECHNIC HAD ALSO REFLECTED ITS GROWING IMPORTANCE IN MEETING HONG KONG'S NEEDS FOR SKILLED AND TRAINED TECHNICIANS AND TECHNOLOGISTS.

SINCE THE WHITE PAPER, MR HAYE ADDED, THERE HAD ALSO BEEN A SERIES OF BUILDING PROGRAMMES TO EXPAND TECHNICAL EDUCATION, HIGHLIGHTED BY THE ESTABLISHMENT IN FEBRUARY THIS YEAR OF A VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL FOR CO-ORDINATING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE.

+THIS WILL, I AM SURE, RESULT IN A FURTHER STRENGTHENING OF OUR INDUSTRIAL BASE,+ MR HAYE SAID.

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MEASURES TO MEET SHORTFALLS OF PLACES FOR ELDERLY

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THE PROJECTED SHORTFALLS OF PLACES IN CARE AND ATTENTION HOMES, AND INFIRMARIES WILL BE MET BY THE END OF 1984/85 AND THE END OF THE 1980S RESPECTIVELY, THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, THE HON ANSON CHAN SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON HO KAM-FAI, SHE SAID THERE WERE 3 448 ELDERLY PERSONS AWAITING ADMISSION TO CARE AND ATTENTION HOMES, AND 230 TO INFIRMARIES.

ON AVERAGE, THE FORMER HAVE BEEN ON THE WAITING LIST FOR TWO AND A HALF YEARS, AND THE LATTER FOR THREE MONTHS TO ONE YEAR, SHE SAID.

TO REDUCE THE SHORTFALL, +THERE IS AN ONGOING PROGRAMME TO SECURE SUITABLE SITES FOR PURPOSE-BUILT CARE AND ATTENTION HOMES, AND TO ENCOURAGE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES TO OPERATE SUCH FACILITIES WITH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM GOVERNMENT,+ SHE SAID.

THERE WILL BE 125 NEW PLACES TOWARDS THE END OF 1982/83, AND 2 055 PLACES IN 14 ADDITIONAL HOMES IN THE NEXT TWO YEARS, SHE ADDED.

THE CURRENT SHORTFALL OF INFIRMARY BEDS IS PARTLY MET BY THE ADDITION OF 300 BEDS THIS YEAR WITH THE COMPLETION OF THE WONG TAI SIN INFIRMARY NEW EXTENSION, SHE SAID.

AS FOR THE ESTIMATED SHORTFALL OF 1 600 INFIRMARY BEDS BY THE END OF 1980S, MRS CHAN SAID THAT 2 050 ADDITIONAL BEDS ARE PLANNED FOR THE NEXT EIGHT YEARS.

ADMISSION TO CARE AND ATTENTION HOMES IS NORMALLY ON A FIRST-COME-FIRST-SERVED BASIS ON APPLICATION, HOWEVER, URGENT REFERRALS FROM THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT OR THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT MAY BE GIVEN PRIORITY ADMISSION.

ADMISSION TO INFIRMARIES IS BASED ON THE CLINICAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF EACH PATIENT, WHO IS TO BE ADMITTED DIRECTLY FROM CLINICAL UNITS OF ACUTE REGIONAL HOSPITALS, SHE SAID.

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GUARANTEE FOR MTR LOAN

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY APPROVED A GOVERNMENT GUARANTEE TO THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION TO COVER THE PAYMENT OF A $1 060 MILLION LOAN.

THE SUM BORROWED UNDER THIS GUARANTEE WILL BE USED TO FINANCE THE ISLAND LINE CONTRACTS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CHAI WAN DEPOT, THE CHAI WAN OVERHEAD STATION, THE PAK CHAI WAN STATION AND THE CAUSEWAY BAY WEST CONCOURSE; THE DESIGN, MANUFACTURE AND INSTALLATION OF THE SIGNALLING SYSTEM, THE ESCALATORS AND THE AUTOMATIC FARE COLLECTION EQUIPMENT; AND THE MAIN SITE FORMATION WORKS AT KORNHILL.

THIS BRINGS THE GOVERNMENT'S TOTAL GUARANTEE COMMITMENT IN RESPECT OF THE OUTSTANDING LOANS AVAILABLE TO THE MTR CORPORATION TO $9 673 MILLION.

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POWER TO REMOVE VESSELS FROM PUBLIC CARGO WORKING AREAS

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THE GOVERNMENT HAD AGREED TO A PROPOSED AMENDMENT THAT THE DIRECTOR OF MARINE BE GIVEN POWER ALSO TO REMOVE ANY VESSEL WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN BERTHED FOR AN UNDUE PERIOD OF TIME IN PUBLIC CARGO WORKING AREAS, DR THE HON FRANCIS TIEN, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE PORT CONTROL (CARGO WORKING AREAS) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1982, MR TIEN EXPLAINED THAT THE SUGGESTION FOLLOWED VISITS BY THE UNOFFICIALS' ECONOMIC SERVICES GROUP TO TWO CARGO WORKING AREAS TO STUDY PROBLEMS THERE.

+I AM GLAD TO SAY THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAS AGREED TO THE SUGGESTION,+ MR TIEN SAID.

THE LEGISLATION AIMS AT FACILITATING CONTROL OVER CARGO HANDLING OPERATIONS AT PUBLIC CARGO WORKING AREAS.

THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON D.G. JEAFFRESON, THANKED DR TIEN AND THE MEMBERS OF THE ECONOMIC SERVICES GROUP FOR THEIR CAREFUL CONSIDERATION OF THE BILL AND FOR CARRYING OUT THE ON-SITE INSPECTIONS OF THE PROBLEMS AT THE PUBLIC CARGO WORKING AREAS.

APPROPRIATE CHANGES TO THE REGULATIONS WOULD BE PROPOSED TO THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL, HE SAID.

THE BILL WAS APPROVED, WITH AMENDMENTS.

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UMELCO POLICE GROUP PRAISED FOR WORK

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THE REPORT OF THE UMELCO POLICE GROUP FOR 1981 WAS TABLED AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

COMMENTING ON THE REPORT THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON J.R. HEYWOOD, SAID THE REPORT PROVIDED A VERY CLEAR ACCOUNT OF THE GROUP'S WORK FOR THE YEAR.

HE PAID TRIBUTE TO THE GROUP'S CHAIRMAN, THE HON T.S. LO AND HIS UNOFFICIAL COLLEAGUES FOR DEVOTING SO MUCH TIME TO THE IMPORTANT WORK OF ENSURING THAT THE POLICE FORCE DID NOT +FLINCH+ FROM POLICING ITSELF.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE GROUP'S WORK COULD BEST BE SUMMED UP BY QUOTING A PARAGRAPH IN THE REPORT WHICH STATES: +EVERY COMPLAINT AGAINST THE POLICE MADE DIRECTLY, OR REFERRED TO THE COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE POLICE OFFICE, IS REPORTED TO THE UMELCO POLICE GROUP,+ HE SAID.

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REQUIREMENT FOR ENTRY TO UK

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THE ONLY REQUIREMENTS FOR A HONG KONG PASSPORT-HOLDER WISHING TO ENTER THE UK FOR GENUINE VISIT OR STUDY PURPOSES ARE THAT THERE ARE NO OBJECTIONS ON MEDICAL, CRIMINAL OR SECURITY GROUNDS AND THAT THE VISITOR HAS ADEQUATE FUNDS TO MAINTAIN HIMSELF DURING HIS VISIT, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON J.R. HEYWOOD TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON SELINA CHOW ON THE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR HONG KONG PASSPORT-HOLDERS WHO WISH TO ENTER THE UNITED KINGDOM.

MR HEYWOOD STATED THAT FULL DETAILS OF THE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS SPECIFIED BY THE UK GOVERNMENT FOR HONG KONG PASSPORT-HOLDERS WHO DO NOT HAVE THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM ARE CONTAINED IN A COMPREHENSIVE STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN IMMIGRATION RULES LAID BEFORE PARLIAMENT ON FEBRUARY 20, 1980 UNDER SECTION 3(2) OF THE IMMIGRATION ACT 1971.

+BRIEFLY, AND IN GENERAL, THOSE GOING TO WORK IN THE UK REQUIRE WORK PERMITS OR ENTRY CERTIFICATES DEPENDENT ON THE TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT,+ HE EXPLAINED.

+DEPENDANTS OF THOSE WORKING IN THE UK, AND OTHERS GOING THERE FOR A LONG TERM RESIDENCE REQUIRE ENTRY CERTIFICATES,+ MR HEYWOOD SAID.

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NO GROWTH IN VICE ESTABLISHMENTS

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THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE THAT THE NUMBER OF VICE ESTABLISHMENTS IN RESIDENTIAL OR OTHER BUILDINGS HAD GROWN, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON J.R. HEYWOOD, SAID AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY.

MR HEYWOOD WAS REPLYING TO THE HON SELINA CHOW WHO ASKED WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WAS TAKING ACTION TO CONTROL THE GROWTH OF SUCH ESTABLISHMENTS IN RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS.

HE EXPLAINED THAT RECENTLY, THE PUBLIC HAD BECOME MORE AWARE OF THE EXISTENCE OF VICE ESTABLISHMENTS AND THE PRESS HAD GIVEN PROMINENT COVERAGE TO THE SUBJECT.

AS THESE ESTABLISHMENTS MIGHT BE LOCATED IN BUILDINGS OF ANY TYPE, CONTROL MEASURES WERE NOT CONFINED TO RESIDENTIAL PREMISES ONLY, MR HEYWOOD POINTED OUT.

HE SAID THAT EACH POLICE DISTRICT HAD SET UP ITS OWN VICE SQUAD TO CONDUCT REGULAR CHECKS AND TAKE PROSECUTION ACTION AGAINST BREACHES OF THE LAW.

THE CONTROL MEASURES ALSO INVOLVED THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT, THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT, THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE, AND THE REGISTRAR GENERAL, DEPENDING ON WHICH OF THE LAWS AND REGULATIONS WERE BEING VIOLATED, HE SAID.

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STOCK EXCHANGE ELECTION

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A BILL SEEKING TO ALLOW THE CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMEN OF THE STOCK EXCHANGE OF HONG KONG LTD (THE UNIFIED EXCHANGE) TO BE ELECTED BY SECRET BALLOT OF THE COMMITTEE, INSTEAD OF BY MEMBERS OF THE COMPANY, WAS INTRODUCED BY THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON D.G. JEAFFRESON, AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, MR JEAFFRESON EXPLAINED THAT THE ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS TO THE EXCHANGE IS GOVERNED BY ITS ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION, WHICH ARE IN PART, AND INCLUDING THE PROCEDURE FOR ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN, SUBJECT TO PROVISIONS IN THE STOCK EXCHANGES UNIFICATION ORDINANCE.

BOTH THE MEMBERS OF THE EXCHANGE COMPANY, AND THE SECURITIES COMMISSION APPROVED OF THE PROPOSAL, AND THE BILL BEFORE MEMBERS SOUGHT TO REPEAL THE RELEVANT SECTION OF THE ORDINANCE TO ALLOW FOR THE PROPOSED NEW ELECTION PROCEDURE.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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SYMPATHY OVER FUSED PLUGS

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FUSED PLUGS ARE DESIGNED TO PROTECT ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES FROM THE CONSEQUENCES OF OVERLOADING OR OF SHORT CIRCUITING, AND NOT TO PROVIDE PROTECTION AGAINST ELECTROCUTION.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON D.G. JEAFFRESON, TO QUESTION BY HON K.C. CHAN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

+IT IS TRUE THAT IN CERTAIN RATHER PRECISE AND LIMITED CIRCUMSTANCES A BLOWN FUSE IN WHAT WAS A CORRECTLY FUSED PLUG MIGHT HAVE SAVED SOMEONE FROM ELECTROCUTION. BUT AS I UNDERSTAND IT, THE CHANCES OF THIS HAPPENING ARE NOT VERY HIGH AND ARE NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO JUSTIFY MAKING THE USE OF FUSED PLUGS COMPULSORY,+ HE SAID.

AS FAR AS HE KNEW, FUSED PLUGS ARE USED EXTENSIVELY ONLY IN BRITAIN, AND NOWHERE WERE THEY COMPULSORY.

MR CHAN HAD ASKED WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER REQUIRING THE COMPULSORY USE OF FUSED PLUGS FOR ALL DOMESTIC AND INDUSTRIAL ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES TO MINIMISE THE RISK OF ELECTROCUTION BY ACCIDENT OR THROUGH FAULTY WIRES OR EQUIPMENT.

+NEVERTHELESS, WE SYMPATHISE WITH MY HONOURABLE FRIEND'S INTEREST IN SAFETY AND WE WILL CERTAINLY BEAR HIS SUGGESTION IN MIND,+ HE SAID.

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PEAK TRAMWAY PERMIT FEE

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THE PEAK TRAMWAY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1982 WHICH SETS THE PERMIT FEE PAYABLE BY THE COMPANY FOR THE YEARS 1981 AND 1982 AT THE NOMINAL SUM OF $1 000 WAS READ A SECOND TIME IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON ALAN SCOTT SAID THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL APPROVED AN INCREASE IN FARES ON THE PEAK TRAMWAY ON JUNE 4 THIS YEAR AND RECOMMENDED THAT THE BILL BE INTRODUCED INTO THE COUNCIL.

HE SAID THE FARE SCALES APPROVED DEPENDED ON THE PERMIT FEE BEING SET AT A NOMINAL LEVEL IN ORDER TO ALLOW THE COMPANY TO MAKE A REASONABLE PROFIT WITHOUT RAISING FARES TO AN UNREASONABLY HIGH LEVEL.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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MEDICAL REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1982

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AN AMENDMENT TO THE DEFINITION OF +REGISTRATION,+ IN THE MEDICAL REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL WAS A TECHNICAL ONE AND WOULD NOT AFFECT THE QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED FOR REGISTRATION AS A MEDICAL PRACTITIONER, THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES, DR THE HON S.F. LAM, CONFIRMED AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HE WAS RESPONDING TO AN ASSURANCE SOUGHT FROM THE GOVERNMENT ON THAT POINT BY AN UNOFFICIAL MEMBER, DR THE HON HARRY FANG.

DR FANG TOLD THE COUNCIL THAT THE UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS' SOCIAL SERVICES GROUP HAD EXAMINED THE BILL, AND THAT, SUBJECT TO THE ASSURANCE FROM THE GOVERNMENT ON THE DEFINITION, HE SUPPORTED THE MOTION.

THE BILL WAS LATER APPROVED WITH AMENDMENTS.

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UNIVERSITIES TO MEET MANPOWER NEEDS

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THE GROWTH RATE OF THE STUDENT POPULATION OF THE TWO UNIVERSITIES WILL BE RAISED TO MEET HONG KONG'S PROFESSIONAL MANPOWER NEEDS AND STUDENTS' ASPIRATIONS.

AS DETERMINED BY THE GOVERNMENT IN 1980, THE PRESENT GROWTH RATE OF THE UNIVERSITIES FOR THE 1981-84 TRIENNIUM IS FOUR PER CENT PER ANNUM COMPOUND. IT WAS DECIDED SUBSEQUENTLY TO EXTEND THIS GROWTH RATE TO 1984-85 TO ALLOW FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S DELIBERATIONS ON THE LONGER TERM DEVELOPMENT OF TERTIARY EDUCATION IN HONG KONG BEFORE DECIDING ON STUDENT TARGETS FOR THE NEXT TRIENNIUM.

A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THAT AFTER CONSIDERING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE TO REVIEW POST-SECONDARY AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND THE ADVICE OF THE UNIVERSITIES AND POLYTECHNIC GRANTS COMMITTEE, THE GOVERNMENT HAD AGREED ON UNIVERSITY STUDENT NUMBER TARGETS FOR BOTH THE YEAR 1984-85 AND THE 1985-88 TRIENNIUM.

+PAST EXPERIENCE HAS SHOWN THAT VERY HIGH AND FLUCTUATING RATES OF GROWTH OF ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS CAN BE DETRIMENTAL TO STANDARDS,+ THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

IT HAS BEEN DECIDED, THEREFORE, THAT STUDENT NUMBERS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE TO GROW AT FOUR PER CENT ANNUALLY BETWEEN 1984-88 BUT THAT SPECIFIC REQUESTS BY THE GOVERNMENT FOR MANPOWER TRAINING WOULD BE MET OVER AND ABOVE THE TARGETS BASED ON THE GROWTH RATE.

FOR THE YEAR 1984-85 THE BASIC FOUR PER CENT GROWTH WOULD RAISE THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PLACES TO 6 375 AT HONG KONG UNIVERSITY AND 5 700 AT THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG. GOVERNMENT REQUIREMENTS ARE EXPECTED TO BOOST THESE FIGURES TO 6 600 AND 5 900 RESPECTIVELY.

THE TARGETS FOR THE 1985-88 TRIENNIUM ARE 7 170 FOR HKU AND 6 420 FOR CUHK. THE ACTUAL NUMBER OF PLACES WILL BE 8 000 AND 7 100 RESPECTIVELY AFTER ADDING ON THE GOVERNMENT'S REQUIREMENTS.

THE PROFESSIONALS WHICH THE UNIVERSITIES WILL BE ASKED TO PROVIDE MORE OF ARE TEACHERS, SOCIAL WORKERS, DOCTORS, LAWYERS AND SPEECH THERAPISTS.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THIS ARRANGEMENT SHOULD MEET SPECIFIC MANPOWER NEEDS UP TO 1988 WITHOUT COMPROMISING THE TWO UNIVERSITIES' OWN DEVELOPMENT.

+IN THE LONGER TERM IT IS ENVISAGED THAT OTHER DEGREE AWARDING INSTITUTIONS BEING PLANNED OR ESTABLISHED WILL BE ABLE TO ABSORB THESE TRAINING NEEDS WITHIN THEIR NORMAL EXPANSION PROGRAMME, THEREBY REDUCING THE LOAD ON THE UNIVERSITIES,+ HE ADDED.

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THE ADDITIONAL COST OF THE LARGER EXPANSION PROGRAMMES FOR THE TWO UNIVERSITIES IS ESTIMATED TO BE $330 MILLION FOR CAPITAL PROJECTS, INCLUDING STUDENT HOSTELS. RECURRENT EXPENDITURE IS EXPECTED TO INCREASE FROM $571 MILLION IN THE FINAL YEAR OF THE 1981-84 TRIENNIUM TO $744 MILLION BY 1987-88.

COMMENTING ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION BEYOND 1988, THE SPOKESMAN SAID THE GOVERNMENT AND THE UPGC WERE STUDYING THE FURTHER GROWTH POTENTIAL OF THE TWO UNIVERSITIES AND THE POSSIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A THIRD UNIVERSITY OR ANOTHER MAJOR TERTIARY INSTITUTION.

+THE DELIBERATIONS WILL NEED TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE PHYSICAL CONSTRAINTS OF THE EXISTING CAMPUS OF HKU AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEGREE COURSES IN TWO POLYTECHNICS AND THE BAPTIST COLLEGE,+ HE ADDED.

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MORE PUPILS JOIN SCHOOL MEDICAL SCHEME

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ONE IN EVERY THREE ELIGIBLE PUPILS BETWEEN PRIMARY ONE AND FORM THREE WAS COVERED BY THE SCHOOL MEDICAL SERVICE SCHEME IN THE LAST FINANCIAL YEAR, A GROWTH OF 18 PER CENT OVER THE YEAR BEFORE.

THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN TAKING PART IN THE HEAVILY-SUBSIDISED SCHEME RUN BY THE SCHOOL MEDICAL SERVICE BOARD, A STATUTORY BODY, REACHED 244 864, IT IS STATED IN THE BOARD'S REPORT, TABLED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THERE WERE 852 SCHOOLS, REPRESENTING 70 PER CENT OF ALL ELIGIBLE SCHOOLS, AND 232 DOCTORS TAKING PART IN THE SCHOOL-BASED SCHEME WHICH IS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE ECONOMICAL MEDICAL TREATMENT FOR CHILDREN AND IN WHICH PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY.

DOCTORS TAKING PART IN THE SCHEME ARE ALL IN PRIVATE PRACTICE AND RECEIVE $55 A YEAR FOR EACH PUPIL, $5 BEING PAID BY THE CHILD AND $50 BY THE GOVERNMENT, WHICH ALSO PAYS THE ADMINISTRATION COSTS.

THE SCHEME WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1964 WHEN THE SCHOOL MEDICAL SERVICE BOARD WAS CONSTITUTED AS A STATUTORY BODY. IT REQUIRES DOCTORS, WHO APPLY TO JOIN, TO PROVIDE TREATMENT AND MEDICATION FREE OF CHARGE AT THEIR OFFICES DURING NORMAL CONSULTATION HOURS. HOWEVER, THE DOCTOR HAS THE DISCRETION TO ISSUE PRESCRIPTIONS TO BE FILLED AT A PHARMACY, WITH THE COST TO BE BORNE BY THE PATIENT. DURING THE YEAR, SOME 600 000 CONSULTATIONS AND PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS WERE CARRIED OUT.

THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL PLAYS THE KEY ROLE IN THE SCHEME, THE REPORT STATES, AS HE IS ASKED TO MAKE KNOWN ITS EXISTENCE, CHOOSE A DOCTOR FOR HIS SCHOOL AND REQUEST AN INITIAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPATION CARDS, EACH OF WHICH WILL BEAR THE NAME OF THE DOCTOR CHOSEN.

FOR THE 1981-82 PERIOD, THE GOVERNMENT SUBVENTION FOR THE SERVICE AMOUNTED TO $11 204 000, WHILE THE ADMINISTRATION FEE WAS $561 000, COMPARED WITH $5 682 000 AND $416 000 RESPECTIVELY IN THE YEAR BEFORE.

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YAUMATI FERRY FARE INCREASE APPROVED

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS CONFIRMED THAT IT HAS APPROVED AN APPLICATION BY THE HONG KONG AND YAUMATI FERRY COMPANY TO INCREASE FARES ON CERTAIN ROUTES.

THE FARES INCREASE DOES NOT APPLY TO EIGHT PASSENGER SERVICES AND TO VEHICULAR FERRY SERVICES. THE PASSENGER SERVICES ARE: HONG KONG-TSUEN WAN, TSUEN WAN-TSING YI, CENTRAL-TAIKOO SHING, TAIKOO SHING-KOWLOON CITY, NORTH POINT-TSUEN WAN, TUEN MUN-CENTRAL, CHAI WAN-CENTRAL, AND CHAI WAN-KWUN TONG.

A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THE INCREASES, TO BE EFFECTIVE FROM NEXT MONTH, WILL GENERALLY BE FROM 20 TO 25 PER CENT.

FOR THE MOST PART, THE INCREASE FOR ADULTS ON CROSS HARBOUR PASSENGER FERRY SERVICES WILL BE BY 20 CENTS TO $1 AND BY 10 CENTS TO 50 CENTS FOR CHILDREN.

FOR OUTLYING DISTRICT SERVICES, THE INCREASES FOR ADULTS WILL RANGE FROM 20 CENTS FOR THE LOWEST EXISTING FARE OF $1.30, TO $1.50 FOR THE HIGHEST EXISTING FARE OF $6.50.

HOVERFERRY FARES WILL NOT BE AFFECTED EXCEPT FOR OUTLYING DISTRICT SERVICES. AS IN THE CASE OF DELUXE CLASS FARES, THE INCREASE WILL BE BY $2 TO $8.

ON THE HONG KONG-PENG CHAU ROUTE, THE INCREASE ON WEEKDAYS FOR ADULTS WILL BE FROM $1.50 AT PRESENT TO $2 FROM AUGUST 1, AND TO $2.50 FROM FEBRUARY 1 NEXT YEAR.

MORE CONVENIENT DIRECT SAILINGS HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED ON THIS ROUTE SINCE JUNE AND THE NEW FARES ARE IN LINE WITH OTHER OUTLYING ISLAND SERVICES ON A JOURNEY DISTANCE BASIS.

HOWEVER, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT VIEWS EXPRESSED BY THE ISLANDS DISTRICT BOARD, THE INCREASE FOR THIS SERVICE IS BEING INTRODUCED IN TWO STAGES, THE SPOKESMAN EXPLAINED.

IN APPROVING THIS INCREASE IN FARES, THE GOVERNMENT NOTED THAT THE HONG KONG AND YAUMATI FERRY COMPANY'S FARES HAVE BEEN HELD AT LOW LEVELS FOR MANY YEARS. IN THE LIGHT OF THE COSTS OF MAINTAINING A LARGE FLEET WHICH OPERATES A COMPREHENSIVE NETWORK OF FERRY SERVICES, THE COMPANY'S PROFITS HAVE BEEN, AND EVEN AFTER THIS INCREASE REMAIN, REASONABLE.

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TRADE AND INDUSTRY BRANCH FOR SECRETARIAT

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ARRANGEMENTS ARE BEING MADE TO SET UP A TRADE AND INDUSTRY BRANCH IN THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT AND TO DEFEDERALISE THE TRADE, INDUSTRY AND CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT ON AUGUST 1.

A RESOLUTION WAS PASSED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY TO MAKE THE NECESSARY LEGISLATIVE CHANGES AND TO TRANSFER STATUTORY POWERS FROM THE DIRECTOR OF TICD TO THE HEADS OF THE DEFEDERALISED DEPARTMENTS AND THE NEW BRANCH.

APPOINTMENTS TO THESE POSTS WERE ANNOUNCED LAST WEEK.

A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN EXPLAINED THAT THE WORK OF THE THREE SEPARATE AND INDEPENDENT DEPARTMENTS, OF TRADE, INDUSTRY, AND CUSTOMS AND EXCISE, WILL LARGELY MATCH THAT OF THE SUB-DEPARTMENTS PREVIOUSLY IN THE TICD.

THE TRADE AND INDUSTRY BRANCH WILL TAKE OVER FROM THE ECONOMIC SERVICES BRANCH POLICY RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE INDUSTRY DEPARTMENT AND THE TRADE DEPARTMENT, AND FOR THE CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DEPARTMENT'S DUTIES RELATING TO THE ENFORCEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE OBLIGATIONS.

HOWEVER, REVENUE PROTECTION AND ANTI-NARCOTICS FUNCTIONS OF THE CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DEPARTMENT WILL CONTINUE TO COME UNDER THE FINANCE BRANCH AND THE SECURITY BRANCH, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

CONSUMER PROTECTION SUBJECTS WILL BE DIVIDED BETWEEN THE TRADE AND INDUSTRY BRANCH AND THE ECONOMIC SERVICES BRANCH, DEPENDING ON WHETHER THE SUBJECT CONTENT WAS MORE TRADE OR CONSUMER-ORIENTED.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE THREE HONG KONG OFFICES IN WASHINGTON, BRUSSELS AND GENEVA, HITHERTO OVERSEAS OFFICES OF THE TICD, WILL BE ASSUMED BY THE COUNCILS AND ADMINISTRATION BRANCH OF THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT.

THE INDUSTRIAL INVESTMENT PROMOTION OFFICES IN STUTTGART, TOKYO AND SAN FRANCISCO WILL BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE INDUSTRY DEPARTMENT, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THE INTENTION WAS TO ACCOMMODATE THE TRADE AND INDUSTRY BRANCH IN THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES; BUT BEFORE SUITABLE ACCOMMODATION COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE, IT WOULD OPERATE FROM EXISTING PREMISES IN OCEAN CENTRE IN TSIM SHA TSUI.

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THAI OFFICIALS STUDY HK DRUG PROGRAMME

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A GROUP OF 12 THAI GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WHO ARE CURRENTLY IN HONG KONG FOR A TRAINING PROGRAMME ON THE PREVENTION, TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION OF NARCOTIC ADDICTION VISITED THE HEI LING CHAU DRUG ADDICTION TREATMENT CENTRE THIS (WEDNESDAY) MORNING.

THE GROUP, COMPRISING DOCTORS, PSYCHOLOGISTS AND SOCIAL WORKERS FROM THE BANGKOK METROPOLITAN ADMINISTRATION, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, IS SPENDING TWO DAYS WITH THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT TO STUDY ITS COMPULSORY PLACEMENT PROGRAMME FOR CONVICTED DRUG ADDICTS.

ACCOMPANIED BY TSUNG PUI-KWAN, SUPERINTENDENT IN CHARGE OF THE CENTRE, THE VISITORS TOURED ITS DORMITORY, HOSPITAL, SEGREGATION UNIT, WORKSHOPS AND EDUCATIONAL CLASSES FOR THE INMATES.

THEY ALSO STUDIED A COMPREHENSIVE TREATMENT PROGRAMME, SUPPORTED BY AN EXTENSIVE AFTER-CARE SERVICE.

EIGHT OF THE THAI OFFICIALS WILL BE VISITING THE TAI LAM CENTRE FOR WOMEN TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

THE OFFICER IN CHARGE OF THE INSTITUTION, SUPERINTENDENT PAULINE CHAN, WILL TAKE THEM ON A TOUR OF ITS FACILITIES.

THEY WILL ALSO STUDY THE INSTITUTION'S TREATMENT PROGRAMMES AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES FOR THE FEMALE INMATES.

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TWO LOTS OF CROWN LAND SOLD

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TWO LOTS OF CROWN LAND WERE SOLD AT AN AUCTION CONDUCTED BY THE LANDS DEPARTMENT IN THE JADE BALLROOM OF HOTEL FURAMA TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE FIRST LOT, MEASURING ABOUT 1 171 SQUARE METRES IN PING SHAN, YUEN LONG, IS FOR PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL PURPOSES.

IT WAS SOLD TO BATEMAN COMPANY LTD. FOR $760 000 OR $649.08 PER SQUARE METRE.

THE OTHER SITE, ALSO FOR PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL USE, COVERS AN AREA OF ABOUT 345 SQUARE METRES IN WAI TSAI PEAK, PENG CHAU.

IT WAS SOLD TO TONIE INVESTMENT CO. LTD. FOR $250 000 OR $724.64 PER SQUARE METRE.

TWO OTHER LOTS, IN KWAI CHUNG AND YUEN LONG RESPECTIVELY, WERE WITHDRAWN BECAUSE THERE WAS NO BIDDERS.

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TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS

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THE BUS ONLY LANE ON CONNAUGHT ROAD CENTRAL BETWEEN CLEVERLY STREET AND RUMSEY STREET WILL BE OPEN TO ALL VEHICLES FROM 10 AM ON THURSDAY (JULY 29) FOR THE REPAIR OF WATER MAINS.

THE ARRANGEMENT WILL LAST FOR ABOUT SEVEN DAYS.

MEANWHILE, SHA KOK STREET NEAR SHA KOK ESTATE ACCESS ROAD IN SHA TIN WILL BE CLOSED TO TRAFFIC BETWEEN 1 AM AND 5 AM ON THURSDAY AND FRIDAY (JULY 29 AND 30) FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A FOOTBRIDGE.

DURING THE CLOSURE, VEHICLES HEADING FOR SHA KOK ESTATE WILL BE DIVERTED VIA TAI CHUNG KUI ROAD, SHA TIN WAI AND SHA KOK STREET.

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