



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES
BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, HONG KONG. TEL: 5-233191

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16, 1980

<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
UNREASONABLE RENT INCREASES -- A MAJOR FACTOR IN EXTENDING RENT CONTROL TO ALL DOMESTIC PREMISES	1
TWO UNOFFICIAL LEGCO MEMBERS EXPRESS VIEWS ON RENT CONTROL BILL	3
GOVERNMENT MAINTAINS OPEN MIND TOWARDS REASONABLE STAFF REQUESTS	7
HK/USA TEXTILES RESTRAINT AGREEMENT MODIFIED	9
TICD COMMENTS ON MODIFIED HK/USA TEXTILE AGREEMENT	10
LABOUR COMMISSIONER ORDERS STUDY OF CONSTRUCTION SITE ACCIDENTS	10
GOVERNMENT STUDYING PROPOSALS TO REGULATE UNDESIRABLE PRACTICES IN GOLD TRANSACTIONS	11
SPECIAL FUND TO BE SET UP TO FINANCE STUDENT LOANS	12
POLICE TO BE BETTER EQUIPPED TO TOW AWAY ILLEGALLY PARKED CARS	13

/MARINE

MARINE FISH CULTURE BILL 1980 PASSED WITH AMENDMENTS	14
REGISTRATION OF PERSONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1980 INTRODUCED INTO LEGCO	15
REPORT ON HK EXHIBITION CENTRE UNDER STUDY	15
EIGHT STATISTICAL SURVEYS PLANNED FOR THIS YEAR	16
REFUSE COLLECTION FLEET IN NT TO GROW	17
MORE MONEY INJECTED INTO PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME	17
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE SATISFIED WITH GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO ITS RECOMMENDATIONS	18
LAND GRANTED FOR CONSTRUCTION OF CEMENT PLANT	19
SUPPLEMENTARY MEDICAL PROFESSIONS BILL TO BE INTRODUCED INTO LEGCO SHORTLY	20
USE OF FIRE ARMS BY OFF DUTY POLICE OFFICERS	20
DON'T USE ROOM HEATERS TO DRY CLOTHES	21
WELDING IN PUBLIC PLACES CONTROLLED BY LAW	21
GOVERNMENT GUARANTEE FOR MTRC LOAN	22
GOVERNMENT PROBES IMPLICATIONS OF EXTENDING MEDICAL CARE TO CHILDREN OF FEMALE OFFICERS	23
CHINESE TITLES FOR GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS	23
DORWARD TO GIVE PRESS CONFERENCE	24
BILLS PASSED	24

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16, 1980

- 1 -

UNREASONABLE RENT INCREASES — A MAJOR FACTOR
IN EXTENDING RENT CONTROL TO ALL DOMESTIC PREMISES
* * * * *

INCREASING EVIDENCE OF UNREASONABLE RENT INCREASES WAS ONE OF THE MAIN FACTORS LEADING TO THE DECISION OF THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL ON DECEMBER 18 THAT RENT CONTROLS SHOULD BE IMPOSED ON THE REMAINING UNCONTROLLED PRIVATE DOMESTIC PREMISES IN HONG KONG.

THIS WAS SAID TODAY BY THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON ALAN SCOTT, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DURING THE SECOND READING OF THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1980.

HE SAID THE BILL PROPOSED THAT CONTROLS BE EXTENDED TO THE FOLLOWING TENANCIES:

- * IN BUILDINGS CERTIFIED FOR OCCUPATION AFTER DECEMBER 14, 1973-
- * WHERE A LEASE OF THREE YEARS OR MORE HAD BEEN ENTERED INTO AFTER DECEMBER 31, 1975- AND
- * WHERE THE TENANT WAS A PUBLIC BODY, CORPORATION, FOREIGN OR COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT, PARTNERSHIP OR FIRM.

THE BILL ALSO PROPOSES THAT THE PART II RENT CONTROLS, AT PRESENT DUE TO EXPIRE ON DECEMBER 14, 1982, SHOULD NOW BE BROUGHT BACK TO DECEMBER 18 NEXT YEAR.

HE SAID: +WHEN GOVERNMENT IN THE PAST HAS INTRODUCED RENT CONTROLS IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN HOPED THAT THEY WOULD BE SHORT-TERM MEASURES- AND GOVERNMENT CANNOT VIEW WITH EQUANIMITY THE INEQUITIES AND ANOMALIES WHICH ARE CAUSED AS BETWEEN LANDLORDS AND LANDLORDS, LANDLORDS AND TENANTS AND TENANTS AND TENANTS.

+THESE HAVE TO BE ACCEPTED IN THE SHORT-TERM, BUT THE PRESENT CONTROLS ARE ALREADY UP TO 10 YEARS OLD+.

THEREFORE, HE SAID, IT WAS INTENDED TO CONDUCT A WIDE-RANGING REVIEW OF THE RENT-CONTROL LEGISLATION.

THE TWO-YEAR +LIFE+ OF THE PART II RENT CONTROLS WOULD ENABLE THE REVIEW GROUP TO DO A THOROUGH JOB AND PRODUCE PROPOSALS WHICH COULD BE FULLY CONSIDERED IN GOOD TIME FOR IMPLEMENTATION BY THE END OF 1981.

+I HOPE THAT THE TASK OF REVIEW CAN BE COMPLETED WELL WITHIN THE TIME ALLOWED, BUT THERE IS NEED FOR WIDE CONSULTATION AND ALTHOUGH A FEW OF THE SEVERAL INTERESTS INVOLVED ARE REPRESENTED BY ASSOCIATIONS, SOME ARE NOT,+ SAID MR SCOTT.

HE CLARIFIED THE FOLLOWING POINTS CONCERNING THE RENT-CONTROL PROPOSALS:

NEW FLATS:

RENTS FOR FIRST LETTINGS OF NEWLY-BUILT PREMISES, AND FRESH LETTINGS OF EXISTING PREMISES, WILL NOT BE CONTROLLED.

/POSSESSION:

POSSESSION:

ANY LANDLORD MAY RECOVER POSSESSION OF A FLAT BY A COURT ORDER PROVIDING HE CAN PROVE THAT HE NEEDS THE PREMISES FOR HIS OWN OR HIS IMMEDIATE FAMILY'S OCCUPATION, AND HE CAN SHOW THAT GREATER HARDSHIP WOULD BE CAUSED BY REFUSING THE ORDER THAN BY GRANTING IT. HOWEVER, SEVERE PENALTIES ARE PROPOSED FOR LANDLORDS WHO OBTAIN SUCH A COURT ORDER BUT WITHIN TWO YEARS EITHER LET OR ASSIGN THE PREMISES.

BACK-DATING:

THE LEGISLATION WILL BE RETROSPECTIVE TO DECEMBER 18 LAST YEAR. ANY NOTICE OF TERMINATION THAT HAD NOT EXPIRED BY THAT DATE, OR ANY AGREEMENT AFFECTING A TENANT IN POSSESSION WHICH HAD NOT COMMENCED BY THAT DATE, WILL BE NULLIFIED.

CHANGE OF TENANCIES:

WHERE A LANDLORD HAS ENTERED INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH A NEW TENANT ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE EXISTING TENANT WOULD BE VACATING ON EXPIRY OF THE LEASE OR THE NOTICE OF TERMINATION AFTER DECEMBER 18, SUCH AN AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE ENFORCEABLE IF THE EXISTING TENANT REMAINS IN OCCUPATION BECAUSE OF THE PROTECTION GIVEN TO HIM UNDER THE BILL.

MR SCOTT ALSO ANSWERED THE MAIN POINTS MADE BY LANDLORDS AND DEVELOPERS, AS FOLLOWS:

1. +BEING DEPRIVED OF THE RIGHT TO RECOVER THE USE OF THEIR PROPERTY+ — THIS INVOLVED SECURITY OF TENURE, WHICH WAS THE +VERY CORE+ OF THE LEGISLATION. MR SCOTT SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT IMPOSED RENT CONTROL WITH GREAT RELUCTANCE AND ONLY WHEN THE SITUATION VERY CLEARLY REQUIRED IT.
2. +RENT INCREASES BEING LIMITED TO A MAXIMUM OF 21 PER CENT EVERY TWO YEARS+ — MR SCOTT SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S MIND WAS OPEN ON THIS POINT, WHICH WOULD BE CONSIDERED TOGETHER WITH MANY RELATED MATTERS WHEN THE OVERALL REVIEW WAS MADE.
3. +BUSINESSMEN IN COMPANY-LEASED ACCOMMODATION BEING GIVEN THE BENEFIT OF RENT CONTROLS WHEN THE PRICES OF THEIR PRODUCTS ARE UNCONTROLLED+ — THE MARKED UPSURGE IN RENTS FOR LARGE COMPANY FLATS AND HOUSES IN TURN ENCOURAGED SOME LANDLORDS TO PUSH UP RENTS OF MEDIUM NON-COMPANY FLATS, HE SAID. FURTHER, TO EXCLUDE COMPANY LEASES WOULD ENCOURAGE MORE LANDLORDS TO INSIST ON LEASING ONLY TO COMPANIES, TO THE DISADVANTAGE OF INDIVIDUALS.

ON THE SUBJECT OF EXCESSIVE SPECULATION IN DOMESTIC PROPERTY, MR SCOTT SAID THIS +CONTINUES TO BE THE SUBJECT OF CLOSE STUDY BY GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING THE POSSIBILITY OF LEGISLATION.+

HE ADDED: +I CAN, HOWEVER, AT THIS STAGE SAY THAT GOVERNMENT DOES NOT HAVE IN MIND RESTRICTIONS ON THE FIRST PRE-COMPLETION SALE OF SUCH PROPERTY.+

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16, 1980

- 3 -

TWO UNOFFICIAL LEGCO MEMBERS
EXPRESS VIEWS ON RENT CONTROL BILL
* * * * *

THE ACCELERATING TREND TOWARDS UNCONSCIONABLE RENT INCREASES WAS BEGINNING SERIOUSLY TO AFFECT NOT ONLY THE WHOLE PROPERTY MARKET, BUT ALSO - IF ALLOWED TO CONTINUE - THE STABILITY OF THE COMMUNITY, THE HON JOHN BREMRIDGE SAID.

SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1980 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), HE SAID THE LEGISLATION PUT FORWARD WOULD PROVIDE A COOLING OFF PERIOD DURING WHICH THE GOVERNMENT MUST CONSIDER MORE EQUITABLE LONG TERM MEASURES.

AND HE HOPED THESE WILL INCLUDE PROVISION FOR A RATHER HIGHER PERCENTAGE INCREASE FOR RENTS AND NEW THINKING ON RELATED ISSUES SUCH AS PLOT RATIOS.

ALTHOUGH HE BELIEVED THE BILL WAS IN THE IMMEDIATE BEST INTERESTS OF HONG KONG, HE POINTED OUT THAT IT WAS ONLY A +TEMPORARY PALLIATIVE WHICH MUST GIVE WAY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO MORE SATISFACTORY LONG TERM MEASURES+.

THERE ARE IN FACT TWO MAJOR AND INTERTWINED ISSUES CONFRONTING THE GOVERNMENT - THE PROTECTION FOR EXISTING DOMESTIC TENANTS AND, MORE IMPORTANT, THE PROVISION OF MORE FLATS FOR RENTING, HE SAID.

ON THE FIRST ISSUE, HE NOTED THAT THERE WERE AT PRESENT 43 000 UNCONTROLLED FLATS WITH ABOUT 200 000 PEOPLE BEING INVOLVED IN RENTAL INCREASE PROBLEMS.

A NUMBER OF THE TENANTS WERE RICH OR OBTAINED ASSISTANCE OF SOME SORT OR ANOTHER, BUT A SUBSTANTIAL PERCENTAGE REPRESENTED THE EMBATTLED MIDDLE CLASS.

+I BELIEVE MYSELF THAT GOVERNMENT CAN BE FAULTED FOR NOT TAKING STRONG ACTION SOME SIX MONTHS AGO WHEN ALL THE WARNING SIGNS WERE APPARENT.

+HOWEVER THIS MAY BE, AND DESPITE EARLIER ASSURANCES ABOUT FREEDOM FROM CONTROLS, NO RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT NOW COULD TOLERATE THE PROBLEMS BEING INFLICTED BY SOME GREEDY LANDLORDS ON SOME TENANTS LIVING IN UNCONTROLLED FLATS,+ MR BREMRIDGE SAID.

HE NOTED THAT THE PROPOSED MEASURES BY THE GOVERNMENT TO CONTROL RENT INCREASES WERE OF NECESSITY BLUNT AND BLUNT MEASURES HAD TO BRING WITH THEM SOME DEGREE OF INEQUITY.

+I WOULD PREFER MYSELF A TWO TIERED SYSTEM WITH PREVIOUSLY UNCONTROLLED RENTS BEING PEGGED TO A 14 PER CENT PER YEAR INCREASE, THAT IS 30 PER CENT IN TWO YEARS.

+I CAN SEE HOWEVER THE IMMEDIATE COMPLICATIONS THAT THIS LATTER PROPOSAL WOULD CAUSE, AND I AGREE THAT THE LEGISLATION PUT FORWARD WILL PROVIDE A COOLING OFF PERIOD DURING WHICH GOVERNMENT MUST CONSIDER OTHER AND MORE EQUITABLE LONG TERM MEASURES.+

/A MAJOR

A MAJOR ISSUE TO BE RESOLVED IS THE RIGHT OF REPOSSESSION OF PREMISES.

MR BREMRIDGE STATED THAT IT WAS POSSIBLE TO CONSIDER SPECIAL REVERSIONARY LEASES OF SAY FOUR OR FIVE YEARS, WHICH WOULD BE REGISTERABLE. THEY WOULD BE AT A FLAT RENT, AND THE LANDLORD WOULD KNOW IN ADVANCE THAT HE WAS NOT COMMITTED TO A LIFETIME TENANT.

HE SAID HE WAS LESS CONCERNED WITH THE RENTAL PROBLEMS IN RESPECT OF TENANCIES TAKEN BY EXPATRIATES, LARGE FIRMS, CONSULATES AND SIMILAR TENANTS.

WHILE CONCEDED THERE WAS INDEED SOME VALIDITY IN THE ACCUSATION THAT THEY WOULD BE AS IT WERE SUBSIDISED BY THEIR LANDLORDS, HE POINTED OUT THAT SOME LANDLORDS HAD FOR SOME TIME BEEN INSISTING ON SIGNING LEASES ONLY WITH COMPANIES AND NOT WITH INDIVIDUALS, AND HAD EVEN ARRANGED FOR INDIVIDUALS TO TURN THEMSELVES INTO PRIVATE LIMITED COMPANIES.

+WITH THIS BACKGROUND UNLESS CRISP ALTERNATIVE MEASURES CAN BE DEvised IT WAS INEVITABLE THAT ALL FLATS SHOULD FOR THE TIME BEING BE BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL, AND NOT ONLY JUST THOSE UP TO A CERTAIN VALUATION, OR LEASED TO CERTAIN SECTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY.

+OTHERWISE THE LOOPHOLE TO EXCESSIVE INCREASES WOULD REMAIN OPEN.+

REGARDING THE PROVISION OF MORE LAND, MR BREMRIDGE SAID HE WAS NOT IN FAVOUR OF GOVERNMENT SELLING LAND AT BELOW MARKET PRICE BECAUSE HE BELIEVED THAT FINAL RENTS AND SALE PRICES OF RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES WOULD REFLECT GOING MARKET VALUES.

HE SUGGESTED THAT NEW LAND SHOULD BE FED ONTO THE MARKET IN BULK, AND NOT DRIBBLED ON IN SMALL LOTS.

+THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT DESPITE RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED BY GOVERNMENT IN LAND SALES, LAND IS BEING HOARDED IN THE PROSPECT OF SPECULATIVE GAIN. THERE THUS SEEMS TO BE A CASE FOR THE SALE OF LARGER LOTS, POSSIBLY WITH THE RELEASE OF STAGES BEING TIED TO PERFORMANCE BY THE DEVELOPER.

+THE POSSIBILITIES THAT THIS WOULD PROVIDE FOR A BETTER PLANNED ENVIRONMENT ARE NOT TO BE IGNORED. NOR TO BE IGNORED ARE THE REDUCED OPPORTUNITIES THUS AFFORDED TO THE PREVALENT PROPERTY RINGS.+

HE QUERIED WHY INFRASTRUCTURE SHOULD NOT BE PROVIDED BY THE DEVELOPERS RATHER THAN BY THE INEVITABLY DELIBERATE GOVERNMENT PROCESS AND URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE THIS MATTER MORE SERIOUSLY.

MR BREMRIDGE ALSO SPOKE ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF TAKING THE PROBLEMS OF LAND OUT OF THE OVER-BURDENED ENVIRONMENT BRANCH, THE NTA AND THE PWD. +SURELY A SEPARATE DEPARTMENT OF LANDS IS LONG-OVERDUE?+ HE ASKED.

AS TO THE SUGGESTION THAT RENTAL CONTROL MEASURES COULD BE APPLIED TO COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY, MR BREMRIDGE SAID HE, FOR ONE, WOULD BE OPPOSED TO THIS, CERTAINLY AT THIS JUNCTURE.

/+THERE IS

+THERE IS IN GENERAL PLENTY OF INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY AVAILABLE FOR RENT IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, WHILE RENTAL CRITERIA FOR COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES REQUIRE DIFFERENT PHILOSOPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS THAN FOR RENTED DOMESTIC ACCOMMODATION,+ HE SAID.

+A FAMILY WITH A ROOF OVER THEIR HEAD CANNOT BE UNFAIRLY EJECTED IF SOCIETY IS TO REMAIN STABLE. I DO NOT FEEL AT ALL THE SAME WAY ABOUT COMMERCIAL TENANTS. IF THEY CANNOT PAY THE RENT ASKED AND OTHERS CAN, WHY SHOULD NOT THE LATTER BE GIVEN A CHANCE? THERE IS CERTAINLY NO EVIDENCE OF THE WAREHOUSING OF EMPTY COMMERCIAL PREMISES.+

MR BREMRIDGE NOTED THAT THE MEASURES TO CURB RENTAL INCREASES IN SOME 43 000 FLATS MIGHT ONLY AFFECT A SMALL SEGMENT OF HONG KONG'S POPULATION, BUT IT WOULD HAVE A SALUTARY EFFECT ON THE WHOLE PROPERTY MARKET WHICH HAD BEEN +FRIGHTENINGLY BALLOONED IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS - FAR BEYOND WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED FROM THE INEVITABLE COLLISION OF EXUBERANT DEMAND AND SHORT SUPPLY+.

+THOUGH FOR SOME TIME THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY HAS BEEN TRYING TO MODERATE THE MONEY SUPPLY, STILL TOO MUCH HAS BEEN GOING INTO LAND SPECULATION AS OPPOSED TO SOUND DEVELOPMENT.

+NOT ONLY SHOULD THESE RELATIVELY MODEST AND TEMPORARY RENTAL CONTROL MEASURES AMELIORATE THIS SITUATION, BUT I HOPE ALSO THAT SOME INVESTORS' ATTENTION WILL AGAIN BE TURNED TO THE FACT THAT HONG KONG LIVES ON ITS EXPORTS.

+THERE MUST COME A TIME ALSO WHEN EVEN THE MOST AVARICIOUS DEVELOPER SHOULD REALISE THAT IRRESPONSIBLE LAND SPECULATION RESULTING IN EVER INFLATING COSTS FOR THE DOMESTIC RESIDENT, FACTORY OWNER, BUSINESSMAN, OR SHOPKEEPER CAN HAVE ONLY ONE END,+ HE ADDED.

ALSO COMMENTING ON THE BILL, THE HON DAVID NEWBIGGING URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO MAKE A +DEFINITE, REALISTIC AND POSITIVE STATEMENT+ OVER ITS POLICY ON FUTURE LAND SUPPLY AND DEVELOPMENT.

HE SAID THE CURRENT SPIRALLING RESIDENTIAL RENTS HAD CREATED A SITUATION WHICH REQUIRED SOME IMMEDIATE ACTION TO COOL IT DOWN, BUT POINTED OUT THAT GOVERNMENT SHOULD BEAR A LARGE SHARE OF THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR NOT HAVING SUPPLIED SUFFICIENT LAND FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT.

+HOWEVER, THIS BILL BY ITSELF WILL PROVIDE, AT BEST, ONLY A COOLING-OFF PERIOD RATHER THAN A SOLUTION AND FOR THIS REASON I HAVE SOME DIFFICULTY IN SUPPORTING IT IN ISOLATION.

+I BELIEVE THAT GOVERNMENT MUST ANNOUNCE CONCURRENTLY A FIRM POLICY COMMITMENT TO INCREASING THE SUPPLY OF LAND OVER AND ABOVE WHAT IS ALREADY PLANNED AND MUST OUTLINE HOW AND WHEN IT PROPOSES TO IMPLEMENT THIS POLICY.+

MR NEWBIGGING NOTED THAT CERTAIN SECTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY WOULD INEVITABLY FEEL HARD DONE BY IF THE BILL WAS PASSED. THEY INCLUDED RESPONSIBLE LANDLORDS WHO HAD NOT EXPLOITED THE MARKET TO THE ULTIMATE EXTENT- CORPORATIONS AND SOME INDIVIDUALS WHO MIGHT BE UNABLE TO OBTAIN POSSESSION OF RESIDENTIAL PREMISES FOR THEIR OWN USE- GENUINE INVESTORS WHO MIGHT FIND THEMSELVES LIMITED TO A GROWTH IN RENTS SUBSTANTIALLY LESS THAN THE LEVEL OF INFLATION- AND OTHER GENUINE INVESTORS WHO ACCEPTED, AND ACTED UPON, AN UNDERTAKING GIVEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CHAMBER SOME FOUR AND A HALF YEARS AGO BY THE THEN SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, ONLY TO FIND THIS UNDERTAKING NOW BEING BROKEN.

HOWEVER, MR NEWBIGGING SAID HIS FUNDAMENTAL CONCERN WAS THAT WE SHOULD CURE THE DISEASE ITSELF RATHER THAN MERELY TREATING ITS SYMPTOMS.

ON THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION, MR NEWBIGGING URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO CONSIDER:

- * SOME FLEXIBILITY ON THE 21 PER CENT INCREASE IN RENTS PERMITTED OVER A TWO-YEAR PERIOD IF THE INFLATION RATE CONTINUES AT ITS PRESENT LEVEL, OR ACCELERATES. A SIMPLE INDEXED FORMULA MIGHT BE APPROPRIATE-
- * WHETHER THERE IS LIKELY TO BE A CONSEQUENT SLOWING DOWN OF THE NUMBER OF RESIDENTIAL UNITS BECOMING AVAILABLE FOR RENTAL- AND
- * WHETHER, BY NOT EXEMPTING UNITS AT THE VERY TOP END OF THE MARKET, INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES MORE CONCERNED WITH THE ACTUAL AVAILABILITY OF RENTED ACCOMMODATION THAN THE LEVEL OF RENTS, MAY BE INHIBITED FROM ESTABLISHING BRANCHES OR REPRESENTATIVE OFFICES IN HONG KONG.

HE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD MAKE LAND AVAILABLE IN BULK - NOT IN DRIBS AND DRABS. HE STRONGLY FELT THAT THIS SHOULD BE LINKED TO THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS.

FIRSTLY, HE SAID, HE DID NOT ACCEPT THE OFTEN-VOICED CONTENTION THAT THE CAPACITY OF THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY IS THE LIMITING FACTOR ON PRODUCING INCREASED RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION. BECAUSE, HE SAID, THE PRINCIPAL LIMITING FACTOR IS INSUFFICIENT LAND BEING MADE AVAILABLE.

SECONDLY, THE FACT THAT THE GOVERNMENT SOLD NEARLY 20 PER CENT LESS LAND OVERALL IN 1979 THAN IN 1978 AND THAT, WITHIN THE TOTAL FIGURE, THE DECLINE OF THE RESIDENTIAL COMPONENT WAS EVEN GREATER, DOES NOT AUGUR WELL FOR THE FUTURE.

THE THIRD REASON HE GAVE WAS THAT HE BELIEVED THERE MIGHT BE SCOPE FOR INCREASING THE SUPPLY OF DOMESTIC ACCOMMODATION BY INCREASING THE PERMITTED PLOT RATIO IN SOME AREAS.

/LASTLY,

LASTLY, MR NEWBIGGING SAID HE DID NOT ACCEPT STATEMENTS BY SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICERS THAT ONLY LIMITED ADDITIONAL LAND WAS AVAILABLE, FOR EXAMPLE IN THE NEW TERRITORIES. HE POINTED OUT THAT IF THE GOVERNMENT FOUND DIFFICULTY IN PROVIDING EITHER RAW OR FORMED LAND WITH THE ACCOMPANYING INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES, THEN IT SHOULD TURN THE JOB OVER TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR EVEN IF IT WAS IN THE FORM OF SEABED OR OLD RESERVOIRS, WITH A REQUIREMENT AT LEAST TO CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS SOME OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE SUCH AS ROADS.

HE NOTED THAT ALTHOUGH THIS BILL WOULD NOT PLEASE OR SATISFY ALL SECTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY, MOST RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUALS AND CORPORATIONS WOULD ACCEPT IT IF THEY WERE CONVINCED THAT IT WAS TEMPORARY.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED TILL THE NEXT SITTING OF THE COUNCIL.

- - - - 0 - - - -

GOVERNMENT MAINTAINS OPEN MIND TOWARDS REASONABLE STAFF REQUESTS
* * * * *

IN DEALING WITH STAFF DISPUTES, THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALWAYS TRIED TO MAINTAIN AN OPEN MIND AND A SYMPATHETIC ATTITUDE TOWARDS ALL REASONABLE STAFF REQUESTS, BUT THE PRIME CONSIDERATION MUST BE TO ENSURE THAT SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC ARE NOT DISRUPTED AND THAT THE OVERALL PUBLIC INTEREST IS NOT IMPAIRED, THE SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, THE HON MARTIN ROWLANDS SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON ANDREW SO, MR ROWLANDS DREW ATTENTION TO THE FACT THAT THE VAST BULK OF THE CIVIL SERVICE WAS GOING ABOUT ITS DAILY BUSINESS QUIETLY AND CONSCIENTIOUSLY.

HE ALSO AFFIRMED THAT THE CIVIL SERVICE DID RECOGNISE ITS OVERRIDING DUTY TO DO EVERYTHING IN ITS POWER TO MAINTAIN, AT ALL TIMES AND EFFICIENTLY, THE VARIOUS ADMINISTRATIVE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES WHICH ARE SO NECESSARY FOR THE STABILITY AND WELL BEING OF HONG KONG.

+AT THE SAME TIME, THE MANAGEMENT OF THE CIVIL SERVICE RECOGNISES ITS SPECIAL OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE THE STAFF OF THE CIVIL SERVICE WITH FAIR REMUNERATION AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE, SATISFACTORY WORKING CONDITIONS AND EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT,+ HE ADDED.

+MOST DISPUTES WITHIN THE CIVIL SERVICE HAVE THEIR ORIGINS IN PROBLEMS OF MANAGEMENT, AND RESOLUTE ACTION IS BEING TAKEN TO STRENGTHEN MANAGEMENT THROUGHOUT THE CIVIL SERVICE.

+MOST DISPUTES SPILL OVER INTO QUESTIONS OF PAY, AND WHEN THIS HAPPENS THE ADVICE OF THE STANDING COMMISSION ON CIVIL SERVICE SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE IS SOUGHT,+ HE EXPLAINED.

HE NOTED THAT IN RECENT MONTHS THERE HAVE BEEN FIVE INSTANCES OF DISPUTES AFFECTING SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC.

- * THE DISRUPTIVE ACTION BY NURSING STAFF CAUSED SOME INCONVENIENCE TO THE PUBLIC FOR A SHORT PERIOD BUT ALL NURSING SERVICES ARE NOW BACK TO NORMAL AND A MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE IS BEING CARRIED ON BETWEEN THE STAFF ASSOCIATIONS AND THE MANAGEMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT=
- * THE 26 DISPENSERS WHO REFUSED TO PERFORM CERTAIN DUTIES IN SUPPORT OF A PAY CLAIM HAVE ALL RETURNED TO NORMAL DUTY AND ON JANUARY 10 THE SEVEN EVENING CLINICS WHICH WERE CLOSED EARLIER WERE REOPENED=
- * DISRUPTIVE ACTION BY HEALTH INSPECTORS IN SUPPORT OF A PAY CLAIM LED QUICKLY TO A REDUCTION IN FRESH MEAT SUPPLIES. BUT THESE RETURNED TO NORMAL WITHIN A WEEK FOLLOWING A DECISION BY THE STAFF ASSOCIATION CONCERNED TO PURSUE ITS CLAIM FURTHER WITH THE STANDING COMMISSION=
- * THE ACTION BY A GROUP OF POSTAL OFFICERS WHO DECLINED TO WORK VOLUNTARY OVERTIME TO DRAW ATTENTION TO THEIR CLAIMS FOR BETTER WORKING CONDITIONS AND PAY. THIS, COMING IN THE WAKE OF THE CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR PEAK, CAUSED IMMEDIATE OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS FOR THE POST OFFICE AND IT WAS NECESSARY TO SUSPEND CERTAIN SERVICES AS A TEMPORARY MEASURE. HOWEVER, RE-DEPLOYMENT OF STAFF AND RECRUITMENT OF TEMPORARY STAFF HAS SUBSTANTIALLY REMOVED THE BACKLOG OF MAIL AND ENABLED RESUMPTION OF SOME SERVICES. THE POSITION IS IMPROVING STEADILY AND MR ROWLANDS HOPED ALL SERVICES WILL HAVE BEEN RESUMED AND ALL BACKLOGS CLEARED BY NEXT WEEK= AND
- * THE DECISION BY A GROUP OF LABOURERS IN THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT ENGAGED ON HAWKER CONTROL WORK NOT TO CARRY OUT SOME OF THEIR DUTIES, WHICH IN THEIR VIEW ARE INAPPROPRIATE TO THE RANK OF LABOURER, HAS HAD A MINOR EFFECT ON CONDITIONS IN SOME HAWKERS AREAS. IT DOES SEEM TO MR ROWLANDS THAT THERE IS A NEED TO RE-EXAMINE THE DUTIES OF THESE STAFF AND THIS IS NOW BEING DONE. HE HOPED TO PERSUADE THE STAFF CONCERNED TO RESUME NORMAL DUTIES PENDING RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16, 1980

- 9 -

HK/USA TEXTILES RESTRAINT AGREEMENT MODIFIED
* * * * *

AFTER MORE THAN SIX MONTHS OF CONSULTATIONS, HONG KONG HAS CONCEDED TO INSISTENT USA DEMANDS THAT THE TERMS OF THE CURRENT FIVE YEAR TEXTILES RESTRAINT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THEM BE MODIFIED DOWNWARDS FOR 1980.

THE ACTUAL TRADE EFFECTS OF THE REVISION ARE EXPECTED TO BE SLIGHT. BASIC LIMITS ARE UNAFFECTED AND THE MAIN REVISION AFFECTS ONLY THE SO-CALLED FLEXIBILITY PROVISIONS.

HONG KONG DIRECTOR OF TRADE INDUSTRY AND CUSTOMS, MR WILLIAM DORWARD, EXPLAINED WHY SUCH AN APPARENTLY MINOR CHANGE HAD TAKEN OVER SIX MONTHS TO BE SETTLED.

+APART FROM THE FACT THAT WHEN HONG KONG MAKES AN AGREEMENT WE BELIEVE IN LIVING UP TO IT, OUR MAIN CONCERN HERE WAS THAT THE USA WAS SEEKING TO ESTABLISH A PRECEDENT WHICH COULD BE VERY DAMAGING IN FUTURE,+ HE SAID. +WHY ELSE USE A SLEDGEHAMMER TO CRACK A WALNUT?+

FINAL AGREEMENT BY HONG KONG WAS MADE IN THE FACE OF A TAKE-IT-OR-LEAVE-IT PROPOSITION MADE THIS WEEK BY THE USA, THE EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVE TO WHICH WAS NOTICE OF TERMINATION OF AN AGREEMENT WHICH STILL HAS NEARLY THREE YEARS TO RUN.

CHIEF HONG KONG NEGOTIATOR, MR PETER TSAO, EXPLAINED THAT THE SERIES OF CONSULTATIONS HAD BEGUN IN MID-1979 WITH A USA REQUEST TO HONG KONG FOR ASSISTANCE IN DEALING WITH A THEORETICAL PROBLEM OF 'SURGES'. THESE ARE SITUATIONS WHERE THE USA CONSIDERS THAT CHANGING MARKET CONDITIONS MIGHT MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR IMPORTS TO RISE SUBSTANTIALLY IN SPITE OF AGREED RESTRICTIONS.

+WE EVENTUALLY REACHED AGREEMENT ON A FORMULA TO TAKE CARE OF THAT,+ MR TSAO SAID. +BUT AS TIME WENT ON IT BECAME CLEAR THAT THE USA OFFICIALS WERE IN FACT SET IN CUTTING BACK ON THE HONG KONG TRADE POTENTIAL TO WHICH THEY HAD AGREED LESS THAN TWO YEARS EARLIER.+

HONG KONG OFFICIALS EXPRESS THEMSELVES BEWILDERED BY THE VEHEMENCE OF THE USA DEMANDS. +IN TERMS OF THE USA MARKET,+ ONE SAID,+IT DOESN'T ADD UP TO A ROW OF BEANS. NO ONE COULD EXPLAIN TO US WHY THE CONCESSION HAD TO BE EXACTED, EXCEPT THAT THE REASON WAS POLITICAL.+

THIS IS BELIEVED TO REFER TO AN INTERPRETATION OF THE USA ADMINISTRATION'S COMMITMENT TO THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY CONTAINED IN A WHITE PAPER ISSUED IN FEBRUARY 1979.

+WE POINTED OUT ON MANY OCCASIONS THAT THIS INTERPRETATION WAS NOT CONSISTENT WITH INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS THE USA HAD FREELY ACCEPTED,+ MR DOWARD SAID. +AND THAT TO FORCE IT ON HONG KONG UNDER THREAT OF ACTION WHICH WOULD CAUSE CHAOS IN OUR MAJOR INDUSTRY WOULD DAMAGE THE CREDIBILITY OF FUTURE AGREEMENTS BETWEEN UNEQUAL PARTNERS.+

HONG KONG IS UNIQUELY DEPENDENT ON ITS TEXTILE AND APPAREL TRADE. HALF ITS INDUSTRY AND WORKFORCE ARE IN THIS SECTOR AND A THIRD OF ITS EXPORTS GO TO THE UNITED STATES.

TICD COMMENTS ON MODIFIED HK/USA TEXTILE AGREEMENT
* * * * *

COMMENTING ON A REPORT FROM WASHINGTON ON THE EFFECT OF THE MODIFICATIONS TO THE HONG KONG/USA TEXTILE AGREEMENT, A SPOKESMAN FOR THE TRADE, INDUSTRY AND CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT SAID THE ARRANGEMENT WAS LIMITED TO 10 CATEGORIES IN THE COTTON AND MAN-MADE FIBRE (MMF) GROUP.

ACCORDING TO 1979 UTILIZATION, TRADE IN THESE CATEGORIES REPRESENTED 40 PER CENT BY VOLUME OF TEXTILE AND APPAREL EXPORTS TO THE USA FOR THAT YEAR.

THE REDUCTION IN FLEXIBILITY (THAT IS, CARRY-OVER, CARRY-FORWARD AND SWING) FOR THE 10 CATEGORIES REPRESENTS EIGHT PER CENT OF THE POTENTIAL WE SHOULD HAVE HAD IN THE CATEGORIES IN 1980 OR IN TERMS OF THE ENTIRE AGREEMENT 2.67 PER CENT.

THE USA PROPOSED, AS A FINAL PACKAGE, THAT CATEGORIES 350 (DRESSING GOWN, COTTON), 351 (PYJAMAS AND OTHER NIGHT WEAR, COTTON), AND 649 (BRASSIERES, MMF) SHOULD BE DROPPED INTO THE APPAREL BASKET.

IN RESPECT OF 10 CATEGORIES, NAMELY 331 (GLOVES, COTTON), 333/4/5 (COATS, COTTON), 340 (SHIRTS, COTTON) 347/8 (TROUSERS, SLACKS AND SHORTS, COTTON), 341 (BLOUSES, NOT KNIT), 338/9 (1) (TANK TOPS, KNIT), 638/9 (SHIRTS AND BLOUSES, KNIT, MMF) AND 640 (SHIRTS, MMF), SWINGS SHOULD BE REDUCED FROM THE PRESENT LEVEL TO FIVE PER CENT AND THERE SHOULD BE NO CARRY-OVER OR CARRY-FORWARD FOR THESE CATEGORIES.

CARRY-OVER AND CARRY-FORWARD FOR THE APPAREL GROUP AS A WHOLE WOULD, HOWEVER, STILL APPLY WHERE APPROPRIATE. THERE WOULD ALSO BE SOME SLIGHT TECHNICAL IMPROVEMENT IN THE EXPORT AUTHORISATION SYSTEM.

- - - - 0 - - - -

LABOUR COMMISSIONER ORDERS STUDY OF
CONSTRUCTION SITE ACCIDENTS
* * * * *

THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON NEIL HENDERSON, HAS ORDERED A SPECIAL STUDY OF ALL RECENT ACCIDENTS AT CONSTRUCTION SITES.

REPLYING TO QUESTIONS FROM THE HON PETER C. WONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), HE SAID THE STUDY WAS IN ADDITION TO INVESTIGATIONS BEING CARRIED OUT BY THE FACTORY INSPECTORATE INTO RECENT SERIOUS ACCIDENTS.

MR HENDERSON SAID HE AND THE INSPECTORATE WERE DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THESE ACCIDENTS.

+IF AS A RESULT OF THIS MORE EXTENSIVE ANALYSIS A NEED IS SHOWN TO AMEND THE REGULATIONS I SHALL PROPOSE AMENDMENTS ACCORDINGLY AND GIVE APPROPRIATE WARNINGS OR ADVICE TO THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY,+ HE STRESSED.

/MR HENDERSON

MR HENDERSON SAID INVESTIGATIONS INTO RECENT SERIOUS ACCIDENTS HAD NOT SHOWN, HOWEVER, THAT THE CONSTRUCTION SITES (SAFETY) REGULATIONS WERE NECESSARILY DEFECTIVE.

+HOWEVER, THE INVESTIGATIONS HAVE NOT YET ALL BEEN COMPLETED. IF THEY DO REVEAL ANY DEFECTS IN THE LEGISLATION I WILL CERTAINLY CONSIDER AMENDING THE REGULATIONS.

+IN SOME CASES THE REGULATIONS MAY NOT HAVE BEEN PROPERLY OBSERVED AND IF OUR INVESTIGATIONS SHOW THIS TO BE THE CASE, LEGAL ACTION WILL BE TAKEN AGAINST THE OFFENDERS,+ HE ADDED.

EARLIER, MR HENDERSON EXPLAINED THE CONTROL PROVIDED BY THE REGULATIONS ON PASSENGER HOISTS AND CRADLES USED ON CONSTRUCTION SITES.

BEFORE THE HOISTS WERE PUT INTO USE, HE SAID, THEY WERE REQUIRED TO BE TESTED AND THOROUGHLY EXAMINED BY A COMPETENT EXAMINER AND THEREAFTER TO BE THOROUGHLY EXAMINED EVERY SIX MONTHS.

IF A HOIST WAS REMOVED TO A NEW LOCATION OR AFTER EXTENSIVE ALTERATION OR REPAIR, IT MUST BE TESTED AND THOROUGHLY EXAMINED AGAIN BEFORE BEING PUT INTO USE.

SUSPENSION PLATFORMS, INCLUDING CRADLES, MUST BE SIMILARLY EXAMINED BEFORE USE AND THEREAFTER WITHIN EVERY 14 MONTHS.

THE REGULATIONS ALSO CONTAINED PROVISIONS GOVERNING THE EXAMINATION AND SAFE USE OF OTHER LIFTING APPLIANCES AT CONSTRUCTION SITES.

+FACTORY INSPECTORS DURING THEIR INSPECTIONS OF CONSTRUCTION SITES, CHECK THE CERTIFICATES ISSUED BY COMPETENT EXAMINERS TO ENSURE THAT THE REGULATIONS HAVE BEEN PROPERLY OBSERVED,+ SAID MR HENDERSON.

- - - - 0 - - - -

GOVERNMENT STUDYING PROPOSALS TO REGULATE
UNDESIRABLE PRACTICES IN GOLD TRANSACTIONS

* * * * *

THE GOVERNMENT IS LOOKING AT PROPOSALS TO REGULATE UNDESIRABLE PRACTICES RELATED TO GOLD TRANSACTIONS OUTSIDE THE CHINESE GOLD AND SILVER EXCHANGE, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PHILIP HADDON-CAVE TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SIR PHILIP SAID HE WOULD BE CONSULTING THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL SHORTLY.

AS TO CONTROL OVER THE OPERATIONS OF THE EXCHANGE SOCIETY, SIR PHILIP SAID HE SAW NO REASON AT PRESENT TO ALTER THE VIEW HE EXPRESSED IN THE COUNCIL A YEAR AGO.

+AS I SAID THEN, THE EXCHANGE SOCIETY HAS A LONG HISTORY OF WELL CONDUCTED OPERATIONS AND THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT SO FAR CONSIDERED IT NECESSARY TO EXERCISE CONTROL OVER IT,+ HE SAID.

SIR PHILIP WAS REPLYING TO THE HON PETER C WONG WHO ASKED WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT NOW THOUGHT THE TIME HAD COME TO INTRODUCE SOME FORM OF CONTROL OVER THE HONG KONG GOLD AND SILVER MARKET IN THE LIGHT OF RECENT EVENTS.

- - - - 0 - - - -

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16, 1980

- 12 -

SPECIAL FUND TO BE SET UP TO FINANCE STUDENT LOANS
* * * * *

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS AFTERNOON APPROVED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A STUDENT LOAN FUND FROM FEBRUARY 1, 1980 TO FINANCE LOANS TO NEEDY STUDENTS AT THE TWO UNIVERSITIES, THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC, AND POST SECONDARY COLLEGES.

UNDER THIS SCHEME, LOANS WILL ALSO BE AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS IN AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION APPROVED BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL. THE FUND WILL BE ADMINISTERED BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY.

AT PRESENT ALL STUDENT LOANS, EXCEPT THOSE GRANTED TO TRAINEES AT THE THREE COLLEGES OF EDUCATION, ARE CHARGED TO THE DEVELOPMENT LOAN FUND.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PHILIP HADDON-CAVE EXPLAINING THE REASONS FOR THE CREATION OF A SEPARATE LOAN FUND FOR STUDENTS SAID AN INITIAL ALLOCATION OF \$15 MILLION FROM THE DEVELOPMENT LOAN FUND WAS APPROVED IN 1969 TO SET UP THE LOAN SCHEME AT THE TWO UNIVERSITIES. IT WAS ENVISAGED THAT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE IN DUE COURSE TO MEET EXPENDITURE ON LOANS ALMOST ENTIRELY FROM REPAYMENTS.

HOWEVER THE FUND HAD NOT BEEN REVOLVING BECAUSE OF SIGNIFICANT INCREASES IN THE NUMBERS OF STUDENTS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR LOANS -- 1 599 IN 1969 COMPARED WITH 11 881 IN 1979.

FURTHERMORE, HE ADDED, THE MAXIMUM LOAN WAS INCREASED FROM TIME TO TIME TO KEEP PACE WITH INCREASES IN THE COST OF LIVING. FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, IT HAD RISEN FROM \$4 000 A YEAR IN 1969 TO \$5 400 A YEAR IN 1979.

HE ALSO DISCLOSED THAT NEARLY \$182 MILLION HAD BEEN ALLOCATED FOR LOANS AND FURTHER ALLOCATIONS, BRINGING THIS TOTAL TO MORE THAN \$218 MILLION, WOULD BE SOUGHT FOR THE COMING FINANCIAL YEAR.

SIR PHILIP SAID THE CONTINUING DEPLETION OF THE RESOURCES OF THE DEVELOPMENT LOAN FUND FOR STUDENT LOANS HAD BEEN CAUSING HIM CONCERN FOR SOME TIME, AND HE THOUGHT THE LOANS SHOULD MORE APPROPRIATELY BE FUNDED SEPARATELY AS A CLEARLY IDENTIFIABLE ELEMENT WITHIN THE TOTAL FINANCIAL COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION AT THE TERTIARY LEVEL.

- - - - 0 - - - -

/13

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16, 1980

- 13 -

POLICE TO BE BETTER EQUIPPED TO TOW AWAY
ILLEGALLY PARKED CARS

* * * * *

THE POLICE WILL BE BETTER EQUIPPED TO TOW AWAY ABANDONED CARS AND CARS CAUSING OBSTRUCTION WHEN IT REPLACES FIVE OF ITS LANDROVERS THIS YEAR WITH LARGER TOWING VEHICLES CAPABLE OF LIFTING UP TO FOUR TONS IN WEIGHT. IN ADDITION, FUNDS ARE BEING SOUGHT FOR THE PURCHASE OF THREE MORE TOW TRUCKS CAPABLE OF LIFTING UP TO EIGHT TONS WEIGHT.

THIS WAS DISCLOSED BY THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON DEREK JONES IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS FROM THE REV THE HON JOYCE BENNETT AND THE HON ALEX WU IN TODAY'S LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING.

MR JONES SAID THAT THE POLICE NOW HAD 14 LANDROVERS TO TOW AWAY VEHICLES THAT HAD BEEN ABANDONED, INVOLVED IN AN ACCIDENT OR PARKED ILLEGALLY ON THE STREETS.

HOWEVER, HE NOTED THAT THESE LANDROVERS WERE ONLY CAPABLE OF MOVING SMALL OR MEDIUM-SIZED SALOON CARS AND ANY LARGER VEHICLES HAD TO BE REMOVED BY COMMERCIAL OPERATORS HIRED FOR THE PURPOSE.

+WHERE THERE IS A SERIOUS ACCIDENT, OR VERY HEAVY VEHICLES ARE INVOLVED, HEAVY DUTY TOW TRUCKS BELONGING TO THE ARMY, THE FIRE SERVICES, OR THE ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL OFFICE OF THE PWD ARE ASKED TO ASSIST, + HE SAID.

REFERRING TO ILLEGAL PARKING AND DOUBLE PARKING IN THE STREETS, MR JONES SAID A FIXED PENALTY TICKET WOULD USUALLY BE ISSUED, BUT IF THE VEHICLES CAUSED SERIOUS OBSTRUCTION TO TRAFFIC OR POSED A SAFETY HAZARD THEY WOULD BE TOWED AWAY.

OWNERS MAY RECOVER THEIR CARS BY PAYING A TOWING FEE OF \$80 PLUS \$20 PER DAY, AFTER THE SECOND DAY, FOR EVERY DAY THE VEHICLE IS LEFT IN THE POLICE POUND.

IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 1979, A TOTAL OF 1 115 ENFORCEMENT TOWS WERE CARRIED OUT BY THE POLICE.

REFERRING TO ABANDONED VEHICLES, MR JONES POINTED OUT THAT ACCORDING TO THE LAW, WHEN A VEHICLE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN ABANDONED FOR MORE THAN 72 HOURS, THE POLICE MUST GIVE THE REGISTERED OWNER SEVEN DAYS' NOTICE TO REMOVE IT FROM THE STREETS.

IF THE VEHICLE IS NOT REMOVED IN THIS PERIOD, IT IS THEN TAKEN TO THE POLICE POUND WHERE THE OWNER IS ALLOWED ONE MONTH TO RECLAIM IT. THEREAFTER, THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE CAN DISPOSE OF THE VEHICLE BY AUCTION OR AS HE THINKS FIT.

+IT IS NOT THE PRACTICE TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST THE LAST REGISTERED OWNERS OF ABANDONED VEHICLES BECAUSE THE SALE OF SUCH VEHICLES BY AUCTION OR FOR SCRAP USUALLY MORE THAN COVERS THE COST OF REMOVAL, + HE SAID.

/HOWEVER,

HOWEVER, MR JONES ADMITTED THAT THERE WERE DIFFICULTIES IN HANDLING ABANDONED CARS SINCE FEBRUARY 1979 BECAUSE THE COMPANY WHICH HELD THE GOVERNMENT CAR CRUSHING CONTRACT HAD TO GIVE UP ITS SITE FOR MTR CONSTRUCTION WORK, BUT HE ADDED THAT A NEW SITE HAD BEEN FOUND IN KWAI CHUNG AND CRUSHING OPERATIONS WOULD RESUME BY THE END OF THIS MONTH.

+IN THE LONGER TERM, CONSIDERATION IS BEING GIVEN A SYSTEM OF REFUNDABLE DEPOSITS BY VEHICLE OWNERS. SUCH A SYSTEM WOULD ENCOURAGE OWNERS OF OLD CARS TO ARRANGE FOR THEM TO BE SCRAPPED ON THEIR OWN INITIATIVE BECAUSE THEY WOULD THEN BE ABLE TO RECLAIM THEIR DEPOSITS FROM THE GOVERNMENT,+ HE SAID.

- - - - 0 - - - -

MARINE FISH CULTURE BILL 1980 PASSED WITH AMENDMENTS
* * * * *

THE MARINE FISH CULTURE BILL 1980 WHICH AIMS TO REGULATE AND PROTECT THE CULTURE OF MARINE FISH IN HONG KONG WATERS WAS PASSED INTO LAW WITH AMENDMENTS BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE AMENDMENTS WERE:

- * FISH CULTURE ZONES WOULD BE DEMARCATED IN THE PRESCRIBED MANNER-
- * AN AUTHORISED OFFICER WHEN EXERCISING POWER OR PERFORMING A DUTY OR FUNCTION UNDER THE BILL WOULD PRODUCE WRITTEN AUTHORISATION TO ANY PERSON WHO QUESTIONS HIS AUTHORITY-
- * EVERY PERSON ARRESTED UNDER THE BILL WOULD BE GIVEN INTO THE CUSTODY OF A POLICE OFFICER WITHIN 24 HOURS OF HIS ARREST- AND
- * FISH CULTURE WOULD BE OUTSIDE SPECIFIED PROHIBITED ZONES, FROM A DAY TO BE APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR.

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE OF THE BILL, THE HON PETER C. WONG, ALTERNATE CONVENOR OF THE LEGISLATION SCRUTINY GROUP OF UNOFFICIAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS WHO HAD DISCUSSED THE BILL WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS SAID THESE AMENDMENTS WERE PRIMARILY MADE TO SAFEGUARD THE INDIVIDUAL.

MR WONG ALSO SAID THE BILL SHOULD DESERVE MORE PUBLICITY THAN IT HAD SO FAR ATTRACTED.

+THIS IS NOT ONLY BECAUSE IT IS A FINE PIECE OF WELL-CONCEIVED LEGISLATION TAILORED FOR THE NEEDS OF HONG KONG, BUT, MORE SIGNIFICANTLY, BECAUSE IT PROVIDES FOR THE KIND OF PIONEERING PROJECT THAT HONG KONG NEEDS IN ITS EFFORTS TO DIVERSIFY INDUSTRY,+ HE SAID.

/ANOTHER COUNCILLOR,

ANOTHER COUNCILLOR, THE HON WONG LAM, ALSO SPOKE IN SUPPORT OF THE BILL.

HOWEVER, HE SAID THE LICENCE FEES FOR FISH CULTURE OPERATIONS SHOULD NOT BE TOO HIGH AT FIRST.

HE SUGGESTED THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD, AFTER TWO YEARS, EXAMINE THE EXPENDITURE INCURRED IN IMPLEMENTING THE LEGISLATION AND THE TURNOVER ACHIEVED BY FISH FARMERS, SO AS TO MAKE A REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT.

- - - - 0 - - - -

REGISTRATION OF PERSONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1980
INTRODUCED INTO LEGCO
* * * *

A BILL WHICH ENABLES REGULATIONS TO BE MADE FOR EXCLUDING CERTAIN PERSONS FROM REGISTERING AND OBTAINING IDENTITY CARDS WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE REGISTRATION OF PERSONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1980, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON LEWIS DAVIES SAID IF IT WAS PASSED, IT WAS INTENDED TO EXCLUDE VIETNAMESE REFUGEES ALLOWED TO STAY TEMPORARILY IN HONG KONG PENDING RESETTLEMENT OVERSEAS FROM ANY ENTITLEMENT TO REGISTER AND BE ISSUED WITH IDENTITY CARDS.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT MAINTAINED COMPREHENSIVE RECORDS OF ALL VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IN HONG KONG, AND THEY WERE ISSUED WITH IDENTITY PAPERS BY THE MANAGERS OF THE VARIOUS REFUGEE CAMPS. AT PRESENT THERE ARE ABOUT 55 000 VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IN HONG KONG.

+THERE IS THEREFORE NO PRACTICAL REASON FOR THEM TO BE REGISTERED UNDER THE ORDINANCE,+ HE ADDED.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

- - - - 0 - - - -

REPORT ON HK EXHIBITION CENTRE UNDER STUDY
* * * * *

THE CONSULTANT'S REPORT ON THE NEED FOR AN EXHIBITION CENTRE IN HONG KONG HAS BEEN RECEIVED AND IS NOW BEING CONSIDERED IN DETAIL, THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND CUSTOMS, MR LAWRENCE MILLS SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON ALLEN LEE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR MILLS SAID THE REPORT WAS RECEIVED BY HIS DEPARTMENT ON JANUARY 2.

/IT WAS

IT WAS A VERY SUBSTANTIAL DOCUMENT AND CONTAINED A NUMBER OF RECOMMENDATIONS REQUIRING DETAILED CONSIDERATION BY HIS AND OTHER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS WHICH WERE BEING CONSULTED. HE HOPED THE INTER-DEPARTMENTAL WORK COULD BE COMPLETED WITHIN THE NEXT THREE MONTHS.

THEIR JOINT VIEWS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TOGETHER WITH THE REPORT WOULD THEN BE FORWARDED TO THE GOVERNMENT.

+PROVIDED THAT THE CONSULTANT'S REPORT IS FOUND TO BE ADEQUATE, THE INTENTION IS TO SEEK THE ADVICE OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AS TO THE NEXT STEPS TO BE TAKEN,+ HE SAID.

- - - - 0 - - - -

EIGHT STATISTICAL SURVEYS PLANNED FOR THIS YEAR

* * * * *

EIGHT ORDERS MADE BY THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL, SIX AUTHORISING STATISTICAL SURVEYS ON ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND TWO AUTHORISING PILOT CENSUSES IN PREPARATION FOR THE MAJOR POPULATION CENSUS IN 1981 WERE TABLED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THESE AUTHORISATIONS WERE THOSE THE COMMISSIONER FOR CENSUS AND STATISTICS WAS LIKELY TO NEED FOR HIS WORK DURING THIS YEAR, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON EXPLAINED.

MR JEAFFRESON SAID THE COMMISSIONER WAS UNDERTAKING A LONG-TERM PROGRAMME OF ECONOMIC SURVEYS AND IN A PARTICULAR YEAR THERE WAS A COMBINATION OF THEM:

- * A BENCHMARK SURVEY -- THE ONE THIS YEAR WOULD COLLECT DATA IN RESPECT OF 1979 RELATING TO THE BUILDING, CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDING CIVIL ENGINEERING) AND THE REAL ESTATE SECTOR-
- * SEVERAL ANNUAL FOLLOW-UP SURVEYS -- THREE THIS YEAR, ON INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION FOR 1979, ON WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADES AND RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS, AND ON IMPORTS AND EXPORTS OF SERVICES- AND
- * QUARTERLY AND MONTHLY SURVEYS -- TWO SERIES IN 1980, A QUARTERLY SERIES ON INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION, AND A MONTHLY SERIES ON RETAIL SALES AIMED AT PROVIDING UP-TO-DATE ASSESSMENT OF TRENDS IN CONSUMER DEMAND.

IN THE TWO REMAINING SURVEYS THIS YEAR -- THE LAND AND MARINE POPULATION PILOT CENSUSES, ALL ASPECTS OF THE 1981 CENSUS WOULD BE TESTED, PARTICULARLY THE CENSUS CONTENT, FIELD ORGANISATION AND DATA PROCESSING, MR JEAFFRESON SAID.

+THE STATISTICS ADVISORY BOARD HAS ENDORSED THE OVERALL PLANS FOR THE VARIOUS ECONOMIC SURVEYS AND THE OVERALL POPULATION CENSUS PLAN WHICH INCLUDES THE TWO PILOT POPULATION CENSUSES,+ HE ADDED.

- - - - 0 - - - -

REFUSE COLLECTION FLEET IN NT TO GROW

* * * * *

THERE ARE 83 COLLECTION VEHICLES IN USE IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, OF WHICH 67 OR 81 PER CENT ARE OF THE REFUSE COMPACTING TYPE, THE SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, THE HON DAVID AKERS-JONES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR AKERS-JONES SAID IT WAS THE INTENTION OF THE GOVERNMENT TO EXTEND THE USE OF COMPACTION TYPE REFUSE COLLECTION VEHICLES. SEVEN NEW VEHICLES WOULD BE DELIVERED IN THE NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR.

IN ADDITION, THE PURCHASE OF 17 VEHICLES HAD BEEN INCLUDED IN THE 1980/81 DRAFT ESTIMATES.

HE SAID THE EXISTING REFUSE COLLECTION FLEET INCLUDED TWO COMPACTION VEHICLES AND 11 TIPPER LORRIES HIRED FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ONE REFUSE COLLECTION VEHICLE WHICH HAD A CARRYING CAPACITY OF TWO TONS THE CARRYING CAPACITY OF THE FLEET VARIED BETWEEN THREE TO EIGHT TONS.

OF THE 83 VEHICLES, 31 VEHICLES OR 37 PER CENT WERE OVER FIVE YEARS OLD, 34 OR 41 PER CENT WERE BETWEEN TWO TO FIVE YEARS AND 18 OR 22 PER CENT WERE UNDER TWO YEARS OLD.

MR AKERS-JONES WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON CHARLES YEUNG, CONCERNING THE NUMBER, TYPE, CAPACITY AND AGE OF REFUSE COLLECTING VEHICLES IN USE IN THE NEW TERRITORIES AND WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT INTENDED TO EXTEND THE USE OF REFUSE COMPACTING VEHICLES.

- - - - 0 - - - -

MORE MONEY INJECTED INTO PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME

* * * * *

MORE RAPID PROGRESS ON A NUMBER OF APPROVED PROJECTS AND THE UPGRADING OF ANOTHER TEN PROJECTS IN THE PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME HAD REQUIRED THE SPENDING OF AN ADDITIONAL \$136 MILLION IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR.

THIS AMOUNT WAS MET BY SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS TOTALLING \$180 MILLION FOR THE FIRST QUARTER OF 1979/80 APPROVED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

ANOTHER MAJOR ITEM OF SUPPLEMENTARY EXPENDITURE WAS \$16 MILLION TO MEET THE REVISED OPERATING COSTS OF THE DENTAL SCHOOL AND DENTAL TEACHING HOSPITAL AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG AND FOR THE POLYTECHNIC'S MAIN BUILDING PROGRAMME.

ASKING FOR THE COVERING AUTHORITY OF THE COUNCIL FOR THESE SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PHILIP HADDON-CAVE POINTED OUT THAT THERE WERE OFFSETTING SAVINGS OF \$160 MILLION UNDER OTHER GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES. THE REMAINING \$20 MILLION NOT OFFSET BY SAVINGS WAS REQUIRED TO MEET EXPENSES RELATING TO REFUGEES AND ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
SATISFIED WITH GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO ITS RECOMMENDATIONS
* * * * *

THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE IS SATISFIED WITH GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE IN ITS FIRST REPORT, THE HON LI FOOK-WO SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MR LI WAS SPEAKING AT THE TABLING OF THE SECOND REPORT OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE OF WHICH HE IS THE CHAIRMAN.

+BY AND LARGE, THE GOVERNMENT MINUTE IN RESPONSE TO OUR PREVIOUS REPORT COMMENTED ADEQUATELY ON THE CONCLUSIONS DRAWN AND RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE, AND INDICATED WHAT ACTION, IF ANY, WOULD BE TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT TO RECTIFY THE IRREGULARITIES BROUGHT TO NOTICE BY THE COMMITTEE AND THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT,+ HE SAID.

+WE HOPE THAT ON THIS OCCASION THE RESPONSE WILL BE EQUALLY SATISFACTORY.+

THIS YEAR, THE COMMITTEE HAD AGAIN CONFINED ITS ATTENTION TO 21 ITEMS WHICH, IN ITS OPINION, WERE IRREGULARITIES OR SHORTCOMINGS OF A MORE SERIOUS NATURE, MR LI SAID.

HE APPRECIATED THE CO-OPERATION OF ALL BRANCH SECRETARIES OF THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT AND HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS WHO GAVE EVIDENCE ON ITEMS RELEVANT TO THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES AT MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE. HE ALSO THANKED THE ASSISTANCE AND ADVICE GIVEN TO THE COMMITTEE BY THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT, THE DEPUTY FINANCIAL SECRETARY AND THE DIRECTOR OF ACCOUNTING SERVICES.

MR LI ALSO NOTED THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT HAD IN HIS MORE RECENT REPORTS REFERRED TO CERTAIN SHORTCOMINGS IN A NUMBER OF PUBLIC BODIES AND VOLUNTARY AGENCIES WHICH ARE HEAVILY SUBSIDISED FROM THE PUBLIC PURSE.

+AS IN THE CASE OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS THEY ARE ACCOUNTABLE TO THE TAX-PAYERS FOR THE EXPENDITURE OF THEIR FUNDS,+ HE SAID.

- - - - 0 - - - -

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16, 1980

- 19 -

LAND GRANTED FOR CONSTRUCTION OF CEMENT PLANT
* * * * *

TREATY DOCUMENTS FOR THE GRANT OF A SITE ON WHICH A CEMENT PLANT IS TO BE BUILT AT SIU LANG SHUI, NEAR TAP SHEK KOK IN TUEN MUN, WERE SIGNED TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR AUGUSTINE CHUI KAM, DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, SIGNED FOR THE GOVERNMENT WHILE MR LI KA-SHING, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF CHINA CEMENT COMPANY (HONG KONG) LIMITED, SIGNED FOR THE COMPANY, WHICH WILL BUILD AND OPERATE THE PLANT.

CHINA CEMENT COMPANY (HONG KONG) LIMITED IS A JOINT VENTURE BETWEEN CHEUNG KONG (HOLDINGS) LIMITED AND KAISER CEMENT CORPORATION OF CALIFORNIA.

THE SITE, NEXT TO THAT ON WHICH THE KOWLOON ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY'S POWER STATION IS BEING CONSTRUCTED, HAS A TOTAL AREA OF 15 HECTARES AND INCLUDES UNFORMED LAND AND SEABED. IT IS BEING GRANTED BY PRIVATE TREATY.

THE PLANT WILL BE MODERN, SOPHISTICATED AND FULLY INTEGRATED, AND WILL BE CAPABLE OF EXPANSION. IT WILL HAVE AN ANNUAL PRODUCTION CAPACITY OF 1.4 MILLION METRIC TONS WITH A WORKFORCE OF 300, MOST OF WHOM WILL BE SKILLED. THE GOVERNMENT WILL APPLY CAREFUL MONITORING AND CONTROL TECHNIQUES TO ENSURE THAT THERE IS NO UNDUE IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT.

UNDER THE AGREEMENT WITH THE COMPANY, THE HIGH QUALITY PORTLAND AND OTHER SPECIALISED CEMENTS PRODUCED BY THE PLANT WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR USE IN HONG KONG. THIS WILL BE BENEFICIAL IN TIMES OF SHORT SUPPLY OR HIGH DEMAND.

ANOTHER BENEFIT WILL BE THAT THE PLANT WILL USE AS A BASIC RAW MATERIAL FUEL ASH PRODUCED BY THE POWER STATION.

CONSTRUCTION WORK ON THE SITE IS STARTING SHORTLY AND THE PLANT IS DUE TO BE READY BY 1982. ESTIMATED COST OF THE PROJECT IS \$1 BILLION.

WELCOMING THE INVESTMENT, A SPOKESMAN FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION SAID IT CONSTITUTED A FURTHER TANGIBLE SIGN OF CONFIDENCE IN HONG KONG'S FUTURE. HE SAID ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PLANT ALSO ENHANCED OUR IMAGE AS A MANUFACTURING BASE IN THE REGION.

+IT IS PARTICULARLY WELCOME THAT THE PLANT WILL BE BUILT CLOSE TO THE POWER STATION AS THIS WILL DO A GREAT DEAL TO REDUCE THE PROBLEM OF DISPOSAL OF ASH PRODUCED BY THE STATION,+ HE SAID.

- - - - 0 - - - -

/20

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16, 1980

- 20 -

SUPPLEMENTARY MEDICAL PROFESSIONS BILL
TO BE INTRODUCED INTO LEGCO SHORTLY

* * * * *

THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, THE HON E.P. HO SAYS THE SUPPLEMENTARY MEDICAL PROFESSIONS BILL WILL BE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SHORTLY.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON HARRY FANG IN THE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY, MR HO SAID THE MEDICAL SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE UNIVERSITY AND POLYTECHNIC GRANTS COMMITTEE EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN THE PROPOSALS FOR LEGISLATION.

THOUGH THIS MAY HAVE SLOWED PROGRESS A LITTLE, THE METICULOUS CARE WITH WHICH THE SUB-COMMITTEE EXAMINED THE APPROACH FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE COURSES OF PARA-MEDICAL TRAINING ON WHICH THEY HAD TO ADVISE THE GOVERNMENT HAD RESULTED IN SOME IMPROVEMENTS TO THE DRAFT LEGISLATION.

HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE PROPOSALS FOR THE LEGISLATION ARE NOW IN THEIR FINAL FORM AND HAVE BEEN REFERRED BACK TO THE UPGC AND OTHER BODIES FOR ANY FURTHER VIEWS THEY MAY HAVE.

- - - - 0 - - - -

USE OF FIRE ARMS BY OFF DUTY POLICE OFFICERS

* * * * *

THE GOVERNMENT IS SATISFIED WITH PRESENT CONTROLS GOVERNING THE POSSESSION AND USE OF FIRE ARMS BY OFF DUTY POLICE OFFICERS.

THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON LEWIS DAVIES SAID THIS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM DR THE HON HO KAM-FAI IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

- - - - 0 - - - -

/21

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16, 1980

- 21 -

DON'T USE ROOM HEATERS TO DRY CLOTHES

*** * * * ***

ELECTRIC ROOM HEATERS ARE DESIGNED FOR THAT PURPOSES ONLY AND NOT FOR DRYING CLOTHES, A SPOKESMAN FOR THE FIRE SERVICES SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

+NO ROOM HEATER OF ANY KIND SHOULD BE USED FOR DRYING PURPOSES OR PLACED NEAR ANY COMBUSTIBLE MATERIALS SUCH AS CLOTHES, CURTAINS, FURNITURE AND UPHOLSTERY,+ SAID THE SPOKESMAN.

+PARTICULAR CARE IN THIS RESPECT SHOULD BE EXERCISED IN REGARD TO RADIANT HEATERS (GLOWING BURN ELEMENT), FAN HEATERS AND CONVECTOR HEATERS AND THESE SHOULD ALWAYS BE PLACED OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN,+ HE ADDED.

HE ALSO URGED THE PUBLIC TO BE CAUTIOUS WHEN USING PORTABLE HEATERS AT HOME AND AT PLACES OF WORK WITH THE APPROACH OF COOLER AND DRYER WEATHER.

THE SPOKESMAN POINTED OUT THAT A COMMON CAUSE OF FIRES ARISING FROM THE USE OF ROOM HEATERS WAS BY PLACING THEM IN UNSUITABLE LOCATIONS. THESE INCLUDED AREAS CLOSE TO COMBUSTIBLE MATERIALS IN DRAUGHTS OR WHERE CHILDREN PLAY.

+BEFORE TURNING ON ANY TYPE OF HEATERS,+ HE SAID, +IT IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THAT THOUGHT SHOULD BE GIVEN AS TO WHICH IS THE SAFEST SPOT TO PLACE THEM. KEEP IT WELL AWAY FROM CLOTHES, CURTAINS OR BEDDING MATERIALS AND ALSO MAKE SURE IT IS NOT TOO CLOSE TO UPHOLSTERED FURNITURE. SATISFY YOURSELF FULLY THAT IT CANNOT BE KNOCKED OVER BY PLAYING CHILDREN OR ELDERLY PEOPLE.+

THE SPOKESMAN ALSO ADVISED THAT BEFORE TURNING ON AN ELECTRIC ROOM HEATER FOR THE FIRST TIME IT SHOULD BE GIVEN A THOROUGH CHECK TO ENSURE THAT IT WAS CLEAN AND THAT ALL POWER CONNECTIONS AND PLUG LEADS WERE IN GOOD CONDITIONS.

- - - - - 0 - - - - -

WELDING IN PUBLIC PLACES CONTROLLED BY LAW

*** * * * ***

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, THE HON DAVID MCDONALD, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT WELDING IN PUBLIC PLACES WAS CONTROLLED BY LAW UNDER THE SUMMARY OFFENCES ORDINANCE.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON LEUNG TAT-SHING, HE SAID UNDER SECTION 4 (28) OF THE ORDINANCE ANY PERSON WHO CARRIED OUT SUCH WORKS IN A MANNER WHEREBY INJURY OR OBSTRUCTION MAY ACCRUE TO A PUBLIC PLACE WAS LIABLE TO A FINE OF \$500 OR TO THREE MONTHS IMPRISONMENT.

/+IN CASES

+IN CASES WHERE ANYTHING, INCLUDING WELDING DEBRIS, IS DROPPED OR FALLS FROM A BUILDING TO THE DANGER OR INJURY OF ANY PERSON IN OR NEAR A PUBLIC PLACE THE PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR THE OFFENCE IS LIABLE, UNDER SECTION 4 B(1), TO A FINE OF \$10 000 AND IMPRISONMENT FOR SIX MONTHS.

+AND, UNDER SECTION 4 B(2) WHERE THE OFFENCE RELATES TO MATERIAL WHICH IS DROPPED OR FALLS FROM A BUILDING IN THE COURSE OF CONSTRUCTION, REPAIR OR DECORATION THE CONTRACTOR CARRYING OUT THE WORK IS LIABLE TO A FINE OF \$50 000 AND IMPRISONMENT FOR ONE YEAR.+

MR MCDONALD SAID THAT MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC MIGHT, BY INFORMING THE POLICE, INITIATE PROSECUTIONS AGAINST OFFENDERS.

THEY MIGHT ALSO HAVE RECOURSE TO LEGAL ACTION FOR DAMAGES IN RESPECT OF INJURIES SUFFERED, HE ADDED.

- - - - 0 - - - -

GOVERNMENT GUARANTEE FOR MTRC LOAN

* * * *

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) ADOPTED A MOTION TO GIVE AUTHORITY FOR A GOVERNMENT GUARANTEE FOR EXPORT CREDITS AMOUNTING TO \$37 MILLION TO FINANCE A CONTRACT PLACED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM FOR THE TRACKWORK FOR THE EXTENSION OF THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY TO TSUEN WAN.

THE GUARANTEE ALSO COVERS DEFERRED INTEREST AT A FIXED INTEREST RATE OF 7.75 PER CENT PER ANNUM OF UP TO \$7.5 MILLION.

MOVING THE MOTION IN THE COUNCIL TODAY, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR PHILIP HADDON-CAVE SAID THAT WITH THE ADDITIONAL LOAN, THE GOVERNMENT'S TOTAL GUARANTEE COMMITMENT IN RESPECT OF THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION WOULD AMOUNT TO \$8 942 MILLION, AND THIS CONTINGENT LIABILITY ON THE PUBLIC FINANCES WAS WELL PROVIDED FOR WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT'S FISCAL RESERVES.

+THE WHOLE OF THE CONTRACT HAS BEEN AWARDED IN HONG KONG DOLLARS TO AVOID ANY EXCHANGE RISK TO THE CORPORATION AND TO THE GOVERNMENT IN RESPECT OF ANY GUARANTEE WHICH MIGHT BE GRANTED TO COVER IT,+ HE ADDED.

- - - - 0 - - - -

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16, 1980

- 23 -

GOVERNMENT PROBES IMPLICATIONS OF EXTENDING
MEDICAL CARE TO CHILDREN OF FEMALE OFFICERS

* * * * *

THE GOVERNMENT IS STUDYING THE IMPLICATIONS OF EXTENDING MEDICAL CARE TO THE ESTIMATED 28 000 CHILDREN OF ITS 14 000 MARRIED WOMEN EMPLOYEES.

THIS WAS DISCLOSED BY THE SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, THE HON MARTIN ROWLANDS IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM DR THE HON HARRY FANG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MR ROWLANDS POINTED OUT THAT MARRIED WOMEN OFFICERS, AS A GENERAL RULE, DID NOT RECEIVE THE SAME FRINGE BENEFITS AS THEIR MALE COUNTERPARTS BECAUSE IT HAD BEEN THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TO ADHERE TO THE GENERALLY ACCEPTED COMMUNITY VIEW IN THESE MATTERS, NAMELY THAT THE HUSBAND SHOULD BE THE PROVIDER.

HOWEVER, HE NOTED THAT COMMUNITY ATTITUDES WERE CHANGING AND A SUBSTANTIAL PROPORTION OF PRIVATE COMPANIES NOW PROVIDED MEDICAL BENEFITS FOR THE CHILDREN OF THEIR MARRIED WOMEN EMPLOYEES.

+I CAN ASSURE MEMBERS THAT WE ARE KEEPING THIS MATTER UNDER CLOSE STUDY. I MIGHT ADD THAT THE FRINGE BENEFITS OFFERED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO ITS WOMEN OFFICERS ARE STILL THOUGHT TO COMPARE FAVOURABLY WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR,+ HE SAID.

- - - - 0 - - - -

CHINESE TITLES FOR GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

* * * * *

THE DIRECTOR OF HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON JOHN WALDEN WILL LOOK INTO THE QUESTION OF WHETHER IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO CONSISTENTLY USE ONE OF THE TWO CHINESE CHARACTERS PRESENTLY USED FOR THE WORD 'DEPARTMENT'.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON WONG LAM IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MR WALDEN SAID THAT IF SUCH A CHANGE WOULD BE HELPFUL TO THE PUBLIC THE DEPARTMENT WOULD EXAMINE THE IMPLICATIONS OF INTRODUCING IT.

HE ALSO ADMITTED THAT THE CHINESE TITLES FOR GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS WERE NOT COMPLETELY UNIFORM PARTICULARLY IN REGARD TO THE CHINESE CHARACTER USED TO TRANSLATE 'DEPARTMENT'.

- - - - 0 - - - -

/24

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16, 1980

- 24 -

NOTE TO EDITORS:

DORWARD TO GIVE PRESS CONFERENCE

* * * *

THE DIRECTOR OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND CUSTOMS, MR WILLIAM DORWARD AND THE DIRECTOR OF TRADE, MR PETER TSAO WILL HOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AT 10 PM AT KAI TAK AIRPORT IN THE V.I.P. PRESS CONFERENCE ROOM, FIRST FLOOR, PASSENGER TERMINAL ON THEIR RETURN FROM THE NEGOTIATIONS ON THE HONG KONG/US TEXTILE AGREEMENT.

YOU ARE INVITED TO SEND A REPRESENTATIVE TO COVER THE PRESS CONFERENCE. MR DORWARD AND MR TSAO WILL RETURN BY PAN AMERICAN WORLD AIRWAYS FLIGHT PA 5. THE EXPECTED TIME OF ARRIVAL IS 2120 HOURS.

- - - - 0 - - - -

BILLS PASSED

* * * *

TWO BILLS WERE PASSED INTO LAW IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THEY WERE THE SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION (1978-79) BILL 1980 AND THE MARINE FISH CULTURE BILL 1980.

- - - - 0 - - - -