



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
GREEN PAPER ON CHILD EDUCATION APPRAISED	1
ANTI-BRIBERY BILL PASSED WITH AMENDMENTS	8
CLAMPDOWN ON LOAN SHARKS WELCOMED	13
BILL TO STAMP OUT LOAN SHARKS PASSED	15
YAUMATI FERRY FARES REVISED	17
+GUESSTIMATE+ OF SQUATTER POPULATION	18
WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION LEVELS TO BE ADJUSTED	19
APPRENTICESHIP LAW MADE EVEN BETTER	21
CROWD CONTROL AT OUT-DOOR CONCERTS	22
WEIGHTIER PENALTIES FOR TRAFFIC OFFENCES	23
FULL POLICE POWERS FOR AUXILIARIES	24
TRADE DESCRIPTIONS BILL PUT TO LEGCO	24
BAN ON PYRAMID SELLING SUPPORTED	26
WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ZONES TO BE SET UP	26
POLICE PATROLS IN PICNICKING AREAS	27
POWER TO SUSPEND SCHOOLS CLARIFIED	28

/CONTROL OF

CONTROL OF LORRIES WITH LIFTING GEAR	28
TACKLING FIRES AND FIRE HAZARDS	29
THEFT-ORDINANCE IMPROVED	29
MTR BY-LAWS APPROVED	30
FAKE DRUG TRAFFICKING AN OFFENCE	31
GREATER CONTROL OVER STREET NAMING	31
BILLS PASSED	32
COURTESY THE BEST POLICY, SAYS TOPLEY	32
FOOTBRIDGE AT CAFETERIA BEACH TO BE REBUILT	33
WATER FOR YUEN LONG INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT	34
GOVERNOR TO ATTEND ANNUAL CAS DINNER	34
NEW URBAN CLEARWAYS IN KWAI CHUNG	35
REPULSE BAY ROAD BUS SCHEME	36

GREEN PAPER ON CHILD EDUCATION APPRAISED

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THE AD HOC GROUP OF UMEICO MEMBERS FORMED TO STUDY THE GREEN PAPER ON PRIMARY EDUCATION AND PRE-PRIMARY SERVICES HAS CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO RECONSIDER THE PROPOSAL TO INTRODUCE A UNIFIED SYSTEM OF PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION.

MOVING DEBATE ON THE GREEN PAPER IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, CONVENOR OF THE GROUP, THE REV THE HON JOYCE BENNETT, SAID THAT WHILE MANY ASPECTS OF THE GREEN PAPER WERE COMMENDABLE, THERE WERE HOWEVER CERTAIN BASIC POINTS THAT SHOULD BE RECONSIDERED.

+THE ROOT OF OUR DISSATISFACTION LIES WITH THE REFUSAL TO ACCEPT THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION THAT THERE SHOULD BE ONE DEPARTMENT AND ONE ORDINANCE TO CONTROL ALL PRE-SCHOOL SERVICES,+ SHE SAID.

+WE NOTED THAT THIS WAS REJECTED SINCE IT WAS THOUGHT THE MARGINAL ADVANTAGES WOULD NOT JUSTIFY THE ADMINISTRATIVE UPHEAVAL NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT SUCH A PROPOSAL.

+THE PUBLIC HAS AWAITED WITH EAGERNESS THIS GREEN PAPER BECAUSE THERE IS SO MUCH WRONG AT PRESENT WITH THE AFFAIRS OF CHILDREN UNDER SIX BEING ADMINISTERED BY TWO DEPARTMENTS.+

INSTEAD, MISS BENNETT OBSERVED THAT THE GROUP FOUND THE OLD SYSTEMS PERPETUATED AND THERE WAS NO REALLY FRESH THINKING IN THE GREEN PAPER.

SHE STRESSED THAT A SEPARATE ORGANISATION, WHERE THE NEEDS OF THE PRE-SCHOOL CHILD ARE CLEARLY LAID DOWN, HAS MANY ADVANTAGES.

+WE NEED A PRE-SCHOOL SERVICES SECTION OF OUR SOCIAL SERVICES WHERE THE WHOLE GAMUT OF OUR SERVICES FOR THE YOUNG CAN BE DRAWN TOGETHER.

+I SEE THIS NEW SECTION CLARIFYING THE NEEDS OF THE CHILDREN NOT ONLY OF THE POORER MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY WHERE BOTH PARENTS WORK, BUT ALSO OF THE PROFESSIONAL AND MIDDLE CLASS FAMILIES WHERE PARENTS WORK IN ORDER TO SECURE A HIGHER STANDARD OF LIVING.+

SHE AGREED THERE IS MUCH OVERLAP BETWEEN CHILD CARE CENTRES AND KINDERGARTENS BUT POINTED OUT THAT THE TIGHTENING UP OF TWO SEPARATE ORDINANCES WILL NOT OVERCOME THE PROBLEMS OF SEPARATING THESE TWO TYPES OF INSTITUTIONS.

FURTHERMORE SUCH LAWS WILL CAUSE ADDED FRUSTRATION AND CYNICISM TO THE OPERATORS WHO WILL SEEK TO GET ROUND THE REGULATIONS AS THEY CONTINUE TO SERVE THE KINDS OF FAMILIES FOR WHOM THEY ARE ALREADY CATERING, SHE SAID.

AS TO THE PROPOSAL TO ABOLISH ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS AND INTERVIEWS TO PRIMARY SCHOOLS, MISS BENNETT OPINED THAT IT CLEARLY SHOWS THAT THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT RECOGNISES THE COMPLETE FAILURE OF ITS KINDERGARTEN INSPECTORATE SINCE IT HAS DECIDED TO CONTROL THE KINDERGARTENS BY THIS NEW METHOD OF ALLOCATING CHILDREN TO PRIMARY SCHOOLS BY COMPUTER.

+CERTAINLY THE METHOD HAS MUCH TO COMMEND IT, ESPECIALLY IF WE BELIEVE IN A TOTALITARIAN TYPE OF SOCIETY WITH THE GOVERNMENT CONTROLLING THE INDIVIDUAL.

+HOWEVER I UNDERSTOOD THAT HONG KONG WAS THE HOME OF THOSE WHO VALUED FREE CHOICE AND PRIVATE ENTERPRISE.+

BUT SHE FEARED THAT, HAVING READ THE CHAPTER ON CONTROL OF ENTRY TO PRIMARY SCHOOLS, PARENTS WOULD IN FACT HAVE VERY LITTLE CHOICE OF SCHOOL FOR THEIR CHILDREN.

SHE FELT THAT THE NEW ALLOCATION SYSTEM WHEREBY SCHOOLS COULD RETAIN 15 PER CENT OF THE PLACES AS DISCRETIONARY PLACES WAS FRAUGHT WITH OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORRUPTION AND CALLED FOR +VERY SERIOUS RECONSIDERATION OF SO RADICAL A CHANGE IN THE BASIS OF OUR SOCIETY+.

MISS BENNETT POINTED OUT THAT ANOTHER FACTOR WHICH SHOULD NOT BE OVERLOOKED CONCERNED THE GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY, OR INABILITY, TO CHECK THE GENUINENESS OF ADDRESSES GIVEN.

SHE EXPLAINED THAT WITH THE CHINESE EXTENDED FAMILY IT WOULD BE EASY FOR A CHILD TO BE REGISTERED AS LIVING NEAR A SO-CALLED +PRESTIGIOUS+ PRIMARY SCHOOL.

THERE IS A FURTHER VERY REAL DANGER OF AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS TO CATER FOR THE CHILDREN WHOSE PARENTS DO NOT WISH THEIR CHILDREN TO BE EDUCATED ALONGSIDE CHILDREN FROM POOR AND ILLITERATE HOMES.

+WE HAVE NOT YET GOT THE FINAL SOLUTION TO PRIMARY SCHOOL ENTRANCE PROCEDURES,+ SHE STRESSED.

+I URGE CONSIDERABLY MORE THOUGHT ON THIS ASPECT OF THE GREEN PAPER, SO THAT PARENTAL CHOICE CAN BE ENSURED WITHOUT THE SCHOOLS TESTING THEM OR THEIR CHILDREN BY INTERVIEW OR WRITTEN TEST.+

THE AD HOC GROUP ALSO VIEWED WITH GREAT DISQUIET THE LOWERING OF EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS FOR CHILD CARE WORKERS AND KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS.

ENQUIRIES MADE BY MEMBERS OF THE GROUP REVEALED A DIVERSITY OF COURSES FOR TRAINING THESE YOUNG GIRLS BUT MISS BENNETT STRESSED THAT WHAT HONG KONG NEEDED WAS ONE INSTITUTION AND ONE ALONE WHICH WOULD TRAIN ALL WORKERS FOR PRE-SCHOOL INSTITUTIONS.

+I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SEE OUTLINES OF THE TWO-YEAR IN-SERVICE TRAINING COURSE FOR KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS.

+MOST OF THIS SHOULD BE APPLICABLE TO ANY IN-SERVICE COURSE FOR CHILD CARE WORKERS,+ SHE ADDED.

BUT SHE WAS ALARMED TO NOTE THAT KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS HAVE TO WAIT YEARS TO GET ON THIS COURSE. AND TO GET ALL THE PRESENT KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS TRAINED AT THE PRESENT SPEED WOULD TAKE 19 YEARS WITHOUT COUNTING NEWCOMERS TO THE KINDERGARTEN PROFESSION DURING THOSE YEARS.

SHE CRITICISED THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT FOR THINKING IT FIT TO APPOINT INSPECTORS OF KINDERGARTEN WITH THE BARE MINIMUM OF KINDERGARTEN QUALIFICATIONS AND WITH NO EXPERIENCE IN RUNNING KINDERGARTENS OR TEACHING IN THEM.

/SHE NOTED

SHE NOTED THAT ALTHOUGH THERE ARE NOW IN HONG KONG A FEW SPECIALISTS TRAINED IN THE CARE OF THE PRE-SCHOOL CHILD, THE GREEN PAPER DOES NOT ENVISAGE RECRUITING THEM FOR ITS TRAINING PROGRAMMES.

ANOTHER ASPECT OF THE GREEN PAPER THAT DREW THE ATTENTION OF THE AD HOC GROUP CONCERNS FINANCIAL AID TO KINDERGARTENS.

+THE DEMAND FOR FULL GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT WITH SUBSIDIES TO KINDERGARTENS HAS BEEN REJECTED.

+INSTEAD, EVEN THE PRESENT METHOD OF SUBSIDY TO CHILD CARE CENTRES WILL BE RADICALLY REVISED, SO THAT THE CHILDREN IN THEM OR IN KINDERGARTENS CAN BE ASSISTED AFTER THE FAMILY HAS BEEN MEANS-TESTED.+

SHE NOTED THAT THE PROPOSALS ON SPACE AND STUDENT-TEACHER RATIO WILL REDUCE THE NUMBERS IN KINDERGARTEN CLASSES AND NATURALLY THE FEES WILL HAVE TO BE RAISED IN ORDER TO MEET THE BUDGETED EXPENSES.

FURTHERMORE, THE GOVERNMENT PLANS TO CONTINUE ITS POLICY OF LETTING KINDERGARTEN PREMISES IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES BY TENDER.

+WHY MUST WE ENCOURAGE EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS TO BE PROFIT-MAKING AND CHARGE THE HIGHEST FEES THAT THE MARKET CAN BEAR?+ SHE ASKED.

SHE HOPED THAT A LONG HARD LOOK WILL BE TAKEN TO IMPROVE THESE ASPECTS OF THE GREEN PAPER.

MISS BENNETT PAID TRIBUTE TO THE AUTHORS OF THE GREEN PAPER ON THE DECISION TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF PRIMARY EDUCATION BY PROMOTING THE +LEARNING BY DOING+ EDUCATIONAL METHOD.

SHE WAS ALSO PLEASED TO NOTE THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF LIBRARIES AND THE IMPROVEMENTS IN FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT.

BUT SHE THOUGHT THAT NOT ENOUGH CONSIDERATION HAD BEEN GIVEN TO IMPROVE THE ACTUAL TEACHING IN THOSE SCHOOLS WHERE TEACHERS DARE TO COMPLAIN THEY +SELDOM SEE A BRIGHT PUPIL+.

+THE SOONER HONG KONG'S EDUCATIONALISTS RECOGNISE THAT THE SIX YEAR OLD PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD HAS TREMENDOUS INNATE POTENTIAL THE BETTER.

+NONE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED USELESS AND UNWORTHY OF A CERTAIN SCHOOL,+ SHE ADDED.

FOUR OTHER UNOFFICIALS ALSO SPOKE ON THE GREEN PAPER DURING DEBATE ON THE MOTION.

DR THE HON HENRY HU DISAGREED WITH THE GREEN PAPER'S PROPOSAL THAT THE STAFF QUALIFICATION FOR CHILD CENTRES SHOULD BE FORM 3, PLUS TWO YEARS' PRE-SERVICE TRAINING.

HE ARGUED: +IN NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES, WHEN WE DEAL WITH MACHINES OR TOOLS, A BASIC EDUCATION OF FORM 3 PLUS SOME SPECIAL TRAINING WOULD BE SUFFICIENT, BUT IN THE CASE OF CHILD CARE CENTRES, THE HUMAN ELEMENT IS INVOLVED.

+I SHOULD THEREFORE THINK THAT THE BASIC EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION SHOULD BE FORM 5 INSTEAD OF FORM 3.

+THE QUESTION CONCERNING HUMAN BEINGS IS MORE IMPORTANT AND COMPLICATED THAN THE CASE OF MACHINERY.+

HE SUPPORTED THE SETTING UP OF A SPECIAL TRAINING INSTITUTE FOR THIS PURPOSE.

DR HU ALSO CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO SET UP FREE CHILD CARE CENTRES AND KINDERGARTENS FOR THOSE PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT CAPABLE OF EDUCATING THEIR OWN CHILDREN.

HE SUGGESTED THAT THE ROLE OF THE PO LEUNG KUK SHOULD BE ENLARGED AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE MORE DIRECTLY INVOLVED.

ON THE ACTIVITY APPROACH FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION, DR HU POINTED OUT THAT A BALANCE MUST BE STRUCK BETWEEN THIS TYPE OF APPROACH AND THE NORMAL WAY OF LEARNING.

+THE ACTIVITY APPROACH IS A GOOD EDUCATIONAL METHOD TO EMPLOY IN ORDER TO DEVELOP CHILDREN'S INTELLIGENCE AND THEIR APPRECIATION OF VARIOUS MATTERS, BUT IT SHOULD ONLY BE APPLIED UP TO PRIMARY 3 TO ENABLE US TO ASSESS ITS IMPLICATIONS AND EFFECTS OF LEARNING BY YOUNG CHILDREN,+ HE SAID.

THE HON WONG LAM SAID HE WAS NOT IN FAVOUR OF THE PROPOSAL TO BASE THE ALLOCATION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES ON A DISTRICT SYSTEM AS +IT MAY DO MORE HARM THAN GOOD IN THE LONG RUN+.

HE NOTED THAT ONE OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE SYSTEM WAS TO PREVENT THE CONCENTRATION OF THE MOST ABLE CHILDREN IN CERTAIN SCHOOLS. BUT THE PROPOSAL IS DEFECTIVE IN THAT THE +CREAM+ WILL STILL BE CONCENTRATED IN A SMALL NUMBER OF SCHOOLS, HE SAID.

HE EXPLAINED THAT THE GREEN PAPER ALLOWS THE SCHOOLS TO HAVE AN ALLOCATION OF 15 PER CENT DISCRETIONARY PLACES WHEN SELECTING PUPILS.

+I DO NOT OBJECT TO SCHOOL AUTHORITIES EXERCISING THEIR RIGHTS TO ADMIT CERTAIN TYPES OF PUPILS, TREATING THEM AS SPECIAL CASES.

+BUT IN ACTUAL FACT, 15 PER CENT IS NOT AN ACCURATE PERCENTAGE BECAUSE APART FROM SELECTING PUPILS ACCORDING TO THIS PERCENTAGE, THE SCHOOLS MAY ADMIT PUPILS THEY FAVOUR UNDER THE CONDITIONS MENTIONED IN PARAGRAPH 6.17 OF THE GREEN PAPER.

+IN OTHER WORDS, THE 'CREAM' WILL STILL REMAIN IN A FEW SCHOOLS EVEN WHEN THE DISTRICT SYSTEM IS IMPLEMENTED,+ HE SAID.

ANOTHER DIFFICULTY IN IMPLEMENTING THE SYSTEM IS HOW TO DECIDE UPON DISTRICT BOUNDARIES, MR WONG POINTED OUT.

HE OBSERVED THAT MANY POPULAR SCHOOLS ARE IN FACT LOCATED IN JUST A FEW DISTRICTS WHERE THE MORE AFFLUENT LIVE.

IF THE DIVISION OF THE TERRITORY INTO DISTRICTS IS IMPERFECT, THE RICH WILL BE GROUPED IN ONE DISTRICT AND THE POOR IN ANOTHER, WHICH MEANS THAT CHILDREN COMING FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO RECEIVE EDUCATION TOGETHER, HE SAID.

MR WONG SAID THAT IT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED THAT DISTRICT NETS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS ARE QUITE DIFFERENT IN THAT, UNLIKE PRIMARY 1 PUPILS, FORM 1 STUDENTS ARE OLDER AND CAN AFFORD TO ATTEND SCHOOLS FARTHER OR EVEN VERY FAR FROM HOME.

HENCE, HE THOUGHT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONSIDER TRAFFIC CONDITIONS AND DISTANCE OF TRAVEL WHEN INTRODUCING THE SYSTEM FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

HE SAID WHAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD DO IS TO TAKE APPROPRIATE MEASURES TO EFFECT OVERALL IMPROVEMENT IN PRIMARY EDUCATION.

+I AM CONVINCED THAT IT IS MORE FRUITFUL TO GET AT THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM THAN TO IMPLEMENT THE ALLOCATION SYSTEM, WHICH IS BY NATURE ONLY AN EXPEDIENT MEASURE.

+FURTHERMORE, OVERALL IMPROVEMENT IN PRIMARY EDUCATION WILL PLAY A POSITIVE ROLE IN PROMOTING THE STANDARD OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND REDUCING THE COMPETITION FOR ADMITTANCE TO POPULAR SCHOOLS,+ HE ADDED.

TURNING TO THE TRAINING OF KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS, MR WONG FELT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD STANDARDISE THE TRAINING COURSES AND PUT THEM UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF A COLLEGE OF EDUCATION OR A DEPARTMENT SO AS TO BRING ABOUT BETTER ADMINISTRATION AND AN IMPROVEMENT IN THE CURRICULUM.

AS FOR THE RE-TRAINING OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS, MR WONG QUERIED WHY THOSE ENTERING THE PROFESSION BEFORE SEPTEMBER 1981 WERE NOT REQUIRED TO UNDERGO THIS KIND OF RE-TRAINING WHEREAS NEW TEACHERS ENTERING AFTER THIS DATE HAD TO BE RETRAINED.

IN HIS OPINION, IT IS THE VETERAN TEACHERS RATHER THAN NEW RECRUITS WHO SHOULD BE RETRAINED, SAY, AT APPROPRIATE INTERVALS OF EVERY FIVE OR TEN YEARS.

ON THE SUBJECT OF TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS, HE WAS WORRIED BY A PARAGRAPH IN THE GREEN PAPER WHICH STATES +DUE TO PARENTAL PREFERENCE, THE VAST MAJORITY OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS AIM TO TEACH IN THE MEDIUM OF ENGLISH IN FORM 1 ... BUT MOST PRIMARY SCHOOLS ARE UNABLE TO PRODUCE PUPILS TRUELY CAPABLE OF LEARNING IN THE MEDIUM OF ENGLISH.+

HE THOUGHT EITHER ENGLISH SHOULD BE TREATED AS A SPECIAL SUBJECT AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL, SO MUCH SO THAT THEY CAN COPE WITH A NEW ENVIRONMENT ON ENTERING SECONDARY SCHOOL, OR SECONDARY SCHOOLS SHOULD BE CLEARLY DIRECTED NOT TO TEACH IN THE MEDIUM OF ENGLISH AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL IN ORDER TO AVOID HAMPERING THE PROGRESS OF STUDENTS IN OTHER SUBJECTS UNNECESSARILY.

MR WONG WAS ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT THE LACK OF CONCRETE SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO REINFORCE MORAL TRAINING FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS.

+CHINESE PEOPLE OFTEN EXPECT TOO MUCH FROM MORAL EDUCATION, HOPING THAT STUDENTS WOULD BECOME SAINTS OR SAGES THROUGH SUCH EDUCATION,+ HE SAID.

+THIS IS SOMETHING UNNECESSARY, BUT THEN IT DOES NOT MEAN THAT PRIMARY EDUCATION CAN ENTIRELY IGNORE THE DEVELOPMENT OF MORAL EDUCATION.+

MR WONG ENDORSED THE PROPOSAL TO ENCOURAGE THE CONVERSION OF PROFIT-MAKING KINDERGARTENS INTO NON-PROFIT-MAKING ONES, BUT POINTED OUT THAT THE EXISTING EDUCATION ORDINANCE HAD SOMEHOW UNINTENTIONALLY CREATED A WIDE GAP BETWEEN SOME NON-PROFIT-MAKING BODIES AND THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE SCHOOL RUN BY THEM.

ALTHOUGH THESE BODIES ARE ENTITLED TO RECOMMEND CANDIDATES TO THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION FOR CONSIDERATION OF APPOINTMENT AS DIRECTORS OF A SCHOOL, THEY HAVE NO RIGHT TO RECOMMEND REPLACEMENTS, HE SAID.

CONSEQUENTLY THESE BODIES TEND TO LOSE ENTHUSIASM IN RUNNING OTHER NEW SCHOOLS.

MR WONG HOPED THE GOVERNMENT WOULD MAKE BETTER ARRANGEMENTS AND PROPER IMPROVEMENTS IN THIS RESPECT.

DR THE HON HO KAM-FAI CONFINED HIS COMMENTS ON THE GREEN PAPER TO PRE-SCHOOL SERVICES.

HE CALLED FOR A SINGLE ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT WHICH WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING ALL PRE-SCHOOL SERVICES.

HE SAID THAT AS A RESULT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO REPLACE THE MUCH CRITICISED PRIMARY SCHOOL ENTRANCE EXAMINATION WITH A COMPREHENSIVE ALLOCATION OF SCHOOL PLACES, THERE SHOULD NO LONGER BE ANY FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCE IN THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY A CHILD CARE CENTRE OR A KINDERGARTEN.

+BOTH TYPES OF PRE-SCHOOL INSTITUTIONS CATER FOR CHILDREN OF A COMMON AGE GROUP AND SHARE THE SIMILAR OBJECTIVES OF FOSTERING THE CHILD'S OVERALL DEVELOPMENT IN THE PHYSICAL, SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL REALMS.

+WHY THEN PERPETUATE THE DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PROVISION OF PRE-SCHOOL SERVICES BETWEEN THE EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENTS?+ HE ASKED.

HE NOTED THAT A SIMILAR SUGGESTION PUT FORWARD BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION WAS REJECTED, AND URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO RECONSIDER THIS PROPOSAL.

ON THE TRAINING OF CHILD CARE WORKERS AND KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS, DR HO SUGGESTED THAT EITHER A SEPARATE INSTITUTE SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED OR ONE OF THE EXISTING COLLEGES OF EDUCATION BE MADE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING ALL TYPES OF PRE-PRIMARY TRAINING COURSES.

AT PRESENT TRAINING FOR THIS GROUP OF PEOPLE IS REGULATED BY TWO DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS AND IS PROVIDED BY A NUMBER OF INDEPENDENT BODIES.

IN ADDITION, IT IS PROPOSED THAT THE LEE WAI LEE TECHNICAL INSTITUTE WILL ALSO RUN TRAINING COURSES FOR CHILD CARE STAFF AS FROM SEPTEMBER THIS YEAR.

+WITH SUCH A SEGMENTED TRAINING SYSTEM, IT IS VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO CONTROL AND MONITOR THE CONTENTS AND STANDARDS OF THE TRAINING COURSES,+ DR HO SAID.

+WITH THIS CENTRALIZED ARRANGEMENT, A CURRICULUM CAN BE DEVELOPED TO ENSURE THAT THE TRAINED WORKERS ARE CAPABLE OF WORKING IN ALL KINDS OF PRE-SCHOOL INSTITUTIONS.+

HE CONSIDERED THAT THE ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION FOR ADMISSION TO THIS COURSE SHOULD BE AT THE CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION LEVEL SO AS TO ENSURE THAT THE TRAINEES CAN DERIVE MAXIMUM BENEFITS FROM THE COURSE AND ARE CAPABLE OF MEETING THE DEMANDS ARISING FROM THEIR PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES LATER ON.

DR HO ALSO CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO INTRODUCE DIRECT SUBSIDY FOR APPROVED NON-PROFIT-MAKING KINDERGARTENS.

HE GAVE THREE REASONS FOR THIS SUGGESTION:

- * KINDERGARTENS NEED FINANCIAL SUPPORT IN ORDER TO PROCURE FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT AND TO REPLENISH TEACHING AIDS AND FIT OUT PREMISES TO MEET SPECIFIED REQUIREMENTS-
- * THE SALARIES FOR KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS SHOULD BE REVISED UPWARD TO REFLECT THE LEVEL OF TRAINING REQUIRED AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO BE UNDERTAKEN, AND
- * WITHOUT FINANCIAL SUBSIDY FROM THE GOVERNMENT, THE INCREASED OPERATIONAL COSTS RESULTING FROM THE GRADUAL REDUCTION IN CLASS SIZE WILL BE PASSED ON TO THE PARENTS AND THIS MAY PROHIBIT THEM FROM SENDING THEIR CHILDREN TO KINDERGARTENS.

THE HON ANDREW SO DREW ATTENTION TO THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY PROPER CHILD CARE.

HE SAID THE FIRST THREE YEARS ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL YEARS OF A CHILD'S LIFE.

+THESE ARE THE YEARS WHEN THE CHILD IS MOST VULNERABLE.

+THEY ARE THE YEARS WHEN THE CHILD IS DEVELOPING MOST QUICKLY PHYSICALLY, EMOTIONALLY AND INTELLECTUALLY,+ HE ADDED.

MR SO QUERIED WHY THE GREEN PAPER DID NOT CONSIDER THESE VITAL THREE YEARS AND SUGGESTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD DO MORE IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

- * FORMULATE A FAMILY AND CHILD-ORIENTED POLICY IN THE CONTEXT OF AN OVERALL SOCIAL POLICY FOR HONG KONG-
- * PROVIDE MORE COUNSELLING SERVICES TO PARENTS-
- * TRAIN MORE QUALIFIED PERSONNEL TO SHAPE THE COURSE OF PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION, PREFERABLY BY THE EARLY ESTABLISHMENT OF A PROPER PRE-SCHOOL TEACHERS TRAINING COLLEGE-
- * ENCOURAGE THE PUBLICATION OF PARENTS MAGAZINES, AND THE PRODUCTION OF TV AND RADIO PROGRAMMES FOR PARENTS, TEACHERS AND CHILDREN, AND
- * RECRUIT QUALIFIED PERSONNEL TO GIVE EXPERT OPINIONS ON THE LEARNING VALUE OF THE MANY TYPES OF TOYS ON THE MARKET.

DEBATE ON THE MOTION RAISED BY MISS BENNETT WAS ADJOURNED.

ANTI-BRIBERY BILL PASSED WITH AMENDMENTS
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THE PREVENTION OF BRIBERY (AMENDMENT) BILL WAS PASSED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY WITH SEVERAL OF ITS PROVISIONS AMENDED ON THE RECOMMENDATION OF AN AD HOC GROUP OF UNOFFICIAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS.

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE HON T.S. LO, CONVENOR OF THE GROUP, POINTED OUT THAT DIFFERENT SECTORS OF THE PUBLIC HAD VOICED RESERVATIONS ON A NUMBER OF THE CHANGES TO THE LAW ORIGINALLY PROPOSED.

AFTER LENGTHY DISCUSSIONS AMONG UNOFFICIAL COUNCILLORS AND BETWEEN THEM AND THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE DEPUTY LAW DRAFTSMAN, THE COMMISSIONER OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION AND ITS ACTING DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS, ALL THE POINTS WERE RESOLVED.

THE FIRST POINT, MR LO SAID, CONCERNED THE BREADTH OF THE PROPOSED DEFINITION IN THE BILL OF BANKER'S BOOKS AND COMPANY'S BOOKS.

THE EXCHANGE BANKS ASSOCIATION AND THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY WERE CONCERNED THAT MEMBERS OF THE ICAC WOULD AS A RESULT OF THIS DEFINITION BE GIVEN AN ABSOLUTELY FREE REIN TO ROAM OVER THE AFFAIRS OF PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS IRRESPECTIVE OF WHETHER THEY ARE SUSPECTS OR ARE PERFECTLY INNOCENT PEOPLE.

MR LO NOTED THAT HIS GROUP HAD CONSIDERED THE POSSIBILITY OF LAYING DOWN THAT THE RIGHT TO SUCH DOCUMENTS SHOULD BE MONITORED BY THE COURTS BY INSISTING THAT A DOCUMENT COULD ONLY BE LOOKED AT AFTER THE COMMISSIONER HAD MADE AN APPLICATION TO THE COURTS.

BUT THEY HAD ALSO CONSIDERED THAT PERFECTLY INNOCENT PEOPLE WOULD PROBABLY PREFER NOT TO HAVE THE MATTER AIRED IN THE COURTS WHERE NO MATTER HOW INNOCENT, A BIT OF MUD WOULD STICK.

+MOREOVER, THE EFFECT OF SUCH MONITORING APPEARS TO BE MORE THEORETICAL THAN REAL FOR IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO SET OUT THE GROUNDS UPON WHICH A COURT COULD REFUSE AN APPLICATION.

+ACCORDINGLY WE AGREED TO LEAVE THE BILL AS IT STANDS BUT I BELIEVE THAT THE COMMISSIONER OF ICAC WILL ESTABLISH A BI-ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE SITUATION WITH THE EXCHANGE BANKS ASSOCIATION AND THAT THE ATTORNEY GENERAL WILL CONSIDER REVISING THE LAW IF IN PRACTICE SERIOUS PROBLEMS ARISE,+ HE SAID.

SECONDLY, MR LO SAID, THE GROUP FELT THAT EMPLOYEES OF SCHEDULED PUBLIC BODIES AUTHORISED TO ACCEPT OR SOLICIT ADVANTAGE BY THE EMPLOYERS SHOULD NOT HAVE TO RELY ON THE DEFENCE OF REASONABLE EXCUSE, AS SUCH A CASE SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN AN OFFENCE IN THE FIRST PLACE.

THEY THOUGHT THAT TO HAVE PROPER CONTROL AUTHORITY SHOULD BE IN WRITING.

THIRDLY, THE GROUP CONSIDERED THE PROPOSAL TO ALLOW THE ICAC TO FORCE A PERSON TO FURNISH INFORMATION OR DOCUMENTS TO WHICH HE MERELY HAS ACCESS TO BE QUITE OPPRESSIVE BECAUSE THERE CAN BE MANY DIFFERENT KINDS OF ACCESS.

+FOR EXAMPLE, THE WHOLE OF THE LAND OFFICE RECORDS AS WELL AS THE COMPANIES REGISTRY IS OPENED TO EVERYONE, AND IT WOULD BE OBVIOUSLY OPPRESSIVE IF THE ICAC WERE TO REQUIRE A PERSON TO FURNISH INFORMATION THEREFROM, SINCE MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION COULD FREELY ATTAIN ACCESS THEMSELVES,+ HE SAID.

THIS POINT WAS AGREED BY THE ADMINISTRATION AND APPROPRIATE AMENDMENTS WERE MADE TO THE BILL.

FOURTHLY, ON THE POWER SOUGHT BY THE COMMISSION TO FREEZE A SUSPECT'S BANK ACCOUNTS OR HIS DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANY ACCOUNTS, THE UNOFFICIALS RECOGNISED THE IMPORTANCE OF ENSURING THAT THE CORRUPT SHOULD NOT BE PERMITTED TO SALT AWAY HIS ILL-GOTTEN GAINS AND EVERY EFFORT OUGHT TO BE MADE BY THE ICAC TO DENY HIM OF THEM.

HOWEVER, MR LO POINTED OUT THAT NOT ALL SUSPECTS ARE CRIMINALS AND ASKED IF AN INNOCENT PERSON'S ACCOUNT IS FROZEN, WHO WILL PAY FOR THE DAMAGE THAT HE MAY SUFFER FOR FAILING TO MEET A CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATION.

IT IS NOW AGREED THAT ONLY THE ICAC COMMISSIONER OR HIS DEPUTY MAY ORDER THE FREEZING OF AN ACCOUNT AND THAT HE WILL BE IN A POSITION TO AND WILL TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE SUSPECT'S MORAL, LEGAL AND DAILY NEEDS. AGAINST THE COMMISSIONER'S DECISION, AS AT PRESENT, AN APPEAL WILL LIE TO THE COURTS.

+IF BETWEEN THE PERIOD OF HIS DECISION AND FINAL RESOLUTION BY THE COURTS, THE FREEZING OF A PERSON'S ACCOUNT HAS CAUSED HIM TO SUFFER DAMAGE THROUGH FAILURE TO MEET HIS LEGAL OBLIGATIONS AND THE EXISTENCE OF SUCH OBLIGATION WAS PREVIOUSLY DRAWN TO THE ATTENTION OF THE COMMISSIONER, THEN THE ICAC WOULD BE LIABLE FOR DAMAGES IN THE EVENT THAT THE SUSPECT IS NOT CHARGED OR IS ACQUITTED,+ MR LO ADDED.

FIFTHLY, CONCERNING THE NOTICE RESTRAINING THE DISPOSAL OF A SUSPECT'S PROPERTY TO BE REGISTRABLE IN THE LAND OFFICE, MR LO SAID THIS CAUSED LESS OF A PROBLEM THAN WAS ANTICIPATED.

+THE NOTICE IS NOT AN INCUMBRANCE ON THE PROPERTY AND A THIRD PARTY IS NOT PROHIBITED FROM SAY, BUYING IT, BUT OBVIOUSLY IT WOULD BE WISE FOR THE BUYER TO ENSURE THAT SUITABLE ARRANGEMENTS ARE MADE IN REGARD TO ANY FUNDS PAYABLE TO THE SUSPECTED OWNER,+ HE SAID.

+OTHERWISE, HE MAY WELL FIND HIMSELF SUSPECTED OF CONSPIRACY. IN THE CASE OF INNOCENT PEOPLE, THE COMMISSION WILL, I UNDERSTAND, ARRANGE TO EXPUNGE THE ENTRY FROM THE LAND OFFICE RECORDS THROUGH A CLEVER SYSTEM INVENTED BY THE REGISTRAR GENERAL.+

MR LO ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT OVER THE YEARS, ANYONE INVESTIGATED BY THE ICAC IS AUTOMATICALLY TREATED AS A CRIMINAL, WORSE, AS A LEPER, BY HIS EMPLOYER ASSOCIATES AND ACQUAINTANCES, NO MATTER HOW INNOCENT THE PERSON TURNS OUT TO BE.

+I AM PLEASED TO SAY, HOWEVER, THAT THE COMMISSIONER HAS NOW AGREED TO CONSIDER ADOPTING A PROCEDURE OF WRITING TO THOSE SUSPECTS IN RESPECT OF WHOM ALL INVESTIGATIONS ARE TERMINATED AND NO CHARGES ARE CONTEMPLATED,+ HE SAID.

SIXTHLY, THE UNOFFICIALS' AD HOC GROUP WAS TOLD THAT THE POWER OF THE COMMISSION TO DETAIN A PERSON FOUND IN PREMISES BEING SEARCHED WAS NO NEW POWER AND THAT IT ALREADY EXISTED IN SEPARATE ORDINANCES FOR THE POLICE AS WELL AS FOR THE PREVENTIVE SERVICE.

IT WAS NOW AGREED HOWEVER THAT THE POWER OF DETENTION SHOULD BE LIMITED TO THREE HOURS FROM THE MOMENT OF ICAC ENTERING THE PREMISES.

SEVENTHLY, THE TIME LIMIT FOR BRINGING SUMMARY PROSECUTIONS IN REGARD TO CERTAIN OFFENCES FROM SIX MONTHS TO THREE YEARS WAS AMENDED TO TWO YEARS. IN ADDITION, ONE OF THE OFFENCES WAS DELETED FROM THE LIST.

HOWEVER MR LO SAID THE POSITION WAS UNSATISFACTORY BECAUSE TRIVIAL OFFENCES REALLY OUGHT TO BE DEALT WITH WITHIN SIX MONTHS AND THE MORE SERIOUS OFFENCES OUGHT NOT TO HAVE A TWO YEARS' LIMIT.

HE REVEALED THAT THE ATTORNEY GENERAL WOULD RECONSIDER THE LIST AND DO AWAY WITH THE PRESENT UNHAPPY STOP-GAP MEASURE.

THE LAST POINT CONCERNED THE PROHIBITION OF EMPLOYMENT OF CONVICTED PERSONS IN A PARTICULAR BUSINESS OR A CLASS OF BUSINESS FOR UP TO SEVEN YEARS.

WHILE IT IS POSSIBLE TO LOOK UPON IT AS NO MORE THAN A PART OF THE PUNISHMENT, MR LO CONTENDED THAT IT WAS NOT THE REAL INTENT.

THE UNOFFICIALS OBTAINED THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S AGREEMENT THAT WHERE THE CONVICTED PERSON WAS EMPLOYED AT THE TIME OF THE OFFENCE BY A COMPANY THE PROHIBITION IS LIMITED TO THAT PARTICULAR COMPANY OR ITS SUBSIDIARIES.

+HOWEVER, WE AGREED THAT THE PROHIBITION MAY COVER EMPLOYMENT BY ANY OF THE SCHEDULED PUBLIC BODIES OR PARTNERSHIP OR FIRM,+ MR LO SAID.

TWO OTHER UNOFFICIAL COUNCILLORS SPOKE ON THE BILL.

THE HON FRANCIS TIEN SAID THERE WERE CERTAIN POINTS IN THE ORIGINAL PROPOSALS WHICH NEEDED CLARIFICATION IN ORDER TO REMOVE ALL POSSIBLE DOUBT.

ON THE DEFINITIONS OF +BANKER'S BOOKS,+ +COMPANY BOOKS+ AND +DOCUMENT+ WHICH INVESTIGATING OFFICERS OF THE ICAC MAY SEIZE FOR PURPOSES OF INVESTIGATION, HE URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO ASSURE THAT THIS PARTICULAR PROVISION WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED WITH EXTREME CARE AND DISCRETION.

+NO DOUBT WITH MODERN PHOTOCOPYING PROCESSES, EXTRACTS OF THE RELEVANT INFORMATION COULD BE MADE WITHOUT THE ACTUAL IMPOUNDING OF THE DOCUMENTS, FOR PURPOSES OF INVESTIGATION BUT NOT AS EVIDENCE IN COURT.+

WITH REGARD TO THE DEFINITION OF +EMPLOYER+ IN RESPECT OF PERMISSION GIVEN TO AN EMPLOYEE TO ACCEPT AN ADVANTAGE, MR TIEN NOTED THAT IN THOSE CASES WHERE THE EMPLOYER IS HIMSELF A SENIOR EMPLOYEE OR A PAID EXECUTIVE OF A PUBLIC ORGANISATION, THE POSSIBILITY OF COLLUSION COULD EXIST.

HE SUGGESTED THAT THE TERM SHOULD BE DEFINED MORE CLOSELY AND THE NATURE OF SUCH ADVANTAGE SPECIFIED.

WHILE AGREEING THAT THE ASSETS OF A PERSON WHO IS ON TRIAL OR UNDER INVESTIGATION SHOULD BE FROZEN, MR TIEN POINTED OUT THAT PROVISION SHOULD BE MADE FOR THAT PERSON TO BE ABLE TO WITHDRAW SUCH REASONABLE SUMS AS ARE NECESSARY FOR MAINTAINING THE LIVELIHOOD OF HIS DEPENDENTS WITHOUT HIS HAVING TO APPLY TO THE COURT ON EACH OCCASION.

HE THOUGHT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD UNDERTAKE TO RECOMPENSE A PERSON WHO MAY HAVE A PRIOR CONTRACTUAL LIABILITY AND HIS ASSETS FROZEN FOR ANY LOSSES IF HE IS SUBSEQUENTLY FOUND NOT GUILTY OR NO PROCEEDINGS ARE INSTITUTED AGAINST HIM.

TURNING TO THE DETENTION OF PERSONS FOUND ON PREMISES WHERE INVESTIGATIONS ARE TAKING PLACE, MR TIEN SAID THAT ALTHOUGH HE WAS SURE ICAC OFFICERS WOULD NOT DETAIN PEOPLE INDISCRIMINATELY AND WITHOUT THE DUE EXERCISE OF CARE AND DISCRETION, HE THOUGHT THAT A TIME LIMIT SHOULD BE PLACED ON SUCH DETENTION UNLESS THE ICAC OFFICERS HAVE A JUSTIFIABLE REASON TO DETAIN A PERSON LONGER.

ON THE RE-EMPLOYMENT OF A CONVICTED PERSON, HE AGREED THAT THE PERSON SHOULD BE REHABILITATED AND GIVEN EMPLOYMENT, OTHERWISE HE WOULD BECOME A BURDEN ON SOCIETY.

HOWEVER, THE QUESTION OF WHETHER HE SHOULD BE RE-EMPLOYED IN A SIMILAR POSITION IN THE SAME FIELD OF WORK REMAINS.

+IF HIS SKILL AND KNOWLEDGE ARE SUCH THAT HIS OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT ARE NARROWLY CIRCUMSCRIBED, THEN HE SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO RETURN TO HIS FIELD BUT NOT TO OCCUPY A POSITION OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR SOME TIME UNTIL HE HAS FULLY REHABILITATED HIMSELF,+ MR TIEN SAID.

BUT HE CONSIDERED A MAXIMUM TIME LIMIT OF SEVEN YEARS TO BE RATHER EXCESSIVE.

MR TIEN ALSO URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF REALISM TOWARDS THE PROBLEM OF CORRUPTION.

HE CITED AS EXAMPLE THAT THE LIMIT ON THE VALUE OF A GIFT WHICH MAY BE OFFERED TO A CIVIL SERVANT WAS SET SOME YEARS AGO AT \$500.

+THIS MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE BEEN REVISED SINCE THEN, BUT WITH CONTINUING INFLATION AND RISING PRICES, I WONDER WHETHER GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOT CONSIDER A MORE REALISTIC FIGURE,+ HE SAID.

THE HON PETER C. WONG SPOKE IN SUPPORT OF THE BILL.

HE POINTED OUT THAT SOME OF THE AMENDMENTS WERE IN ESSENCE NOT AN EXTENSION OF POWER, BUT RATHER TO CLARIFY WHAT HAD SO FAR BEEN THE PRACTICE OF ICAC IN CARRYING OUT ITS STATUTORY DUTIES.

HE NOTED THAT DURING THE SIX YEARS OF ITS EXISTENCE, THE ICAC HAS AN EXTREMELY GOOD TRACK RECORD.

+THERE HAS BEEN FEW INSTANCES OF ABUSE OF POWER AND INDEED, THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT THE POWERS IT HAS ARE EXERCISED WITH CARE AND DISCRETION,+ HE ADDED.

ANOTHER ANTI-CORRUPTION BILL, THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1980, WAS PASSED WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE UNOFFICIALS.

THE HON T.C. LO POINTED OUT THAT THE BILL PROPOSED TO EXTEND THE POWER OF INVESTIGATION, ARREST AND PROSECUTION BY THE ICAC TO BLACKMAIL, THEFT AND FALSE ACCOUNTANCY.

+IT IS QUITE CLEAR TO US THAT THIS IS NOT AN UNDUE EXTENSION BECAUSE THIS POWER WILL BE USED ONLY WHEN SUCH OFFENCES ARE DISCOVERED DURING THE COURSE OF AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE ALLEGATION OF CORRUPTION, AND NOT OTHERWISE,+ HE SAID.

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL GAVE ITS SEAL OF APPROVAL TO 11 NEW CLAUSES IN THE PREVENTION OF BRIBERY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1980 AND RECEIVED ASSURANCES FROM THE ATTORNEY GENERAL THAT THE TIME-LAG IN JUDICIAL PROCESSING IN CORRUPTION CASES WOULD BE INVESTIGATED.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JOHN GRIFFITHS, SAID THAT THE NEW CLAUSES AND ASSURANCES STEMMED FROM DISCUSSIONS HE HAD WITH AN AD HOC COMMITTEE OF THE UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS.

HE ADDED THAT SIMILAR DISCUSSIONS ALSO OCCURRED WITH REGARD TO THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1980 WHICH WAS ALSO PASSED AT TODAY'S COUNCIL MEETING.

MR GRIFFITHS SAID CONCERN WAS EXPRESSED BY THE UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS ABOUT THE POSSIBLE DAMAGING EFFECT CAUSED TO BOTH A BANK'S CUSTOMERS AND THE BANK'S OPERATIONS BY THE ICAC INSPECTIONS OF +BANKER'S BOOKS+.

+THE COMMISSION DOES NOT INSPECT ANYTHING NOT NEEDED FOR THE PURPOSE OF AN INVESTIGATION. BEFORE AN AUTHORISATION IS ISSUED REQUIRING THE PRODUCTION OF BANKER'S BOOKS, THE MATTER IS CONSIDERED EITHER BY THE COMMISSIONER PERSONALLY OR BY HIS DEPUTY. THE POWER TO INSPECT BANKER'S BOOKS HAS BEEN ON THE STATUTE BOOK FOR SIX YEARS AND HAS NOT, TO MY KNOWLEDGE, CAUSED UNDUE INCONVENIENCE TO THE BANKING COMMUNITY,+ HE TOLD THE COUNCIL.

HOWEVER, HE SAID HE PROPOSED THAT THE COMMISSIONER SHOULD MEET WITH THE EXCHANGE BANKS' ASSOCIATION ABOUT EVERY SIX MONTHS TO ASCERTAIN IF THERE WERE ANY PROBLEMS.

MR GRIFFITHS SAID HE WOULD ALSO CONSULT THE CHIEF JUSTICE REGARDING REDUCING THE TIME-LAG IN APPEALS CONCERNING PROPERTY FROZEN BY ICAC AND WHETHER PROSECUTION FOR A NUMBER OF SUMMARY OFFENCES, NORMALLY HEARD BEFORE A MAGISTRATE, COULD INSTEAD BE DEALT WITH BY A DISTRICT COURT, AND NOT BE SUBJECT TO ANY TIME LIMIT.

THE MAJOR PROVISION WHICH WAS PASSED IN THE AMENDMENTS TO THE PREVENTION OF BRIBERY (AMENDMENT) BILL WAS THAT NO OFFENCE IS COMMITTED IF A PUBLIC SERVANT, OTHER THAN A GOVERNMENT OFFICER, SOLICITS OR ACCEPTS AN ADVANTAGE DIRECTLY RELATED TO HIS EMPLOYMENT WITH THE PERMISSION OF HIS EMPLOYER.

IN RELATION TO THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1980, MR GRIFFITHS ASSURED MEMBERS THAT THE ICAC WOULD ONLY INVESTIGATE BLACKMAIL CASES BY A CROWN SERVANT ONLY WHEN THE COMMISSION +COMES ACROSS SUCH OFFENCES IN THE COURSE OF THEIR INVESTIGATION INTO CORRUPTION CASES.+

OTHERWISE, HE SAID, SUCH CASES WOULD BE INVESTIGATED BY THE POLICE.

CLAUSE 4 OF THE BILL HAS BEEN AMENDED TO INTRODUCE A TIME LIMIT ON THE DETENTION OF PERSONS WHEN OFFICERS OF THE COMMISSION ARE SEARCHING PREMISES.

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CLAMPDOWN ON LOAN SHARKS WELCOMED

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UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WELCOMED THE MONEY LENDERS BILL 1980 WHICH AIMS TO CLAMP DOWN ON LOAN SHARKS AND TO ENSURE BETTER PROTECTION TO BORROWERS IN ALL LOAN TRANSACTIONS BOTH AS REGARDS EXCESSIVE INTEREST RATES AND EXTORTIONATE STIPULATIONS.

+WE AGREE THAT EXISTING LEGISLATION IS NOT REALLY CAPABLE OF DEALING WITH THE PREVAILING EVIL OF LOANSHARKING,+ THE HON LI FOOK-WO SAID AT THE RESUMPTION OF THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL TODAY.

+TAKING INTO ACCOUNT RECENT LEGISLATIVE CHANGES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THE FACT THAT OUR OWN ORDINANCE IS COMPLETELY OUT-OF-DATE, WE CONSIDER THE BILL TO BE VERY TIMELY.+

HOWEVER, HE ASKED THE GOVERNMENT TO ALLOW A PERIOD OF AT LEAST THREE MONTHS BEFORE BRINGING THE NEW LEGISLATION INTO OPERATION TO ENABLE EXISTING MONEY LENDERS TO MAKE OTHER ARRANGEMENTS.

MR LI POINTED OUT THAT THE CONCEPT OF THE BILL WAS TO REGULARISE THE EFFECTIVE RATE OF INTEREST WHICH MAY BE CHARGED ON UNSECURED LOANS TO WAGE-EARNERS WHO, FOR GENUINE AND LEGITIMATE REASONS, MUST APPROACH A MONEY LENDER INSTEAD OF A BANK.

UNDER THE BILL, A MAXIMUM EFFECTIVE RATE OF 60 PER CENT PER ANNUM IN RESPECT OF ANY LOAN AGREEMENT IS PROPOSED. ANY RATE EXCEEDING THIS MAXIMUM WILL NOT BE ENFORCEABLE AND THE LENDER WILL BE LIABLE TO PROSECUTION.

WHERE PROCEEDINGS ARE TAKEN IN ANY COURT IN RESPECT OF A LOAN ANY EFFECTIVE RATE OF INTEREST EXCEEDING 48 PER CENT BUT NOT 60 PER CENT PER ANNUM WILL BE PRESUMED TO BE EXTORTIONATE UNLESS, HAVING REGARD TO ALL THE CIRCUMSTANCES RELATING TO THE LOAN AGREEMENT, THE COURT IS SATISFIED THAT SUCH A RATE IS NOT UNREASONABLE OR UNFAIR.

MR LI NOTED THAT WHILE IT MAY BE ARGUED THAT THIS TWO TIER RATE OF INTEREST IS ON THE HIGH SIDE, THE UNOFFICIALS TOOK THE VIEW THAT THE RATES ARE APPROPRIATE AT THIS PARTICULAR POINT IN TIME, AND WOULD ALLOW SUFFICIENT MARGIN FOR THE REPUTABLE MONEY LENDER TO MEET A GENUINE SOCIAL NEED.

ON THE LICENSING OF MONEY LENDERS, MR LI ASKED FOR AN ASSURANCE FROM THE GOVERNMENT THAT A SIMPLER PROCEDURE FOR THE RENEWAL OF LICENCES SHOULD BE DEvised TO AVOID UNNECESSARY DELAY FOR THE GENUINE APPLICANT, SINCE THE LICENSING SYSTEM PROPOSED IN THE BILL IS ALREADY VERY COMPREHENSIVE AND TIME-CONSUMING.

MR LI FURTHER POINTED OUT THAT, TO DISCOURAGE MONEY LENDERS FROM ENTERING FALSE PARTICULARS IN THE LOAN AGREEMENT RELATING TO THE CAPITAL SUM OR THE EFFECTIVE RATE OF INTEREST, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL HAD ASSURED THAT FALSIFICATION OF PARTICULARS WOULD BE A CRIMINAL OFFENCE UNDER THE BILL.

THE UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS HAVE ALSO GIVEN CAREFUL CONSIDERATION TO THE POSITION OF UNINCORPORATED BUSINESSES WHICH MAKE COMMERCIAL LOANS IN THE COURSE OF THEIR NORMAL TRADING, ALTHOUGH MONEY LENDING AS SUCH IS NOT THEIR MAIN ACTIVITY.

THEY THOUGHT THAT THERE SHOULD BE A PROVISION FOR THIS TYPE OF TRANSACTION TO CONTINUE AND THE BILL WAS ACCORDINGLY AMENDED.

TWO OTHER UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS SPOKE ON THE BILL.

THE HON PETER C. WONG AGREED THAT THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION WOULD MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR LOAN SHARKS TO OPERATE WITH IMPUNITY WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE LAW BUT EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS AS TO ITS EFFECTIVENESS IN STAMPING OUT LOANSHARKING ALTOGETHER, PARTICULARLY WHERE TRIADS ARE INVOLVED.

HE SAID THE BILL IS USEFUL ONLY IF DISPUTES ARE BROUGHT BEFORE COURT. BUT IN MANY CASES, THEY ARE NOT.

+LOAN SHARKS RUN BY TRIADS WILL CONTINUE, AS THEY DO NOW, TO RESORT TO ILLEGAL MEANS TO EXTRACT REPAYMENT AND THIS BILL WILL NOT MATERIALLY ASSIST THE MARRIED WOMAN, REFERRED TO BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, WHO WAS DRIVEN TO PROSTITUTION IN A DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO REPAY WHAT HER HUSBAND OWED,+ MR WONG SAID.

+FOR OBVIOUS REASONS, SUCH PEOPLE ARE NOT EAGER TO SEEK PROTECTION OF THE LAW.+

HE SUGGESTED THAT GREATER VIGILANCE ON THE PART OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES AND BETTER PUBLIC RELATION CAMPAIGNS TO ENCOURAGE VICTIMS TO REPORT CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES MIGHT IN TIME REDUCE THE MENACE POSED BY TRIADS.

MR WONG ALSO FELT THAT THE PROPOSED TWO-TIER INTEREST RATE SYSTEM - 48 PER CENT AND 60 PER CENT - MAY SEEM TO BE ARBITRARY.

+BUT I AM PERSUADED THAT THEY ARE REALISTIC, HAVING REGARD TO THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC STRUCTURES IN HONG KONG.

+AND THESE RATES ARE NOT FINAL AS THEY MAY BE ALTERED BY RESOLUTION OF THIS COUNCIL IF IT SHOULD APPEAR THAT THE RATES WERE NO LONGER APPROPRIATE,+ HE ADDED.

THE HON ANDREW SO EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER THE LACK OF PROVISION IN THE BILL TO PROHIBIT MONEY LENDERS FROM RESORTING TO INTIMIDATORY METHODS TO RECOVER MONEY FROM DELINQUENT BORROWERS.

HE SAID: +IT IS WELL KNOWN THAT SOME MONEY LENDERS IN THE PAST HAVE PUT UP POSTERS STATING THAT A CERTAIN BORROWER HAS WELSHED ON HIS DEBT.

+SOME EVEN BEAT UP BORROWERS WHO FAIL TO REPAY THEIR DEBTS OR USE OTHER EXTREME MEANS TO COLLECT, MEANS THAT INVOLVE THE USE OR THREATENED USE OF VIOLENCE, OR OTHER CRIMINAL ACTS TO CAUSE HARM TO THE BORROWER, HIS REPUTATION OR HIS PROPERTY.+

MR SO URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO CONSIDER THIS ASPECT OF MONEY LENDING OPERATIONS.

ON THE FORMAT OF PROMISSORY NOTES, HE SUGGESTED THAT THE REGISTRAR GENERAL SHOULD DRAW UP, AND RECOMMEND FOR USE BY MONEY LENDERS, A DOCUMENT IN SIMPLE AND YET LEGALLY ADEQUATE LANGUAGE.

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BILL TO STAMP OUT LOAN SHARKS PASSED * * * * *

THE MONEY LENDERS BILL 1980 AIMED AT PROVIDING MACHINERY TO ASSIST IN STAMPING OUT THE SCOURGE OF LOANSHARKING WAS PASSED INTO LAW WITH AN AMENDMENT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THE AMENDMENT WHICH WAS INTRODUCED BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JOHN GRIFFITHS, EXTENDED TO UNINCORPORATED BUSINESSES, WHOSE MAIN BUSINESS IS NOT MONEY LENDING, BUT WHO MAKE LOANS AS AN INCIDENTAL ASPECT OF THEIR BUSINESS, THE EXEMPTION FROM LICENSING REQUIREMENTS AND MANDATORY PROCEDURES LAID DOWN IN THE BILL.

MR GRIFFITHS SAID SUCH AN EXCLUSION WAS MADE AFTER CONSULTATIONS WITH UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS WHO HAD REPRESENTED TO HIM THAT MANY LEGITIMATE BUSINESSES RUN BY PARTNERSHIPS AND INDIVIDUALS WOULD BE UNNECESSARILY INCONVENIENCED IF THEY WERE REQUIRED TO BE LICENSED MERELY BECAUSE AN INCIDENTAL PART OF THEIR BUSINESS INVOLVED GIVING LOANS.

EXAMPLES OF SUCH BUSINESSES WOULD BE IMPORT/EXPORT HOUSES WHO GAVE LOANS TO MANUFACTURERS WHO WERE MAKING GOODS TO THEIR ORDER.

/BUT HE

BUT HE STRESSED THAT THE UNIVERSAL BAN ON INTEREST IN EXCESS OF 60 PER CENT PER ANNUM WOULD APPLY TO ALL TRANSACTIONS WHERE INTEREST FALLS TO BE PAID, WHETHER OR NOT THE LENDING OF MONEY IS THE MAIN OBJECT, OR ONLY AN INCIDENTAL OR ANCILLARY ASPECT OF THE BUSINESS IN QUESTION.

HE NOTED THAT THE EXEMPTION OF SUCH BUSINESSES PRESENTS ITS OWN PROBLEMS IN THE CAMPAIGN TO ELIMINATE LOAN SHARKS. HOWEVER, HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT OTHER EQUALLY EFFECTIVE MEANS OF COUNTERING LOANSHARKING ACTIVITIES WOULD BE FOUND WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE GENERAL PROVISIONS OF THE NEW LEGISLATION.

IN REPLY TO POINTS RAISED BY UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS, MR GRIFFITHS SAID IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION SHORTLY BEFORE THE LEGISLATION COMES INTO OPERATION TO MOUNT A PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN SO THAT THE PUBLIC MAY BE FULLY INFORMED OF THE PROTECTION OFFERED THEM. THEY WILL ALSO BE ENCOURAGED TO REPORT BREACHES OF THE LAW BY LOAN SHARKS.

HE ASSURED THAT WHERE MONEY LENDERS RESORT TO CRIMINAL METHODS TO ENFORCE REPAYMENT, THEY WILL, IF THERE IS EVIDENCE OF THIS, BE PROSECUTED.

ON THE PROBLEM CREATED BY OTHER INTIMIDATORY METHODS, SUCH AS DISPLAYING PUBLICLY ON POSTERS THE NAMES OF BORROWERS SUGGESTING THAT THEY HAVE WELSHED ON THEIR BETS, MR GRIFFITHS SAID THIS COULD BE DRAWN TO THE ATTENTION OF THE LICENSING COURT WHEN APPLICATION IS MADE FOR RENEWAL.

THE COURT CAN, IF IT CONSIDERS THAT SUCH UNDESIRABLE PRACTICES HAVE BEEN INDULGED IN SUFFICIENTLY, FREQUENTLY AND ARE SUFFICIENTLY REPREHENSIBLE, REFUSE TO RENEW THE LICENCE ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT IS NOT IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST TO DO SO.

ON THE TWO RATES OF INTEREST OF 48 PER CENT AND 60 PER CENT SET OUT IN THE LEGISLATION, MR GRIFFITHS SAID HE WAS GLAD THE UNOFFICIALS FELT THEY WERE APPROPRIATE AT PRESENT.

HOWEVER, HE SAID, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD WATCH TO SEE HOW THEY OPERATE IN PRACTICE AND WOULD NOT HESITATE TO ASK THE COUNCIL TO ALTER THEM SHOULD THEY BE PROVED TO BE EITHER TOO HIGH OR TOO LOW.

HE ALSO ASSURED THAT THE LICENSING AND IN PARTICULAR THE RENEWAL OF LICENCE PROCEDURES WOULD BE KEPT UNDER REVIEW BY THE REGISTRAR TO SEE THAT IN PRACTICE THEY OPERATE EXPEDITIOUSLY AND FAIRLY AND THAT IF CHANGES APPEAR DESIRABLE, NECESSARY AMENDMENTS WOULD BE BROUGHT BEFORE THE COUNCIL IN DUE COURSE.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25, 1980

- 17 -

YAUMATI FERRY FARES REVISED

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INCREASES IN PASSENGER FARES ON THE SHORTER CROSS-HARBOUR SERVICES AND FOR SOME CATEGORIES OF VEHICLES ON VEHICULAR FERRY SERVICES OF THE HONG KONG AND YAUMATI FERRY COMPANY WILL BE INTRODUCED FROM JULY 1.

THE INCREASES WERE APPROVED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY. THE MAIN CHANGE IS IN THE CROSS-HARBOUR FARE WHICH WILL BE RAISED FROM 50 CENTS TO 60 CENTS FOR ADULTS. CHILDREN WILL STILL BE CHARGED 30 CENTS.

THE COST OF MONTHLY TICKETS WILL BE INCREASED FROM \$20 TO \$24 FOR ADULTS AND FROM \$10 TO \$12 FOR CHILDREN.

FOR LIGHT BUSES AND OMNIBUSES USING THE VEHICULAR SERVICE, THE CHARGES WILL BE INCREASED FROM \$6 TO \$7, AND GOODS VEHICLES FROM \$6, \$9 AND \$12 TO \$7, \$10 AND \$15 RESPECTIVELY, ACCORDING TO THEIR WEIGHT.

THERE WILL BE NO INCREASE IN CHARGES FOR OTHER VEHICLES, INCLUDING PRIVATE CARS, TAXIS AND MOTOR CYCLES.

MOVING THE MOTION IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON DEREK JONES EXPLAINED THAT THERE WAS A DECLINE IN PROFITABILITY IN THE FERRY COMPANY'S SERVICES MAINLY DUE TO INCREASE IN FUEL COSTS AND A DROP IN THE PREDICTED REVENUE FROM VEHICULAR FERRY CHARGES AS A RESULT OF LOWER THAN EXPECTED PATRONAGE, PARTICULARLY BY DANGEROUS GOODS VEHICLES.

+THE INCREASES IN FARES AND CHARGES NOW PROPOSED ARE EXPECTED TO BRING BACK THE PROFITABILITY OF THE COMPANY'S FERRY OPERATIONS IN 1980 TO BETWEEN FIVE AND SIX PER CENT,+ HE SAID.

HOWEVER, HE DID NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A FURTHER GENERAL INCREASE IN FERRY FARES LATER THIS YEAR OR EARLY IN 1981 SHOULD OPERATING COSTS, PARTICULARLY FUEL COSTS INCREASE FURTHER, OR IF PASSENGER NUMBERS WERE TO DROP.

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/18

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25, 1980

- 18 -

+GUESSTIMATE+ OF SQUATTER POPULATION
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THE EXTENT OF SQUATTING THROUGHOUT HONG KONG IS SUBSTANTIAL, AND A +GUESSTIMATE+ OF THE TOTAL COULD RUN AS HIGH AS 750 000 PEOPLE.

THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON DONALD LIAO, SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS AFTERNOON.

MR LIAO SAID: +IN THE ABSENCE OF A FULL-SCALE SURVEY, NO ACCURATE FIGURES ARE AVAILABLE REGARDING SQUATTERS. HOWEVER, IT IS NOW ESTIMATED THAT THIS SECTOR OF THE POPULATION COULD COMPRISE AS MANY AS THREE-QUARTERS OF A MILLION PEOPLE.+

HE SAID THAT THE SQUATTER CONTROL DIVISION OF THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT WAS BEING GREATLY STRENGTHENED AND THAT ABOUT 5 000 HUTS HAD BEEN DEMOLISHED IN THE PAST THREE MONTHS.

DESPITE THESE EFFORTS, HOWEVER, THE NUMBER OF NEW OCCUPIED HUTS WAS INCREASING BY 400 A MONTH.

+THE STRENGTHENING OF STAFF RESOURCES WILL ENABLE THE DEPARTMENT TO CONCENTRATE ITS EFFORTS ON KNOWN SQUATTER BLACKSPOTS WHICH ARE DAILY ATTRACTING NEW SQUATTERS AND HUT BUILDERS,+ HE SAID.

+ALSO, WITH VIGOROUS LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTION IT WILL PROVE POSSIBLE TO CONTAIN FRESH SQUATTING IN AREAS DUE FOR DEVELOPMENT, BUT I AM UNDER NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT REDUCING THE PROBLEM.

+THE PEOPLE ARE HERE IN HONG KONG, MORE ARE ARRIVING DAILY AND THEY HAVE TO LIVE SOMEWHERE. IN OUR PRESENT HOUSING SITUATION, FOR MOST OF THEM THAT 'SOMEWHERE' IS INEVITABLY A SQUATTER HUT.+

SINCE 1976, HE SAID, THE GOVERNMENT HAD ADOPTED A POLICY OF CONTAINING SQUATTING IN AREAS SCHEDULED FOR DEVELOPMENT, BY USING INTENSIVE PATROLLING.

IN OTHER AREAS THERE WAS MORE GENERAL PATROLLING, AND HUTS WHICH WERE QUICKLY ERECTED AND OCCUPIED WERE ALLOWED TO STAND TO AVOID THE CONSIDERABLE REHOUSING COMMITMENT THAT WOULD ARISE FROM THEIR DEMOLITION.

MR LIAO SAID THE MOST ACTIVE AREA FOR SQUATTING WAS EAST KOWLOON, WHERE RACKETEERS WERE CAPITALISING ON THE HOMELESSNESS OF NEW ARRIVALS BY SELLING THEM HUTS OF 200 SQ FT AT MORE THAN \$10 000.

+THE ADDED LURE OF EVENTUAL PUBLIC HOUSING, SHOULD THE SQUATTER LOSE HIS HOME AS THE RESULT OF A FIRE, DEVELOPMENT CLEARANCE OR SQUATTER CONTROL ACTION, PERMITS THE RACKETEERS TO CHARGE THESE EXORBITANT PRICES,+ HE ADDED.

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/19

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25, 1980

- 19 -

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION LEVELS TO BE ADJUSTED

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THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT INTENDS TO REVIEW EVERY TWO YEARS THE LEVELS OF WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF CHANGES IN WAGE LEVELS AND THE COST OF LIVING.

TO FACILITATE FUTURE ADJUSTMENTS, THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1980, WHICH WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, PROVIDES THAT THE VARIOUS LEVELS OF COMPENSATION MAY BE AMENDED BY RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL.

DISCLOSING THIS IN THE COUNCIL, THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON J.N. HENDERSON, POINTED OUT THAT THE NEW LEVELS OF COMPENSATION PROPOSED BY THE BILL WERE IN FACT HIGHER THAN THOSE ORIGINALLY RECOMMENDED BY A WORKING PARTY IN 1978, HAVING BEEN ADJUSTED TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE INCREASES IN WAGES AND COST OF LIVING WHICH OCCURRED DURING 1978/79.

+NEVERTHELESS, IF HONOURABLE MEMBERS CONSIDER THAT THEY ARE STILL ON THE LOW SIDE AND WISH TO ADJUST THEM FURTHER TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE INCREASES WHICH HAVE TAKEN PLACE DURING 1979/80, I SHOULD BE PREPARED TO CONSIDER DOING THIS AT THE COMMITTEE STAGE.

+ON THE WHOLE I CONSIDER THAT THERE IS A CASE FOR DOING THIS, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF THE TIME NECESSARY TO BRING THE BILL INTO FORCE.+

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, MR HENDERSON SAID THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE WORKING PARTY WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED IN TWO STAGES.

THE FIRST STAGE WAS THOSE RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH NEEDED TO BE IMPLEMENTED URGENTLY. THEY INCLUDED THE EXTENSION OF WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION TO ALL EMPLOYEES, INCREASED LEVELS OF COMPENSATION, PAYMENT FOR REPAIR AND RENEWAL OF PROSTHESES AND SURGICAL APPLIANCES AND REVISION OF THE FIRST SCHEDULE IN THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ORDINANCE.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS WOULD BE DEALT WITH BY FURTHER LEGISLATION IN THE SECOND STAGE. THESE WOULD INVOLVE THE INTRODUCTION OF COMPULSORY INSURANCE, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TWO-TIER EMPLOYEES COMPENSATION BOARD, MEASURES TO EXPEDITE THE PROCESSING OF COMPENSATION CASES AND VARIOUS OTHER AMENDMENTS AIMED AT IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EXISTING PROVISIONS OF THE ORDINANCE.

MR HENDERSON DISCLOSED THAT THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL HAD RECENTLY APPROVED IN PRINCIPLE THE INTRODUCTION OF COMPULSORY INSURANCE.

+I HOPE TO INTRODUCE THE FURTHER LEGISLATION INTO THIS COUNCIL DURING THE 1980/81 SESSION,+ HE ADDED.

/THE COMMISSIONER

THE COMMISSIONER WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE BILL PROPOSED TO REMOVE THE \$5 000 PER MONTH WAGE CEILING FOR NON-MANUAL EMPLOYEES, EXTENDING THE ORDINANCE TO COVER ALL EMPLOYEES IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR EARNINGS.

THIS WAS NECESSARY BECAUSE THE DISTINCTION, BOTH IN LEGAL TERMS AND PRACTICE, BETWEEN MANUAL AND NON-MANUAL WORKERS, WAS FAST DISAPPEARING IN MANY TRADES AND INDUSTRIES.

IT WAS ESTIMATED THAT ABOUT 55 000 EMPLOYEES WHO HAD HITHERTO BEEN UNPROTECTED WOULD BE BROUGHT WITHIN THE AMBIT OF THE ORDINANCE BY THE AMENDMENT.

SPEAKING OF THE NEW LEVELS OF WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION PROPOSED BY THE BILL, MR HENDERSON SAID THE PRESENT MAXIMUM LEVELS OF \$60 000 FOR DEATH AND \$80 000 FOR PERMANENT TOTAL INCAPACITY WOULD BE RAISED TO \$147 000 AND \$168 000 RESPECTIVELY.

THE MINIMUM LEVELS WOULD BE RAISED FROM \$9 000 FOR DEATH AND \$12 800 FOR PERMANENT TOTAL INCAPACITY TO \$49 000 AND \$56 000 RESPECTIVELY.

AT THE SAME TIME THREE AGE GROUPS WOULD BE INTRODUCED TO AWARD COMPENSATION IN TERMS OF THE NUMBER OF MONTHS' EARNINGS, RECOGNISING THE FACT THAT A YOUNGER PERSON INJURED AT WORK INEVITABLY SUFFERED A GREATER LOSS OF FUTURE EARNING CAPACITY THAN AN OLDER PERSON.

FOR EMPLOYEES UNDER 40 YEARS OF AGE, THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF MONTHS' EARNINGS PROPOSED WAS 84 MONTHS FOR DEATH AND 96 MONTHS FOR PERMANENT TOTAL INCAPACITY- FOR THOSE AGED 40 TO UNDER 56 THE LIMITS WERE 60 MONTHS AND 72 MONTHS AND FOR EMPLOYEES AGED 56 AND OVER, 36 MONTHS AND 48 MONTHS.

HOWEVER, THESE LIMITS WOULD BE SUBJECT TO THE PROPOSED MAXIMUM AND MINIMUM LEVELS.

MR HENDERSON SAID OTHER PROVISIONS PROPOSED BY THE BILL WERE :

- * TO RAISE THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF MEDICAL AND BURIAL EXPENSES PAYABLE FOR A DECEASED EMPLOYEE LEAVING NO DEPENDANTS FROM \$800 TO \$2 000-
- * TO RAISE THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF CONSTANT ATTENTION ALLOWANCE PAYABLE IN THE CASE OF TOTAL PERMANENT INCAPACITY FROM \$32 000 TO \$67 000-
- * TO REQUIRE AN EMPLOYER TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COST OF REPAIR AND RENEWAL OF ANY PROSTHESES OR SURGICAL APPLIANCE FOR A WORKER FOR A PERIOD OF 10 YEARS AFTER THE INITIAL FITTING, SUBJECT TO A MAXIMUM OF \$30 000. THE COST OF ANY FURTHER REPAIR AND RENEWAL AFTER THE PERIOD WOULD BE BORNE BY THE GOVERNMENT- AND
- * TO EXPAND THE CATEGORIES OF INJURY AND RAISE THE PERCENTAGE FIGURES LISTED IN THE FIRST SCHEDULE IN THE ORDINANCE IN CERTAIN CASES TO BRING IT INTO LINE WITH CURRENT PRACTICE IN OTHER COUNTRIES.

/MR HENDERSON

MR HENDERSON POINTED OUT THAT WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION WAS A STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITY IMPOSED ON THE EMPLOYER AND WAS BASED ON THE +NO FAULT+ PRINCIPLE.

IN CASES WHERE THERE MIGHT BE NEGLIGENCE ON THE PART OF THE EMPLOYER THE INJURED WORKER (OR HIS DEPENDANTS IN A CASE OF DEATH) COULD CLAIM CIVIL DAMAGES THROUGH THE COURTS FOR WHICH THERE WAS NO FIXED MAXIMUM LEVEL. PAYMENT OF COMPENSATION UNDER THE ORDINANCE WAS NO BAR TO A CLAIM FOR DAMAGES.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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APPRENTICESHIP LAW MADE EVEN BETTER

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SINCE COMING INTO FORCE IN 1976, THE APPRENTICESHIP ORDINANCE HAS HAD FAR-REACHING BENEFICIAL EFFECTS ON APPRENTICE TRAINING IN HONG KONG.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON J.N. HENDERSON, TODAY WHEN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE APPRENTICESHIP (AMENDMENT) BILL 1980 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MR HENDERSON SAID THE ORDINANCE HAD BROUGHT ABOUT IMPROVEMENTS, BOTH QUALITATIVE AS WELL AS QUANTITATIVE, IN THE TRAINING OF YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGED IN DESIGNATED TRADES AND, TO A LESSER EXTENT, IN NON-DESIGNATED TRADES.

TO DATE, 36 CRAFT TRADES HAD BEEN SPECIFIED AS DESIGNATED TRADES, AND BY LAST APRIL, THE NUMBER OF REGISTERED APPRENTICES IN THESE TRADES WAS MORE THAN 7 600.

IN ADDITION, THERE WERE 533 CRAFT AND 886 TECHNICAL APPRENTICES IN NON-DESIGNATED TRADES, WHOSE CONTRACTS HAD BEEN VOLUNTARILY REGISTERED UNDER THE ORDINANCE, BRINGING THE TOTAL OF REGISTERED APPRENTICES TO OVER 9 000.

SINCE 1976 MORE THAN 13 700 APPRENTICES HAD HAD THEIR CONTRACTS REGISTERED.

MR HENDERSON POINTED OUT THAT THE BILL WAS THE RESULT OF A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE ORDINANCE AND ITS SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION.

THE BILL CONTAINED VARIOUS AMENDMENTS DESIGNED TO TIDY UP THE WORDING IN PLACES, TO REMOVE MINOR ANOMALIES, TO RECTIFY SOME OMISSIONS AND TO REFLECT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN OTHER LEGISLATION GOVERNING THE EMPLOYMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

THE APPRENTICESHIP (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 1980, WHICH WERE MADE FOLLOWING THE REVIEW, WERE LATER MOVED BY MR HENDERSON AND WERE APPROVED BY THE COUNCIL.

MR HENDERSON SAID THE AMENDMENTS SOUGHT TO LIMIT THE PERIOD DURING WHICH REGISTERED APPRENTICES AGED BELOW 18 YEARS COULD BE EMPLOYED TO BETWEEN 7 AM AND 7 PM. THE LIMITATION WOULD APPLY EVEN IF OVERTIME WAS WORKED.

TOGETHER, THE REGULATIONS WOULD EFFECTIVELY ENSURE THAT YOUNG APPRENTICES BELOW THE AGE OF 18 YEARS WOULD HAVE A NIGHT REST OF 12 CONSECUTIVE HOURS IN LINE WITH INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONVENTION NO 90.

IN ADDITION, THE AMENDMENTS WOULD ALLOW REGISTERED APPRENTICES OF 16 YEARS AND ABOVE TO WORK UP TO 10 HOURS IN ANY DAY BETWEEN 7 AM AND 7 PM SUCH THAT THE HOURS WORKED IN EXCESS OF EIGHT HOURS WOULD NOT BE COUNTED AS OVERTIME EMPLOYMENT, PROVIDED THAT THE TOTAL HOURS WORKED IN ANY WEEK DID NOT EXCEED 48.

THE NEW REGULATIONS WOULD PROVIDE A REGISTERED APPRENTICE WITH AN EXTRA REST DAY IN ANY WEEK WHICH CONTAINED A STATUTORY HOLIDAY. THESE PROVISIONS ALREADY EXISTED IN THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE AND APPLIED TO YOUNG PEOPLE WHO WERE NOT REGISTERED APPRENTICES, SAID MR HENDERSON.

MR HENDERSON PROPOSED THAT THE REGULATIONS BE BROUGHT INTO OPERATION ON SEPTEMBER 1, 1980 TO GIVE EMPLOYERS AND APPRENTICES ADEQUATE NOTICE OF THE CHANGES.

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CROWD CONTROL AT OUT-DOOR CONCERTS

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THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT HAS DECIDED NOT TO ORGANISE PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENT EVENTS WHICH ARE LIKELY TO DRAW LARGE AUDIENCES AT PLACES SUCH AS KOWLOON PARK WHERE PROPER ADMISSION CONTROL IS IMPRACTICABLE, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON LEWIS DAVIES SAID TODAY.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ANDREW SO IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR DAVIES SAID FACILITIES DESIGNED TO ACCOMMODATE LARGE NUMBERS OF SPECTATORS, SUCH AS HONG KONG STADIUM AND THE MONG KOK STADIUM WOULD BE USED INSTEAD.

TWO OTHER MEASURES TO PREVENT A RECURRENCE OF INCIDENTS SIMILAR TO THE ONE AT KOWLOON PARK ON JUNE 8 HAVE ALSO BEEN TAKEN.

THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT WILL EXERCISE CAREFUL AND APPROPRIATE CONTROL OF PRE-EVENT PROMOTION AND PUBLICITY TO AVOID DRAWING EXCESSIVELY LARGE CROWDS.

+THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE HAS ADVISED POLICE DISTRICT AND DIVISIONAL COMMANDERS TO LIAISE MORE CLOSELY WITH THE DEPARTMENT IN FUTURE SO AS TO ENSURE A SUFFICIENT POLICE PRESENCE AT ALL URBAN COUNCIL PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENT EVENTS,+ MR DAVIES ADDED.

/HE POINTED

HE POINTED OUT THAT AT THE CONCERT EARLIER THIS MONTH, MINOR DISORDER INVOLVING NO CASUALTIES BUT INCLUDING DAMAGE TO THREE VEHICLES OCCURRED.

THE ORGANISERS ESTIMATED AN AUDIENCE OF BETWEEN SIX AND SEVEN THOUSAND AND PLANS WERE MADE ON THIS BASIS. IN THE EVENT THE ACTUAL TURN-OUT WAS THREE OR FOUR TIMES THAT NUMBER AND MAY HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED BY AN ILL-FOUNDED RUMOUR THAT A PARTICULARLY POPULAR LOCAL +POP+ STAR WOULD PERFORM AT THE CONCERT, HE SAID.

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WEIGHTIER PENALTIES FOR TRAFFIC OFFENCES

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COME SUNDAY WEEK (JULY 6) MOTORISTS WHO PARK ILLEGALLY WITHOUT WORRYING TOO MUCH ABOUT THE RELATIVELY CHEAP FIXED PENALTY FINE COULD FIND A LITTLE SOMETHING EXTRA ON THEIR WINDSCREENS.

THAT IS THE DAY THE NEW +INFLATED+ PENALTY COMES INTO EFFECT. AFTER THAT MOTORISTS WHO PARK ILLEGALLY WILL BE FACED WITH A FINE OF \$70 INSTEAD OF THE PRESENT \$30.

STRESSED A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN: +THE PRESENT \$30 PENALTY IS NO LONGER EFFECTIVE AS A DETERRENT TO ILLEGAL PARKING.

+AN INCREASE IS NEEDED TO MAKE IT SO.+

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT SEVERE TRAFFIC CONGESTION AND DANGER TO PEDESTRIANS WAS OFTEN CAUSED BY ILLEGALLY PARKED VEHICLES, AND IT WAS HOPED THE INCREASED PENALTY WOULD +GO SOME WAY+ TO RELIEVING THE PROBLEM.

THE SPOKESMAN ALSO EXPLAINED THAT THE \$30 FIXED PENALTY WAS INTRODUCED WHEN THE FIXED PENALTY (TRAFFIC CONTRAVENTIONS) ORDINANCE CAME INTO EFFECT IN 1971, AND HAS REMAINED UNCHANGED SINCE.

ALSO FROM SUNDAY WEEK, FIXED PENALTIES FOR MOVING TRAFFIC OFFENCES WILL BE INCREASED.

THERE ARE AT PRESENT 74 OFFENCES WHICH ATTRACT FIXED PENALTIES RANGING FROM \$50 TO \$200.

WHILE THESE CAME INTO EFFECT WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF THE FIXED PENALTY (CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS) ORDINANCE IN 1976 THEY WERE, IN FACT, SET FOUR YEARS EARLIER.

+A LAPSE OF EIGHT YEARS IS CONSIDERED SUFFICIENTLY LONG ENOUGH TO MERIT A REVISION,+ SAID THE SPOKESMAN. +THERE IS ALSO THE NEED TO MAINTAIN THE RELATIVITY BETWEEN THE PENALTIES FOR PARKING AND MOVING OFFENCES WHICH ARE GENERALLY MORE SERIOUS.+

/THE RESULT

THE RESULT IS THAT \$50 FIXED PENALTIES WILL BE INCREASED TO \$100, AND THE \$100 PENALTIES WILL BE RAISED TO \$200.

THE INCREASED FINES WERE APPROVED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN NOVEMBER LAST YEAR.

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FULL POLICE POWERS FOR AUXILIARIES
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A BILL PROPOSING TO GIVE AUXILIARY POLICEMEN SIMILAR STATUTORY POWERS AS THEIR REGULAR COUNTERPARTS WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON LEWIS DAVIES, IN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE ROYAL HONG KONG AUXILIARY POLICE FORCE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1980 EXPLAINED THAT AS A RESULT OF THE DETERIORATING CRIME SITUATION IN 1972, ELEMENTS OF THE AUXILIARY POLICE WERE CALLED OUT TO SUPPLEMENT THE REGULAR UNIFORM BRANCH IN A NORMAL CONSTABULARY ROLE.

+WHAT WAS THEN REGARDED AS A TEMPORARY MEASURE HAS, IN PRACTICE, CONTINUED EVER SINCE BECAUSE THERE HAS BEEN A NEED TO MAKE GOOD SHORTFALLS IN THE STRENGTH OF THE REGULAR POLICE, OCCASIONED BY THE EXPANSION OF THE PAST FEW YEARS AND BECAUSE THE AUXILIARIES HAVE SHOWN THAT THEY HAVE A MOST VALUABLE ROLE TO PLAY IN CERTAIN TYPES OF POLICING,+ MR DAVIES SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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TRADE DESCRIPTIONS BILL PUT TO LEGCO
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A BILL WHICH SEEKS TO GIVE CONSUMERS GREATER PROTECTION AND TO PROVIDE MORE STRINGENT CONTROL OVER FORGERY OF TRADE MARKS WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

SPEAKING AT THE SECOND READING OF THE TRADE DESCRIPTIONS BILL 1980, THE ACTING FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON SAID THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL WOULD BE EMPOWERED TO MAKE +MARKING ORDERS+ REQUIRING GOODS TO BE MARKED OR TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY INFORMATION OR BY INSTRUCTIONS RELATING TO THE GOODS.

IT IS ENVISAGED THAT MARKING ORDERS WILL BE SOUGHT ONLY FOR GOODS IN RESPECT OF WHICH PURCHASERS CAN BE EASILY DECEIVED, FOR EXAMPLE FOOD AND GOLD ARTICLES, HE SAID.

THE BILL ALSO SEEKS TO CONFER A POWER TO REQUIRE ADVERTISEMENT FOR GOODS TO CARRY SPECIFIED INFORMATION WHETHER OR NOT THERE IS A MARKING ORDER IN FORCE IN RELATION TO THE GOODS ADVERTISED.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25, 1980

- 25 -

IN ADDITION, THE DEFINITION OF TRADE DESCRIPTIONS HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO OPERATE IN TWO AREAS, ADVERTISEMENTS AND MARKING ORDERS.

ON TRADE MARKS, MR JEAFFRESON SAID THE BILL RESTATED THE EXISTING LAW RELATING TO THE FORGERY OF TRADE MARKS AND THE APPLICATION OF FORGED TRADE MARKS ON GOODS.

+THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IS THAT THE BILL OMITTS THE REQUIREMENT FOR COMPLAINANTS TO PROVIDE A SECURITY AGAINST COSTS INCURRED BY THE GOVERNMENT AS A PRE-REQUISITE TO OFFICIAL PROSECUTION.

+THIS IS BECAUSE, AS TRADE MARK OFFENCES ARE BASICALLY INVASIONS OF PRIVATE RIGHTS, CIVIL ACTION PROVIDES A MORE SUITABLE AND EQUITABLE METHOD OF DEALING WITH INFRINGEMENT,+ HE SAID.

MR JEAFFRESON NOTED THAT CRIMINAL PROSECUTIONS WILL NOW ONLY BE INSTITUTED IN TWO MAIN TYPES OF CASES. FIRST, WHERE THE TRADE MARKS ENJOY WORLD WIDE RECOGNITION AND THE TOLERATION OF THEIR INFRINGEMENT WILL BE DETRIMENTAL TO HONG KONG'S REPUTATION AS A TRADING AND SHOPPING CENTRE. SECOND, WHERE THE TRADE MARK INFRINGEMENTS ARE DETRIMENTAL TO THE INTERESTS OF CONSUMERS IN HONG KONG WHO COULD NOT OTHERWISE BE EXPECTED TO PROTECT THEMSELVES IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

MR JEAFFRESON SAID THE BILL DIFFERED FROM ITS UK COUNTERPART IN ONE SIGNIFICANT ASPECT, IN THAT IT MAKES NO PROVISIONS FOR THE PROHIBITION OF MISDESCRIPTION IN RESPECT OF PRICES, SERVICES, ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES. DUE TO DIFFICULTIES IN ENFORCING APPROPRIATE PROVISIONS THEY ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE BILL FOR THE TIME BEING. BUT THE ISSUE WOULD BE RECONSIDERED IN THE LIGHT OF EXPERIENCE IN ENFORCING THE NEW LEGISLATION.

ENFORCEMENT OF THE AMENDING LEGISLATION WILL REST WITH THE TRADE, INDUSTRY AND CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT. THE PENALTIES INVOLVED HAVE BEEN RAISED FROM THE PRESENT LEVELS IN THE MERCHANDISE MARKS ORDINANCE TO A FINE OF \$100 000 AND IMPRISONMENT FOR TWO YEARS UPON SUMMARY CONVICTION AND A FINE OF \$500 000 AND IMPRISONMENT FOR FIVE YEARS UPON CONVICTION ON INDICTMENT.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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BAN ON PYRAMID SELLING SUPPORTED

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THE HON PETER C. WONG SPOKE IN SUPPORT OF THE PYRAMID SELLING PROHIBITION BILL 1980 AT ITS SECOND READING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HE POINTED OUT HOWEVER THAT THE EFFICACY OF THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION REMAINED TO BE TESTED.

+WITH EXPERIENCE FROM ACTUAL APPLICATION, AMENDMENTS WOULD NO DOUBT RECTIFY ANY DEFECTS THAT MIGHT BE FOUND TO EXIST,+ HE SAID.

AN AD HOC GROUP OF UNOFFICIAL COUNCIL MEMBERS CONVENED BY HIM HAS CAREFULLY CONSIDERED THE PROVISIONS OF THE BILL WHICH, HE SAID, +CALLS FOR CLOSE SCRUTINY AS IT TREADS ON DELICATE GROUND+.

+THE GROUP HAD A USEFUL SESSION WITH SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, INCLUDING THE DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES AND A REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT.

+SEVERAL ASPECTS OF THE BILL WERE DISCUSSED AND THE GROUP IS SATISFIED THAT, GIVEN THE COMPLEXITY OF THE MATTER, GOVERNMENT HAS SUCCEEDED IN PRODUCING A BILL THAT SHOULD STOP THOSE NOW ENGAGED IN PYRAMID SELLING AND SERVE AS A DETERRENT TO THOSE CONTEMPLATING SUCH UNDESIRABLE ACTIVITIES,+ HE SAID.

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WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ZONES TO BE SET UP

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WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ZONES ARE TO BE ESTABLISHED IN VARIOUS PARTS OF HONG KONG TO CURB AN INCREASE IN POLLUTION, ACCORDING TO A NEW BILL INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON DEREK JONES, SAID THAT ONCE THE ZONES AND DATE WERE ESTABLISHED BY THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL, IT WOULD BE AN OFFENCE TO PERMIT ANY POISONOUS, NOXIOUS OR POLLUTING MATTER OF A SPECIFIC TYPE TO ENTER THE ZONES, UNLESS THE DISCHARGER HAD OBTAINED AN EXEMPTION PERMIT FROM THE WATER CONTROL AUTHORITY.

ANY PERSON WHO FAILED TO OBTAIN A PERMIT AND WHO DISCHARGED PROHIBITED DEPOSITS FACED A MAXIMUM PENALTY OF \$50 000 FOR THE FIRST OFFENCE, \$100 000 FOR A SUBSEQUENT OFFENCE AND A FURTHER \$5 000 DAILY IF THE OFFENCE WAS A CONTINUING ONE.

MR JONES SAID EXISTING DISCHARGERS — THOSE IN BUSINESS BEFORE THE APPOINTED DAY — WOULD BE PERMITTED TO CONTINUE THEIR EMISSIONS, +SO LONG AS THEY ARE NOT ENDANGERING PUBLIC HEALTH AND PROVIDED THAT THEY DO NOT EXCEED BY MORE THAN 30 PER CENT THE LEVEL OF DISCHARGE RECORDED DURING THE 12-MONTH PERIOD PRECEDING THE FIRST APPOINTED DAY.+

A SECOND APPOINTED DAY WOULD ALSO BE ESTABLISHED FOR NEW DISCHARGERS — A NEW BUSINESS OPERATION STARTING AFTER THE FIRST APPOINTED TIME — AND IN THIS CASE LICENCES WOULD BE REQUIRED BY THE WATER CONTROL AUTHORITY.

SUCH APPLICATIONS WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC COMMENT TO ENABLE ANY PERSON TO OBJECT ON THE GROUNDS THAT GRANTING A LICENCE WOULD LOWER THE WATER QUALITY OBJECTIVE.

MR JONES SAID THE BILL WAS DESIGNED TO ALLOW EXISTING INDUSTRY TO CONTINUE OPERATING IN A REASONABLE MANNER, WHILE GRADUALLY IMPROVING THE OVERALL SITUATION BY IMPOSING CONDITIONS ON NEW UNDERTAKINGS.

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POLICE PATROLS IN PICNICKING AREAS

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SPECIAL UNIFORMED AND PLAIN CLOTHES POLICE PATROLS, BOTH MOBILE AND ON FOOT, ARE MOUNTED, AND POLICE DOGS ARE USED IN ALL POPULAR PICNICKING AREAS TO PROTECT PICNICKERS FROM ROBBERS, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON LEWIS DAVIES TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS AFTERNOON.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON HO KAM-FAI, MR DAVIES SAID THESE PATROLS WERE INCREASED AT WEEKENDS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS AND IN ESPECIALLY POPULAR AREAS.

+WITHIN COUNTRY PARKS, THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT ALSO MAINTAIN A PRESENCE AND LIAISES CLOSELY WITH THE POLICE. DAILY PATROLS ARE UNDERTAKEN BY FOREST GUARDS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR AND POLICE HELP CAN BE SUMMONED QUICKLY IF NECESSARY THROUGH THE COUNTRY PARK MANAGEMENT CENTRES,+ HE SAID.

+THE DEPARTMENT HAS ALSO INTRODUCED AN EXPERIMENTAL SCHEME OF USING UNIFORMED PARK RANGERS TO PATROL THE TWO MOST POPULAR COUNTRY PARKS AT PLOVER COVE AND SOUTH LANTAO.

+IT INTENDS TO EXTEND THE PARK RANGERS SCHEME TO ALL COUNTRY PARKS WITHIN THE NEXT TWO YEARS,+ MR DAVIES ADDED.

POWER TO SUSPEND SCHOOLS CLARIFIED

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THE PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE EDUCATION ORDINANCE IS TO AVOID PUBLIC MISINTERPRETATION OF THE POWER OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION CONCERNING CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS, SAID THE HON KENNETH TOPLEY, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

IN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE EDUCATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1980, HE SAID THE AMENDMENT TO SECTION 83 OF THE ORDINANCE WOULD ENABLE THE DIRECTOR TO SUSPEND THE OPERATION OF A SCHOOL FOR A SPECIFIED PERIOD.

+SHOULD IT BE NECESSARY TO CLOSE A SCHOOL, THE EXISTING POWERS OF THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL ARE AVAILABLE,+ HE SAID.

THIS AMENDMENT WOULD ALSO GIVE EFFECT TO ONE OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FINAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF ENQUIRY INTO THE PRECIOUS BLOOD GOLDEN JUBILEE SECONDARY SCHOOL.

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CONTROL OF LORRIES WITH LIFTING GEAR

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THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON J.N. HENDERSON, SAID TODAY THAT HE WAS APPROACHING THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT TO SEE WHETHER SOME TESTING OR CERTIFICATION OF LIFTING GEAR ON LORRIES COULD BE COMBINED WITH THE ANNUAL INSPECTION OF GOODS VEHICLES.

HE ALSO SAID IT WAS NECESSARY TO CONSIDER WHETHER SOME FEATURES OF THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS (LIFTING APPLIANCES AND LIFTING GEAR) REGULATIONS MIGHT BE USEFULLY PUT INTO THE ROAD TRAFFIC (CONSTRUCTION AND USE) REGULATIONS, BEARING IN MIND THAT PUBLIC SAFETY AS WELL AS WORKER SAFETY MAY BE INVOLVED WHERE LOADING AND UNLOADING BY THESE APPLIANCES TAKES PLACE ON PUBLIC THOROUGHFARES.

MR HENDERSON WAS REPLYING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO THE HON ANDREW SO WHO ASKED ABOUT THE CONTROL EXERCISED OVER THE INSTALLATION AND USE OF LIFTING APPLIANCES ON GOODS VEHICLES.

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25, 1980

- 29 -

TACKLING FIRES AND FIRE HAZARDS

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THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON LEWIS DAVIES, SAID TODAY THAT THERE WERE EXTREME DIFFICULTIES IN FIGHTING THE RECENT KWAI CHUNG GODOWN FIRE DUE TO THE AMOUNTS OF COMBUSTIBLE GOODS STORED IN THE PASSAGeways AND EXITS OF THE AFFECTED PREMISES, WHICH PREVENTED FIRE OFFICERS FROM GAINING RAPID ACCESS TO THE SOURCE OF THE FIRE.

HE WAS REPLYING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO THE HON LI FOOK-WO WHO ALSO ASKED WHAT STEPS WOULD BE TAKEN TO ENSURE MORE EFFECTIVE FIRE FIGHTING IN FUTURE.

TO THIS, MR DAVIES SAID STEPS WERE CONTINUOUSLY BEING TAKEN TO MAINTAIN A HIGH STANDARD OF EFFECTIVENESS BY UPDATING FIRE-FIGHTING EQUIPMENT, RECRUITING AND TRAINING FIREMEN AND FIRE OFFICERS OF SUITABLE CALIBRE, BY ROUTINE DAILY FIRE EXERCISES, AND BY THE CONSTRUCTION OF ADDITIONAL FIRE STATIONS.

+A LARGE PROGRAMME OF FIRE PREVENTION IS ALSO IMPLEMENTED. UNDER THIS THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT PUBLICISES THE DANGERS OF OBSTRUCTING EXITS, STAIRCASES AND LIFT LOBBIES, CARRIES OUT INSPECTIONS TO ABATE FIRE HAZARDS AND ALSO CHECKS THE PLANS OF NEW BUILDINGS TO ENSURE THAT APPROPRIATE MINIMUM FIRE PROTECTION IS PROVIDED. IT DOES ITS BEST THROUGH ITS INSPECTORATE AND BY THE USE OF LEGISLATIVE POWERS TO ENSURE THAT AREAS ARE CLEARED OF OBSTRUCTION AFTER AN INSPECTION,+ HE SAID.

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THEFT ORDINANCE IMPROVED

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JUDICIAL DIFFICULTIES OF INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION OF THE THEFT ORDINANCE MAY BE CLEARED UP WITH AMENDMENTS TO SOME SECTIONS OF THE ORDINANCE, THE LAW DRAFTSMAN, THE HON G.P. NAZARETH, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

IN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE THEFT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1980, MR NAZARETH SAID THE ORDINANCE WAS DERIVED FROM THE 1968 THEFT ACT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

HOWEVER, ONE SECTION OF THE ACT WAS DESCRIBED BY THE COURT OF APPEAL IN ENGLAND AS +A JUDICIAL NIGHTMARE+ AND IN HONG KONG IT PRESENTED THE COURTS WITH +MAJOR DIFFICULTIES OF INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION+.

IN ENGLAND, AMENDMENTS TO THE ACT WERE ENFORCED IN 1978. MR NAZARETH SAID IT WAS NOW PROPOSED TO MAKE SIMILAR CHANGES TO THE THEFT ORDINANCE, MODELLED ON THE 1978 THEFT ACT, WITH ONE IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE -- THE DISHONEST OBTAINING OF TIME FOR PAYMENT BY DECEPTION.

/IN THE

IN THE UNITED KINGDOM IT IS NOT A CRIMINAL OFFENCE IF THE DEBTOR INTENDS ULTIMATELY TO PAY.

+THIS HAS NOT BEEN FOLLOWED IN THE BILL AND NEW SECTION 18B SPECIFICALLY RETAINS THE PRESENT LEGAL POSITION IN HONG KONG BY PROVIDING THAT IT IS AN OFFENCE TO DISHONESTLY INDUCE A CREDITOR BY DECEPTION TO WAIT FOR PAYMENT EVEN IF THE DEFAULT IS NOT PERMANENT,+ MR NAZARETH SAID.

IN THE COMMERCIALY ORIENTED CIRCUMSTANCES OF HONG KONG, HE SAID, THE IMPLICATIONS OF PERMITTING DEFERMENT OF THE DUE PAYMENT OF LARGE SUMS TO BE SECURED DISHONESTLY BY DECEPTION ARE TOO GRAVE TO BE SANCTIONED UNCHECKED.

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MTR BY-LAWS APPROVED
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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL HAS APPROVED THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY (AMENDMENT) BY-LAWS 1980 WHICH WERE CONSIDERED NECESSARY BY THE MTR CORPORATION AS A RESULT OF EXPERIENCE GAINED IN THE OPERATION OF THE RAILWAY SINCE ITS OPENING IN OCTOBER LAST YEAR.

MOVING THE BY-LAWS TODAY, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON DEREK JONES SAID A NUMBER OF PROBLEMS HAD ARISEN RELATING TO TICKETING ARRANGEMENTS AND FARE EVASION AND THAT THESE AMENDMENTS WOULD MORE CLEARLY DEFINE THE OFFENCES AND PENALTIES.

ONE OF THE AMENDMENTS DEFINES THE +PAID AREA+ OF THE RAILWAY PREMISES AS THE AREA WHICH IS SET ASIDE FOR THE PURPOSE OF FARE PAYING PASSENGERS AND WHICH IS PROVIDED WITH TICKET GATES OR TURNSTILES FOR ENTRY OR EXIT.

A MAXIMUM FINE OF \$500 WILL BE IMPOSED FOR ENTERING THE PAID AREA OR TRAVELLING WITHOUT HAVING PAID A FARE AND OBTAINING A TICKET, FOR FAILING TO SURRENDER A TICKET AND FOR REFUSING TO PAY A FARE, EXCESS FARE OR SURCHARGE.

A MAXIMUM PENALTY OF \$1 000 WILL BE IMPOSED FOR OFFENCES RELATING TO ALTERING A TICKET AND USING A DAMAGED OR ALTERED TICKET.

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25, 1980

- 31 -

FAKE DRUG TRAFFICKING AN OFFENCE

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MORE EFFECTIVE ACTION COULD BE TAKEN AGAINST PEOPLE WHO TRAFFIC IN FAKE DANGEROUS DRUGS IF A BILL TO AMEND THE DANGEROUS DRUGS ORDINANCE IS PASSED.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE DANGEROUS DRUGS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1980 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON LEWIS DAVIES SAID OWING TO THE SHORTAGE OF ILLICIT DRUG SUPPLIES LAST YEAR, THERE HAD BEEN NUMEROUS CASES OF ATTEMPTED SALES OF NARCOTICS WHERE EITHER THE DRUGS WERE NOT IN EXISTENCE OR WERE FAKE POWDERS PURPORTING TO BE DANGEROUS DRUGS.

+IN 1979, 338 CASES OF COUNTERFEIT HEROIN, REPRESENTING ABOUT 10 PER CENT OF ALL HEROIN SEIZURE CASES MADE DURING THE YEAR, AND OTHER SUBSTANCES PURPORTING TO BE DANGEROUS DRUGS, WERE DETECTED,+ HE SAID.

THE BILL NOW PROPOSES THAT CASES LIKE THESE SHOULD BE MADE AN OFFENCE IN THE SAME WAY AS AN OFFENCE TO TRAFFIC IN DANGEROUS DRUGS BUT WITH PENALTIES CORRESPONDING TO THOSE PROVIDED FOR THE OFFENCE OF DECEPTION.

+THE NEED TO PROVE A DISHONEST INTENTION WOULD BE ELIMINATED,+ MR DAVIES SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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GREATER CONTROL OVER STREET NAMING

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A BILL TO PROVIDE THE RELEVANT AUTHORITIES WITH STATUTORY POWERS TO REGULATE THE SYSTEM OF NAMING STREETS WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

IN THE URBAN AREAS, THE AUTHORITY IS THE URBAN COUNCIL AND IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, THE SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND URBAN SERVICES (AMENDMENT)(NO. 2) BILL 1980, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON DEREK JONES SAID WHILE THE BILL PRESERVED THE EXISTING RIGHT OF OWNERS OF A PRIVATE STREET TO SUGGEST TO THE AUTHORITY A NAME FOR IT OR TO CHANGE ITS EXISTING NAME, IT ALSO VESTED THE AUTHORITY WITH POWERS TO MAKE, OR REFUSE TO MAKE, SUCH A STREET DECLARATION IN THE GAZETTE.

WHERE THE AUTHORITY REFUSES TO MAKE A DECLARATION, THE OWNERS WOULD HAVE THE RIGHT OF APPEAL TO THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL WHOSE DECISION WOULD BE FINAL.

/THIS PROVISION

THIS PROVISION TAKES CARE OF THE INTEREST OF THE OWNERS WHILE MAKING SURE THAT INAPPROPRIATE NAMES ARE NOT GIVEN TO STREETS, MR JONES EXPLAINED.

THE DISPLAY OF UNOFFICIAL STREET NAMES IN PRIVATE STREETS ALONGSIDE THE OFFICIAL GAZETTED NAMES WILL BE AN OFFENCE PUNISHABLE BY A FINE OF \$2 000.

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BILLS PASSED

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EIGHT BILLS COMPLETED THEIR COMMITTEE STAGE AND THIRD READING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THEY ARE THE PYRAMID SELLING PROHIBITION BILL 1980, CRIMES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1980, INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1980, PREVENTION OF BRIBERY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1980, MONEY LENDERS BILL 1980, PENSIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1980, MAINTENANCE ORDERS (RECIPROCAL ENFORCEMENT) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1980, AND THE TRANSFER OF BUSINESSES (PROTECTION OF CREDITORS) BILL 1980.

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COURTESY THE BEST POLICY, SAYS TOPLEY

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THE HONG KONG SOCIETY WILL HAVE TO BE PREPARED TO MODIFY ITS COMPETITIVE SPIRIT IN SOME AREAS IF WE ARE TO ENJOY A MORE CIVILISED LIFE IN HONG KONG, MR KENNETH TOPLEY, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, SAID AT A ZONTA CLUB LUNCH MEETING TODAY.

SPEAKING ON +TOWARDS A MORE CIVILISED HONG KONG+, HE CALLED ON PEOPLE TO BE MORE COURTEOUS.

HE SAID IF WE COULD RESTRAIN OURSELVES FROM JUMPING THE TAXI QUEUE ON A WET DAY OR PINCHING SOMEONE ELSE'S PARKING SPACE AS THEY ARE BACKING INTO IT, WE WOULD BE DOING A GOOD DAY'S WORK FOR HONG KONG.

+I DON'T RECOMMEND THAT WE BECOME UNCOMPETITIVE AND EFFETE. WE ARE ALL IN THE SURVIVAL BUSINESS BUT WE SHOULD CONFINE OUR COMPETITIVENESS TO PLACES WHERE IT IS PROPER, LIKE THE TENNIS COURT,+ MR TOPLEY SAID.

HE THOUGHT CIVILISED BEHAVIOUR WAS BEST TAUGHT BY EXAMPLE.

+EXAMPLE IS MUCH THE MOST COMPELLING TEACHER. THIS IS BECAUSE WE CAN SEE NO ADVANTAGE TO OURSELVES BY CONCEDED TO OTHERS WHEN WE ARE NOT FORCED TO.

/+BUT

+BUT WHEN THOSE WE RESPECT SHOW THIS KIND OF COURTESY THEN WE THINK AGAIN MAYBE THERE IS SOMETHING IN IT,+ HE SAID.

SOCIETY CANNOT LEGISLATE FOR CIVILISED BEHAVIOUR BUT, HE SAID, +IF WE ARE A SHADE MORE GENEROUS, A SHADE FAIRER, WE SHALL ALL HAVE A BETTER LIFE.+

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FOOTBRIDGE AT CAFETERIA BEACH TO BE REBUILT

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A FOOTBRIDGE AT CAFETERIA OLD BEACH, TUEN MUN, IS TO BE REBUILT TO PROVIDE AN EASIER AND SAFER ACCESS TO THE BEACH FOR SWIMMERS AND PICNICKERS.

THE OLD FOOTBRIDGE, 15.4 METRES LONG AND 1.22 METRES WIDE, WAS CONSTRUCTED OVER A STREAM MANY YEARS AGO BY LOCAL RESIDENTS TO PROVIDE A SHORTCUT TO THE BEACH.

CRACKS DEVELOPED ON THE TIMBER DECKING A YEAR AGO BECAUSE OF EROSION BY WIND AND RAIN.

IT WAS DEMOLISHED BY THE LOCAL DISTRICT OFFICE IN MARCH THIS YEAR TO AVOID DANGER TO PEDESTRIANS.

THIS HAS CAUSED INCONVENIENCE TO HOLIDAY MAKERS WHO HAVE TO TAKE A LONGER WAY TO THE BEACH.

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE BRIDGE WAS AGREED AT A RECENT MEETING OF TUEN MUN DISTRICT ADVISORY BOARD WHICH ALLOCATED \$40 000 FROM ITS MINOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS VOTE.

WORK IS EXPECTED TO BEGIN IN AUGUST AND TAKE THREE MONTHS TO COMPLETE.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE BOARD SAID THAT THEY PLAN TO IMPROVE THE FACILITIES AT THE BEACH, WHICH IS AN ATTRACTIVE HOLIDAY RESORT, FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS AND PEOPLE FROM THE URBAN AREAS.

A PROJECT COMPLETED LAST YEAR NEAR THE BEACH WAS THE CONSTRUCTION OF A CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND AND SITTING-OUT AREA. THE NEW BRIDGE WILL IMPROVE ACCESS BETWEEN THIS PLAYGROUND AREA AND THE BEACH.

FACILITIES PROVIDED AT THE PLAYGROUND INCLUDE PARK BENCHES, COVERED REST AREAS, A HORIZONTAL LADDER, A PARALLEL BAR AND A ROCKING LAUNCH. CONSTRUCTION COSTS OF \$6 000 WERE PROVIDED BY THE DISTRICT ADVISORY BOARD.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25, 1980

- 34 -

WATER FOR YUEN LONG INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

THE WATER SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT IS TO BUILD A THIRD FRESH WATER RESERVOIR IN YUEN LONG NEW TOWN TO IMPROVE WATER SUPPLY TO THE FAST-GROWING INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE AREA.

THE CHIEF ENGINEER (CONSTRUCTION) OF THE DEPARTMENT, MR LEE GUN-CHEUNG, TODAY SIGNED A CONTRACT FOR THE PROJECT WITH NISHIMATSU CONSTRUCTION CO. LTD. AT THE DEPARTMENT'S HEADQUARTERS IN LEIGHTON CENTRE.

MR LEE SAID THE NEW SERVICE RESERVOIR AT WANG CMAU WOULD HAVE A STORAGE CAPACITY OF 60 000 CUBIC METRES.

+THE PROJECT INCLUDES THE LAYING OF 860 METRES OF TRUNK AND DISTRIBUTION MAINS TO SERVE MORE THAN 80 HECTARES OF INDUSTRIAL LAND AT THE YUEN LONG INDUSTRIAL ESTATE AND THE INDUSTRIAL AREA NORTHEAST OF YUEN LONG NEW TOWN.

+WHEN COMPLETED, THE NEW SERVICE RESERVOIR TOGETHER WITH THE EXISTING YUEN LONG SERVICE RESERVOIR AND THE AU TAU SERVICE RESERVOIR NOW BEING EXTENDED, WILL INCREASE YUEN LONG'S FRESH WATER STORAGE CAPACITY BY MORE THAN FOUR TIMES TO 85 000 CUBIC METRES,+ HE SAID.

WORK WILL START NEXT WEEK AND WILL TAKE 21 MONTHS TO COMPLETE.

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GOVERNOR TO ATTEND ANNUAL CAS DINNER

THE GOVERNOR, SIR MURRAY MACLEHOSE, WILL ATTEND THE CIVIL AID SERVICES ANNUAL DINNER AT THE OCEAN PALACE RESTAURANT IN THE OCEAN CENTRE ON FRIDAY (JUNE 27).

OTHER GUESTS INCLUDE THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR LEWIS DAVIES- THE SECRETARY FOR CIVIL SERVICE, MR MARTIN ROWLANDS- THE DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES, DR K.L. THONG- THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE, MR ROY HENRY AND THE DIRECTOR OF FIRE SERVICES, MR FREDERICK WATSON.

ABOUT 800 CAS OFFICERS AND MEMBERS WILL ALSO BE ATTENDING.

/SIR MURRAY

SIR MURRAY WILL BE MET ON ARRIVAL BY THE COMMISSIONER OF THE CIVIL AID SERVICES, MR ROGER LOBO AND THE CAS CHIEF STAFF OFFICER, MR JOHN FORTUNE.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO SEND REPRESENTATIVES TO COVER THE RECEPTION OF THE CIVIL AID SERVICES ANNUAL DINNER AT THE OCEAN PALACE RESTAURANT, OCEAN CENTRE, TSIM SHA TSUI ON FRIDAY (JUNE 27).

THE PRE-DINNER RECEPTION WILL BE HELD FROM 7 TO 8 PM.

PRESS PHOTOGRAPHERS CAN TAKE PICTURES ON THE GROUND FLOOR OF THE OCEAN CENTRE, AND IN THE RECEPTION ROOM ON THE FOURTH FLOOR OF THE OCEAN PALACE RESTAURANT WHERE THE RECEPTION WILL BE HELD. NO PHOTOGRAPHS WILL BE ALLOWED DURING THE DINNER.

COPIES OF SPEECHES BY THE GOVERNOR AND THE CAS COMMISSIONER WILL BE DISTRIBUTED TO THE PRESS AT 7 PM ON THE GROUND FLOOR OF THE OCEAN CENTRE.

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NEW URBAN CLEARWAYS IN KWAI CHUNG

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THREE ROADS IN KWAI CHUNG WILL BE DESIGNATED URBAN CLEARWAYS FROM 10 AM ON SATURDAY (JUNE 28).

THEY ARE THE NEW SECTION OF CASTLE PEAK ROAD TO BE OPENED AS PART OF THE ROTARY SYSTEM AT ITS JUNCTION WITH KWAI CHUNG ROAD AND LEI MUK ROAD, A SECTION OF WO YI HOP ROAD FROM A POINT ABOUT 50 METRES NORTH OF CHEUNG WING ROAD TO THE END OF THE EXISTING URBAN CLEARWAY AND CHEUNG WING ROAD FROM WO YI HOP ROAD TO THE NEW SECTION OF CASTLE PEAK ROAD.

WITHIN THE RESTRICTION ZONES, ALL MOTOR VEHICLES, EXCEPT FRANCHISED BUSES, WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO STOP FOR PASSENGERS OR LOAD OR UNLOAD GOODS FROM 7 AM TO 10 AM AND FROM 4 PM TO 7 PM DAILY.

TRAFFIC SIGNS WILL BE SET UP TO INDICATE THE ZONES.

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25, 1980

- 36 -

REPULSE BAY ROAD BUS SCHEME
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NOTE TO EDITORS:

ACTING CHIEF TRANSPORT OFFICER, MRS DOROTHY CHAN, AND TRAFFIC POLICE SUPERINTENDENT HK ISLAND, MR J.H. WALKER, WILL HOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE AT 3 PM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) TO ANNOUNCE A REPULSE BAY BUS PRIORITY SCHEME. THE CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD IN THE GIS THEATRE, 5TH FLOOR, BEACONSFIELD HOUSE.

MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO ATTEND AND TV CREWS ARE REQUESTED TO ARRIVE EARLY TO SET UP THEIR EQUIPMENT.

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