



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

WEDNESDAY, JULY 27, 1977

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NEED FOR MTR TSUEN WAN EXTENSION FIRMLY
ESTABLISHED

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THE NEED FOR A MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY EXTENSION TO TSUEN WAN HAS BEEN FIRMLY ESTABLISHED BY TRANSPORT STUDIES UNDERTAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS AFTERNOON WHEN MOVING A MOTION TO WELCOME THE DECISION ON THE EXTENSION.

IT SHOULD HELP TO MEET THE GROWING TRANSPORT NEEDS OF THE LARGE COMMUNITIES NOW TAKING SHAPE IN TSUEN WAN, KWAI CHUNG, TSING YI AND TUEN MUN, MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID.

+THE REPORT ON THE COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORT STUDY ESTIMATES THAT ABOUT 75 PER CENT OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT JOURNEYS ORIGINATING IN TSUEN WAN WILL HAVE DESTINATIONS IN THE AREAS SERVED BY THE COMBINED MODIFIED INITIAL SYSTEM/TSUEN WAN EXTENSION SYSTEM.

+SO THE OPERATION OF THE RAILWAY TO TSUEN WAN WILL UNDOUBTEDLY EASE THE LOT OF A GREAT NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING IN THESE AREAS AS THEIR USUAL TRAVELLING TIME FROM, FOR EXAMPLE, TSUEN WAN TO CENTRAL WILL, IN MANY INSTANCES, BE CUT BY AS MUCH AS 50 PER CENT,+ HE SAID.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE REPORT HAD CONCLUDED THAT THE EXTENSION WOULD GENERATE REVENUES SIGNIFICANTLY IN EXCESS OF ITS RELATIVE SHARE OF THE TOTAL COST OF THE SYSTEM.

HE EXPLAINED THAT THE GOVERNMENT AND THE MTR CORPORATION HAD ELECTED TO PROCEED WITH THE EXTENSION NOW BECAUSE

- * THE PRESSURES ON THE WEST KOWLOON OR TSUEN WAN CORRIDOR WOULD BE MUCH MORE APPARENT BY THE END OF 1982 SO THAT AN UNDERGROUND RAILWAY TO BE BUILT IN TIME TO RELIEVE THE CONGESTION WOULD HAVE TO START WORK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE,
- * IT SEEMS HIGHLY LIKELY THAT VERY COMPETITIVE BIDS WILL BE RECEIVED FROM CONTRACTORS ALREADY EMPLOYED ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE MODIFIED INITIAL SYSTEM SINCE THE NECESSARY HEAVY EQUIPMENT IS ALREADY HERE,
- * THE CORPORATION WOULD BE ABLE TO CONTINUE TO UTILIZE THE KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE OF THE 700 OR SO TECHNICAL AND ENGINEERING STAFF WHICH IT HAS BUILT UP TO SUPERVISE THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE INITIAL SYSTEM,
- * TO DELAY EXTENDING THE INITIAL SYSTEM WHEN THE CORPORATION HAS THE OVERALL CAPACITY TO DO SO WOULD ONLY MEAN INFLATION WOULD SWELL THE TOTAL COST OF THE RAILWAY, AND
- * THE CORPORATION BELIEVES THAT IT IS NOW A FAVOURABLE TIME TO NEGOTIATE LOANS TO FINANCE THE COST OF THE EXTENSION.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID THE MTR CORPORATION PREDICTED THAT BY 1986, THE MODIFIED SYSTEM AND THE TSUEN WAN EXTENSION WOULD TOGETHER CARRY SOME 1.8 MILLION PASSENGERS A DAY, WHICH ESTIMATE HAD BEEN CONFIRMED BY AN INDEPENDENT GOVERNMENT CHECK.

+THE FARE STRUCTURES ASSUMED FOR THE COMBINED SYSTEM WILL BE HIGHER THAN CURRENT PUBLIC TRANSPORT FARES BUT THE SPEED, REGULARITY, COMFORT AND CONVENIENCE OF THE RAILWAY SHOULD AMPLY COMPENSATE FOR THE FARE DIFFERENTIAL,+ HE SAID.

MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S MAIN ROLE NOW WOULD BE TO FACILITATE THE EFFORTS OF THE CORPORATION IN CONSTRUCTING THE EXTENSION.

+TO THIS END, FOR INSTANCE, QUICK ACTION WILL NEED TO BE TAKEN TO ACQUIRE AND CLEAR WORKS AND STORAGE SITES FOR THE CORPORATION= TO ACQUIRE EASEMENTS FOR THE RAILWAY STRUCTURES= AND TO PROTECT THE ROUTE OF THE RAILWAY.

+TRAFFIC DIVERSIONS WILL HAVE TO BE PLANNED, AS WELL AS THE DIVERSION OF UTILITIES BELONGING TO THE GOVERNMENT AND THE UTILITY COMPANIES. SPECIAL CARE WILL HAVE TO BE TAKEN TO ENSURE THAT THE WORKS WILL NOT IMPEDE THE FLOW OF TRAFFIC TO AND FROM THE CONTAINER TERMINAL.

+STATIONS AND THEIR ENTRANCES WILL HAVE TO BE LOCATED AND DESIGNED IN CONJUNCTION WITH SURFACE PUBLIC TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE FACILITIES AND BOTH COMPLEMENTARY AND SUPPLEMENTARY SURFACE TRANSPORT SERVICES WILL HAVE TO BE PLANNED.

+SOME PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS WILL HAVE TO BE PROGRAMMED TO FIT IN WITH THE CORPORATION'S CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMME AND EXISTING LEGISLATION WILL HAVE TO BE AMENDED TO MAKE IT APPLY TO THE EXTENSION.

+ADDITIONAL STAFF, MAINLY IN THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, WILL BE NEEDED TO ACCOMPLISH ALL THIS ON TIME,+ HE SAID.

AS SOON AS THE EXTENSION TO TSUEN WAN BECOMES OPERATIONAL, HE CONTINUED, SURFACE PUBLIC TRANSPORT FEEDER SERVICES WILL BE INTRODUCED TO LINK THE MTR STATIONS AS NEARLY AS POSSIBLE TO PASSENGERS' ORIGINS AND DESTINATIONS.

+THIS WILL BE ACHIEVED,+ HE SAID, +BY USING SOME OF THE BUSES AND PLB'S OPERATING IN MTR CORRIDORS BEFORE THE RAILWAY BECOMES OPERATIONAL AND THUS THE FULL BENEFITS OF THE UNDERGROUND RAILWAY WILL BE SECURED FOR THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC.

+TRAFFIC STUDIES ARE IN HAND TO WORK OUT HOW BUSES AND PLB'S MAY COMPLEMENT AND SUPPLEMENT THE MTR TO MAKE THE BEST USE OF ROAD AND KERBSIDE SPACE,+ HE SAID.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY POINTED OUT THAT THE COMPENSATION ARRANGEMENTS WORKED OUT FOR THE MODIFIED INITIAL SYSTEM WOULD APPLY TO THOSE AFFECTED BY THE EXTENSION.

+THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF ADVANCE PAYMENTS DEvised TO MITIGATE ANY HARDSHIP CAUSED BY BUSINESS LOSSES ARISING FROM STREET CLOSURES WILL ALSO APPLY,+ HE SAID.

+IN THOSE CASES WHERE STATUTORY CLAIMS FOR BUSINESS LOSSES SUSTAINED CANNOT BE ENTERTAINED BECAUSE OF LEGAL TECHNICALITIES, EX GRATIA COMPENSATION WILL BE CONSIDERED,+ HE ADDED.

+IN OTHER WORDS, THE CORPORATION AND THE GOVERNMENT WILL DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO MINIMISE THE INEVITABLE INCONVENIENCE AND ANNOYANCE THAT WILL BE CAUSED TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC BY THE BUILDING OF THIS EXTENSION,+ HE ASSURED.

BUT UNOFFICIAL MEMBER, THE HON. S.L. CHEN, QUERIED SOME OF THE ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING THE MTR CORPORATION'S PROPOSALS TO EXTEND THE MODIFIED INITIAL SYSTEM.

THE FIRST ASSUMPTION ON WHICH MR. CHEN HAD RESERVATIONS WAS THE CORPORATION'S PREDICTION THAT THE INITIAL SYSTEM AND THE TSUEN WAN EXTENSION WILL CARRY 1.8 MILLION PASSENGERS A DAY BY 1986.

HE NOTED THAT THE TOTAL WORKFORCE AND NUMBER OF STUDENTS BY 1986 WOULD BE 2.76 MILLION, BASED ON 1976 FIGURES AND THE AVERAGE 2 PER CENT POPULATION GROWTH RATE.

ALL OF THEM WILL HAVE TO TRAVEL TO THEIR PLACE OF WORK OR STUDY BUT NOT ALL WOULD NECESSARILY REQUIRE THE SERVICE OF THE MTR ESPECIALLY THE MAJORITY OF THOSE WHO LIVE AND WORK ON HONG KONG ISLAND AND IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, HE SAID.

GENERALLY SPEAKING, HE SAID, NO ONE WOULD DESIRE TO TRAVEL A GREAT DISTANCE EVERY DAY TO WORK OR TO STUDY AND SOONER OR LATER ONE WOULD EITHER FIND A JOB CLOSE TO WHERE ONE LIVES OR FIND A HOME NEAR WHERE ONE WORKS, PARTICULARLY IN THE FACE OF RAPIDLY INCREASING TRANSPORTATION COSTS.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW TOWNS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES WOULD EVENTUALLY ABSORB SOMETHING LIKE 2 MILLION OF THE TOTAL POPULATION OF 5.4 MILLION PROJECTED FOR 1986 AND MOST OF THEM WOULD BE EXPECTED TO LIVE AND WORK IN THESE TOWNS.

+FROM THESE OBSERVATIONS, I CANNOT HELP FEELING THAT THE CORPORATION'S PASSENGER PREDICTION IS RATHER OPTIMISTIC,+ HE SAID.

THE UNOFFICIAL MEMBER ALSO QUESTIONED THE OPTIMISM OF THE CORPORATION, THAT THE DIFFERENTIAL BETWEEN MTR AND OTHER LAND TRANSPORT FARES WAS REASONABLE AND JUSTIFIABLE BECAUSE OF SAVINGS IN MTR TRAVEL TIME AND RELIABILITY.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE AVERAGE FARE FOR PUBLIC BUS SERVICES IN 1975 IN THE URBAN AREA WAS ABOUT 30 CENTS WHILE THE FARE STRUCTURE FOR THE MODIFIED INITIAL SYSTEM/TSUEN WAN EXTENSION WOULD RANGE FROM \$1 TO \$2.50 AT 1975 PRICES.

+THEREFORE, THE RATIO BETWEEN MTR FARE AND PUBLIC BUS FARE RANGES FROM 3.3 TO 8.3,+ HE SAID, AND MAY BE EVEN HIGHER BY 1986, BASED ON THE HISTORICALLY LOWER FREQUENCY OF INCREASES IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT FARES.

FOR EXAMPLE, HE EXPLAINED, SINCE 1946 PUBLIC BUS FARES HAD BEEN CHANGED THREE OR FOUR TIMES WHEREAS TRAMWAY FARES HAD ONLY BEEN CHANGED TWICE SO THAT BETWEEN 1946 AND 1975, THE AVERAGE RATE OF INCREASE IN PUBLIC BUS AND TRAM FARES WAS ABOUT 1.5 TO 2 PER CENT PER ANNUM, SUBSTANTIALLY BELOW THE 7 PER CENT ASSUMED BY THE CORPORATION.

IT MUST BE APPRECIATED THEREFORE, THAT IF THE FARE STRUCTURE PROPOSED BY THE CORPORATION WERE ACCEPTED, +THEN ARE WE IN EFFECT UNNECESSARILY FORCING THE PACE OF INCREASE IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT FARES?+ MR. CHEN ASKED, AND IF THE 7 PER CENT ANNUAL INCREASE IN THE MTR FARE STRUCTURE WAS ACCEPTED, +ARE WE NOT SETTING A PRECEDENT FOR OTHER PUBLIC UTILITIES TO FOLLOW IN FUTURE?+

HE DOUBTED VERY MUCH WHETHER THE MTR WOULD BE COMPETITIVE ENOUGH TO ATTRACT 1.8 MILLION PASSENGERS PER DAY IF THE FARE RATIO BETWEEN IT AND FRANCHISED BUSES WERE MAINTAINED.

MR. CHEN SAID HE WAS MOST CONCERNED ABOUT ANOTHER ASSUMPTION MADE BY THE CORPORATION THAT SOME +RESHAPING OF BUS AND PLB SERVICES+ WOULD BE NECESSARY TO FIT IN WITH THE EXTENDED MTR SYSTEM.

FURTHERMORE, HE ADDED, THERE IS ALREADY ANTICIPATION, ON THE PART OF THE CORPORATION, OF A REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF BUSES AND PLB'S OPERATING OVER MTR ROUTES.

+ALL THESE POINT TO THE ULTIMATE CREATION OF A MONOPOLY FOR THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY. UNLESS I RECEIVE AN ASSURANCE FROM GOVERNMENT THAT THIS IS NOT THE INTENTION BEHIND THE ASSUMPTION +RESHAPING OF BUS AND PLB SERVICES+, I SHALL OPPOSE THE MOTION BEFORE COUNCIL,+ HE SAID.

MR. CHEN SAID HE DID NOT DISAGREE WITH THE PRINCIPLE OF THE NEED FOR THE PROPOSED TSUEN WAN EXTENSION. +BUT I AM OF THE OPINION THAT IT SHOULD ONLY BE CONTEMPLATED AFTER THE CORPORATION HAS PROVED THE EXPECTED BENEFITS OF THE MODIFIED INITIAL SYSTEM, WHEREBY THE VARIOUS ASSUMPTIONS MADE IN JUSTIFYING ITS VIABILITY CAN BE FULLY VERIFIED OR OTHERWISE,+ HE SAID.

THE HON. JAMES WU ALSO SPOKE ON THE PROPOSED FARE STRUCTURE OF THE MTR AND THE +RESHAPING+ OF OTHER FORMS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT, THE EFFECTS OF WHICH, HE SAID, ON THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC AS FAR AS TIME AND COST WERE CONCERNED, WERE NOT CLEAR.

/ FOR INSTANCE,

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FOR INSTANCE, MR. WU SAID, ONE CAN STILL TRAVEL BY PUBLIC BUS FROM PEDDER STREET TO THE PROPOSED MTR TERMINUS IN KWUN TONG IN ABOUT 35 MINUTES FOR \$1, AND THIS TIME CAN ONLY BE IMPROVED BY 1980 IF THE THEN COMPLETED AND OPERATIONAL MODIFIED INITIAL SYSTEM IS TO SERVE ITS DESIGNED PURPOSE TO ALLEVIATE ROAD CONGESTION, WHILE IT IS NOT ANTICIPATED THERE WOULD BE ANY INCREASE IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE IN THIS CROSS HARBOUR BUS ROUTE, WHICH IS IDENTICAL TO THE MTR ROUTE CHARGING \$2.50 AT 1975 PRICES.

THAT THE DIFFERENTIAL BETWEEN CURRENT PUBLIC TRANSPORT FARES AND MTR FARES SHOULD BE AMPLY COMPENSATED FOR BY THE SPEED, REGULARITY, COMFORT AND CONVENIENCE OF THE RAILWAY IS A MATTER OF JUDGMENT, MR. WU SAID, BUT HE AGREED WITH THE IMPLIED PRINCIPLE OF FAIR COMPETITION BY THE VARIOUS PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES THAT WOULD THEN BE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC.

+HOWEVER, WHAT I CANNOT AGREE TO WOULD BE ANY ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION WHEREBY SURFACE PUBLIC TRANSPORT FARES ROUTES AND SERVICES ARE REVISED SOLELY TO MAKE THE MTR VIABLE.

+CONSIDERING THAT A LARGE PORTION OF OUR WORKING PEOPLE AND STUDENTS USE PUBLIC TRANSPORT, THE INFLATIONARY EFFECT OF SUCH MEASURES WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE, AND I SUGGEST THAT THE COMMUNITY'S INTEREST MUST OVERRIDE THAT OF THE MTR,+ HE SAID.

DEBATE ON THE MOTION MOVED BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY WAS ADJOURNED.

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UNOFFICIALS CONCERNED OVER TEXTILE AND GARMENT INDUSTRY
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THE HON. FRANCIS TIEN TODAY EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER THE PRESENT OUTLOOK OF HONG KONG'S TEXTILE AND GARMENT INDUSTRY AND HIGHLIGHTED SOME OF THE DIFFICULTIES NOW FACING THE INDUSTRY.

QUOTING TRADE STATISTICS RELEASED BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT, MR. TIEN POINTED OUT THAT THERE WAS A DECLINE IN VALUE TERMS OF NEARLY 9 PER CENT IN THE EXPORT OF TEXTILES AND GARMENTS IN THE FIRST FIVE MONTHS THIS YEAR COMPARED WITH THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR, FROM \$6,690 MILLION TO \$6,100 MILLION.

IN QUANTITY TERMS, MR. TIEN SAID, THE DECLINE WAS EVEN MORE MARKED. +IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 1977, WE WERE ABLE TO SHIP, IN OVERALL TERMS, ONLY 44 PER CENT OF OUR ANNUAL QUOTA FOR THE UNITED STATES AND 30 PER CENT FOR THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY.+

AND COMPARING THE VOLUME OF SHIPMENT OF RESTRAINED ITEMS IN THE FIRST HALF OF THIS YEAR WITH LAST YEAR, +THERE HAS BEEN A MARGINAL INCREASE OF 4.5 PER CENT FOR THE US MARKET, BUT SHARP DECLINES OF 31 PER CENT FOR GERMANY, 25 PER CENT FOR THE UK AND 25 PER CENT FOR THE EEC AS A WHOLE,+ HE SAID.

HE NOTED THAT THE SPINNING SECTOR HAD, FOR THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, BEEN OPERATING AT LESS THAN 70 PER CENT OF INSTALLED CAPACITY, THE WEAVING SECTOR AT ABOUT 50 PER CENT CAPACITY AND WHILE INFORMATION WAS NOT READILY AVAILABLE, SOME GARMENT MANUFACTURERS WERE ALSO EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTIES.

ON THE BASIS OF THESE FACTS AND FIGURES THE PROGNOSIS FOR 1977 DID NOT LOOK TOO BRIGHT AND THE FUTURE WAS BY NO MEANS ROSY WHEN ASSESSED IN RELATION TO CERTAIN RECENT DEVELOPMENTS, HE SAID.

+REGRETTABLY, SOME OF OUR TRADING PARTNERS, IN AN ATTEMPT TO PROTECT THEIR OWN DOMESTIC INDUSTRIES, HAVE CHOSEN TO TAKE UNILATERAL MEASURES WHICH ARE INCONSISTENT WITH BOTH THE LETTER AND SPIRIT OF THE MULTI-FIBRE ARRANGEMENT, AN INTERNATIONALLY AGREED FRAMEWORK FOR THE REGULATION OF TRADE IN TEXTILES,+ MR. TIEN SAID, GIVING AS EXAMPLES MEASURES TAKEN BY AUSTRALIA AND CANADA AND RECENTLY FRANCE AND THE EEC WHICH WERE AS YET UNCLEAR.

+THESE, ONE MAY SAY, ARE MERELY ISOLATED INSTANCES BUT TAKEN TOGETHER, THESE IMPOSITIONS HAVE CERTAINLY CAUSED GREAT ANXIETY IN THE TEXTILE AND GARMENT INDUSTRY PARTICULARLY WHEN SUCH DEVELOPMENTS HAVE TAKEN PLACE AT A TIME WHEN THE VERY FUTURE OF THE MFA ITSELF, WHICH EXPIRES AT THE END OF THIS YEAR, WAS BEING DEBATED INTERNATIONALLY,+ HE SAID.

REFERRING TO EFFORTS BY SOME IMPORTING COUNTRIES, IN PARTICULAR THE EEC, FOR MORE STRINGENT RESTRICTIONS, MR. TIEN SAID +IT SEEMS TO ME THAT WHAT THE EEC REALLY WANTS IS TO BE ABLE TO RESTRICT IMPORTS FROM SO-CALLED 'LOW COST SUPPLIERS' AS A GROUP, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER EACH OF THEM INDIVIDUALLY IS CAUSING OR THREATENING MARKET DISRUPTION.+

IT ALSO WANTS, HE CONTINUED, +TO LIMIT THE GROWTH OF IMPORTS OF SO-CALLED 'HIGH IMPORT PENETRATION' CATEGORIES TO FIGURES WELL BELOW THE INTERNATIONALLY AGREED MINIMUM OF SIX PER CENT PROVIDED FOR IN THE MFA, AND, INDEED TO CUT BACK IMPORTS FROM SO-CALLED 'DOMINANT SUPPLIERS' OF WHOM HONG KONG IS ONE IN RESPECT OF MANY SUCH CATEGORIES.+

HE WARNED THAT THESE FAR-REACHING PROPOSALS, IF ACCEPTED, WOULD HAVE SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS, +PARTICULARLY SO BECAUSE FROM PAST EXPERIENCE, WHATEVER GUIDELINES ARE ESTABLISHED IN THE MFA AS THE MINIMA, VERY SOON IT WILL BE REGARDED AS THE MAXIMA BY THE DEVELOPED IMPORTING COUNTRIES.+

MR. TIEN RECALLED THAT THE DELEGATION OF ALL THE CHAIRMEN OF THE 13 TEXTILE AND GARMENT MANUFACTURERS' ASSOCIATIONS LED BY HIM TO LONDON TOWARDS THE END OF LAST MONTH TO EXPRESS CONCERN AT THE POLICIES REPORTEDLY BEING PURSUED BY THE EEC, AND BY THE UK AS ONE OF ITS MEMBER STATES, WAS COURTEOUSLY RECEIVED AND PATIENTLY HEARD AT A HIGH LEVEL.

HE SAID HE WAS AWARE OF THE STRENUOUS EFFORTS WHICH THE GOVERNMENT, PARTICULARLY THE DIRECTOR OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, HAD MADE TO REPRESENT THE INTERESTS OF THE INDUSTRY TO THE UK GOVERNMENT.

+I CANNOT BUT FEEL A LITTLE DISAPPOINTED THAT ALL THESE EFFORTS HAVE NOT YET SUCCEEDED IN BRINGING ABOUT ANY SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN THE ATTITUDE OF THE EEC ON ITS POLICY ON TEXTILES NOR ON THE FUTURE OF THE MFA,+ HE SAID.

AS TO THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG'S BILATERAL AGREEMENTS, MR. TIEN HOPED THAT IN THE COURSE OF NEGOTIATIONS TO REPLACE THE EXISTING AGREEMENT WITH THE EEC WHICH WILL EXPIRE AT THE END OF THIS YEAR, +THE EEC WILL NOT SEEK TO INTENSIFY WHAT ARE ALREADY VERY SEVERE RESTRICTIONS ON OUR EXPORTS TO ITS MARKETS.+

MR. TIEN WELCOMED THE NEW FIVE-YEAR BILATERAL AGREEMENT WITH THE UNITED STATES WHICH PROVIDES +A FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH THE INDUSTRY CAN PLAN ITS PRODUCTION AND SALES IN RESPECT OF OUR LARGEST SINGLE MARKET UP TO THE END OF 1982.+

HE REGRETTED HOWEVER THAT THE TERMS HAD SO FAR NOT BEEN DISCLOSED AND THIS WAS MAKING IT VERY DIFFICULT FOR THE INDUSTRY TO MAKE COMMERCIAL DECISIONS ON WHETHER OR NOT TO ACCEPT ORDERS FOR GOODS TO BE SHIPPED NEXT YEAR, HE SAID.

THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN ALSO SPOKE ON THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG'S TEXTILE AND GARMENT INDUSTRY DURING THE ADJOURNMENT DEBATE, AND POINTED OUT THAT THE SHORT AND LONG-TERM OUTLOOK WAS A CONTINUOUS CAUSE FOR CONCERN.

THE LOW WAGE STRUCTURE AND IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY OF OTHER TEXTILE EXPORTING COUNTRIES IN ASIA WERE MAKING DEEP INROADS IN OUR MAJOR TRADITIONAL MARKETS, AND THE SEVERELY PROTECTIONIST ATTITUDE OF A NUMBER OF EEC COUNTRIES WAS A SERIOUS THREAT AND SOURCE OF UNCERTAINTY FOR HONG KONG'S TEXTILE TRADE, HE SAID.

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HE SAID THERE HAD TO BE UNITY OF APPROACH AND EFFORT BY ALL, AND IN THE MEANTIME IT WAS PRUDENT FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO ACCELERATE ITS PLANS FOR INDUSTRIAL DIVERSIFICATION.

+FIRST OF ALL, THE INCREASED PERSONNEL REQUIRED FOR THE NEW INDUSTRY AND CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT IS A MATTER OF TOP PRIORITY. WE CANNOT EXPECT MIRACLES OVERNIGHT BUT IF THE RIGHT CALIBRE OF PERSONS ARE APPOINTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, THERE WILL BE STEADY PROGRESS IN OUR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION EFFORTS,+ MR. CHEONG-LEEN SAID.

SECONDLY, HE CONTINUED, THERE WAS A NEED TO REVIEW WHETHER ADDITIONAL INCENTIVES, SUCH AS THOSE DEVELOPED AND REFINED BY THE SINGAPORE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD, SHOULD BE DEVISED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY TO ATTRACT NEW INDUSTRIES.

IT IS OBVIOUS, HE SAID, THAT HONG KONG'S LOW TAX STRUCTURE AND FREE PORT STATUS NO LONGER COMMAND THE OVERWHELMING ATTRACTION TO POTENTIAL OVERSEAS INVESTORS AS IN PREVIOUS YEARS.

MR. CHEONG-LEEN ALSO SUGGESTED THE IMMEDIATE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TOP LEVEL AND HIGH-POWERED WORKING PARTY, PREFERABLY WITH THE INCLUSION OF UNOFFICIALS, TO EXAMINE WHETHER AND WHAT ADDITIONAL INCENTIVES ARE REQUIRED.

SUCH A WORKING PARTY, IF SET UP, MIGHT ALSO LOOK INTO THE PROPOSAL TO FORM AN INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL FOR THE PURPOSE OF STRENGTHENING AND CO-ORDINATING ON A BROADER FRONT HONG KONG'S INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS, HE SAID.

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LEGO GIVEN INDICATION OF WHAT'S IN STORE
IN HK-US TEXTILE AGREEMENT

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THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, THE HON. BILL DORWARD, TODAY GAVE AN INDICATION OF WHAT IS IN STORE IN THE HK-US TEXTILE AGREEMENT WHICH IS TO BE SIGNED SHORTLY.

MR. DORWARD, WHO WAS SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, DISCLOSED THAT THE NEW AGREEMENT WOULD BE MORE RESTRICTIVE THAN THE CURRENT ONE, BUT POINTED OUT THAT IT CONTAINED SOME FEATURES WHICH COUNTERBALANCED THE NEGATIVE ONES.

HE ALSO SAID THAT THE NEW AGREEMENT WOULD RUN FOR FIVE YEARS.

OVERALL GROWTH RATES IN THE FIRST YEAR OF THE FIVE-YEAR AGREEMENT WOULD BE LOW BUT WOULD INCREASE SUBSTANTIALLY IN LATER YEARS, SAID MR. DORWARD.

FOR SOME SENSITIVE CATEGORIES THE SPECIFIC GROWTH RATES WOULD BE LOW THROUGHOUT- BUT MR. DORWARD HINTED THAT, ALMOST WITHOUT EXCEPTION, THEY WERE HIGHER THAN 2.5 PERCENT.

MR. DORWARD APOLOGISED THAT HE COULD NOT BE MORE SPECIFIC AT THIS STAGE. HE SAID HE WAS +ACUTELY CONSCIOUS+ OF THE FRUSTRATION IN BUSINESS CIRCLES AT THE DELAY IN ANNOUNCING THE TERMS OF THE NEW AGREEMENT. HE EXPLAINED THAT THIS WAS DUE TO MINOR TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES FACED BY THE U.S. AUTHORITIES WHICH HAVE SO FAR DELAYED THE FORMAL SIGNING.

+I NOW EXPECT THIS TO TAKE PLACE VERY SOON,+ HE ADDED.

REFERRING TO HIS ANNOUNCEMENT LAST MONDAY ON A BRIDGING ARRANGEMENT TO COVER THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE EXPIRY OF THE PRESENT HK-US AGREEMENT ON SEPTEMBER 30 AND THE START OF THE NEW ONE ON JANUARY 1, 1978, MR. DORWARD SAID +THIS HAS REMOVED SOME OF THE IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS FACED BY THE TRADE DUE TO UNCERTAINTIES+.

MR. DORWARD MADE SEVERAL POINTS IN RELATION TO THE CURRENT STATE OF THE DOMESTIC TEXTILES INDUSTRY.

HE SAID: +FIRST, AND MOST IMPORTANT, AT A TIME WHEN PROTECTIONIST VOICES ARE BEING LOUDLY HEARD AROUND THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, IT IS SALUTORY TO REMIND ALL CONCERNED THAT STRUCTURAL AND EMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS ARE NOT PECULIAR TO THOSE COUNTRIES- AND THAT, FURTHERMORE, THE SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF THOSE PROBLEMS ARE MUCH MORE ACUTELY FELT BY THE RELATIVELY POOR THAN BY THE RELATIVELY RICH.

+SECONDLY, I WOULD NOTE THAT WHILE THE HONG KONG INDUSTRY HAS UNDOUBTEDLY SUFFERED AS A RESULT OF PROTECTIONIST ACTIONS, THE MAIN PROBLEMS THIS YEAR HAVE BEEN THE CONSEQUENCES OF SLACK DEMAND IN SUCH MAJOR MARKETS AS THE UNITED STATES, THE UNITED KINGDOM AND GERMANY. IT IS ONLY IN A VERY FEW ITEMS IN STRONG DEMAND THAT THE QUOTA LIMITS HAVE BEEN OF ANY SIGNIFICANCE AT ALL AND INDICATIONS ARE THAT THIS WILL REMAIN THE CASE FOR THE REST OF THIS YEAR.

+THIRDLY, AND FOLLOWING ON MY SECOND POINT, THE PATTERN OF OUR CURRENT TRADE GIVES THE LIE TO THOSE PROTECTIONIST CLAIMS THAT IMPORTERS' PROBLEMS WOULD DISSOLVE IF HONG KONG AND OTHER MAJOR SUPPLIERS WOULD ACCEPT A REDUCTION IN OUR NEGOTIATED MARKET ACCESS RIGHTS. THEY CONFUSE, EITHER ACCIDENTALLY OR DELIBERATELY, THE EXISTENCE OF ACCESS RIGHTS, OR QUOTAS AS THEY ARE MORE COMMONLY CALLED, WITH THE ACTUAL TRADE DONE.+

MR. DORWARD POINTED OUT THAT THE MERE EXISTENCE OF QUOTAS, OR GROWTH RATES ON THEM, DOES NOT CAUSE DAMAGE TO DOMESTIC INDUSTRIES. +BUT TO THOSE WHO MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO ARGUE THAT UNDER-UTILISATION OF QUOTAS CONSTITUTED A CASE FOR REDUCING THEIR LIMITS, I WOULD ANSWER, 'NO, IT CONSTITUTES A CASE FOR REMOVING THEM'+, HE SAID.

ON OUR AGREEMENT WITH THE EEC WHICH RUNS OUT AT THE END OF THIS YEAR, MR. DORWARD SAID HE EXPECTED THAT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE COMMUNITY TO DETERMINE FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS WOULD COMMENCE IN LATE SEPTEMBER. HE PREDICTED THAT THESE WOULD NOT BE EASY, PARTICULARLY AS REGARDS THE QUESTION OF GROWTH.

THE EEC HAS ALREADY INDICATED PUBLICLY THAT THERE ARE SEVEN CATEGORIES OF TEXTILES WHICH ARE PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE AND WHERE THEY WILL BE SEEKING GROWTH RATES LOWER THAN SIX PER CENT PROVIDED FOR IN THE PRESENT MULTI-FIBRE ARRANGEMENT.

MR. DORWARD POINTED OUT +UNDER THE PRESENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN HONG KONG AND THE EEC, ANNUAL GROWTH ON UK QUOTA LIMITS FOR ALL OF THESE ITEMS BAR ONE IS ONE HALF OF ONE PERCENT= AND FOR THE OTHER ITEM IT IS ABOUT THREE AND A HALF PER CENT. FOR GERMANY, THE FIGURES FOR THE ONLY FIVE CATEGORIES WHERE THERE IS ANY SIGNIFICANT TRADE RANGE BETWEEN 0.5 AND 2.3 PER CENT. AND FOR THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE THE ANNUAL GROWTH RANGES FROM 2.5 PER CENT FOR FIVE OF THE ITEMS TO 7 PER CENT FOR THE OTHER TWO+.

HE CONCLUDED THAT +THERE IS LITTLE SCOPE FOR REDUCTION THERE.+

ON THE FUTURE OF THE MFA, MR. DORWARD SAID THAT, BECAUSE OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE TEXTILE COMMITTEE'S DISCUSSION, HE COULD NOT RECOUNT +THE MANY SHIFTS AND TURNS WHICH THE NEGOTIATIONS, BOTH FORMAL AND INFORMAL, HAVE RECENTLY TAKEN IN GENEVA.+

BUT HE INDICATED THAT A GROUP OF PARTICIPANTS INCLUDING HONG KONG, WHO BETWEEN THEM REPRESENT 85 PERCENT OF WORLD TRADE IN TEXTILES, REACHED A CONSENSUS LAST SUNDAY, ALTHOUGH IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE FOR THE TEXTILES COMMITTEE AS A WHOLE TO AGREE.

+THE PARTIAL CONSENSUS WAS ON A COMPLEX FORM OF WORDS AGREEING AMONGST OTHER THINGS A FLEXIBLE APPROACH TO FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF A RENEWED AND UNCHANGED MFA+, MR. DORWARD SAID.

+I SHALL BE PUTTING THE TERMS AS AGREED BETWEEN THE NEGOTIATORS BEFORE THE TEXTILES ADVISORY BOARD LATER THIS WEEK SO THAT, ON THE BASIS OF THEIR ADVICE, I CAN MAKE A RECOMMENDATION AS TO WHETHER THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT SHOULD STAND READY TO SIGN A PROTOCOL, INCORPORATING THESE TERMS, WHICH WILL BE OPENED LATER IN THE YEAR TO PROVIDE FOR THE EXTENSION OF THE MFA+, MR. DORWARD ADDED.

GOOD PROSPECTS FOR COLLEGE OF EDUCATION GRADUATES
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THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, THE HON. COLVYN HAYE SAID TODAY THERE WERE GOOD PROSPECTS DURING THE NEXT FIVE YEARS FOR GRADUATES FROM FULL-TIME COURSES FROM THE COLLEGES OF EDUCATION.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. LEUNG TAT-SHING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR. HAYE SAID SECONDARY EDUCATION WAS EXPANDING RAPIDLY AND IT WAS CLEAR THAT GRADUATES FROM THE COLLEGES OF EDUCATION WOULD HAVE TO LOOK MAINLY TO SECONDARY SCHOOLS RATHER THAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS FOR JOBS IN THE FUTURE.

+WE ARE RAPIDLY EXPANDING SECONDARY EDUCATION WITH A VIGOROUS SCHOOL BUILDING PROGRAMME AND WE ARE PLANNING TO MEET AMBITIOUS REHABILITATION TARGETS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION, WHICH SHOULD PROVIDE FURTHER JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLEGE GRADUATES,+ HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THE INTAKE OF THE COLLEGES OF EDUCATION WOULD BE REGULATED SO AS TO MATCH SUPPLY WITH DEMAND AS FAR AS POSSIBLE.

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SIX PER CENT INCREASE FOR PENSIONERS
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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL HAS APPROVED A SIX PER CENT INCREASE FOR ALL PENSIONS IN PAYMENT ON JULY 1, 1977 WITH EFFECT FROM OCTOBER 1 BECAUSE OF HIGHER COST OF LIVING.

THE COST OF THE INCREASE IS ESTIMATED AT \$3.65 MILLION FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR AND \$7.3 MILLION IN A FULL YEAR.

MOVING A RESOLUTION IN COUNCIL TODAY, THE SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, THE HON. JOSEPH HAMMOND, SAID IN DECEMBER 1975 NEW RULES WERE ADOPTED BY GOVERNMENT FOR REVIEWING CIVIL SERVICE PENSIONS, INCLUDING WIDOWS AND ORPHANS PENSIONS.

THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE OF THESE RULES, HE SAID, WAS TO MAINTAIN THE ORIGINAL PURCHASING POWER IN HONG KONG OF RETIRED CIVIL SERVANTS' PENSIONS BY REGULAR REVIEWS AND BY REFERENCE TO MOVEMENTS IN THE COST OF LIVING DURING THE REVIEW PERIOD.

LAST YEAR THESE RULES WERE APPLIED FOR THE FIRST TIME AND, FOLLOWING A REVIEW COVERING THE PERIOD APRIL 1, 1974 TO JUNE 30, 1976, PENSIONS IN PAYMENT ON JULY 1, 1976 WERE INCREASED BY 11 PER CENT WITH EFFECT FROM OCTOBER 1, 1976, BY RESOLUTIONS AMENDING THE RESPECTIVE SCHEDULES IN THE PENSIONS (INCREASE) ORDINANCE AND THE WIDOWS AND ORPHANS PENSION (INCREASE) ORDINANCE, MR. HAMMOND SAID.

+ANOTHER REVIEW OF PENSIONS HAS BEEN CONDUCTED RECENTLY COVERING THE PERIOD JULY 1, 1976 TO JUNE 30, 1977, DURING WHICH THE MOVING ANNUAL AVERAGE OF THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX+A+ROSE BY SIX POINTS OR 5.5 PER CENT,+ HE SAID.

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LEGCO ADOPTS MOTION TO INCREASE CONTROL ON RATS

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UNOFFICIAL MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE HON. T.S. LO, TODAY SUCCESSFULLY MOVED A MOTION URGING THE GOVERNMENT TO INCREASE ITS EFFORTS IN RODENT CONTROL.

THE MOTION WAS SUPPORTED BY DR. THE HON. HARRY FANG, THE HON. LYDIA DUNN, AND THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES.

MR. LO HAD QUESTIONED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT HAD DONE ITS BEST AND HAD BEEN USING THE MOST UP-TO-DATE METHODS TO CONTROL THE BREEDING OF RATS.

HE SAID HE HAD REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS USING A POISON TO WHICH RATS HAVE ACQUIRED AN IMMUNITY AND WHICH GETS WASHED AWAY BY RAIN. +I ALSO HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT BETTER POISONS EXIST WHICH ARE RAIN RESISTANT AND AGAINST WHICH RATS HAVE NOT ACQUIRED AN IMMUNITY.+

HE SAID THAT WHEN MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE DISSATISFIED WITH SOME ASPECT OF GOVERNMENT'S WORK AND SAY SO ALL TOO OFTEN, +GOVERNMENT REPLIES THAT THE MATTER IS ESSENTIALLY UP TO THE PUBLIC.+

+ACCORDINGLY, I AM NOT PARTICULARLY SURPRISED THAT THIS IS PRECISELY WHAT GOVERNMENT SAYS WHEN CRITICISED ABOUT RATS.

+IT SEEMS ALMOST SECOND NATURE TO GOVERNMENT TO SAY THAT ITS DIRECT ACTION AGAINST RATS WILL ALWAYS BE INADEQUATE AND THAT IT IS UP TO THE PEOPLE TO IMPROVE THE STRUCTURE OF THEIR BUILDINGS, KEEP FOOD IN RAT-PROOF STORAGE AND KEEP GARBAGE COVERED EFFECTIVELY,+ HE SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE +INFAMOUS+ KWAI SHING WAI AREA WAS FORMERLY A LICENSED AREA WITH 1,600 PEOPLE. +WHEN THE RESIDENTS MOVED OUT GOVERNMENT FAILED TO DEMOLISH THE STRUCTURES AND FAILED TO STOP SQUATTERS FROM MOVING IN. THE SQUATTER POPULATION ULTIMATELY GREW TO 4,100. IT IS HARDLY SURPRISING THAT RATS FOUND PLENTY OF FOOD AND HARBOURAGE IN THE AREA.+

HE SAID IT MUST HAVE BEEN WELL-KNOWN TO THE GOVERNMENT AS EARLY AS 1973 THAT THE AREA WOULD VERY SOON BECOME RAT INFESTED.

DR. THE HON. HARRY FANG SAID THAT UNSANITARY CONDITIONS EXIST IN SLUM AREAS LIKE KWAI SHING WAI, EVEN IF NOT ON THE SAME SCALE AS THE PLAGUE OF 1894. +IT IS A VERY POOR RECORD OF PROGRESS IN THIS MODERN DAY AND AGE,+ HE SAID.

+ACCORDING TO THE ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT, UP TO 1974-75 TESTS WERE DONE ON SAMPLE RATS FOR PLAGUE AND OTHER ORGANISMS. ARE THESE STILL BEING CARRIED OUT REGULARLY?+ HE ASKED.

/ HE QUOTED

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HE QUOTED RELIABLE AUTHORITIES AS SAYING THAT JUST ONE PAIR OF RATS OF OPPOSITE SEXES WILL BREED AT LEAST 10,000 RATS BY THE END OF A YEAR AND OVER ONE MILLION BY THE END OF THE SECOND YEAR.

+EVEN IF THEY DO NOT ALL SURVIVE AND ALLOWING FOR SEASONAL VARIATIONS IN BREEDING, THESE FIGURES ARE STAGGERING. THE FIGURES PUBLISHED BY THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT SHOW AN AVERAGE OF ABOUT 300,000 RATS BEING CAUGHT ANNUALLY IN RECENT YEARS,+ DR. FANG SAID.

HE SUGGESTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT, IF IT LACKED MANPOWER AND FACILITIES, CONSIDER RE-INTRODUCING A MONETARY REWARD SYSTEM, ADOPTED IN 1900, TO ENLIST THE HELP OF THE PUBLIC.

HE SAID THERE WAS ROOM FOR IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY OF EXISTING CONTROL MEASURES ADOPTED BY THE USD, BY VARYING THE POISONS AND DOSAGES, AND BY IMPROVING THE DESIGN OF TRAPS.

+FURTHERMORE, THERE SHOULD BE AN OVERALL CO-ORDINATED APPROACH WHICH TAKES ACCOUNT OF THE WIDER ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT OF RAT CONTROL. THESE INCLUDE BUILDING DESIGN, GENERAL CLEANSING, DISTRICT HYGIENE AND HEALTH EDUCATION ESPECIALLY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR NEW TOWNS,+ HE SAID.

THE HON. LYDIA DUNN SAID EXPERIENCE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD AMPLY DEMONSTRATED THAT THE CONTROL OF RATS AND OTHER PESTS REQUIRES A CONTINUING EFFORT AND COMPLETE ERADICATION IS VERY DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE, WHILE THE SPEED WITH WHICH THEY CAN MULTIPLY IS SUCH THAT ANY RELAXATION, LET ALONE INADEQUACY, OF CONTROL MEASURES CAN HAVE DISASTROUS EFFECTS.

+IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, I FIND IT IMPOSSIBLE TO UNDERSTAND HOW ANY GOVERNMENT CAN EVER REALLY BE SATISFIED THAT ITS PEST CONTROL MEASURES ARE ADEQUATE, AT ANY RATE IN THE ABSENCE OF QUITE POSITIVE EVIDENCE THAT THIS IS SO,+ SHE SAID.

THE OFFICIAL ATTITUDE, SHE SAID, SUGGESTS THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS SOMEWHAT INDIFFERENT TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THOSE +LITTLE HERALDED, BUT VERY VITAL+ BASIC PUBLIC SERVICES, MAY BE DUE TO A PRE-OCCUPATION WITH OTHER LARGER SUBJECTS.

+BE THAT AS IT MAY, I REALLY DO BELIEVE THAT THE GOVERNMENT UNDER-ESTIMATES THE DAMAGE TO ITS IMAGE AMONG ORDINARY PEOPLE WHO SUFFER DISCOMFORT AND, IN SOME CASES, EVEN FEAR, AS A RESULT OF THE INEFFICIENT, AND EVEN INADEQUATE, PROVISION OF BASIC SERVICES,+ SHE SAID.

SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE MOTION, MR. JONES ASSURED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN USING THE BEST METHODS AVAILABLE, AND MORE WOULD BE DONE, TO ERADICATE THE RAT PROBLEM.

/ HE REVEALED

HE REVEALED THAT CONSIDERATION WILL BE GIVEN TO STEP UP A PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN INFORMING THE PUBLIC HOW THEY COULD HELP TO WIPE OUT RATS AND OTHER VERMIN.

MR. JONES AGAIN EMPHASISED THAT IT IS LARGELY UP TO THE PUBLIC TO ENSURE THE SUCCESS IN ELIMINATING THE PROBLEM OF RATS.

COMMENTING ON THE EFFICIENCY OF THE METHODS USED BY THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT, MR. JONES SAID THE PEST CONTROL UNIT OF THE DEPARTMENT WAS IN CONTINUOUS CONTACT WITH WORLDWIDE AUTHORITIES IN THIS FIELD, AND IT ADHERED TO THE ADVICE OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION ON THE BEST METHODS OF CONTROLLING VERMIN.

CONCERNING THE TYPE OF POISON WHICH IS USED, MR. JONES POINTED OUT THAT IT HAD BEEN EFFECTIVELY USED IN HONG KONG FOR ABOUT 15 YEARS AND THERE HAD BEEN NO EVIDENCE SO FAR OF RATS ACQUIRING IMMUNITY TO IT.

BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE URBAN COUNCIL WERE ALIVE TO THE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING DOWN RODENTS AND THAT EFFORTS TO THIS END ARE SPREAD OVER A BROAD FRONT, MR. JONES ADDED.

HE MENTIONED THAT ADVICE WAS GIVEN TO ARCHITECTS ON THE NECESSARY DESIGN FEATURES IN BUILDINGS WHICH WOULD DETER THE HARBOURAGE OF VARIOUS TYPES OF VERMINS- AND THAT IN SUCH AREAS AS GENERAL CLEANSING ACTIVITIES, DISTRICT HYGIENE MEASURES, HEALTH EDUCATION AND THE REQUIREMENTS FOR RESTAURANT LICENSING, THE NEED TO CONTROL VERMIN WAS TAKEN FULLY INTO ACCOUNT.

REFERRING TO REWARDS FOR EVERY RAT KILLED OR CAPTURED AND BROUGHT IN, MR. JONES SAID THIS SCHEME WAS DROPPED BOTH BECAUSE IT TENDED TO ENCOURAGE MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO EMPLOY UNSAFE METHODS HARMFUL TO CHILDREN AND ALSO BECAUSE AN INCENTIVE OF THIS KIND COULD ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO BREED RATS FOR REWARD.

AS FOR THE BEST WAY TO GET RID OF THE RATS AT KWAI SHING WAI, MR. JONES SAID THAT THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT WOULD CLEAR THE WHOLE RAT-INFESTED AREA BY AUGUST 11.

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LAW AGAINST DISCLOSURE OF NAMES IN RAPE CASES

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THE GOVERNMENT WILL ENACT LEGISLATION TO PREVENT THE DISCLOSURE OF THE NAMES AND PAST SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR OF PERSONS WHO HAD BEEN RAPED, THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON. GARTH THORNTON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. OSWALD CHEUNG, MR. THORNTON SAID, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL INTENDS TO SUBMIT DRAFT LEGISLATION TO THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL SHORTLY AND, IF APPROVED, IT WOULD BE INTRODUCED TO THE COUNCIL EARLY IN THE NEXT SESSION.

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RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF LYEMUN TO BE STUDIED

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CONSULTANTS MAY BE ENGAGED TO WORK OUT A COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT SCHEME FOR 130 ACRES OF RUGGED LAND PREVIOUSLY OCCUPIED BY THE LYEMUN BARRACKS.

THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY THAT THE AREA WAS FORMALLY RELEASED TO THE GOVERNMENT IN JANUARY THIS YEAR FOR DEVELOPMENT BY THE URBAN COUNCIL.

HE SAID THE AREA WAS MOSTLY VERY STEEP HILLSIDE AND WAS NOT EASY TO DEVELOP.

+THE PRECISE NATURE OF THE ACTIVE AND PASSIVE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES TO BE PROVIDED ON THE LAND IS NOW BEING CONSIDERED BY THE URBAN COUNCIL, BUT, IN VIEW OF THE SIZE OF THE AREA, I AM INFORMED THAT IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO ENGAGE CONSULTANTS TO WORK OUT A COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT SCHEME,+ HE SAID IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. JOHN BREMRIDGE.

NEGOTIATIONS WERE ALSO IN PROGRESS WITH THE SERVICES FOR THE RELEASE OF ADDITIONAL FLAT LAND TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO THIS AREA AND TO PERMIT THE MORE RAPID DEVELOPMENT OF AMENITY AREAS, MR. JONES SAID.

IN THE SHORT TERM IT WAS ORIGINALLY INTENDED THAT, AS A FIRST STEP, THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NORTHERNMOST PORTION OF THE AREA, COMPRISING ABOUT 25 ACRES, SHOULD BE PLANNED WITH BARBECUE PITS AND SITTING OUT AREAS.

BUT, MR. JONES SAID, THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE PLANS HAD SINCE BEEN HELD UP PENDING THE OUTCOME OF DISCUSSIONS ON THE PROVISION OF IMPROVED ACCESS TO THE AREA.

THE ONLY ACCESS AT PRESENT IS A NARROW CAGED FOOTBRIDGE FROM A REMOTE CORNER OF AH KUNG NGAM WHICH WOULD NOT BE CONVENIENT FOR THE PUBLIC, HE ADDED.

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WORK ON MTR-KCR INTERCHANGE AWAITING GREEN SIGNAL

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WORK ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF A MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY - KOWLOON CANTON RAILWAY INTERCHANGE STATION AT KOWLOON TONG WOULD GO AHEAD IF ELECTRIFICATION OF THE K.C.R. IS PROPOSED AND ACCEPTED, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM DR. THE HON. S.Y. CHUNG ON THE RESULT OF GOVERNMENT'S INVESTIGATION INTO THE FEASIBILITY OF A M.T.R. - K.C.R. INTERCHANGE STATION AT KOWLOON TONG.

MR. JONES SAID WHEN DR. CHUNG ASKED A SIMILAR QUESTION IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL JUST OVER A YEAR AGO, THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS HAD ADVISED THAT THE FEASIBILITY OF A K.C.R. - M.T.R. INTERCHANGE STATION AT KOWLOON TONG WAS DEPENDENT UPON OTHER INVESTIGATIONS WHICH WERE IN HAND, PARTICULARLY CONCERNING THE MODERNISATION OF THE K.C.R.

MR. JONES POINTED OUT THAT BECAUSE OF OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH THE STEEPNESS OF THE GRADIENT TO THE BEACON HILL TUNNEL, A STATION AT KOWLOON TONG AND A CONSEQUENT INTERCHANGE FACILITY WITH THE M.T.R. WILL ONLY BE FEASIBLE WITH ELECTRIFIED TRAINS.

HE SAID THAT A CONSULTANCY TO STUDY THE MODERNISATION AND POSSIBLE EXTENSION OF THE K.C.R. HAS BEEN COMMISSIONED AND THE CONSULTANTS HAVE BEEN AT WORK SINCE JANUARY THIS YEAR. THEY ARE EXPECTED TO REPORT IN THE AUTUMN AND THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS WILL INCLUDE ADVICE ON WHETHER, AND BY WHAT MEANS, THE K.C.R. SHOULD BE ELECTRIFIED.

ON THE OTHER HAND, THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CORPORATION IS PROCEEDING WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF ITS STATION AT KOWLOON TONG AND IT HAS MODIFIED THE DESIGN TO INCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY OF A CONNECTION WITH A K.C.R. STATION. THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO ALMOST COMPLETED ARRANGEMENTS FOR A FURTHER CONSULTANCY TO BE COMMISSIONED ON THE DESIGN OF THE K.C.R. STATION AND OF THE INTERCHANGE WITH THE M.T.R. ALONG WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SPACE OVER THE STATION.

MR. JONES SAID ALTHOUGH WE MUST AWAIT THE CONSULTANTS' REPORTS ON THESE POSSIBILITIES AND THEIR EVALUATION, HE BELIEVED THAT GIVEN THE EXPECTED GROWTH IN POPULATION IN SHA TIN NEW TOWN AND FURTHER UP THE LINE, THE ELECTRIFICATION OF A DOUBLE-TRACKED RAILWAY WILL PROVE TO BE WELL WORTH WHILE.

+IF SO, THE BUILDING OF THIS INTERCHANGE BETWEEN THE TWO RAILWAYS WILL BE A VERY IMPORTANT ADDITION TO OUR TRANSPORT SYSTEM, LINKING AS IT WILL THE NEW TOWN OF SHA TIN WITH WESTERN KOWLOON AND HONG KONG ISLAND IN ONE DIRECTION AND KWUN TONG IN THE OTHER.+ HE SAID.

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RECOMMENDATIONS ON LONG TERM NEEDS OF GOVERNMENT OFFICES
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THE PROPERTY ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HAS CONCLUDED THAT GOVERNMENT SHOULD BUILD ITS OWN OFFICES TO MEET LONG TERM REQUIREMENTS.

THIS WAS REVEALED TODAY BY THE SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, THE HON. JOSEPH HAMMOND, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO THE HON. T.S. LO'S QUESTION TABLED AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

BUT IN THE SHORTER TERM, IT IS CHEAPER TO LEASE THEM IN VIEW OF THE LARGE AMOUNT OF OFFICE ACCOMMODATION AT PRESENT AVAILABLE FOR RENTING AT REASONABLE PRICES, MR. HAMMOND ADDED.

HE SAID THAT THE COMMITTEE IN ITS STUDY OF THE LONG-TERM REQUIREMENTS OF PERMANENT OFFICE ACCOMMODATION IN THE CENTRAL AREA INCLUDING THAT OF THE FUTURE EXPANSION OF THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT HAS RECOMMENDED THE CONSTRUCTION OF A FURTHER LARGE BLOCK OF GOVERNMENT OFFICES.

+IT IS HOPED THAT A SUITABLE SITE WILL BECOME AVAILABLE IN THE VICTORIA BARRACKS AREA,+ MR. HAMMOND SAID.

THE COMMITTEE HAS ALSO MADE SEVERAL RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT THE RE-LOCATION OF CERTAIN DEPARTMENTS WHICH NEED TO BE CENTRALISED, REPLACED OR UNECONOMIC TO MAINTAIN. THESE INCLUDE :

- * THE COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY DEPARTMENT SHOULD BE RE-LOCATED IN LEASED ACCOMMODATION IN KOWLOON LATER THIS YEAR.
- * THE MARINE DEPARTMENT SHOULD BE RE-LOCATED IN A NEW GOVERNMENT-OWNED OFFICE BUILDING TO BE CONSTRUCTED AND COMPLETED IN 1981 ON A SITE NEAR THE GOVERNMENT PIERS AT RUMSEY STREET.
- * THE INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT SHOULD BE CENTRALISED UNDER ONE ROOF IN LEASED ACCOMMODATION BY 1979 IN CAUSEWAY BAY.
- * THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION SHOULD BE ACCOMMODATED IN TWO ADJACENT BUILDINGS -- HUTCHISON HOUSE AND THE MURRAY ROAD CARPARK BUILDING -- BEFORE THE END OF THIS YEAR.

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MEASURES TO MINIMISE ACCIDENTS IN KWAI CHUNG ROAD

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS ADOPTED SEVERAL MEASURES TO MINIMISE THE RISK OF FURTHER ACCIDENTS TO PEDESTRIANS IN KWAI CHUNG ROAD NEAR THE CONTAINER TERMINAL FLYOVER SINCE THE RECENT TRAGIC ACCIDENT THERE, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES SAID.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. S.L. CHEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, MR. JONES SAID THESE MEASURES COMPRISED INTENSIFIED POLICE ACTION AGAINST JAY-WALKERS= THE SETTING UP OF AN ANTI-DAZZLE FENCE ALONG THE CENTRAL DIVIDE OF THE ROAD= REMOVAL OF A RAILING AT THE EASTERN END OF THE FLYOVER TO ENABLE RESIDENTS OF LAI KING ESTATE TO GAIN ACCESS TO THE PEDESTRIAN FOOTBRIDGE ON THE FLYOVER BY MEANS OF A FLIGHT OF STEPS= AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW FOOTPATH TO LINK THE PEDESTRIAN FOOTBRIDGE ON THE FLYOVER WITH ANOTHER FLIGHT OF STEPS FROM LAI KING ESTATE.

HE SAID THE ANTI-DAZZLE FENCE, APART FROM ACTING AS A BARRIER AND THUS A FURTHER DETERRENT TO JAY-WALKERS, WOULD IMPROVE MOTORING SAFETY BY REDUCING HEADLIGHT GLARE. THE WORK WOULD BE COMPLETED IN ABOUT SIX WEEKS.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW FOOTPATH WOULD BE COMPLETED IN ABOUT FOUR WEEKS.

MR. JONES SAID THE EFFECT OF THE MEASURES TO REMOVE THE RAILING AND TO BUILD THE NEW FOOTPATH WOULD BE TO MAKE IT MUCH EASIER FOR RESIDENTS OF LAI KING ESTATE TO CROSS THAT BUSY ROAD BY MEANS OF THE FOOTBRIDGE.

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MARINE COURT TO INVESTIGATE HYDROFOIL-FERRY COLLISION

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A MARINE COURT WILL SHORTLY BE CONVENED TO INVESTIGATE FULLY THE COLLISION BETWEEN A HYDROFOIL AND A FERRY WHICH OCCURRED ON MARCH 2 THIS YEAR, THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON. GARTH THORNTON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM DR. THE HON. S.Y. CHUNG, MR. THORNTON SAID LEGAL ADVICE ORIGINALLY TENDERED ON THE COLLISION BETWEEN THE HYDROFOIL, FLYING ALBATROSS, AND THE FERRY, MAN TAK, WAS THAT A MARINE COURT WAS NOT WARRANTED BECAUSE A COMPREHENSIVE PRELIMINARY INQUIRY HAD ALREADY BEEN CONDUCTED BY THE MARINE DEPARTMENT.

+HOWEVER, FOLLOWING THE TABLING OF DR. CHUNG'S QUESTIONS AT THE LAST SITTING OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, MR. HOBLEY, HAS PERSONALLY CONSIDERED THE PAPERS, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE DIRECTOR OF MARINE, AND HAS ADVISED THAT A MARINE COURT IS LIKELY TO PRODUCE GREATER CERTAINTY AS TO SOME OF THE FACTS,+ MR. THORNTON EXPLAINED.

THE GOVERNOR, SIR MURRAY MACLEHOSE, HAD ACCEPTED THAT ADVICE AND A MARINE COURT WOULD BE SET UP.

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CODE OF PRACTICE FOR CINEMA OPERATORS PREFERABLE

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A CODE OF PRACTICE MIGHT BE PREFERABLE TO LEGISLATION REQUIRING FILM DISTRIBUTORS AND CINEMA PROPRIETORS TO STATE IN ALL ADVERTISEMENTS FOR FILMS WHETHER THEY HAVE BEEN SHORTENED, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON. DAVID JEAFFRESON SUGGESTED.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. ROGER LOBO IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, MR. JEAFFRESON SAID THERE MIGHT WELL BE PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES IN LEGISLATING THESE REQUIREMENTS.

HE SAID FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF +CONSUMER PROTECTION+ AND IN PRINCIPLE, CINEMA PROPRIETORS OUGHT TO TELL CONSUMERS THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEY HAVE VOLUNTARILY SHORTENED THE FILMS THEY ARE SHOWING.

HE PROPOSED TO REFER THE ISSUE TO THE CONSUMER COUNCIL WHICH IS THE APPROPRIATE BODY TO TALK WITH DISTRIBUTORS AND CINEMA PROPRIETORS.

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FREE MEDICAL TREATMENT FOR HK WAR VICTIMS

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO PROVIDE FREE MEDICAL TREATMENT TO PRISONERS OF WAR WHO FOUGHT IN THE DEFENCE OF HONG KONG IN 1941 AND CIVILIAN RESIDENTS WHO WERE IMPRISONED, OTHER THAN FOR COMMON CRIMINAL OFFENCES, AND TORTURED DURING THE OCCUPATION PERIOD. THE SPOUSE OF ANY ELIGIBLE PERSON WILL ALSO QUALIFY.

THIS WAS ANNOUNCED BY THE CHIEF SECRETARY, SIR DENYS ROBERTS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

SIR DENYS SAID FULL DETAILS OF THIS SCHEME WILL BE NOTIFIED FOR GENERAL INFORMATION IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE GOVERNMENT GAZETTE.

HE NOTED THAT THE DECISION WAS TAKEN AFTER THE DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES HAD EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT MORE THAN THREE YEARS OF CAPTIVITY, IN CONDITIONS IN WHICH THE VICTIM SUFFERED MALNUTRITION, ACUTE DISCOMFORT AND PHYSICAL AND MENTAL MALTREATMENT, ARE LIKELY TO HAVE DELETERIOUS EFFECT ON HEALTH, ESPECIALLY AS THE VICTIM GROWS OLDER.

SIR DENYS SAID: +I BELIEVE THAT MEMBERS WILL WELCOME THE PROVISION OF THIS ASSISTANCE TO THOSE WHO SUFFERED IN THE DEFENCE OF HONG KONG OR DURING ITS OCCUPATION. I HOPE THAT IT WILL SHOW THAT THEIR COURAGE AND THEIR SACRIFICES HAVE NOT BEEN FORGOTTEN.+

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IMPROVEMENTS TO SAI KUNG WATER SUPPLY

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THE WATER SUPPLY DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM ON SAI KUNG PENINSULA WILL BE EXPANDED IN THREE STAGES, THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, THE HON. DAVID MCDONALD TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM DR. THE HON. HENRY HU WHO ASKED WHAT IMPROVEMENTS HAD BEEN MADE TO THE SUPPLY SYSTEM TO SAI KUNG SINCE THE UMELCO VISIT IN OCTOBER LAST YEAR.

MR. MCDONALD SAID THAT APPROVAL WAS GIVEN IN THE FIRST PUBLIC WORKS SUB-COMMITTEE'S REVIEW THIS YEAR FOR A WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM FOR THE AREA BETWEEN FEI NGO SHAN AND RAZOR HILL.

THIS SCHEME, WHICH INCLUDES CONSTRUCTION OF A SERVICE RESERVOIR, INSTALLATION OF PUMPING PLANT AND LAYING OF MAINS, SHOULD PROVIDE SUPPLY TO THE AREA INCLUDING TSENG LAN SHUE BY THE LATTER HALF OF 1979.

MR. MCDONALD SAID APPROVAL WAS ALSO BEING SOUGHT FOR AN INTERIM SCHEME TO COPE WITH THE INCREASED DEMAND GENERATED BY VARIOUS RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SAI KUNG UP TO SHA KOK MEI AND THE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNED DEVELOPMENT IN TUI MIN HOI.

THIS SCHEME FOR THE DUPLICATION OF TRUNK MAINS AND AN EXTENSION OF THE SYSTEM HAS BEEN RECOMMENDED FOR INCLUSION IN CATEGORY A OF THE PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME.

A LONGER TERM SCHEME WHICH WILL NECESSITATE THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW TREATMENT WORKS ON THE SAI KUNG PENINSULA IS PLANNED FOR COMPLETION IN 1981.

THIS SCHEME WILL PROVIDE A MORE COMPREHENSIVE DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM TO CATER FOR FUTURE DISTRICT DEMAND, AND FOR VILLAGES SUCH AS TSO WO HANG AND TAI MONG TSAI WHICH ARE LOCATED BEYOND THE ECONOMIC EXPANSION LIMIT OF THE INTERIM IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES FOR SAI KUNG.

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MERIT TRIPS FOR GOVERNMENT STAFF

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THE SECRETARY FOR CIVIL SERVICE, THE HON. JOSEPH HAMMOND SAID A TOTAL OF 102 LOCAL CIVIL SERVANTS HAVE BENEFITED FROM THE MERIT TRIP SCHEME DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. LEUNG TAT-SHING, HE SAID MOST OF THESE OFFICERS SELECTED FOR THE MERIT TRIPS HAVE COME FROM THE MIDDLE AND LOWER LEVELS OF THE CIVIL SERVICE.

HE ALSO NOTED THAT THE MERIT TRIP SCHEME WAS LAST ENLARGED IN 1974 TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF TRIPS AWARDED EACH YEAR FROM 12 TO 30 AND THERE ARE NO PLANS AT THE MOMENT TO ENLARGE THE SCHEME ANY FURTHER.

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HELP OFFER TO URBAN PIG-KEEPERS

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THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT OFFERS AND WILL CONTINUE TO OFFER ASSISTANCE SHOULD PIG-KEEPERS OPT FOR RELOCATION FROM THE URBAN AREA, BUT UP TO DATE NO REQUESTS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED, THE DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES, THE HON. EDWARD NICHOLS SAID TODAY.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR. NICHOLS SAID THOUGH PROPOSALS TO RELOCATE PIG-KEEPERS IN THE URBAN AREA IN ALTERNATIVE SITES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES HAVE BEEN PERIODICALLY DISCUSSED OVER A CONSIDERABLE PERIOD OF YEARS, THERE ARE BASICALLY TWO OBSTACLES TO THE FORMULATION OF ANY LONG TERM PLAN.

THEY ARE THE PROBLEM OF FINDING SUITABLE SITES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES AND A MARKED RELUCTANCE ON THE PART OF THE PIG-KEEPERS TO REMOVE FROM THE URBAN AREA.

+IT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED THAT IN THE MAJORITY OF CASES, PIG-KEEPING IS NOT THE SOLE FORM OF FAMILY INCOME, AND THAT SUCH PERSONS ADDITIONALLY HAVE STRONG FAMILY AND SOCIAL TIES WHICH THEY DO NOT WISH TO SEVER.

+IN ALL CASES, THEREFORE, THE PREFERENCE HAS BEEN TO ACCEPT COMPENSATION, CLOSE DOWN PIG-KEEPING ACTIVITIES AND REMAIN IN THE VICINITY,+ SAID MR. NICHOLS.

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LAW TO CONTROL SPEED-BOATS NEAR BEACHES

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LEGISLATION IS BEING DRAFTED TO MAKE IT AN OFFENCE FOR ANY VESSEL TO TRAVEL AT MORE THAN 5 KNOTS, WITHIN 150 FT. OF THE BUOYS WHICH MARK THE BOUNDARIES OF SWIMMING AREAS AT GAZETTED BEACHES.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE CHIEF SECRETARY, SIR DENYS ROBERTS, AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. PETER C. WONG ABOUT THE PROTECTION TO SWIMMERS FROM SPEED-BOATS.

SIR DENYS ALSO REVEALED, IN RESPONSE TO ANOTHER QUESTION BY MR. WONG, THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONSIDERING A RECOMMENDATION MAKING IT COMPULSORY FOR WATER-SKIERS TO WEAR LIFE JACKETS IN THE INTERESTS OF SAFETY.

THE COMMITTEE ON BOATS AND YACHTS - A COMMITTEE WHICH INCLUDES UNOFFICIALS AND ADVISES THE DIRECTOR OF MARINE -- HAD RECENTLY RECOMMENDED THIS MEASURE, SIR DENYS SAID.

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'JUMBO' PASSPORTS ISSUED TO FREQUENT TRAVELLERS
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APPLICANTS FOR A 94 PAGE (JUMBO) PASSPORT MUST SATISFY THE DIRECTOR OF IMMIGRATION THAT THEY NEED TO TRAVEL FREQUENTLY AND WOULD FILL THE 30 PAGES OF A STANDARD PASSPORT SUFFICIENTLY QUICKLY, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON. LEWIS DAVIES, SAID TODAY.

HE WAS ANSWERING A QUESTION BY DR. THE HON. S.Y. CHUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON WHETHER SUCH PASSPORTS ARE ISSUED TO APPLICANTS WHO HAVE WITHIN THE PRECEDING TWO YEARS USED UP ALL PAGES OF AN EXISTING PASSPORT.

MR. DAVIES SAID THIS WAS NOT THE CASE AND IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT AN INDIVIDUAL APPLICANT MIGHT HAVE GAINED A MISLEADING IMPRESSION FROM AN ENQUIRY.

HE POINTED OUT THAT 1,025 OF THE 'JUMBO' PASSPORTS HAD BEEN ISSUED AND IT WAS INTENDED TO INCLUDE REFERENCE TO THEIR AVAILABILITY WHEN APPLICATION FORMS ARE NEXT REPRINTED.

+THEY WILL NORMALLY BE AVAILABLE ON DEMAND FOR THOSE WHO TRAVEL FREQUENTLY,+ HE SAID.

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STUDY ON PLB SPEED LIMIT

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THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY HE AGREED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD LOOK INTO THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THERE SHOULD BE A SPEED LIMIT FOR PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES.

HE SAID HE HAS ASKED THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT TO EXAMINE THE QUESTION. AFTER HE HAS CONSIDERED THE COMMISSIONER'S ADVICE, AND IN CONSULTATION WITH THE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE, THE OUTCOME OF THE STUDY WOULD BE MADE KNOWN.

MR. JONES WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. S.L. CHEN ON THE IMPOSITION OF A SPEED LIMIT ON PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES OPERATING IN AREAS WHERE THERE IS NO SPEED LIMIT FOR VEHICLES OTHER THAN PUBLIC OMNIBUSES AND GOODS VEHICLES IN EXCESS OF TWO TONS.

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MORE PERMANENT STUDY ROOMS FOR STUDENTS

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THE GOVERNMENT WILL TRY TO MAKE AVAILABLE MORE PERMANENT STUDY ROOM PLACES FOR STUDENTS IF SUCH A NEED IS ESTABLISHED.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY, SIR DENYS ROBERTS, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, POINTED OUT THAT THERE ARE ABOUT 12,000 PERMANENT STUDY ROOM PLACES AVAILABLE IN THE URBAN AREAS.

+AS AN EXPERIMENT, A FURTHER 2,600 PLACES WERE PROVIDED IN GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOLS FROM MARCH TO JULY,+ HE SAID.

THE EXPERIMENT, SIR DENYS ADDED, WOULD BE EVALUATED NEXT MONTH, IN AN EFFORT TO ASSESS THE DEMAND FOR PERMANENT PLACES.

+IF A NEED FOR MORE PERMANENT PLACES IS ESTABLISHED, THE GOVERNMENT WILL TRY TO MEET IT,+ HE SAID.

SIR DENYS ALSO NOTED THAT SINCE THESE ROOMS CATER FOR A WIDE RANGE OF STUDENTS, OF VARYING STANDARDS AND AGES AND FROM DIFFERENT SCHOOLS, A TUTORIAL SERVICE FOR THEM WOULD BE IMPRACTICABLE.

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WHITE PAPER ON REHABILITATION SERVICES

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THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, THE HON. ERIC HO, ASSURED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY THAT THE POLICY STATEMENT ON REHABILITATION SERVICES WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR DEBATE EARLY IN THE NEXT SESSION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING.

MR. HO, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM DR. THE HON. HARRY FANG REGARDING THE WHITE PAPER ON THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF REHABILITATION SERVICES IN HONG KONG, EXPRESSED REGRET THAT IT WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE TO PUBLISH THE WHITE PAPER DURING THE CURRENT SESSION.

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CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY IN HEALTHY STATE

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HONG KONG'S BUILDING INDUSTRY IS IN A VERY HEALTHY STATE, WITH PROSPECTS OF A CONSTRUCTION BOOM, THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, MR. DAVID MCDONALD, SAID TONIGHT.

+THERE IS VIRTUALLY FULL EMPLOYMENT, AND THE AMOUNT OF CONSTRUCTION WORK WHICH IS PLANNED TO BE CARRIED OUT OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS IN BOTH THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS HOLDS OUT THE PROSPECT OF A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR CONTRACTORS,+ HE SAID.

INDEED THE VOLUME OF WORK PLANNED WAS SUCH THAT IT WOULD POSE A CHALLENGE TO CONTRACTORS TO HANDLE IT ALL.

BUT HE SAID HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT CONTRACTORS COULD MEET THE CHALLENGE.

MR. MCDONALD WAS SPEAKING AT THE ANNUAL DINNER HELD BY THE BUILDING CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION TO MARK THE BIRTHDAY OF LU PAN, THE PATRON SAINT OF THE BUILDING TRADE.

HE SAID THAT A POSSIBLE PROBLEM NOW FACING THE INDUSTRY WAS GETTING SUFFICIENT LABOUR TO MEET GROWING DEMANDS.

HOWEVER HE SAID HE BELIEVED THAT UNSKILLED WORKERS WHO HAD MOVED OUT OF THE INDUSTRY INTO THE FACTORIES WHEN TIMES WERE HARD FOR BUILDERS A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO WERE NOW BEING ATTRACTED BACK BY PROSPECTS OF A CONSTRUCTION BOOM.

HE ADDED THAT A METHOD OF COPING WITH THE POSSIBLE PROBLEM OF A LABOUR SHORTAGE WAS THE USE OF MORE SOPHISTICATED CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT.

HE POINTED OUT THAT LU PAN WAS WELL KNOWN AS AN INNOVATOR, AND HAD BEEN THE FIRST TO WELCOME NEW METHODS.

+IN HONG KONG TODAY WE HAVE THE GREATEST COLLECTION OF MECHANICAL PLANT WHICH HAS EVER BEEN SEEN HERE,+ HE SAID.

+SOME IS, OF COURSE, THE VERY SPECIALISED EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY, BUT MUCH OTHER EQUIPMENT IS IN THE HANDS OF FAR-SIGHTED CONTRACTORS WHO HAVE FORESEEN THE VOLUME OF CONSTRUCTION WORK WHICH IS LIKELY TO BE AVAILABLE IN THE COMING YEARS -- AND HAVE ANTICIPATED THE NEED FOR A GREATER DEGREE OF MECHANISATION IF CONSTRUCTION TARGETS ARE TO BE MET.+

MR. MCDONALD POINTED OUT THAT THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW METHODS DID NOT LESSEN THE NEED FOR CRAFTSMEN TRAINED IN THE TRADITIONAL SKILLS, AND HE WARMLY WELCOMED THE RECENT COMPLETION OF THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY TRAINING CENTRE, WHICH WILL SHORTLY ENROL ITS FIRST INTAKE OF TRAINEES.

+EACH YEAR SOME 660 SCHOOL LEAVERS WILL BE GIVEN ONE YEAR'S BASIC TRAINING IN A PARTICULAR TRADE AND WILL THEN BE PLACED IN EMPLOYMENT WITH CONTRACTORS,+ HE SAID.

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NOTING THAT THE SCHEME IS FINANCED BY CONTRACTORS BY WAY OF A LEVY ON THE VALUE OF CONSTRUCTION WORKS, MR. MCDONALD SAID IT REFLECTED CREDIT ON CONTRACTORS THAT THERE HAS BEEN VERY LITTLE EVASION OF THE LEVY.

+PERHAPS YOU HAVE RECALLED THAT WHEN LU PAN, WHO WAS ALSO A TEACHER, ONCE SECRETLY GAVE INSPIRATION TO A YOUNG APPRENTICE, HE DEMANDED A REWARD NOT FROM THE APPRENTICE BUT FROM HIS MASTER WHO, AFTER ALL, WAS THE ONE WHO BENEFITTED MOST FROM THE APPRENTICE'S NEW SKILL.+

MR. MCDONALD CONCLUDED HIS SPEECH TO THE CONTRACTORS BY WISHING THEM A YEAR +IN WHICH GOOD WORKMANSHIP BRINGS ITS JUST AND PROPER REWARD.+

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SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISION APPROVED
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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) APPROVED SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISION AMOUNTING TO \$292.4 MILLION FOR THE FOURTH QUARTER OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR 1976-77.

IN MOVING THE MOTION, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE POINTED OUT THAT THE SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISION COVERED BY THE SCHEDULE HAD BROUGHT THE TOTAL SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISION APPROVED FOR THE YEAR TO \$522.3 MILLION.

+OF THIS SUM, \$313.9 MILLION HAS BEEN OFFSET BY SAVINGS UNDER OTHER SUBHEADS OF EXPENDITURE, OR BY THE FREEZING OF FUNDS UNDER HEAD 50 MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES SUBHEAD 100 ADDITIONAL COMMITMENTS. THUS THE NET INCREASE IN EXPENDITURE APPROVED FOR THE YEAR IS \$238.4 MILLION,+ HE SAID.

MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID THAT THE FINANCE COMMITTEE HAD ALREADY APPROVED ALL ITEMS IN THE SCHEDULE.

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DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION BACK FROM LEAVE
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MR. R.E. DOWNING, DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION, HAD RESUMED HIS OFFICE ON RETURNING TO HONG KONG AFTER A TWO-MONTH ABSENCE.

BEFORE TAKING LEAVE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, MR. DOWNING ATTENDED THE FIVE-DAY AOCI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS CONFERENCE IN ROME, VISITED A NUMBER OF EUROPEAN AIRPORTS AND ATTENDED THE PARIS AIR SHOW.

MR. B.D. KEEP, WHO HAS BEEN ACTING AS DIRECTOR PROCEEDED ON LEAVE ON MR. DOWNING'S RETURN.

MR. J.A. HALLAM, CONTINUES TO ACT AS DEPUTY DIRECTOR DURING MR. KEEP'S ABSENCE.

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BILLS PASSED
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THREE BILLS PASSED THEIR COMMITTEE STAGE AND THIRD READING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THEY ARE THE DANGEROUS DRUGS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1977, THE SUMMARY OFFENCES (AMENDMENT) (NO. 3) BILL 1977, AND AN UNOFFICIAL MEMBER'S BILL, THE ZETLAND HALL TRUSTEES INCORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1977.

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