



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1983

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AMENDMENTS TO DTC, BANKING BILLS MOVED
* * * *

FIVE AMENDMENTS TO THE DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1983 AND THE BANKING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1983 WERE MOVED BY THE HON BILL BROWN AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY.

THE BILLS HAD BEEN STUDIED BY THE LEGCO MONETARY POLICY GROUP WHICH HAD ALSO HELD DISCUSSIONS WITH THE ADMINISTRATION ON THE REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED BY UMELCO.

MR BROWN IS THE CONVENER OF THE GROUP WHICH COMPRISES THE HON CHARLES YEUNG, THE HON WONG PO-YAN, THE HON STEPHEN CHEONG, THE HON MARIA TAM AND THE HON PETER POON.

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE OF THE BILLS, MR BROWN STRESSED THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO REAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST IN HIS ROLES AS THE CONVENER OF THE GROUP AND AS AN EXECUTIVE WITH BOTH A BANK AND DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES SINCE THE FINANCIAL COMMUNITY GENERALLY SUPPORTED THE AIMS OF THE BILLS AND HAD NO OBJECTIONS TO ANY OF THE PRINCIPLES INVOLVED.

+ALTHOUGH BANKS AND DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES RAISED NO OBJECTIONS TO ANY OF THE PRINCIPLES INVOLVED IN THESE BILLS, OTHER MEMBERS OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY DID HAVE SOME RESERVATIONS,+ HE ADDED.

HE WENT ON TO GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF THE AMENDMENTS THAT HE WOULD BE PROPOSING AT THE COMMITTEE STAGE.

HE MENTIONED THE STRONG OBJECTIONS RAISED BY THE HONG KONG SOCIETY OF ACCOUNTANTS ON BEHALF OF AUDITORS THAT THE AMENDMENTS PROPOSED UNDER CLAUSES 17 AND 13 RESPECTIVELY OF THE AMENDMENT BILLS WOULD REPRESENT A BREACH OF THE NORMAL AUDITOR-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP.

+THE SUBJECT CLAUSES PUT THE AUDITOR IN THE DIFFICULT POSITION OF BEING UNDER A DUTY TO REPORT TO THE COMMISSIONER ON MATTERS WHICH MAY INVOLVE QUESTIONS OF OPINION, AND IN REGARD TO POSSIBLE CONTRAVENTIONS OF THE SPECIFIED PROVISIONS OF THE ORDINANCES THE AUDITOR MAY NOT BE QUALIFIED OR IN A POSITION TO DECIDE ON WHAT IS OFTEN A QUESTION OF LAW,+ MR BROWN SAID.

HE SAID HE WAS HAPPY THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAD AGREED TO MODIFY THE ORIGINAL REQUIREMENTS.

+THE REVISED AMENDMENTS PROVIDE THAT THE COMMISSIONER MAY REQUIRE AT ANY TIME FOR RETURNS TO HIM FROM FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, SUBMITTED UNDER SECTIONS 20(3) AND 38(2A) OF THE RESPECTIVE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCES, TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY A CERTIFICATE SIGNED BY THE AUDITOR NOT ONLY TO THE EFFECT THAT THE RETURNS ARE CORRECTLY COMPILED FROM THE BOOKS AND RECORDS, BUT ALSO THAT IN THE OPINION OF THE AUDITOR THERE IS NO APPARENT CONTRAVENTION OR OTHER MATTERS WHICH MATERIALLY AFFECTED THE FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE FINANCIAL INSTITUTION,+ HE EXPLAINED.

/THE SECOND

THE SECOND AMENDMENT CONCERNS THE DUTY OF CERTAIN STATED PARTIES TO PRODUCE ALL BOOKS, PAPERS OR INFORMATION RELEVANT TO THE INVESTIGATIONS TO AN INSPECTOR APPOINTED BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY UNDER SECTION 39 AND 57B RESPECTIVELY OF THE AMENDMENT BILLS.

THE STATED PARTIES INCLUDE ANY AGENT OF A COMPANY UNDER INVESTIGATION, AND THE TERM AGENT IS SUBSEQUENTLY DEFINED AS INCLUDING SOLICITORS.

MR BROWN SAID, +WHILE IT IS QUITE PROPER THAT A SOLICITOR SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO PRODUCE BOOKS AND PAPERS WHICH HAVE BEEN PREPARED IN THE COURSE OF THE BUSINESS OF THE FINANCIAL INSTITUTION, IT IS THOUGHT THIS SHOULD NOT EXTEND TO INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO THE SOLICITOR BY HIS CLIENT.+

HE SAID THAT HE WOULD THEREFORE MOVE AMENDMENTS TO INCORPORATE IN THE BILLS A PROVISION SIMILAR TO SECTION 131(1) OF THE SECURITIES ORDINANCE WHICH READS:

+AN INSPECTOR SHALL NOT REQUIRE DISCLOSURE BY A SOLICITOR OR COUNSEL OF ANY PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATION, WHETHER ORAL OR WRITTEN, MADE TO OR BY HIM IN THAT CAPACITY, EXCEPT AS REGARDS THE NAME AND ADDRESS OF HIS CLIENT.+

THE THIRD AMENDMENT DEALS WITH THE DEFINITION OF +RELATIVE+.

MR BROWN SAID WHILE HE WELCOMED THE ATTEMPT TO DEFINE THE TERM IN THE AMENDMENT BILLS, THE DEFINITION AS PROPOSED WAS TOO WIDE AND WOULD REQUIRE FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS TO ENQUIRE INTO THE PERSONAL AFFAIRS OF THEIR CUSTOMERS BEYOND WHAT WAS EITHER REASONABLE OR PRACTICABLE.

HE WOULD THEREFORE PROPOSE TO DELETE SUB-SECTION (C) (+ANY RELATIVE BY AFFINITY OR CONSANGUINITY WHO IS ONE OF THE HOUSEHOLD+) IN THE DEFINITION OF RELATIVE APPEARING IN CLAUSES 11(D) AND 8(B) RESPECTIVELY OF THE AMENDMENT BILLS.

MR BROWN ADDED THAT UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS HAD ACCEPTED THE ADMINISTRATION'S VIEW THAT IT WAS NECESSARY FOR THE DEFINITION OF +RELATIVE+ TO INCLUDE ANY ASCENDANT OR DESCENDANT AND THE SPOUSE AND THE PARENTS, BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF THE SPOUSE OF ANY SUCH ASCENDANT OR DESCENDANT AND ON THE BASIS THE ORDINANCES PROVIDED THAT DUE DILIGENCE SHOULD BE A GOOD DEFENCE IN THE EVENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS CONTRAVENED THIS RESTRICTION.

IN CONNECTION WITH LIMITATION ON ADVANCE TO DIRECTORS AND THEIR ASSOCIATED INTERESTS, MR BROWN SAID THAT HE WOULD PROPOSE AMENDMENTS SO THAT ADVANCES COVERED BY BANK GUARANTEES WOULD NOT BE SUBJECTED TO LIMITATION.

REFERRING TO THE CONCERN THAT TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS SHOULD BE PRESCRIBED UNDER CLAUSES 11 AND 8 OF THE RESPECTIVE AMENDMENT BILLS, MR BROWN SAID, +AMENDMENTS WILL BE PROPOSED, ACCORDINGLY, TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE PROVISIONS OF THESE CLAUSES WILL NOT APPLY TO PRE-EXISTING CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS ENTERED INTO PRIOR TO THE BILLS' COMMENCEMENT.+

+CONCERN HAS ALSO BEEN EXPRESSED REGARDING THE ADEQUACY OF THE TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENT PRESCRIBED IN CLAUSES 9(B) AND 6(2A) RESPECTIVELY, BUT WE ARE SATISFIED THE COMMISSIONER WILL INTERPRET THESE IN A SENSIBLE MANNER AND THE THE PROVISIONS AS THEY STAND WILL IN PRACTICE MEET THE CIRCUMSTANCES,+ HE ADDED.

MR BROWN THEN RAISED TWO MATTERS WHICH WERE NOT SUBJECT TO AMENDMENTS BUT ON WHICH THE ADMINISTRATION HAD PROMISED CERTAIN ASSURANCES.

ON THE PROPOSED POWERS FOR THE COMMISSIONER WHERE MONEYS HAVE BEEN PLACED WITH A FOREIGN BANK, HE SAID, +I AM PERSONALLY HAPPY WITH THE PROPOSAL BUT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF THE ADMINISTRATION COULD RECONFIRM THAT THE COMMISSIONER WOULD NOT NORMALLY USE SUCH POWERS IN RESPECT OF BANKS WHICH ARE ADEQUATELY SUPERVISED IN THEIR OWN COUNTRY.+

THE SECOND POINT CONCERNS THE DEFINITION OF A +NON-LISTED COMPANY+.

MR BROWN SAID THAT AT PRESENT IT WAS NOT NECESSARY FOR THE REFERENCE TO THE STOCK EXCHANGES IN HONG KONG TO BE EXTENDED TO INCLUDE STOCK EXCHANGES RECOGNISED IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD DUE TO THE RESTRICTIVE DEFINITION OF +COMPANY+ IN THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCES.

+IN THE EVENT, HOWEVER, THAT THIS RESTRICTIVE DEFINITION - WHICH FOR CLARIFICATION I WOULD MENTION INCLUDES BROADLY SPEAKING ONLY COMPANIES INCORPORATED IN HONG KONG OR INCORPORATED ELSEWHERE BUT WHICH HAVE COMPLIED WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE HONG KONG COMPANIES ORDINANCES - IS CHANGED, THEN IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THE ADMINISTRATION WILL RE-EXAMINE THE NEED TO EXTEND THE REFERENCE TO STOCK EXCHANGES TO INCLUDE SPECIFIED OTHER EXCHANGES OVERSEAS.

+THIS MAY SOUND PEDANTIC BUT A NUMBER OF COMPANIES WHO USE HONG KONG AS A FINANCIAL CENTRE FOR THEIR REGIONAL ACTIVITIES WOULD FACE PRACTICAL PROBLEM IN THE EVENT LIMITATIONS WERE PUT ON THEIR TRANSACTIONS WITH RELATED PUBLIC COMPANIES IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD,+ MR BROWN SAID.

HE ALSO REFERRED TO THE AMENDMENTS TO BE MOVED BY THE ADMINISTRATION IN REGARD TO HIRE PURCHASE AND CONDITIONAL SALES AGREEMENTS, LENDING TO SUCH PUBLIC STATUTORY BODIES AS THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY MAY DESIGNATE AND LETTERS OF COMFORT PROVIDED TO THE COMMISSIONER.

HE SAID THAT UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS HAD ALSO CONSIDERED THESE ADDITIONAL AMENDMENTS, PARTICULARLY THOSE DEALING WITH LETTERS OF COMFORT FOR THESE HAD BEEN THE SUBJECT OF REPRESENTATIONS FROM SOME AFFECTED DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES.

MR BROWN ADDED THAT THE LEGCO MONETARY POLICY GROUP HAD CONSIDERED THE AMENDMENTS RELATING TO LETTERS OF COMFORT AND AGREED WITH THE ADMINISTRATION THAT AS BANKS WERE GENERALLY SUBJECTED BY THEIR SUPERVISORY AUTHORITIES TO THE SPECIAL SUPERVISION RELEVANT TO BANKING, IT WAS APPROPRIATE FOR THEM TO BE SUITABLE ISSUERS OF LETTERS OF COMFORT.

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+THESE AMENDMENTS, THEREFORE, TOGETHER WITH THE OTHER TO BE PROPOSED BY THE ADMINISTRATION ARE CONSIDERED SENSIBLE MEASURES AND THEY HAVE OUR SUPPORT,+ HE ADDED.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR JOHN BREMRIDGE, WELCOMED THE AMENDMENTS PROPOSED BY MR BROWN, THANKING HIM AND OTHER UNOFFICIALS FOR THEIR CONSIDERATION TO THE BILLS AND TO THE MANY REPRESENTATIONS MADE.

SIR JOHN ALSO CONFIRMED THAT EXCEPT IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES, THE COMMISSIONER WOULD NOT EXERCISE HIS NEWLY CONFERRED AUTHORITY TO LIMIT PLACEMENTS BY BANKS OR DTC'S WITH FOREIGN BANKS, IN RESPECT OF ANY FOREIGN BANK WHICH HE CONSIDERED TO BE ADEQUATELY SUPERVISED BY THE RELEVANT AUTHORITY IN ITS PLACE OF INCORPORATION.

HE ADDED THAT SHOULD THE ADMINISTRATION IN THE FUTURE PROPOSE ANY CHANGES TO THE DEFINITION OF A COMPANY IN THE TWO PRINCIPAL ORDINANCES, IT WOULD CAREFULLY EXAMINE THE NEED FOR CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS ELSEWHERE IN THE ORDINANCES, NOT LEAST IN RESPECT OF NON-LISTED COMPANIES.

SIR JOHN ALSO SPOKE ON VARIOUS AMENDMENTS TO THE TWO BILLS WHICH HE MOVED TODAY.

UNDER PRESENT ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS SOME DTC'S AND BANKS HAVE IN EFFECT BEEN ALLOWED TO LEND WITHOUT LIMIT TO A SINGLE CUSTOMER OR SINGLE CUSTOMER GROUP.

THIS HAS BEEN BASED ON THE STRENGTH OF A LETTER OF COMFORT FROM ITS PARENT, BY VIRTUE OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR HISTORICAL REASONS REGARDING THE LETTER OF COMFORT AS AN ACCEPTABLE FORM OF GUARANTEE.

SIR JOHN POINTED OUT THAT THE AMENDMENTS MOVED BY HIM WOULD, HOWEVER, ENABLE THE COMMISSIONER TO RAISE THE LIMIT ON LENDING TO SINGLE CUSTOMERS OR GROUPS BEYOND 25 PER CENT OF CAPITAL AND RESERVES, IF THE COMMISSIONER IS IN POSSESSION OF A LETTER OF COMFORT WHICH CONFORMS TO CERTAIN CRITERIA.

ONE OF THESE CRITERIA WOULD BE THAT THE LETTER MUST BE ISSUED BY A BANK.

IN ADDITION, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY AS A MATTER OF ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICE WOULD REQUIRE THE COMMISSIONER TO DISCUSS WITH THE SECRETARY FOR MONETARY AFFAIRS ALL PROPOSALS TO SET A LIMIT HIGHER THAN 25 PER CENT.

+CONSEQUENTLY THERE WILL BE AN END TO THE PRESENT SITUATION WHEREBY A BANK OR DTC CAN, UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF A LETTER OF COMFORT, LEND AS MUCH AS IT LIKES TO SINGLE CUSTOMERS.

+THIS IS AN OPEN-ENDED CAPABILITY WHICH HAS LED TO A NUMBER OF SERIOUS PROBLEMS, EVEN THOUGH DEPOSITORS' INTERESTS MAY HAVE BEEN SAFEGUARDED,+ SIR JOHN EXPLAINED.

/SIR JOHN

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SIR JOHN ALSO PROPOSED TWO OTHER AMENDMENTS, BOTH PROMPTED BY REPRESENTATIONS.

ONE WILL ENSURE THAT A BANK OR DTC WILL NOT BE RESTRICTED IN THE EXTENT TO WHICH IT MAY LEND UNDER HIRE PURCHASE OR CONDITIONAL SALE AGREEMENTS SOLELY BECAUSE THERE IS A SINGLE GUARANTOR.

THE SECOND WILL ALLOW THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO EXEMPT SPECIFIED PUBLIC STATUTORY CORPORATIONS FROM THE LIMITATION OR LENDING BY A BANK TO A NON-LISTED COMPANY WHICH HAS A DIRECTOR IN COMMON WITH THAT BANK.

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SELF CONTROL PREFERABLE: SIR JOHN
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INTERNAL SELF-CONTROL IS MUCH TO BE PREFERRED TO FURTHER LEGISLATION, WHICH IS A FINAL STEP ALWAYS TO BE HELD IN ABEYANCE AND USED ONLY IF OTHER MEASURES DO NOT PROVE SUCCESSFUL, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR JOHN BREMRIDGE, SAID TODAY.

SIR JOHN WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LYDIA DUNN, AS TO WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WAS SATISFIED WITH THE STANDARD OF AUDITING IN HONG KONG -- +IN THE LIGHT OF SOME RECENT COMPANY FAILURES, WHICH MIGHT HAVE INVOLVED THE FALSIFICATION OR INADEQUACIES OF ACCOUNTS.+

SIR JOHN SAID THAT THE HONG KONG SOCIETY OF ACCOUNTANTS, IN ITS LAST ANNUAL REPORT, EXPRESSED GREAT CONCERN ABOUT COMMENTS IN THE MEDIA IMPLYING THAT AUDITORS MAY HAVE BEEN NEGLIGENT IN CERTAIN CASES IN WHICH COMPANIES ENGAGED IN PROPERTY SPECULATION AND FINANCE HAD COLLAPSED IN SPECTACULAR FASHION.

IN ADDITION TO ITS INTERNAL REVIEW, THE COUNCIL WAS DETERMINED TO EMPHASISE THE PROFESSIONALISM OF MEMBERS, THE REPORT POINTED OUT.

SIR JOHN SAID HE SHARED THE CONCERN OF THE RESPONSIBLE COUNCIL, WHOM HE HELD IN HIGH REGARD. +I WISH THEM WELL IN THE EXERCISE OF THEIR DETERMINATION, WHICH I SHALL OBSERVE WITH GREAT INTEREST,+ HE ADDED.

SIR JOHN SAID HE DID NOT INTEND TO GENERALISE FROM ONE OR TWO PARTICULAR INCIDENTS, AS THIS WOULD BE +UNFAIR, MISLEADING AND QUITE DETRIMENTAL TO HONG KONG+.

+BUT THERE DO APPEAR TO ME ARGUABLY TO HAVE BEEN ISOLATED LAPSES BELOW THE HIGH STANDARDS THAT THE COMMUNITY RIGHTLY RESPECTS -- AND INDEED MUST REQUIRE.

+THERE MAY OF COURSE ALSO BE LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM THE FORTHCOMING INSPECTORS' REPORTS INTO THE AFFAIRS OF EDA AND CARRIAN,+ HE SAID.

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COURT DECISION ON JAILING OF DEBTORS PROPOSED
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THE ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLE CONTAINED IN THE DEBTORS (ARREST AND IMPRISONMENT) BILL 1983 IS THAT IN THE FUTURE NO CIVIL DEBTOR WILL BE IMPRISONED WITHOUT A COURT ORDER, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON MICHAEL THOMAS, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, MR THOMAS SAID:
+I BELIEVE STRONGLY THAT IT IS FUNDAMENTALLY WRONG THAT DEBTORS SHOULD BE SENT TO PRISON AT THE MERE BEHEST OF JUDGMENT CREDITORS.+

MR THOMAS SAID THAT DEVELOPMENTS AND LEGAL UNCERTAINTIES THAT HAVE BEEN AIRD IN THE COURTS MADE IT URGENT THAT FRESH LEGISLATION BE BROUGHT FORWARD.

+THE FIGURES SHOW THAT ABOUT HALF THE DEBTORS WHO GO TO PRISON ARE THERE FOR BETWEEN TWO WEEKS AND TWO MONTHS. ALTHOUGH THE COURT MAY RELEASE THEM IF THE JUDGMENT CREDITOR IS UNABLE TO SHOW THAT THE DEBTOR'S INABILITY TO PAY IS ATTRIBUTABLE TO UNJUSTIFIABLE EXTRAVAGANCE, WILFUL CONCEALMENT OR REMOVAL OF HIS PROPERTIES OR OTHER ACT OF BAD FAITH, THERE ARE SERIOUS DELAYS IN PRACTICE IN OBTAINING A RELEASE AND THERE ARE PUNITIVE ELEMENTS IN THIS PROCEDURE WHICH ARE INAPPROPRIATE IN THIS CONTEXT,+ HE SAID.

MR THOMAS SAID THAT THE PROCEDURES PROPOSED IN THE CASE OF JUDGMENT DEBTORS WILL ENABLE JUDGMENT CREDITORS TO OBTAIN A SUMMONS OR, IN APPROPRIATE CASES, AN ORDER FOR THE ARREST OF A CIVIL DEBTOR TO SECURE HIS ATTENDANCE BEFORE A JUDGE FOR AN EXAMINATION. AT THAT HEARING THE DEBTOR WILL BE REQUIRED TO DISCLOSE HIS ASSETS AND EXPLAIN HIS CIRCUMSTANCES, GIVE FULL DISCOVERY OF HIS FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS, AND ANSWER ALL RELEVANT QUESTIONS.

IF THE JUDGE IS SATISFIED AFTER HEARING THE JUDGMENT CREDITOR THAT THE DEBTOR IS, IN EFFECT, ABLE TO MAKE SOME PAYMENT, OR IS DELIBERATELY AVOIDING HIS OBLIGATION, HE MAY ORDER HIS IMPRISONMENT FOR NO LONGER THAN THREE MONTHS.

+AT PRESENT, THE LIMIT IS ONE YEAR,+ SAID MR THOMAS.

+BUT THIS IS FAR TOO LONG AND CAN ONLY BE PUNITIVE. AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO IMPRISONMENT, THE JUDGE MAY ORDER HIM TO SATISFY THE JUDGMENT AND, THEREAFTER, IF HE FAILS TO DO SO, WITHOUT GOOD CAUSE, ORDER HIS IMPRISONMENT. THE COURT WILL HAVE THE POWER TO SUSPEND OR VARY ITS ORDERS AND MAKE THEM SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS.+

NOTE HAS ALSO BEEN TAKEN OF JUDICIAL CRITICISM OF THE PROCEDURE UNDER ORDER 44A OF THE RULES OF COURT BY WHICH A PERSON CLAIMING HE IS OWED MONEY CAN ARREST THE ALLEGED DEBTOR IF HE APPEARS LIKELY TO LEAVE HONG KONG. THIS HAS ITS USES, AND MAY NOT BE UNFAIR TO THOSE WHO LIVE OR CARRY ON BUSINESS HERE, AT ANY RATE WHERE LIABILITY FOR THE DEBT IS BEYOND DISPUTE. BUT, IN THE LIGHT OF TRENCANT JUDICIAL COMMENTS, SAID MR THOMAS, THE BILL PROPOSES IT SHOULD NO LONGER BE AVAILABLE AGAINST VISITING FOREIGNERS. MOST COUNTRIES HAD SATISFACTORY PROCEDURES FOR SUING DEBTORS IN THEIR COURTS AND FOR ENFORCING A HONG KONG JUDGMENT, HE SAID.

MR THOMAS SAID THAT AS THE MEASURE WAS BEING BROUGHT FORWARD AS A MATTER OF URGENCY HE APPRECIATED THAT THERE MAY WELL BE SCOPE FOR IMPROVING DETAILS OF PROCEDURES PROPOSED. TWO PARTICULAR MATTERS WERE IN HIS MIND AS THE SUBJECT OF AMENDMENTS AT THE COMMITTEE STAGE.

FIRSTLY, SO FAR AS ORDER 44A IS CONCERNED, IN ORDER TO PROTECT DEBTORS FROM BEING IMPRISONED IN RELATION TO DISPUTED CLAIMS, THE CREDITOR SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO APPLY TO THE COURT TO TURN HIS CLAIM INTO A JUDGMENT WITHIN A SHORT TIME OF OBTAINING A RESTRAINING ORDER. THERE IS A PROCEDURE FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT AND IF THE CREDITOR IS UNABLE WITHIN A FEW DAYS TO SATISFY THE COURT THAT HE HAS A VALID CLAIM, THE DEBTOR SHOULD BE ENTITLED TO HIS RELEASE.

SECONDLY, THERE SHOULD BE SOME ALTERNATIVE TO ARREST AND IMPRISONMENT BOTH BEFORE AND AFTER JUDGMENT. IT WOULD OFTEN BE JUST AS VALUABLE TO THE CREDITOR, AND FAR LESS ONEROUS TO THE DEBTOR, IF THE COURT HAD THE POWER TO MAKE AN ORDER PROHIBITING THE DEBTOR FROM LEAVING HONG KONG WHICH COULD BE ENFORCED WITH THE AID OF THE IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES, SAID MR THOMAS. THE AMENDMENT HE IS CONSIDERING WOULD HAVE THIS EFFECT.

STATING THAT: +IT SHOULD BE THE COURT, AND NOT THE CREDITOR, WHO DECIDES IF A DEBTOR SHOULD BE JAILED,+ MR THOMAS SAID THAT THE PROCEDURES PROPOSED WOULD BE OF CONSIDERABLE VALUE TO CREDITORS IN DISCOVERING WHETHER DEBTORS HAVE ASSETS OR INCOME FROM WHICH PAYMENTS CAN BE MADE, AND TO ENSURE THAT DEBTORS MEET THEIR DEBTS SO FAR AS THEIR RESOURCES PERMIT.

THE REFORMS WERE LONG OVERDUE, SAID MR THOMAS.

+MANY COUNTRIES DO NOT TOLERATE IMPRISONMENT FOR CIVIL DEBT. THESE MEASURES ARE THEREFORE A COMPROMISE WHICH GO FAR TO MEET THE LEGITIMATE NEEDS OF THE FINANCIAL AND TRADING COMMUNITY IN THE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF HONG KONG WHILST RECOGNISING THAT THE LIBERTY OF THE PERSON IS AN IMPORTANT FREEDOM WHICH ONLY THE COURTS SHOULD TAKE AWAY,+ HE SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED TO DECEMBER 21.

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BILL ACCORDS WOMEN LEGAL IDENTITY
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THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) (NO. 5) BILL 1983 GIVES MARRIED WOMEN THE LEGAL IDENTITY THEY HAVE SOUGHT, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR JOHN BREMRIDGE, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, SIR JOHN SAID THAT WHILE THE PROPOSED PROVISIONS UNDER THE BILL WOULD NOT GIVE RISE TO ANY SAVINGS IN THE TOTAL TAX PAYABLE BY THE FAMILY UNIT, THEY WERE NOT SIMPLY COSMETIC.

+THEY ARE DESIGNED TO MEET THE COMPLAINT THAT THE PRESENT LEGISLATION IS ARCHAIC AND OFFENSIVE TO WOMEN, IN THAT IT MAKES THEM SECOND CLASS CITIZENS; AND THEY WILL THUS ACCORD MARRIED WOMEN THE LEGAL IDENTITY WHICH THEY HAVE PROPERLY SOUGHT,+ SIR JOHN EXPLAINED.

THE PROPOSED PROVISIONS ARE:

FIRST, THE REMOVAL OF THE PROVISION IN THE PRESENT ORDINANCE WHICH DEEMS A WIFE TO BE ONE AND THE SAME PERSON AS HER HUSBAND.

SECOND, THE REMOVAL OF THE PROVISIONS WHICH DEEM THE INCOME OF A WIFE TO BE THAT OF HER HUSBAND.

THIRD, PERMISSION FOR HUSBANDS AND WIVES TO ELECT A JOINT RETURN AND THE SEPARATE PAYMENT OF THEIR RESPECTIVE SHARES OF THE TAX BILL.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED TO DECEMBER 21.

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POTENTIAL FOR EXPANSION IN LRT SYSTEM

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THE LIGHT RAILWAY TRANSIT SYSTEM AS NOW DESIGNED WOULD PROVIDE NOT ONLY AN INTERNAL NETWORK FOR TUEN MUN BUT ALSO A LINK BETWEEN THIS NEW TOWN AND YUEN LONG, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON ALAN SCOTT, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

AND THE SYSTEM HAD THE POTENTIAL FOR EXTENSION TO TSUEN WAN WHERE AN INTERCHANGE WOULD BE PROVIDED WITH THE MTR, MR SCOTT SAID.

SINCE THE ORIGINAL LRT STUDY IN 1977, DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR THE WESTERN NEW TERRITORIES HAD ADDED YUEN LONG TO THE LIST OF NEW TOWNS, AND TIN SHUI WAI HAD BEEN INCLUDED AS A DEVELOPMENT FOR 136 000 PEOPLE INITIALLY, MR SCOTT TOLD THE COUNCIL.

WHEN FULLY DEVELOPED, THE WESTERN NEW TERRITORIES WOULD CONTAIN OVER 800 000 PEOPLE IN AN AREA LARGER THAN THE KOWLOON PENINSULA, HE ADDED.

+THUS THE CHARACTER OF THE ORIGINAL LRT HAS BEEN CHANGED FROM A LOCAL TOWN SYSTEM TO A REGIONAL RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM FOR THE WESTERN NEW TERRITORIES,+ HE SAID.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHEUNG YAN-LUNG, MR SCOTT EXPLAINED THE CHOICE BETWEEN A LIGHT AND A HEAVY RAIL SYSTEM WAS DETERMINED BY REFERENCE TO PASSENGER VOLUMES AND TO COSTS.

+A LIGHT RAIL SYSTEM SUCH AS THE ONE UNDER DISCUSSION COULD CARRY UP TO 35 000 PEOPLE PER HOUR. HEAVY RAIL SYSTEMS, SUCH AS THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY AND THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY CAN CARRY UP TO 60 000 PEOPLE PER HOUR.

+A GROUND-LEVEL HEAVY RAIL SYSTEM WOULD COST ABOUT 2-1/2 TIMES AS MUCH PER KILOMETRE AS AN LRT, AND AN UNDERGROUND HEAVY RAIL SYSTEM WOULD COST MORE THAN THAT,+ MR SCOTT SAID.

AS THE PREDICTED MAXIMUM VOLUME FOR THE FULL POTENTIAL LRT NETWORK DID NOT EXCEED 35 000 PEOPLE PER HOUR, LRT WAS CHOSEN AS PROVIDING AN +ADEQUATE AND ECONOMIC HIGH QUALITY+ SYSTEM FOR THE AREA, HE SAID.

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1983

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TEAM TO LOOK OVER URBAN RENEWAL PLANS

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A PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A CO-ORDINATING URBAN RENEWAL TEAM TO IMPROVE PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING OF URBAN RENEWAL IN HONG KONG WAS DISCLOSED BY THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON CHAN NAI-KEONG, TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR CHAN, WHO WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHAN YING-LUN, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, SAID THE TEAM, TO BE SET UP WITHIN THE TOWN PLANNING DIVISION OF THE LANDS DEPARTMENT, WOULD PROVIDE A COMPREHENSIVE OVERVIEW OF URBAN RENEWAL PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS.

IT WOULD IMPROVE CO-ORDINATION OF THE EFFORTS OF VARIOUS AGENCIES INVOLVED AND HELP ADVANCE THE PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS.

HE SAID THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON LAND SUPPLY HAD ALREADY GIVEN SUPPORT TO THE PROPOSAL AND IT WOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE LAND DEVELOPMENT POLICY COMMITTEE SHORTLY.

MR CHAN SAID URBAN RENEWAL, BY ITS VERY NATURE, WAS A LONG TERM AND THEREFORE A CONTINUOUS PROCESS.

+IMPLEMENTATION, WHETHER BY THE GOVERNMENT OR THE PRIVATE SECTOR, DEPENDS ON DEMAND, OPPORTUNITY, SIZE AND RELATIVE DIFFICULTY OF THE PROJECT, AND THE AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES,+ HE SAID.

A FLEXIBLE RATHER THAN A FIXED TIME FRAME HAD THEREFORE TO BE ADOPTED.

ON THE SUBJECT OF LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS, MR CHAN SAID A CONSULTANTS' REPORT ON THE CONCEPT HAD RECENTLY BEEN COMPLETED. HE SAID THE STUDY HAD CONFIRMED THAT THE MAIN OBSTACLE WAS THE DIFFICULTY OF ASSEMBLING SITES OF A SUFFICIENT SIZE TO PROVIDE DEVELOPMENT GAINS, WITH PARTICULAR PROBLEMS BEING CAUSED BY MULTI-OWNERSHIP, ABSENTEE OWNERS, AND THE POTENTIAL BARGAINING POWER OF THE OWNER OF THE LAST TITLE TO BE ACQUIRED.

MR CHAN SAID, IN GENERAL, THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HAD ENCOUNTERED IN ATTEMPTING TO IMPLEMENT ITS OWN URBAN RENEWAL PROGRAMMES HAD BEEN THE HUMAN PROBLEMS, SUCH AS RESISTANCE TO CHANGE AND DISRUPTION, PRACTICAL PROBLEMS OF PROVIDING HOUSING AND OTHER FACILITIES, AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS OF RELATING RESOURCES AND PROGRAMMES AND OVERALL CO-ORDINATION.

EARLIER, MR CHAN BRIEFED THE COUNCIL ON THE HISTORY OF THE URBAN RENEWAL PROGRAMMES WHICH STARTED WITH A PILOT SCHEME IN SHEUNG WAN IN 1969.

/IN 1973,

IN 1973, FOUR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT AREAS WERE DEFINED WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF UPGRADING ENVIRONMENT IN THESE AREAS BY OBTAINING MORE LAND FOR GOVERNMENT, COMMUNITY, AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AS AND WHEN THE OPPORTUNITY AROSE MR CHAN TOLD THE COUNCIL.

AT THE SAME TIME, HE SAID REDEVELOPMENT SCHEMES FOR INDIVIDUAL SITES WERE ALSO UNDERTAKEN BY THE HONG KONG HOUSING SOCIETY.

MR CHAN REFERRED TO THE HOUSING AUTHORITY'S ESTATE REDEVELOPMENT SCHEMES AND THE REDEVELOPMENT SCHEMES UNDERTAKEN BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

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AGRICULTURAL AND FISHING PRODUCTION RISES
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OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS, THE VALUE IN REAL TERMS OF AGRICULTURAL AND FISHING PRODUCTION HAS BEEN INCREASING AT AN ANNUAL AVERAGE RATE OF 1.7 PER CENT AND 3.6 PER CENT RESPECTIVELY, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON PIERS JACOBS, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

THIS COMPARES WITH THE AVERAGE GDP GROWTH RATE OF 9.6 PER CENT A YEAR OVER THE SAME PERIOD, MR JACOBS SAID.

IN 1982, THE LOCAL AGRICULTURAL AND FISHING INDUSTRIES HAD A NET OUTPUT OF \$1 300 MILLION WHICH REPRESENTED JUST UNDER ONE PER CENT OF THE GDP.

WHILE THE PROPORTION OF THE GDP ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE TWO SECTORS HAD BEEN FALLING, THEIR GROWTH RATES WERE +NO MEAN ACHIEVEMENT+ IN THE FACE OF THE CONTINUAL LOSS OF AGRICULTURAL LAND AND THE RESTRICTIONS ON FISHING GROUNDS IMPOSED ON THE LOCAL FISHING FLEET, HE SAID.

MR JACOBS WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ANDREW SO, WHO WANTED TO KNOW WHAT PROPORTION OF HONG KONG'S GDP WAS DUE TO THE TWO SECTORS AND WHAT ASSISTANCE HAD BEEN OFFERED TO THEM TO INCREASE THEIR OUTPUT AND CONTRIBUTION TO THE ECONOMY.

GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE, PROVIDED THROUGH THE AGRICULTURAL AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT, INCLUDES THE PROVISION OF TECHNICAL ADVICE AND SERVICES, VOCATIONAL TRAINING, CREDIT FACILITIES, EFFICIENT WHOLESALE MARKETING AND THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW PRODUCTION METHODS.

MR JACOBS POINTED OUT THAT SEVEN LOAN FUNDS FOR IMPROVING PRODUCTIVITY AND FACILITATING DEVELOPMENT WORK ARE AVAILABLE TO LOCAL FARMERS AND FISHERMEN.

THE CURRENT CAPITAL OF THE FUNDS IS \$12.2 MILLION FOR AGRICULTURE AND \$19.2 MILLION FOR FISHERIES.

MR JACOBS REPORTED THAT IN THE LAST FINANCIAL YEAR, 1 167 LOANS TALLING \$12.7 MILLION WERE GIVEN TO FARMERS AND 113 LOANS TALLING \$8.17 MILLION TO FISHERMEN.

BIG DRIVE TO BEAT DRY SEASON FIRES

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MAJOR EFFORTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO REDUCE THE DANGERS OF SQUATTER AND HILL FIRES DURING THE DRY SEASON, SAID THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON MR DAVID JEAFFRESON, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON WONG LAM, WHO ASKED WHAT HAD BEEN DONE TO PREVENT SUCH FIRES.

DURING THE FIRST 10 MONTHS OF THIS YEAR, SAID MR JEAFFRESON, THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT MADE OVER 1 200 VISITS TO SQUATTER AREAS TO PUBLICISE FIRE SAFETY MEASURES. AT THE SAME TIME THEY ENCOURAGED THE FORMATION OF FIRE WATCH TEAMS AND GAVE ASSISTANCE TO THEM. THERE ARE NOW 33 NEW FIRE WATCH TEAMS IN SQUATTER AREAS WHICH HAVE UNDERGONE, OR ARE UNDERGOING, TRAINING BY FIRE SERVICES OFFICERS.

+IN ADDITION, THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT HAS THIS YEAR CARRIED OUT 12 LARGE-SCALE EXERCISES IN SELECTED SQUATTER AREAS POTENTIALLY VULNERABLE TO FIRE,+ HE SAID.

THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT HAS ALSO IMPLEMENTED IMPROVEMENTS IN 17 SQUATTER AREAS, PAYING PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO FIRE SAFETY, INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF FIREBREAKS AND WATER PIPE LINES WITH HYDRANTS. ALL SQUATTER AREAS ARE TO BE PROVIDED WITH SUCH FACILITIES.

ONE OF THE MAIN CAUSES OF FIRE IN SQUATTER AREAS IS THE ILLEGAL TAPPING OF ELECTRICITY, SAID MR JEAFFRESON. POLICE ARE ACTIVE IN DETECTING AND PROSECUTING OFFENDERS, AND THE HOUSING AUTHORITY IS TO PROVIDE LEGAL SUPPLIES WHEREVER PRACTICABLE.

ON HILL FIRES, MR JEAFFRESON SAID THAT A JOINT WORKING PARTY, WITH FIRE SERVICES, AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES AND POLICE REPRESENTATIVES HAD BEEN OPERATING SINCE 1980. THIS GROUP CO-ORDINATED EFFORTS TO COMBAT COUNTRYSIDE FIRES. THE COUNTRY PARKS AUTHORITY HAD INTRODUCED A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT MEASURES TO IMPROVE FIRE FIGHTING CAPABILITIES.

PUBLICITY WAS AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THE EFFORT TO REDUCE SQUATTER AND HILL FIRES, HE SAID.

THE SUBJECT IS ACCORDED MAJOR CAMPAIGN STATUS AND DURING THE CURRENT YEAR \$600 000 IS BEING SPENT TO GET THE MESSAGE ACROSS. POSTERS AND LEAFLETS WERE BEING WIDELY DISTRIBUTED, IN SQUATTER AREAS, COUNTRY PARKS, AND AT OTHER LOCATIONS AROUND HONG KONG AND DAILY WARNINGS WERE BEING BROADCAST BY RADIO AND TELEVISION STATIONS.

+I MUST EMPHASISE,+ HE SAID, +THAT ALL THESE EFFORTS WILL ONLY BE EFFECTIVE WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF THE PUBLIC AND I WOULD APPEAL TO ALL RESIDENTS IN SQUATTER AREAS AND TO ALL VISITORS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE, TO EXERCISE PARTICULAR CARE AND VIGILANCE AND TO OBSERVE BASIC FIRE PRECAUTIONS DURING THE CURRENT DRY SEASON.+

EARLY REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE URGED

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THE IMPORTANCE OF SUSPECTED CASES OF CHILD ABUSE BEING REPORTED AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE CANNOT BE EMPHASISED TOO STRONGLY, SAID THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON GEOFFREY BARNES, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MR BARNES WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON SELINA CHOW. SHE ASKED WHETHER CHILD ABUSE IS DEVELOPING INTO A SERIOUS SOCIAL PROBLEM, WHAT IS BEING DONE TO MONITOR THE SITUATION AND WHAT ACTION IS THE GOVERNMENT TAKING TO ASSIST VOLUNTARY AGENCIES IN PREVENTING AND CONTAINING THE PROBLEM.

+EVEN ONE INSTANCE OF CHILD ABUSE IS ONE TOO MANY,+ SAID MR BARNES, ADDING THAT THE ISSUE IS A SERIOUS SOCIAL PROBLEM. STATISTICS SHOW THAT AT SEPTEMBER 30, THIS YEAR, THERE WERE 316 ACTIVE CASES OF CHILD ABUSE, OF VARYING DEGREES OF SERIOUSNESS, KNOWN TO THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT - COMPARED WITH 315 AT THE SAME DATE LAST YEAR. IN 1982 THERE WERE 300 NEW CASES REPORTED, AND IN THE FIRST NINE MONTHS OF 1983, THERE WERE 205 NEW CASES.

ALTHOUGH THESE FIGURES DID NOT INDICATE ANY INCREASE IN CHILD ABUSE, HE SAID, THE ADMINISTRATION WAS CONCERNED THAT THEY MIGHT REPRESENT ONLY PART OF THE WHOLE PROBLEM. THERE IS NO WAY, REGRETTABLY, OF DISCOVERING THE FULL EXTENT OF UNREPORTED CASES.

+WHAT HAS DEVELOPED IS THE GOVERNMENT'S AWARENESS OF CHILD ABUSE, AND WITH THIS HAS COME INCREASED PUBLIC EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY,+ SAID MR BARNES.

+AS A RESULT WE CAN EXPECT AN INCREASE IN REPORTS OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE, AS WELL AS GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEM AND BETTER METHODS OF MONITORING AND CO-ORDINATING REPORTED CASES.

+IN THIS CONNECTION, I CANNOT EMPHASISE TOO STRONGLY THE IMPORTANCE OF SUSPECTED CASES BEING REPORTED AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE.+

MR BARNES DESCRIBED MONITORING PROCEDURES, WHICH INVOLVE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND VOLUNTARY AGENCIES. MORE SERIOUS INDIVIDUAL CASES ARE MONITORED AND HANDLED BY THE CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES UNIT OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT - ESTABLISHED IN JUNE THIS YEAR. AT THE END OF NOVEMBER THIS UNIT WAS DEALING WITH 102 CASES, OF WHICH 84 INVOLVED STATUTORY INTERVENTION.

PUBLIC EDUCATION IS AN IMPORTANT PREVENTIVE MEASURE, HE SAID, AND VOLUNTARY AGENCIES WERE WELL PLACED TO PLAY A MAJOR ROLE THROUGH FAMILY EDUCATION PROGRAMMES. GOVERNMENT GAVE SUPPORT TO SUCH ACTIVITIES.

IN THE ACTUAL HANDLING OF CASES, HE SAID, THERE WERE CLEAR PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES TO BE FOLLOWED AND VARIOUS AVENUES OPEN.

+THE ADMINISTRATION INTENDS THE SAFETY AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD TO BE THE MAIN CONSIDERATION IN EACH CASE,+ MR CHING SAID.

TRIAD PROBLEMS BEING STUDIED

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THE PROBLEMS POSED BY TRIADS ARE NOW BEING STUDIED BY THE RECONSTITUTED FIGHT CRIME COMMITTEE, SAID THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HE WAS RESPONDING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON ANDREW SO, WHO ASKED FOR A STATEMENT ON CURRENT TRIAD ACTIVITIES AND ON THE ACTION BEING TAKEN TO COMBAT THIS FORM OF ORGANISED CRIME.

MR JEAFFRESON SAID THAT THE QUESTION WAS NOT PARTICULARLY EASY TO ANSWER.

+THE FIGHT CRIME COMMITTEE IN 1977 TOOK A CERTAIN VIEW OF TRIADS. THE RECONSTITUTED FIGHT CRIME COMMITTEE IS NOW HAVING ANOTHER LOOK AT THE PROBLEM TO SEE WHETHER OR NOT THE DECISIONS OF ITS PREDECESSOR WERE BASED ON AN ASSUMPTION THAT TRIADS WERE LESS SIGNIFICANT THAN THEY ARE NOW,+ HE SAID.

+THUS THE ANSWER I GIVE TODAY WOULD NOT NECESSARILY BE THE ONE I WOULD GIVE AFTER THE FIGHT CRIME COMMITTEE HAS CONCLUDED ITS DELIBERATIONS. BUT ANY DIFFERENCES ARE LIKELY TO BE ONES OF DEGREE.

+I THINK IT IS A WELL ESTABLISHED FACT THAT TRIADS ARE ACTIVE IN HONG KONG AND HAVE GOT THEMSELVES INVOLVED IN A CRIMINAL WAY IN A WIDE RANGE OF ACTIVITY, INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF CERTAIN ESSENTIAL SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC, EXTORTION AND THE CONTROL OF VICE.+

MR JEAFFRESON SAID THAT THEY WERE INVOLVED IN VARIOUS RACKETS, WITH THE MAIN SOURCES OF INCOME INCLUDING THE CONTROL OF PROSTITUTION, ILLEGAL GAMBLING AND LOAN SHARKING.

+I WOULD BE SURPRISED IF THEY WERE NOT ALSO INVOLVED IN THE NARCOTICS RACKETS,+ HE SAID.

ACTION AGAINST TRIADS WAS TAKEN ON A BROAD FRONT AND IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TO REDUCE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE GANGS TO OPERATE, HE SAID.

EFFORTS WERE MADE TO PREVENT YOUNG PEOPLE TURNING TO CRIME IN GENERAL AND BECOMING INVOLVED WITH TRIADS IN PARTICULAR, HE REPORTED.

CO-ORDINATION OF THE FIGHT AGAINST TRIADS IS FULFILLED BY TWO SUB-COMMITTEES OF THE FIGHT CRIME COMMITTEE.

THE CO-ORDINATING GROUP AGAINST TRIADS DETERMINES SPECIFIC PROBLEM AREAS AND RECOMMENDS ACTION.

THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON UNRULY AND DELINQUENT BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOLS KEEPS UNDER REGULAR REVIEW ACTION AGAINST THE ACTIVITIES OF CRIMINAL GANGS IN SCHOOLS.

+NO REAL SIGN OF YOUTH ALCOHOL PROBLEM+
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THERE IS NO EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST THAT LOCAL TEENAGERS ARE OBTAINING AND DRINKING LIQUOR IN EXCESSIVE QUANTITIES, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON MICHAEL THOMAS SAID TODAY IN REPLY TO A LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL QUESTION FROM THE HON SELINA CHOW.

MRS CHOW WANTED TO KNOW WHETHER PRESENT LAWS ARE ADEQUATE TO PREVENT THE SALE OF ALCOHOL TO MINORS AND WHETHER THEY ARE BEING ENFORCED.

MR THOMAS SAID IT IS AN OFFENCE FOR A LICENSEE TO PERMIT YOUNG PERSONS TO DRINK INTOXICATING LIQUOR IN LICENSED PREMISES BUT THERE ARE NO RESTRICTIONS ON THE SALE OF ALCOHOL TO YOUNG PERSONS IN RETAIL ESTABLISHMENTS.

HE SAID THAT NO REPRESENTATIONS HAD BEEN RECEIVED THAT THE LAW SHOULD BE AMENDED OR STRENGTHENED.

+ENQUIRIES HAVE REVEALED NO REAL EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST THAT LOCAL TEENAGERS ARE OBTAINING AND DRINKING LIQUOR IN EXCESSIVE QUANTITIES,+ SAID MR THOMAS.

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HELP OFFERED TO STREET SLEEPERS
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BOTH IMMEDIATE OFFERS OF HELP AND OFFERS TO PROVIDE COUNSELLING FOR THE LONGER TERM ARE USED TO ENCOURAGE STREET SLEEPERS TO ACCEPT GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE, SAID THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON GEOFFREY BARNES, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON CHAN YING-LUN, WHO WISHED TO KNOW, GIVEN THAT A NUMBER OF STREET SLEEPERS DIE EACH WINTER FROM THE COLD, WHAT POSITIVE MEASURES WOULD BE TAKEN THIS YEAR TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO ACCEPT GOVERNMENT HELP.

MR BARNES SAID THAT THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT AND VOLUNTARY AGENCIES SEEK OUT AND INFORM STREET SLEEPERS OF THE AVAILABILITY OF ASSISTANCE.

IN ADDITION, SOCIAL WORKERS PERSUADE THEM TO ACCEPT HELP, AND TO RECEIVE GUIDANCE ON MATTERS SUCH AS OBTAINING HOUSING, ID CARDS, JOBS, BATHS, HAIRCUTS AND PUBLIC ASSISTANCE.

GENERAL FORMS OF ASSISTANCE, SUCH AS THE OPENING OF COMMUNITY CENTRES IN WHICH STREET SLEEPERS CAN TAKE SHELTER WHEN THE TEMPERATURE FALLS, AND THE PROVISION OF BLANKETS, ARE ALSO AVAILABLE, SAID MR BARNES.

FIELD UNITS KEEP A WATCH ON THE MOST VULNERABLE CASES, HE SAID.

SOME STREET SLEEPERS WERE UNWILLING TO ACCEPT ASSISTANCE, PARTICULARLY WHERE MENTAL ILLNESS WAS INVOLVED.

+SUCH PERSONS ARE SOMETIMES DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH IF THEY ARE NOT CAUSING ANY OBSTRUCTION OR DISTURBING THE PEACE. I AM CONSIDERING WHAT DIRECT ACTION CAN BE TAKEN WITH REGARD TO THIS PARTICULAR GROUP,+ SAID MR BARNES.

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NO PLANS TO RAISE ABERDEEN TUNNEL TOLL

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THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT CONSIDERING AN INCREASE IN TOLLS FOR PRIVATE MOTOR VEHICLES USING THE ABERDEEN TUNNEL, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON ALAN SCOTT, SAID TODAY.

BUT IT WAS GOVERNMENT POLICY TO KEEP CHARGES UNDER REGULAR REVIEW, HE REMINDED MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL.

MR SCOTT WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON PETER C. WONG.

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HOLIDAYS SAFEGUARDED

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AN AMENDMENT WAS PASSED AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE LOSS OF A DAY'S HOLIDAY DUE TO THE COINCIDENCE OF TWO GENERAL HOLIDAYS FALLING ON THE SAME DAY IS AVOIDED.

THE AMENDMENT WAS CONTAINED IN THE HOLIDAYS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1983, MOVED THROUGH THE COMMITTEE STAGE AND THIRD READING BY THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, THE HON NEAL HENDERSON.

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BILL TO CLARIFY BUILDING TERMS

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THE BUILDINGS (AMENDMENT) (NO. 3) BILL 1983, WHICH SEEKS TO ELIMINATE DOUBTS ABOUT HOW TERMS DESCRIBING VARIOUS TYPES OF BUILDINGS SHOULD BE INTERPRETED, WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON CHAN NAI-KEONG, SAID IT WOULD MAKE CLEAR THAT BUILDINGS SUCH AS HOTELS AND BOARDING HOUSES USED FOR TRANSITORY OCCUPATION WERE SUBJECT TO THE SAME REQUIREMENTS AS DOMESTIC PREMISES.

MR CHAN SAID THE AMENDMENT WOULD ALSO TRANSFER THE DEFINITIONS OF +DOMESTIC BUILDINGS+ AND ASSOCIATED EXPRESSIONS FROM SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION INTO THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED TO DECEMBER 21.

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BOARDS BEING CONSULTED ON ERPS

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ONE OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PILOT ELECTRONIC ROAD PRICING SCHEME WAS TO INFORM THE PUBLIC FULLY AND TO ASSESS HOW DRIVERS AND THE PUBLIC WOULD REACT TO A FULL SCHEME, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON ALAN SCOTT, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONSULTING DISTRICT BOARDS ON THE MATTER AND AN INFORMATION PAPER ON THE SCHEME HAD BEEN SENT TO THE BOARDS, MR SCOTT SAID IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON PAULINE NG.

MR SCOTT SAID THAT SO FAR, FOUR BOARDS HAD DISCUSSED THE PAPER, EITHER AS FULL BOARDS OR IN THEIR TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEES.

+THE NEED TO TACKLE CONGESTION AND THE NECESSITY FOR MEASURES TO RESTRAIN PRIVATE CARS, BALANCED BY IMPROVEMENTS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND IN TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ARE GENERALLY ACCEPTED,+ MR SCOTT POINTED OUT.

BUT HE ADDED, +IT WOULD REGRETTABLY NOT YET BE CORRECT TO SAY THAT EVERYONE IS PERSUADED OF THE VIRTUES OF ELECTRONIC ROAD PRICING AS THE MOST ACCEPTABLE MEANS OF ACHIEVING THIS.+

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REFUSE CHAMBERS TO BECOME MANDATORY

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REGULATIONS WHICH WILL REQUIRE NEARLY ALL NEW BUILDING DEVELOPMENTS TO INCLUDE PLANS FOR REFUSE STORAGE CHAMBERS SHOULD HELP REDUCE THE NUMBER OF STREET REFUSE COLLECTION POINTS AND IMPROVE HYGIENE.

THIS WAS SAID TODAY BY THE HON GEOFFREY BARNES, ACTING SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL FROM THE HON ANDREW SO WHO ASKED WHAT WAS THE POSITION REGARDING THE PREPARATION OF LEGISLATION TO REQUIRE THE CHAMBERS IN NEW MULTI-STOREYED BUILDINGS.

MR BARNES SAID THAT A BILL HAS BEEN DRAFTED TO AMEND THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE TO ENABLE THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL TO MAKE REGULATIONS RELATING TO MANDATORY PROVISION OF SUCH FACILITIES IN NEW MULTI-STOREYED BUILDINGS AND IT WAS INTENDED THAT THE AMENDMENT BILL SHOULD BE SUBMITTED TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL IN EARLY 1984.

IN ADDITION, AND FOLLOWING EXTENSIVE CONSULTATION, HE SAID, REGULATIONS HAVE BEEN DRAFTED TO REQUIRE ALL NEW BUILDING DEVELOPMENTS, WITH CERTAIN EXCEPTIONS, TO INCLUDE PLANS FOR REFUSE STORAGE CHAMBERS IN WHICH ALL REFUSE FROM THE BUILDINGS MAY BE STORED PENDING COLLECTION.

+THE INTENTION IS TO MINIMISE THE NUMBER OF ON-STREET COLLECTION POINTS AND TO IMPROVE THE HYGIENE CONDITIONS IN MULTI-STOREYED DEVELOPMENTS,+ SAID MR BARNES.

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LACK OF PASSENGERS CANCELS FERRY RUN

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DECLINING USE LED TO THE CANCELLATION OF THE LONG-STANDING FERRY SERVICE SERVING TUNG CHUNG AND TAI O, SAID THE HON ALAN SCOTT, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MR SCOTT WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON CHEUNG YAN-LUNG, WHO ASKED WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WAS AWARE OF THE DIFFICULTIES THE CANCELLATION CAUSED TO VILLAGE AND WHAT STEPS COULD BE TAKEN TO ENSURE THE INTER-VILLAGE KAI-TO SERVICE OPERATES ON A REGULAR BASIS AND AT REASONABLE COST. IN ADDITION, MR CHEUNG WISHED TO BE ASSURED THAT ROAD CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE VILLAGES WOULD BE IMPROVED AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE.

MR SCOTT ACCEPTED THAT THE CANCELLATION OF THE FERRY SERVICE DID, INDEED, CAUSE INCONVENIENCE BUT SAID THAT IT HAD COME ABOUT THROUGH DECLINING USE.

+WHEN RECENTLY SURVEYED, THE FERRY WAS CARRYING LESS THAN 100 PASSENGERS PER DAY ON WEEKDAYS. ITS CAPACITY IS FOR OVER 500 PASSENGERS. IT HAS, OBVIOUSLY, BEEN OPERATING AT A CONSIDERABLE LOSS. THE PROPOSAL TO CANCEL IT WAS GIVEN VERY CAREFUL CONSIDERATION AND WAS DECIDED WITH THE ADVICE OF THE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE,+ HE SAID.

THE DECLINE IN USE REFLECTS, TO SOME EXTENT, THE INCREASING USE OF OTHER FORMS OF TRANSPORT, SAID MR SCOTT. BOTH TAI O AND TUNG CHUNG ARE CONNECTED BY BUS TO MUI WO, WHICH PROVIDES FREQUENT FERRY SERVICES TO CENTRAL.

STEPS ARE BEING TAKEN TO IMPROVE THE ROAD SYSTEM LINKING OTHER VILLAGES TO PROVIDE BETTER ACCESS TO THE BUS NETWORK ON LANTAU.

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FIGURES GIVEN ON OVERSTAYERS

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THERE WERE 2 356 OVERSTAYERS DURING THE 12 MONTHS ENDING SEPTEMBER 30 THIS YEAR, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR DAVID JEAFFRESON SAID, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM DR THE HON HO KAM-FAI HE SAID THAT, OF THESE, ABOUT 1 620 HAVE BEEN REPATRIATED SO FAR. THERE WERE ONLY TWO CASES OF OVERSTAYERS BEING CONVICTED OF CRIMINAL OFFENCES, OTHER THAN IMMIGRATION OFFENCES, DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS.

ONE WAS CONVICTED OF WASTEFUL EMPLOYMENT OF POLICE RESOURCES AND THE OTHER FOR USING ANOTHER PERSON'S IDENTITY CARD, HE SAID.

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SINGLE ENTITY PROPOSED FOR METHODIST BODIES

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THE METHODIST ORGANISATIONS HAVE FOR OVER A HUNDRED YEARS BROUGHT FAITH, CHARITY AND COMFORT TO THEIR CONGREGATION IN HONG KONG, THE HON MARIA TAM SAID AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY.

+I BELIEVE THAT THE ENACTMENT OF THE METHODIST CHURCH, HONG KONG, INCORPORATION BILL WILL GREATLY ENHANCE THE WORK OF THE METHODIST CHURCH IN HONG KONG IN THE DAYS TO COME+, SHE SAID WHEN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL.

THE BILL PROPOSES TO INCORPORATE AN UNINCORPORATED CHRISTIAN ORGANISATION KNOWN AS +THE METHODIST CHURCH, HONG KONG+ AND CREATES A NEW LEGAL ENTITY WHICH WILL UNITE VARIOUS +METHODIST+ ORGANISATIONS IN HONG KONG IN THEIR STATEMENT OF FAITH, RECOGNITION OF SACRAMENTS AND IN THE OWNERSHIP, CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT OF THEIR ASSETS, PROPERTIES OR TRUST PROPERTIES.

MISS TAM LISTED THE METHODIST ORGANISATIONS WHICH FORMED THE EXISTING UNINCORPORATED +THE METHODIST CHURCH, HONG KONG+ THE METHODIST CHURCH (UNITED KINGDOM), THE HONG KONG CHINESE DISTRICT OF THE METHODIST CHURCH (UNITED KINGDOM) COMMONLY KNOWN AS +TSUN TO KUNG WOOI+, AND +THE METHODIST CHURCH, HONG KONG+ KNOWN IN HONG KONG AS +WEI LI KUNG HUI+.

SHE SAID THAT THE PROPERTIES HELD BY THESE ORGANISATIONS WERE SET OUT IN THE SCHEDULE ATTACHED TO THE BILL.

+UNDER CLAUSE 5 OF THE BILL, ALL OF THESE PROPERTIES IN THE SCHEDULE WILL BE VESTED IN THE NEW +THE METHODIST CHURCH, HONG KONG+ WITHOUT ASSIGNMENT OR CONVEYANCE OR PAYMENT OF STAMP DUTY+, SHE EXPLAINED.

+ALSO, THE ENACTMENT OF THE BILL WILL EFFECT A VALID VESTING OF THE LEGAL ESTATE OF PROPERTIES TO +THE METHODIST CHURCH, HONG KONG+ WHICH ARE AT PRESENT HELD UNDER NEW GRANTS, CONDITIONS OF GRANT AND CROWN LEASES SOME OF WHICH CONTAIN SPECIAL CONDITIONS AGAINST ASSIGNMENT OR ALIENATION BY THE EXISTING GRANTEES OR LESSEES.

+CLAUSE 6 OF THE BILL PROVIDES FOR MEMBERS OF THE CORPORATION WHOSE POWERS ARE DESCRIBED UNDER CLAUSE 4+, MISS TAM ADDED.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED TO DECEMBER 21.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1983

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SEA CADET CORPS SEEKS INCORPORATION

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THE INCORPORATION OF THE HONG KONG SEA CADET CORPS WOULD MAKE A MATERIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROMOTION OF THE CORPS' WORK FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN HONG KONG, THE HON F.K. HU SAID TODAY.

HE WAS MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE HONG KONG SEA CADET CORPS BILL 1983 WHICH SEEKS TO INCORPORATE THE AREA COMMITTEE OF THE CORPS.

TRACING THE HISTORY OF THE SEA CADET CORPS, MR HU SAID THAT IT WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1968, ON THE DEMISE OF THE ROYAL NAVAL VOLUNTEER RESERVE IN HONG KONG.

+THE INTENTION WAS TO USE THE ENTHUSIASM AND THE DEDICATION OF SOME OF THE FORMER OFFICERS TO PROVIDE A SERVICE TO YOUTH IN HONG KONG, WITHOUT ANY MILITARY OVERTONES BUT WITH THE GENEROUS ASSISTANCE OF THE ROYAL NAVY,+ HE EXPLAINED.

HE SAID THAT THE SEA CADET CORPS HAD COME A LONG WAY SINCE THEN.

WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT AND THE ROYAL HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB, THE CORPS NOW PROVIDED ORGANISED ACTIVITIES FOR SOME 750 CADETS IN 11 TRAINING UNITS, MR HU ADDED.

ON ACCOMMODATION, MR HU POINTED OUT THAT THE CORPS HAD A SITE AT STANLEY ON A CROWN LAND LICENCE AND A GRANT OF LAND IN SAI KUNG WHERE A SEA ACTIVITIES TRAINING CENTRE HAD BEEN BUILT THROUGH A MUNIFICENT DONATION FROM SIR SHIU-KIN TANG.

HE SAID THAT TWO FURTHER UNITS WERE BEING SET UP THIS YEAR AND THE CORPS HAD BEEN TOLD THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS PREPARED TO GRANT A SITE IN KOWLOON FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW HEADQUARTERS AND AS A HOME FOR SEVERAL UNITS.

+WITH ITS RESPONSIBILITIES TO SO MANY YOUNG PEOPLE, AND ITS GROWING PROPERTY HOLDINGS, THE CORPS HAS NOW FOUND IT NECESSARY TO SEEK INCORPORATION TO GIVE IT APPROPRIATE LEGAL STATUS,+ MR HU SAID.

THE DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED TO DECEMBER 21.

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DISTRICT COURTS' MONETARY LIMITS RAISED

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A MOTION WAS APPROVED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) TO INCREASE THE MONETARY LIMITS ON CLAIMS THAT CAN BE HEARD AND DETERMINED IN THE DISTRICT COURT.

THE NEW LIMITS WILL COVER CASES INVOLVING UP TO \$60 000 IN ACTIONS IN CONTRACT AND TORT AND \$45 000 RATEABLE VALUE IN RELATION TO DISPUTES ABOUT LAND.

MOVING THE RESOLUTION THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, MR MICHAEL THOMAS, SAID THAT THE EXISTING LIMITS OF \$40 000 AND \$30 000 RESPECTIVELY, WERE SET BY THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) ORDINANCE 1981. THIS ORDINANCE GAVE EFFECT TO RECOMMENDATIONS MADE IN 1979 BY A WORKING PARTY CHAIRED BY MR JUSTICE SILKE.

THE PARTY, HAD IN FACT, RECOMMENDED LIMITS OF \$50 000 AND \$40 000, BUT FOLLOWING CONSULTATION WITH LEGAL PRACTITIONERS, THE EXISTING LIMITS WERE INTRODUCED ON SEPTEMBER 1, 1983.

ALTHOUGH THEY HAD BEEN SET COMPARATIVELY RECENTLY, SAID THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THERE WERE TWO REASONS FOR THEIR REVISION.

FIRSTLY INFLATION SINCE 1979, WHEN THE WORKING PARTY REPORTED, MEANT THAT THE CURRENT LIMITS WERE, IN FACT, MUCH LESS IN REAL TERMS THAN THE GROUP ORIGINALLY PROPOSED.

SECONDLY, PRESSURE ON THE HIGH COURT WOULD BE EASED BY TRANSFERRING SOME OF THE MINOR CLAIMS TO THE DISTRICT COURT WHERE THERE IS SOME SPARE CAPACITY.

AN ADDED BENEFIT WOULD BE A REDUCTION IN COSTS AND DELAYS IN LITIGATION, SINCE THE DISTRICT COURT PROCEDURES ARE INTENDED TO PROVIDE SPEEDIER AND LESS EXPENSIVE SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC.

MR THOMAS SAID THE CHIEF JUSTICE HAD PROPOSED THE INCREASE IN LIMITS, TO \$60 000 AND \$45 000, AND THAT THESE WERE NO HIGHER IN REAL TERMS THAN THOSE RECOMMENDED FOUR YEARS AGO. THE LAW SOCIETY AND THE BAR ASSOCIATION BOTH SUPPORTED THE PROPOSED INCREASE IN THE JURISDICTION OF THE DISTRICT COURT, HE SAID.

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300 000 VISIT JUBILEE SPORTS CENTRE

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THE JUBILEE SPORTS CENTRE HAS ATTRACTED SOME 300 000 VISITS FROM HONG KONG SPORTSMEN AND WOMEN, SAID THE HON DENIS BRAY, SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, IN TABLING THE CENTRE'S 1982/83 ANNUAL REPORT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MR BRAY SAID THAT AS WELL AS CATERING FOR TOP SPORTSMEN, THE CENTRE HAS INAUGURATED SEVERAL PROGRAMMES FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC, AND HAS HOSTED A SERIES OF INTERNATIONAL EVENTS.

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+THE USE OF BOTH RESIDENTIAL AND SPORING FACILITIES IS BUILDING UP. SOME 300 000 VISITS TO THE CENTRE HAVE BEEN MADE BY HONG KONG SPORTSMEN AND WOMEN. THE CENTRE IS ALSO ATTRACTING OVERSEAS INTEREST AND WAS SPOKEN HIGHLY OF BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE, MR JUAN SAMARANCH, WHEN HE CALLED, + HE SAID.

MR BRAY SAID THAT CLOSE CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE CENTRE'S COACHES AND THE GOVERNING BODIES OF SPORTS, FROM NATIONAL TO JUNIOR LEVEL, WAS CLEARLY PAYING DIVIDENDS IN TERMS OF IMPROVED INTERNATIONAL PERFORMANCES.

HE PRAISED THE SPORTING GROUPS, THE RECREATION AND SPORTS SERVICE, THE AMATEUR SPORTS FEDERATION AND OLYMPIC COMMITTEE FOR THEIR SUPPORT.

ALL RUNNING COSTS ARE MET BY THE ROYAL HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB, WHICH HAS CONTINUED TO MAKE GENEROUS FINANCIAL ALLOCATIONS AND PROVIDED MUCH ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT.

MR BRAY ALSO MOVED THE SECOND READING OF THE JUBILEE SPORTS CENTRE (AMENDMENT) BILL OF 1983, CHANGING THE CENTRE'S FINANCIAL YEAR TO FIT IN WITH THAT OF THE ROYAL HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB.

THE NEW YEAR WILL RUN FROM JULY 1 TO JUNE 30 EACH YEAR - INSTEAD OF APRIL 1 TO MARCH 31. THE CHANGE WILL TAKE EFFECT FROM JULY 1 NEXT YEAR WITH THE INTERIM PERIOD BEING ADDED TO THE 1983-84 YEAR.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED TO DECEMBER 21.

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LEGCO APPROVES FIVE BILLS
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FIVE BILLS WERE APPROVED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THEY ARE THE DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1983, THE BANKING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1983, THE ENTERTAINMENTS TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL 1983, THE TELECOMMUNICATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1983 AND THE HOLIDAYS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1983.

SIX BILLS - INCLUDING TWO UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS BILLS - WERE INTRODUCED AND READ A SECOND TIME, AND DEBATE ON THEM WAS ADJOURNED TO DECEMBER 21.

THEY ARE: THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) (NO. 5) BILL 1983, THE DEBTORS (ARREST AND IMPRISONMENT) BILL 1983, THE JUBILEE SPORTS CENTRE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1983 AND THE BUILDINGS (AMENDMENT) (NO. 3) BILL 1983, THE METHODIST CHURCH HONG KONG INCORPORATION BILL 1983, AND THE HONG KONG SEA CADET CORPS BILL 1983.

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1983

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MARKET FORCES ROLE STRESSED BY SIR JOHN
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THE GOVERNMENT FUNDAMENTALLY BELIEVES THAT IT IS NOT ITS BUSINESS TO BE DAILY IN THE MARKET PLACE, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, SIR JOHN BREMIDGE, SAID THIS (WEDNESDAY) EVENING.

SPEAKING AT THE FOURTH ANNIVERSARY DINNER OF THE HONG KONG STOCKBROKERS ASSOCIATION, SIR JOHN SAID, +WE EXPECT THAT INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE APPRECIATE THAT THIS LACK OF INTERFERENCE HELPS THEM TO GET ON WITH THEIR JOB OF PRODUCING AND BUYING AND SELLING.

+AND WE ALSO EXPECT THAT INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE ACCEPT THAT MARKET FORCES MEAN REWARD FOR THE SUCCESSFUL AND NO RETURN FOR THE FAILURES -- WITH NO LAME DUCK POLICY BY GOVERNMENT.+

HE SAID THAT TWO MAIN FACTORS GOVERN WHEN AND WHY THE GOVERNMENT INTERVENES IN THE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL SCENE.

AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE FIRST FACTOR, SIR JOHN REFERRED TO HONG KONG'S LATEST SUCCESS IN EXPORTS WHICH WAS BEING THREATENED BY FACTORS OUTSIDE THE MARKET MOVING TO UNDERMINE THE LOCAL CURRENCY.

+THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT HESITATE TO ACT. WHEN WE ACTED, WE ACTED DECISIVELY AND WE HAVE RESTORED THE BASE THAT INDUSTRY AND PARTICULARLY OUR EXPORTERS NEEDED,+ HE STRESSED.

ON THE HANG LUNG BANK AND THE HONG KONG DOLLAR, SIR JOHN SAID, THERE WAS A NEED TO MOVE TO AVOID UNACCEPTABLE COLLAPSE.

THE SECOND GOVERNING FACTOR IS WHEN SELF REGULATION UNDER HONG KONG'S SYSTEM OF PRUDENTIAL SUPERVISION IS FLOUTED AND THE LAWS AND GOOD NAME OF THE TERRITORY ARE THROWN INTO DISREPUTE.

+THAT IS WHAT WE CLEARLY DID OVER CARRIAN. AND I DO NOT THINK THAT ANY OF YOU WOULD DOUBT ANY LONGER THAT WHEN WE DECIDE WE MUST ACT, WE ACT WITH VIGOUR,+ HE SAID.

BUT THE GOVERNMENT STILL BELIEVES IN THE MERITS OF SELF DISCIPLINE AND REGULATION.

+THAT IS WHY WE HAVE CHOSEN THE PATH TOWARDS DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION BY COMPANIES TO THEIR SHAREHOLDERS AND THE MARKET.

+THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE TO ENSURE THAT THE FLOW GETS STARTED AND THAT IT IS PROPERLY MONITORED TO ENSURE THE CONTINUANCE OF THE FLOW,+ SIR JOHN SAID.

HE PAID TRIBUTE TO MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR THEIR WORTHWHILE SERVICE TO THE MANY PRIVATE INVESTORS OF HONG KONG.

NOTING THAT HAPPY STOCKBROKERS WERE GENERALLY A SIGN OF AN ECONOMY WHICH IS DOING WELL, HE POINTED OUT THAT THE TERRITORY'S EXPORTS WERE BOOMING SO MUCH THAT TRANSPORT JUST MANAGED TO COPE.

HE DESCRIBED THE INCREASE IN MOVEMENT OF HONG KONG-MADE GOODS TO BE +LITTLE SHORT OF FANTASTIC+ AND SAID THAT THE TERRITORY HAD AGAIN SHOWN ITS RESILIENCE AND ITS SPEED OF RECOVERY.

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1983

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PRIMARY ONE ADMISSION RESULTS OUT ON FRIDAY

RESULTS OF THE ALLOCATION OF DISCRETIONARY PLACES UNDER THE PRIMARY ONE ADMISSION SYSTEM WILL BE RELEASED ON FRIDAY (DECEMBER 9) BY ALL GOVERNMENT AND AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

PARENTS ARE ADVISED TO GO TO THE SCHOOL, TO WHICH THEIR CHILDREN HAVE APPLIED FOR A DISCRETIONARY PLACE, ON FRIDAY BETWEEN 9 AM AND 5 PM, OR ON SATURDAY (DECEMBER 10) BETWEEN 9 AM AND NOON, TO FIND OUT THE RESULTS OF THEIR APPLICATION.

THIS APPLIES TO ALL PARENTS REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THEIR CHILDREN HAVE BEEN INTERVIEWED BY THE SCHOOL OR NOT, AN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID.

HE NOTED THAT OF THE 77 000 CHILDREN WHO HAD APPLIED FOR A PRIMARY ONE DISCRETIONARY PLACE IN GOVERNMENT AND AIDED SCHOOLS, ABOUT 45 000 WOULD BE OFFERED A PLACE.

REGISTRATION OF SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS WITH ALL GOVERNMENT AND AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOLS WILL TAKE PLACE ON DECEMBER 12 AND 13 (MONDAY AND TUESDAY) DURING SCHOOL HOURS.

PARENTS WHOSE CHILDREN HAVE BEEN OFFERED A DISCRETIONARY PLACE SHOULD NOTE THE REGISTRATION PROCEDURES AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS AS STIPULATED BY INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS.

IF PARENTS ACCEPTED AN OFFER OF A PRIMARY ONE PLACE FOR THEIR CHILDREN, IT WOULD BE REGARDED AS BINDING ON BOTH THE SCHOOL AND THE PARENTS, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

PARENTS WHO CANNOT REGISTER THEIR CHILDREN WITH A SCHOOL ON DECEMBER 12 OR 13 FOR PERSONAL REASONS SHOULD NOTIFY THE SCHOOL CONCERNED DIRECTLY OR THROUGH THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S PRIMARY ONE ADMISSION UNIT (5-724383) TO MAKE ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS.

THOSE WHO FAILED TO DO SO WOULD BE DEEMED TO HAVE GIVEN UP THE PLACE OFFERED, HE SAID.

THE SPOKESMAN EXPLAINED THAT UNDER THE PRIMARY ONE ADMISSION SYSTEM, A GOVERNMENT OR AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL CAN ACCEPT CHILDREN TO FILL UP TO A MAXIMUM OF 65 PER CENT OF ITS PRIMARY ONE PLACES AS DISCRETIONARY PLACES. THE REMAINING 35 PER CENT WILL BE RESERVED FOR CENTRAL ALLOCATION AT A LATER STAGE.

AS SOME SCHOOLS ARE OVERSUBSCRIBED FOR THEIR DISCRETIONARY PLACES, A NUMBER OF CHILDREN MAY NOT BE SUCCESSFUL IN THEIR APPLICATION.

BUT HE ASSURED PARENTS THAT THESE CHILDREN, TOGETHER WITH THOSE WHO HAVE NOT APPLIED FOR A DISCRETIONARY PLACE, WOULD BE CENTRALLY ALLOCATED A PLACE IN THEIR HOME DISTRICT BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

/THEY WILL

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THEY WILL BE INFORMED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT BY LETTER TO GO TO A SPECIFIED DISTRIBUTION/COLLECTION CENTRE IN MARCH 1984 TO COLLECT A +CHOICE OF SCHOOLS+ FORM AND A LIST OF ALL PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THEIR HOME DISTRICT.

IF A PARENT HAS APPLIED UNSUCCESSFULLY FOR A DISCRETIONARY PLACE AT A SCHOOL IN THE DISTRICT IN WHICH HE LIVES, HE IS STILL ELIGIBLE TO INCLUDE THAT SCHOOL IN HIS PREFERENCE LIST.

OTHER DETAILS REGARDING THE CENTRAL ALLOCATION WOULD BE ANNOUNCED LATER, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

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N.T. TAXI BOUNDARY TO BE RELAXED
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THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL HAS APPROVED LIMITED RELAXATION OF THE OPERATIONAL BOUNDARY FOR NEW TERRITORIES TAXIS, A TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE NEW BOUNDARY LIMITS ARE EXPECTED TO TAKE EFFECT IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF NEXT YEAR, PENDING COMPLETION OF ALL RELATED WORKS.

UNDER THE PROPOSED BOUNDARY EXTENSIONS, THE ROUTE TWISK AND TUEN MUN ROAD BOUNDARIES WILL BE EXTENDED TO ALLOW N.T. TAXIS TO ENTER THE TSUEN WAN MTR STATION.

FROM TAI PO ROAD, N.T. TAXIS WILL BE ABLE TO GO AS FAR AS THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY.

IF ACCESS TO TSUEN WAN MTR STATION PROVES SATISFACTORY, A FURTHER EXTENSION INTO SHA TIN AS FAR AS THE PRINCE OF WALES HOSPITAL WILL BE CONSIDERED WHEN IT OPENS IN 1984.

THE CLEAR WATER BAY ROAD BOUNDARY WILL ALSO BE EXTENDED WESTWARD TO COVER TSENG LAN SHUE.

FURTHER CONSIDERATION IS BEING GIVEN TO ANOTHER PROPOSAL TO EXTEND THIS BOUNDARY EVEN FURTHER TO PROVIDE A STILL MORE CONVENIENT INTERCHANGE POINT FOR RESIDENTS OF SAI KUNG DISTRICT.

COMMENTING ON THE NEW BOUNDARY LIMITS, THE SPOKESMAN SAID: +THIS WILL PROVIDE NEW TERRITORIES TAXI PASSENGERS WITH A BETTER TRANSPORT ACCESS TO THE URBAN AREA AND INTERCHANGE FACILITIES LIKE THE MTR STATIONS.+

+THESE ADDITIONAL N.T. TAXI ACTIVITIES ALONG THE SPECIFIC ROUTES SHOULD NOT IMPOSE SERIOUS IMPACT UPON THE URBAN TAXI TRADE AS INDICATED BY A SURVEY REPORT RECENTLY CONDUCTED BY THE DEPARTMENT.

+THE SURVEY ALSO SHOWS THAT N.T. TAXIS WILL NOT OVERLOAD THE ROAD NETWORK IN TSUEN WAN AND SHA TIN.

+APPROPRIATE TRAFFIC CONTROL MEASURES WILL BE INTRODUCED ON THE ROADS ADJOINING THE TERMINI IN THE ABOVE AREAS,+ HE SAID.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

REDEVELOPMENT SCHEME STARTING

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A REDEVELOPMENT SCHEME IN SHA TAU KOK, WHICH INCLUDES A TEMPORARY HOUSING AREA TO ACCOMMODATE RESIDENTS AT YIM LIU HA, RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND A CROSS-BORDER ROAD LINK, WILL BEGIN IN MAY NEXT YEAR.

DETAILS OF THE SCHEME WILL BE ANNOUNCED AT A PRESS CONFERENCE ON WEDNESDAY (DECEMBER 14) AT 2.30 PM IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE SHA TAU KOK RURAL COMMITTEE OFFICE, SHA TAU KOK.

THE NORTH DISTRICT OFFICER, MR IAN WOTHERSPOON, THE PROJECT MANAGER OF THE TAI PO AND FANLING NEW TOWN DEVELOPMENT OFFICE, MR BOB HANNA, AND THE FRONTIER DISTRICT COMMANDER, MR GWYNN LLOYD, WILL BE PRESENT.

MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THE CONFERENCE.

AS THE RURAL COMMITTEE OFFICE IS IN THE FRONTIER CLOSED AREA, PRESS MEMBERS MUST OBTAIN A CLOSED AREA PERMIT. THEY ARE REQUESTED TO CONTACT THE DISTRICT INFORMATION OFFICER, MR TONY CHAN, AT 0-6584370 BEFORE FRIDAY (DECEMBER 9) FOR THE REGISTRATION OF THEIR IDENTITY CARD NUMBERS AND NAMES.

A GOVERNMENT VEHICLE, AM 5617, WILL LEAVE KOWLOON PUBLIC PIER AT 1 PM ON WEDNESDAY (DECEMBER 14) FOR SHA TAU KOK.

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KOWLOON TO GET NEW LIBRARY

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A CONTRACT WAS SIGNED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A 12-STOREY LIBRARY BUILDING AT THE JUNCTION OF PUI CHING ROAD AND WATERLOO ROAD IN KOWLOON.

THE CONTRACT, VALUED AT \$12.4 MILLION, WAS SIGNED BY A CHIEF ARCHITECT OF THE BUILDING DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT, MR EDWIN LI, AND A REPRESENTATIVE OF HOI SING CONSTRUCTION COMPANY LIMITED.

MR LI SAID THE UPPER STOREYS OF THE NEW BUILDING WOULD ACCOMMODATE A CENTRAL LIBRARY FOR KOWLOON AND THE DISTRICT LIBRARY WHICH WOULD BE MOVED FROM LEASED PREMISES AT CAMBRIDGE COURT IN WATERLOO ROAD.

FACILITIES TO BE PROVIDED ON THE LOWER FLOORS WILL INCLUDE A PUBLIC TOILET, TOGETHER WITH A TOILET FOR THE HANDICAPPED, A COVERED SITTING-OUT AREA AND LIBRARY RECEPTION AREAS.

WORK ON THE CONTRACT WILL START NEXT WEEK AND BE COMPLETED IN MAY, 1985.

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1983

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SEIZED NARCOTICS BURNED

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ABOUT 446.5 KILOGRAMS OF DRUGS, WORTH ABOUT \$26.7 MILLION AT STREET PRICES, WERE DESTROYED IN THE KENNEDY TOWN INCINERATION PLANT TODAY (WEDNESDAY) AT A CEREMONY HELD AS PART OF THE ANTI-NARCOTICS CAMPAIGN.

THE DRUGS HAD BEEN SEIZED BY THE POLICE AND CUSTOMS AND EXCISE SERVICE IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS AND LATER RELEASED BY THE COURTS FOR DESTRUCTION.

SPEAKING AT THE CEREMONY, SIR ALBERT RODRIGUES, CHAIRMAN OF THE ACTION COMMITTEE AGAINST NARCOTICS EXPLAINED THAT SUCH BURNINGS WERE REGULARLY CARRIED OUT UNDER STRICT SECURITY, AND IN PRIVATE.

TODAY'S PUBLIC BURNING SERVED TWO PURPOSES: TO IMPRESS ON THE COMMUNITY THE MENACE OF DRUG TRAFFICKING AND ABUSE, ESPECIALLY TO THE YOUNGER MEMBERS AND TO THANK AND SHOW CONFIDENCE IN THE POLICE FORCE AND THE CUSTOMS AND EXCISE SERVICE.

SIR ALBERT SAID THAT, WITHOUT THE VIGILANCE OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES, THE NARCOTICS THAT WERE BURNED WOULD HAVE GONE INTO THE VEINS OF THOSE ON THE LOWEST RUNGS OF SOCIETY, WHO FORMED THE BULK OF HONG KONG'S ADDICTS.

HE PRAISED THE TWO SERVICES FOR THEIR SUCCESS IN THE ANTI-DRUG FIGHT AND SAID THEY WORKED UNDER GREAT DIFFICULTIES IN HONG KONG'S FREE PORT AND EXCHANGE SYSTEMS.

SIR ALBERT SPOKE OF THE +ENORMOUS PROBLEM+ OF LOOKING FOR DRUGS IN THE 28 MILLION TONS OF CARGO ARRIVING EVERY YEAR AND AMONG THE EIGHT MILLION INCOMING PASSENGERS, REPRESENTING 97 000 SHIP AND AIRCRAFT MOVEMENTS.

+YET AGAINST THESE ODDS, +OUR TWO SERVICES HAVE ACHIEVED SUCCESSES WHICH, OVER THE YEARS, HAVE EARNED FOR THEM AN INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION FOR OUTSTANDING EXPERTISE, COMPETENCE AND DEDICATION,+ HE SAID.

DESPITE THESE ENCOURAGING ACHIEVEMENTS, HOWEVER, HONG KONG WAS NOW FACING YET ANOTHER CHALLENGE, HE WARNED.

+FOLLOWING THREE SUCCESSIVE BUMPER OPIUM CROPS IN THE 'GOLDEN TRIANGLE+ SINCE 1981, AND THE LOSS OF MUCH OF THEIR FORMER LUCRATIVE MARKETS IN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA TO HEROIN FROM SOUTHWEST ASIA, DRUG TRAFFICKERS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA ARE MARKETING THEIR EVIL PRODUCTS MUCH MORE AGGRESSIVELY IN THIS REGION, IN AUSTRALASIA AND IN HONG KONG,+ HE SAID.

SIR ALBERT POINTED OUT THAT THE POLICE AND THE CUSTOMS SEIZED MORE DRUGS IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF THIS YEAR THAN IN THE WHOLE OF 1982.

+DESPITE THIS SUCCESS, THERE IS NOW A GREATER AVAILABILITY OF DRUGS ON THE STREETS, AND PRICES ARE AT A VERY LOW LEVEL,+ HE SAID.

/+AGAINST THIS

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+AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, THE DECLINING TREND IN DRUG ADDICTION SINCE 1974 WAS REVERSED IN 1981, AND ALL DRUG-RELATED INDICATORS ARE SUCH THAT THE SITUATION MUST CAUSE CONCERN TO ALL OF US,+ HE CONTINUED.

+WE MUST THEREFORE CONTINUE TO STEP UP OUR ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORTS IN ALL FIELDS - LAW ENFORCEMENT, TREATMENT, PREVENTION AND INTERNATIONAL ACTION,+ SIR ALBERT STRESSED.

SIR ALBERT ALSO APPEALED TO THE PUBLIC TO REPORT TO THE POLICE AND CUSTOMS SERVICE ANY SUSPICIONS THEY MAY HAVE CONCERNING NARCOTIC DRUGS.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

SOUVENIR PRESENTATION

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THE SECRETARY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, MR DAVID AKERS-JONES, WILL PRESENT SOUVENIRS TO THE PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS OF THIS YEAR'S CENTRAL AND WESTERN DISTRICT FESTIVAL TOMORROW (THURSDAY) EVENING.

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE PRESENTATION CEREMONY AT 6 PM IN THE ISLAND ROOM OF HOTEL FURAMA IN CENTRAL.

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NOTE TO EDITORS :

MEET THE MEDIA

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THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, MR JOHN CHAMBERS, WILL MEET THE MEDIA IN THE GIS THEATRE, BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, 5TH FLOOR, AT 4 PM TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE EVENT.

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RIGHT TURN PROHIBITED

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FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY (DECEMBER 9), RIGHT TURN MOVEMENT FROM THE SOUTHBOUND SECTION OF CHATHAM ROAD NORTH INTO SAN LAU STREET WILL BE PROHIBITED.

MOTORISTS USING THIS SECTION OF ROAD ARE ADVISED TO PROCEED VIA CHATHAM ROAD NORTH, SAN WAI STREET, GILLIES AVENUE AND SAN LAU STREET.

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