



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 1978

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SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS FOR INDUSTRIAL ESTATE
SITES TO SIGN LEASE AGREEMENTS SOON
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SOME OF THE SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS FOR SITES OF TAI PO INDUSTRIAL ESTATE STAGE I ARE EXPECTED TO SIGN THE LEASE AGREEMENTS WITHIN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS AND TO PROCEED WITH PREPARATION OF PLANS FOR BUILDING THEIR FACTORIES.

THIS WAS REVEALED BY THE HON. LI FOOK-WO IN HIS CAPACITY AS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE HONG KONG INDUSTRIAL ESTATES CORPORATION WHEN HE TABLED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY THE CORPORATION'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 1977.

MR. LI SAID SINCE THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF LEASING IN DECEMBER 1976, A STEADY FLOW OF APPLICATIONS HAD BEEN RECEIVED AND THESE NOW TOTALLED 84 OF WHICH TEN HAD BEEN APPROVED.

HE SAID THE LEASE DOCUMENT, WHICH HAD BEEN THE SUBJECT OF CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSIONS, AND THE AMENDMENT TO MEET PARTICULAR CRITICISMS BY INTERESTED PARTIES HAD BEEN FINALISED.

BUT HE SAID THE NAMES OF SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS COULD NOT BE ANNOUNCED UNTIL THE LEASE DOCUMENTS WERE ACTUALLY SIGNED BECAUSE THE CORPORATION WAS BOUND TO RESPECT THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF ALL APPLICATIONS.

ON THE PROGRESS OF WORK BY THE CORPORATION, MR. LI POINTED OUT THAT THE FORMATION OF LAND FOR STAGE I AT TAI PO ESTATE IS NOW SUBSTANTIALLY COMPLETE AND CONTRACTS HAVE BEEN LET FOR STAGE II.

HE WELCOMED THE RECENT APPROVAL BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE CORPORATION'S PROPOSAL TO PROCEED WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SECOND ESTATE AT YUEN LONG AND HOPED THAT LOANS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT LOAN FUND WILL SHORTLY BE MADE AVAILABLE TO ENABLE CONSTRUCTION TO COMMENCE IN THE FIRST HALF OF THIS YEAR.

COMMENTING ON THE LEVEL OF DEMAND AND QUALITY OF APPLICANTS, MR. LI SAID THEY HAD NOT BEEN +AS HIGH AS WE MAY HAVE HOPED, PARTICULARLY FROM OVERSEAS, IT HAS NONETHELESS BEEN ENCOURAGING AND COMMENSURATE WITH THE SUPPLY OF LAND.+

HE NOTED THAT THE CORPORATION AND THE FORMER PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY IN ESTABLISHING THE SELECTION CRITERIA AND LEASE CONDITIONS WERE MINDFUL OF THE SPECIAL PURPOSE OF INDUSTRIAL ESTATES AND THE SPECIAL PRICE OF THE LAND AND HAVE THEREFORE SOUGHT BY STRICT IMPOSITION OF THE CRITERIA AND CONDITIONS TO PREVENT MISUSE AND SPECULATION SO AS TO ENSURE THAT THE BASIC OBJECTIVE OF BROADENING THE BASE OF INDUSTRY IS ACHIEVED.

+THE TASK THUS FACING THE CORPORATION IS FAR FROM EASY BUT IT BELIEVES THE COURSE ON WHICH IT HAS SET OUT TO BE THE RIGHT ONE AND THAT ONLY IF THE ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE WILL BE BETTER SERVED SHOULD THE PRESENT POLICIES BE MODIFIED,+ MR. LI SAID.

/+AT THE MOMENT,

+AT THE MOMENT, HOWEVER, THE CORPORATION CONSIDERS ITS MAIN TASK IS THE FORMATION OF THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF LAND AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE BECAUSE UNTIL A SUFFICIENTLY LARGE AREA OF FORMED AND SERVICED LAND IS AVAILABLE, IT IS NOT REASONABLY POSSIBLE TO ASSESS OR PROVE DEMAND ACCURATELY.

+THE AVAILABILITY OF SUCH LAND WILL IN ITSELF STIMULATE DEMAND AND PROVE A POSITIVE ATTRACTION TO THE DESIRED TYPES OF INDUSTRY,+ HE ADDED.

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WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE 1978
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THE MAJORITY OF HONG KONG EMPLOYEES ARE NOW ENTITLED TO COMPENSATION BENEFITS IF INJURED AT WORK UNDER THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE 1978 PASSED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS (WEDNESDAY) AFTERNOON.

THE LAW RAISES THE WAGE CEILING IN THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ORDINANCE TO COVER THOSE NON-MANUAL EMPLOYEES EARNING UP TO \$5,000 A MONTH.

IT ALSO HAS THE EFFECT OF DISCOURAGING EMPLOYERS FROM DELAYING COMPENSATION PAYMENT TO INJURED WORKERS AND EXTENDS THE TIME LIMIT IN WHICH WORKERS CAN APPLY FOR COMPENSATION FROM 12 TO 24 MONTHS FROM THE DATE OF THE ACCIDENT.

IT ALSO AMENDS THE EXISTING LAW SO THAT ASSESSMENT OF CERTAIN INJURIES CAUSING PARTIAL PERMANENT INCAPACITIES SHOULD BE MADE BY REFERENCE TO THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ORDINANCE WHICH LISTS OUT THE PERCENTAGE OF LOSS OF EARNING POWER OF THE INJURED WORKER.

FORMERLY, THE LAW COVERED ONLY MANUAL WORKERS IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR MONTHLY EARNINGS AND THOSE NON-MANUAL EMPLOYEES EARNING NOT MORE THAN \$2,000 A MONTH.

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE SECOND READING OF THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1977 THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON. PETER WILLIAMS, SAID WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION WAS AN AREA THAT NEEDED CONSTANT REVIEW AND IMPROVEMENT.

HE SAID A WORKING PARTY WAS ABOUT TO START A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ORDINANCE OF WHICH SEVERAL AREAS REQUIRED EXAMINATION AND IMPROVEMENT.

THREE UNOFFICIALS - THE HON. WONG LAM, THE HON. LEUNG TAT-SHING, AND REV. THE HON. PATRICK MCGOVERN SPOKE IN SUPPORT OF THE BILL IN THE DEBATE.

MR. WONG POINTED OUT THAT IT IS REASONABLE TO EXTEND THE INCOME CEILING OF NON-MANUAL WORKERS FROM \$2,000 TO \$5,000, FOR THEY ARE ALL EMPLOYEES WHETHER MANUAL OR NON-MANUAL.

/BOTH MR. LEUNG AND

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BOTH MR. LEUNG AND FATHER MCGOVERN URGED THAT THE CEILING BE LIFTED ALTOGETHER. MR. LEUNG EXPLAINED THAT IT COULD BE DIFFICULT AND OFTEN NOT PRACTICABLE TO DRAW A LINE ALONG THE SCALE OF EARNINGS TO DISTINGUISH THOSE TO BE INCLUDED IN THE LAW= AND NON-MANUAL WORKERS SHOULD NOT BE DEBARRED, LIKE MANUAL WORKERS AT PRESENT, FROM PROTECTION ON AN INCOME BASIS.

FOR THOSE NON-MANUAL WORKERS NOT PROTECTED AT PRESENT, EVEN IF THEY COULD PROVE THAT THEIR EMPLOYERS OWED THEM A CIVIL LIABILITY TO PAY DAMAGES, THEY WERE LIABLE FOR THE COST OF ANY COURT PROCEEDINGS FOR THE RECOVERY OF THE DAMAGES, MR. LEUNG SAID.

MR. WONG ALSO POINTED OUT THE INADEQUACY IN THE EXISTING RATE OF COMPENSATION IN NOT TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE VARYING DEGREES OF LOSS BY WORKERS BELONGING TO DIFFERENT TRADES THOUGH SUFFERING FROM THE SAME PHYSICAL INJURY.

FOR EXAMPLE, HE SAID, THE LOSS OF AN INDEX FINGER WOULD MEAN DIFFERENTLY TO A HIGHLY-SKILLED CRAFTSMAN AND AN ORDINARY FACTORY HAND AND YET THE LOSS IN EARNING CAPACITY OF BOTH IS REGARDED AS 14 PER CENT.

FATHER MCGOVERN ADDED SUPPORT TO MR. WONG'S CALL FOR JUSTICE TO THE SKILLED WORKER. EASE OF ADMINISTRATION SHOULD NOT BE THE MAIN CONSIDERATION IN ASSESSMENT, +THE PURPOSE OF WORKMEN'S COMPENSATIONS IS PRIMARILY TO HELP THE INJURED PERSON TO A DEGREE WHICH WILL JUSTLY COMPENSATE FOR THE LOSS HE HAS SUFFERED,+ HE SAID.

HE ALSO THOUGHT THAT THE BASIS OF ASSESSMENT FOR COMPENSATION WAS GENERALLY INADEQUATE SO THAT THERE WAS INADEQUACY IN THE COMPENSATION PAID.

ALL THE THREE UNOFFICIALS SPOKE ON THE NEED TO INTRODUCE A PRO-RATA SURCHARGE ON LATE PAYMENTS OF COMPENSATION, TO IMPROVE ON THE FIXED \$50 OR 5 PER CENT (IF MORE) SURCHARGE PROVIDED FOR IN THE PRESENT AMENDING ORDINANCE.

FATHER MCGOVERN SAID THE PRESENT POSITION IS OPEN TO SERIOUS ABUSE, WHILE THERE SHOULD NOT BE ANY INSUPERABLE ADMINISTRATIVE DIFFICULTY IN INTRODUCING SUCH PRO-RATA SURCHARGES. +BUT EVEN IF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT DOES FIND PROBLEMS I AM SURE THAT ADVICE COULD BE SOUGHT FROM THE INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT WHICH SEEMS TO HAVE A HIGHLY EFFICIENT, ALMOST INSTANTANEOUS, METHOD OF GETTING OUT DEMAND NOTICES, AND SURCHARGES FOR LATE TAX PAYMENT,+ HE SAID.

MR. WONG WELCOMED THE IMPROVEMENT ARISING FROM EXTENDING THE TIME LIMIT FOR MAKING COMPENSATION APPLICATIONS, FROM 12 TO 24 MONTHS, WHICH WOULD GIVE INJURED WORKERS A MORE REALISTIC ASSESSMENT AND CUT DOWN ON UNNECESSARY ADMINISTRATIVE WORK.

VERY OFTEN, THE DEGREE OF PERMANENT INCAPACITY AND HENCE THE LOSS SUFFERED BY AN INJURED WORKER IS NOT POSSIBLE TO ASSESS BEFORE THE EXPIRY OF THE PRESENT 12 MONTHS PERIOD, HE SAID.

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BILL TO TRANSFER NOTE-ISSUING POWERS TO HONGKONG BANK

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TWO BILLS AIMED AT TRANSFERRING THE NOTE-ISSUING POWERS FROM MERCANTILE BANK TO HONGKONG AND SHANGHAI BANKING CORPORATION, AND ENSURING THAT MERCANTILE BANK NOTES IN CIRCULATION WILL REMAIN LEGAL TENDER WERE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THEY ARE THE HONG KONG AND SHANGHAI BANKING CORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978 AND THE MERCANTILE BANK NOTE ISSUE (REPEAL) BILL 1978.

SPEAKING AT THE SECOND READING OF THE FIRST BILL, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE SAID THE BILL SOUGHT TO REPEAL THE NOTE-ISSUING POWERS OF MERCANTILE BANK AND TO TRANSFER ITS AUTHORITY TO THE HONG KONG AND SHANGHAI BANKING CORPORATION TO ISSUE NOTES UP TO \$30 MILLION AGAINST SECURITIES.

MR. HADDON-CAVE POINTED OUT THAT THE MERCANTILE BANK WAS ACQUIRED BY THE HONGKONG BANK IN 1964 AND SINCE THEN ITS OPERATIONS WITHIN HONG KONG HAVE BEEN PROGRESSIVELY ABSORBED WITHIN THE HONGKONG BANK, AND AS A RESULT ALL BUT ONE OF ITS BRANCHES IN HONG KONG HAVE NOW BEEN CLOSED.

+THUS, THE MERCANTILE BANK'S POSITION AS A NOTE-ISSUING BANK HAS BECOME ANOMALOUS.

+MOREOVER,+ HE SAID, +THERE ARE ONLY ABOUT \$30 MILLION OF THE BANK'S NOTES IN CIRCULATION AND THEY ACCOUNT FOR LESS THAN ONE PER CENT OF THE TOTAL NOTE CIRCULATION.+

HE SAID BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE HONG KONG BANK GROUP NOW FELT THAT THE EXISTENCE OF A THIRD NOTE-ISSUING BANK WAS NO LONGER NECESSARY OR DESIRABLE.

AT PRESENT THE THREE NOTE-ISSUING BANKS MAY ISSUE SMALL AMOUNTS OF NOTES KNOWN AS +AUTHORISED ISSUES+ AGAINST INTEREST BEARING SECURITIES IN A FORM APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND DEPOSITED WITH THE GOVERNMENT OR THE CROWN AGENTS.

BOTH THE HONGKONG BANK AND THE MERCANTILE BANK ARE PERMITTED TO ISSUE \$30 MILLION EACH AND THE CHARTERED BANK HAS AN AUTHORISED ISSUE OF \$35 MILLION.

ADDITIONAL NOTES THAT FORM THE VAST BULK OF THE TOTAL NOTE CIRCULATION ARE ISSUED AGAINST NON-INTEREST BEARING CERTIFICATES OF INDEBTEDNESS ISSUED BY THE EXCHANGE FUND AND OVER 80 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL NOTES IN CIRCULATION ARE ISSUED BY THE HONGKONG BANK.

ON THE SECOND READING OF THE MERCANTILE BANK NOTE ISSUE (REPEAL) BILL, MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID THE MOST SIGNIFICANT POINT IN THE BILL FOR THE PUBLIC WAS THAT WHEN THE BILL BECAME LAW, ANY MERCANTILE BANK NOTE IN ISSUE WOULD BE DEEMED TO HAVE BEEN ISSUED BY THE HONGKONG BANK.

/+THIS ENSURES THAT

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+THIS ENSURES THAT WHEN THE MERCANTILE BANK'S NOTE-ISSUING POWERS CEASE ITS NOTES WILL REMAIN LEGAL TENDER AND THE HONGKONG BANK WILL BE OBLIGED TO REDEEM THEM.

+THERE IS, THEREFORE, NO DANGER THAT SUCH NOTES IN THE HANDS OF THE PUBLIC WILL LOSE THEIR VALUE,+ HE ADDED.

THE DEBATES ON THE BILLS HAVE BEEN ADJOURNED.

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URBCO TO PROVIDE INEXPENSIVE FUNERAL SERVICE

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A BILL TO ENABLE THE URBAN COUNCIL TO PROVIDE INEXPENSIVE FUNERAL SERVICE TO FAMILIES WITH LIMITED INCOMES, WHEN THE NEED ARISES, WAS PASSED INTO LAW IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND URBAN SERVICES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978, UNOFFICIAL MEMBER, THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN, SAID: +TO ENABLE THE LIVING, ESPECIALLY THOSE FAMILIES WHO HAVE A LIMITED INCOME, TO PROVIDE A DIGNIFIED AND INEXPENSIVE FUNERAL SERVICE FOR THEIR DEPARTED ONES, IT IS PROPER AND FITTING FOR THIS COUNCIL TO SUPPORT AND APPROVE THIS AMENDING BILL.+

HE ADDED THAT WITH THE DECLINE IN THE VALUE OF THE HONG KONG DOLLAR OVER THE YEARS, +IT COULD BE CLAIMED THAT IT COST AS MUCH TO BE ALIVE THAN TO DIE AND BE BURIED.+

IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE URBAN COUNCIL WOULD START THE ECONOMICAL FUNERAL SERVICE WHEN THE NEW HUNG HOM PUBLIC FUNERAL HALL IS OPENED IN MARCH THIS YEAR.

MR. CHEONG-LEEN, WHO IS ALSO AN URBAN COUNCILLOR, REVEALED THAT THE URBAN COUNCIL IS WORKING OUT DETAILS OF THE SERVICE TO BE PROVIDED, WHICH MIGHT INCLUDE A TRAINED MASTER OF CEREMONIES, SUITABLE BACKGROUND MUSIC, AND THE ORGANISING OF RECEPTION ARRANGEMENTS FOR THOSE ATTENDING THE FUNERAL.

HE HOPED THAT THE EXPERIENCE OF THE URBAN COUNCIL IN THE OPERATION OF THE NEW HUNG HOM PUBLIC FUNERAL HALL MAY WELL INDICATE FUTURE DEMAND FOR THIS SERVICE IN OTHER PARTS OF THE URBAN AREAS AS WELL AS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES.

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HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC AMENDMENT BILL PASSED
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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY PASSED A BILL WHICH SEEKS TO AMEND SUBSTANTIALLY THE POLYTECHNIC ORDINANCE.

TWO UNOFFICIALS SPOKE IN SUPPORT OF THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978.

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE BILL, SENIOR UNOFFICIAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR, THE HON. SIR S.Y. CHUNG HOPED THAT ANY CHANGES IN FUTURE WOULD TAKE THE FORM OF FURTHER EXPANSION IN STUDENT NUMBERS, PARTICULARLY IN RESPECT OF THOSE PURSUING PART-TIME STUDIES WHO NEEDED TO UP-DATE AND RE-TRAIN THEMSELVES TO MEET THE EVER-CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES IN HONG KONG.

+WE ARE ALL ACUTELY AWARE IN THIS COUNCIL OF THE URGENT NEED TO DIVERSIFY HONG KONG'S INDUSTRIES, AND THE POLYTECHNIC MUST AND WILL PLAY AN EVER-INCREASING ROLE IN THIS VITALLY IMPORTANT ENDEAVOUR,+ HE SAID.

SIR S.Y. CHUNG POINTED OUT THAT EXPANSION AND DIVERSIFICATION OF THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC INVARIABLY BROUGHT GREATER COMPLEXITY INTO MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION AND IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT THE BILL SOUGHT TO PROVIDE AN ENLARGEMENT OF THE GOVERNING BODY FROM 15 TO 23 MEMBERS.

HE SAID THE APPOINTMENT OF FOUR OF THESE ADDITIONAL MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS, WHICH THE BILL SOUGHT TO RETITLE THE +COUNCIL OF THE POLYTECHNIC+, WOULD BE DRAWN FROM INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE.

THIS WOULD INCREASE THE REPRESENTATION OF THE +PRIVATE SECTOR+ BY 50 PER CENT.

+THIS WILL NOT ONLY PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY TO FURTHER DIVERSIFY THE VARIETY OF COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE ON THE GOVERNING BODY, BUT WILL ALSO LIGHTEN THE MANAGERIAL BURDEN WHICH HAS BEEN IMPOSED UPON ALL TOO FEW MEMBERS IN THE PAST,+ HE SAID.

COMMENTING ON THE PROVISION WHICH WOULD ENABLE THE STAFF OF THE POLYTECHNIC TO ELECT THREE REPRESENTATIVES TO SERVE ON THE NEW COUNCIL, SIR S.Y. CHUNG SAID ALTHOUGH THE POLYTECHNIC HAD APPROACHED THE QUESTION OF STAFF REPRESENTATION WITH SOME CAUTION, FOR MORE THAN TWO YEARS, TWO STAFF MEMBERS HAD BEEN IN REGULAR ATTENDANCE AT GOVERNOR BOARD MEETING.

+THERE IS EVERY INDICATION THAT THIS EXPERIMENT HAS BEEN A SUCCESS,+ HE STRESSED.

ANOTHER PROVISION OF THE AMENDING BILL GAVE STATUTORY RECOGNITION TO THE POLYTECHNIC'S INTERNAL ACADEMIC COMMITTEE WHICH, SIR S.Y. CHUNG SAID, WAS SIMILAR TO THE UNIVERSITIES' SENATES.

BUT, HE SAID THE POLYTECHNIC'S FOREMOST COUNCIL OF +TECHNOCRATS+ CALLED ITSELF THE +ACADEMIC BOARD+, AND HE HOPED IT WOULD FUNCTION +WITH A STABILITY AND PERPETUITY WHICH ITS ENSHRINEMENT IN THE ORDINANCE WILL HOPEFULLY BRING ABOUT+.

CONCERNING THE LAST PROVISION OF THE BILL WHICH CONFERRED THE PRESIDENCY OF THE POLYTECHNIC UPON THE GOVERNOR, SIR S.Y. CHUNG PAID TRIBUTE TO THE GOVERNOR FOR ACCEPTING IT BY A NON-STATUTORY ARRANGEMENT IN EARLY 1973 AND HIS REGULAR OFFICIATION AT THE POLYTECHNIC'S GRADUATION CEREMONIES.

+THIS HAD DONE MUCH TO ENHANCE THE PRESTIGE OF THE INSTITUTION AND TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE GRADUATES THE HIGH VALUE WHICH HONG KONG PLACES UPON THEIR FUTURE CONTRIBUTION TO OUR SOCIETY,+ HE SAID.

SIR S.Y. CHUNG ALSO OBSERVED THAT THE FULL-TIME STUDENT POPULATION OF THE POLYTECHNIC HAD EXPANDED FROM 3,500 TO OVER 9,000 IN SIX YEARS AND THE SPECTRUM OF COURSES HAD WIDENED TO PROVIDE STUDIES IN VARIOUS NEW AREAS.

+DESPITE THE FAST EXPANSION OF THE POLYTECHNIC, ONLY SIX PER CENT OF LAST YEAR'S GRADUATES WERE STILL UNEMPLOYED BY OCTOBER 1977 AND THE RATIO OF QUALIFIED APPLICANTS TO FULL-TIME PLACES AVAILABLE FOR THE CURRENT ACADEMIC YEAR IS MAINTAINED AT HIGH LEVEL OF ABOUT SIX TO ONE,+ HE ADDED.

ALSO SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE BILL, DR. THE HON. RAYSON HUANG DESCRIBED THE EXPANSION OF THE POLYTECHNIC AS +TRULY REMARKABLE+ AND SAID IN THE YEARS TO COME, AS HONG KONG MOVED TOWARDS DIVERSIFICATION OF ITS ECONOMY, THE POLYTECHNIC WOULD HAVE AN EVEN GREATER ROLE TO PLAY IN PROVIDING TECHNICAL PERSONNEL IN A HOST OF DISCIPLINES.

+THE TIME HAS THEREFORE COME FOR POLYTECHNIC'S TEACHERS, WHO HAVE NOW SETTLED IN THEIR JOBS AND HAVE BECOME CONVERSANT WITH LOCAL CONDITIONS IN HONG KONG AND ITS NEEDS TO BE GIVEN A GREATER PART IN THE GOVERNANCE OF THE INSTITUTION.

+THIS WILL PROVIDE THEM WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO HELP IN CHARTING THE COURSE OF THE POLYTECHNIC'S FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS AND AT THE SAME TIME GIVE THEM A GREATER SENSE OF PARTICIPATION AND BELONGING,+ HE ADDED.

FILM CENSORSHIP ARRANGEMENTS UNDER CONSTANT REVIEW

THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON. F.K. LI, TODAY ASSURED THAT IT IS GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO KEEP THE PRESENT FILM CENSORSHIP ARRANGEMENTS UNDER CONSTANT REVIEW TO ENSURE THAT APPROPRIATE IMPROVEMENTS ARE MADE WHEREVER NECESSARY.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. KWAN KO SIU-WAH IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR. LI SAID FOR THIS REASON, THE COMMISSIONER FOR TELEVISION AND ENTERTAINMENT LICENSING OR HIS STAFF FREQUENTLY ATTEND SEMINARS AND DISCUSSIONS ORGANISED BY MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES, AREA COMMITTEES, KAIFONG ASSOCIATIONS, STUDENTS GROUPS AND OTHER BODIES TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON CURRENT CENSORSHIP PROBLEMS.

+THESE DISCUSSIONS GREATLY ASSIST THE COMMISSIONER TO KEEP ABREAST WITH PUBLIC SENTIMENTS,+ HE ADDED.

MR. LI ALSO SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS GENERALLY SATISFIED THAT PUBLIC OPINION HAS BEEN ADEQUATELY REFLECTED IN FILM CENSORSHIP.

GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO SELL SITE
OF CENTRAL FIRE BRIGADE BUILDING
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THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO SELL BY PUBLIC AUCTION THE SITE NOW OCCUPIED BY THE FIRE BRIGADE BUILDING FOR FULL COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT WHEN IT BECOMES VACANT.

THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES, SAID THIS IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. LYDIA DUNN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HOWEVER, MR. JONES SAID, THE SITE WAS UNLIKELY TO BE READY FOR SALE FOR ANOTHER TWO OR THREE YEARS BECAUSE ITS AVAILABILITY DEPENDED ON THE REPROVISIONING OF THE CENTRAL FIRE STATION.

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ENCOURAGING SAFE WORKING PRACTICES
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THE NUMBER OF WORKERS KILLED IN FALLS FROM HIGH WORKING PLACES WAS A CAUSE FOR CONCERN AND A GREAT DEAL OF ADVICE WAS BEING GIVEN BY THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT TO ENCOURAGE SAFER WORKING PRACTICES, THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON. PETER WILLIAMS SAID TODAY.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL FROM THE HON. LEUNG TAT-SHING, MR. WILLIAMS HOPED THAT ENFORCEMENT, ADVICE AND EDUCATION BY HIS DEPARTMENT WOULD ENCOURAGE SAFER WORKING PRACTICES AND ADDED THAT IN THE END IT WAS THE VIGILANCE OF CONTRACTORS AND INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYEES THAT WOULD EFFECTIVELY REDUCE THE NUMBER OF THESE CASUALTIES.

HE POINTED OUT THAT IN 1977, THE INDUSTRIAL SAFETY TRAINING CENTRE OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT'S FACTORY INSPECTORATE ORGANISED 79 COURSES IN CONSTRUCTION SAFETY.

+THESE COURSES WERE ATTENDED BY NEARLY 2,000 PERSONS EMPLOYED IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY WHERE THE MAJORITY OF FALLS FROM WORK AT HEIGHT OCCUR.

+PRECAUTION AGAINST FALLS FORMS AN IMPORTANT PART OF EVERY COURSE, + MR. WILLIAMS SAID.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT A MOBILE EXHIBITION VISITED MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY SITES ON THREE OCCASIONS DURING THE YEAR TO DISPLAY SAFETY MEASURES TO WORKERS ON SITE AND THAT FACTORY INSPECTORS GAVE WRITTEN AND VERBAL ADVICE TO CONTRACTORS AND WORKERS DURING THE COURSE OF THEIR REGULAR INSPECTIONS OF CONSTRUCTION SITES.

REFERRING TO PROTECTION BY LEGISLATION, MR. WILLIAMS SAID THIS WAS NOW AFFORDED BY THE CONSTRUCTION SITES (SAFETY) REGULATIONS WHICH COVER THE USE OF LIFTING APPLIANCES AND OTHER ASPECTS OF WORK ON A CONSTRUCTION SITE AND ADDITIONAL AMENDMENTS TO THE LEGISLATION HAD BEEN PREPARED AND WOULD BE INTRODUCED LATER.

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INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS IN 1977

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THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON. PETER WILLIAMS SAID TODAY, ASSUMING THE PATTERN OF MAIN CAUSES FOR LAST YEAR'S INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS FOLLOWED THAT OF 1976, FATAL ACCIDENTS IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY DURING 1977 WERE MAINLY CAUSED BY +FALLING FROM HEIGHTS+ AND +VEHICLES AND MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT.+

HE EXPECTED THIS WOULD BE THE CASE AND BASED ON THIS, HE SAID, THE FIRST CATEGORY OF FATAL ACCIDENTS WOULD TAKE UP 32 PER CENT AND THE SECOND CATEGORY 22 PER CENT OF TOTAL NUMBER OF DEATHS IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY.

MR. WILLIAMS WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL FROM THE HON. FRANCIS TIEN WHO ASKED FOR LAST YEAR'S TOTAL NUMBER OF INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS AND THEIR MAIN CAUSES.

MR. WILLIAMS SAID TOTAL FIGURES FOR LAST YEAR WOULD NOT BE AVAILABLE UNTIL LATE NEXT MONTH AS AT THIS TIME OF THE YEAR THERE WERE STILL A NUMBER OF ACCIDENT NOTIFICATIONS TO BE RECEIVED AND PROCESSED.

HOWEVER, HE GAVE A ROUGH INDICATION OF THE 1977 FIGURES. IN THE CASE OF NON-FATAL ACCIDENTS IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY, HE SAID THE MAIN CAUSES WERE +STEPPING ON OR STRIKING AGAINST OBJECTS+ - 30 PER CENT= +FALLING FROM HEIGHTS+ - 18 PER CENT AND SO CALLED +HANDLING WITHOUT MACHINERY+ - 17 PER CENT.

IN THE CASE OF NON-FATAL INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS, THE MAIN CAUSES WERE +STEPPING ON OR STRIKING AGAINST OBJECTS+ - 28 PER CENT, AND +MACHINERY ACCIDENTS+ -- 27 PER CENT.

MR. WILLIAMS ALSO POINTED OUT THAT DURING THE FIRST THREE QUARTERS OF 1977 THERE WERE 67 FATAL AND 9,300 NON-FATAL ACCIDENTS IN NON-REGISTRABLE INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS= 30 FATAL AND 16,600 NON-FATAL ACCIDENTS IN REGISTRABLE INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS= AND 86 FATAL AND 8,700 NON-FATAL ONES IN OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES.

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MAJOR REVIEW OF BUILDING CONTROL LAW UNDERWAY
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THE GOVERNMENT IS CONDUCTING A MAJOR REVIEW OF EXISTING BUILDING CONTROL LEGISLATION AND IS EXPLORING MEANS OF INCREASING PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE LAW RELATING TO BUILDING AND THE DANGERS OF CARRYING OUT ILLEGAL BUILDING WORKS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE HON. DAVID MCDONALD, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. LEUNG TAT-SHING AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

+AS PART OF THIS REVIEW, A STUDY WILL BE CONDUCTED INTO THE TYPES OF ILLEGAL WORKS COMMONLY CARRIED OUT AND THEIR EFFECTS SO AS TO ASCERTAIN WHAT FURTHER EXEMPTIONS UNDER THE LEGISLATION COULD BE GIVEN IN ORDER TO REDUCE THE OVERALL PROBLEM TO ONE OF PRACTICABLE DIMENSIONS,+ HE SAID. +AT THE SAME TIME, METHODS OF IMPROVING ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS IN MULTI-STOREY BUILDINGS ARE ALSO BEING EXAMINED.+

MR. MCDONALD SAID THAT THE CURRENT POLICY REGARDING ILLEGAL BUILDING WORKS WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1975.

IN VIEW OF THE SIZE OF THE PROBLEM AND THE STAFFING SITUATION IN THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE, HE SAID, IT WAS DECIDED THAT FOR BUILDINGS COMPLETED AFTER JULY 31, 1975, ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN AGAINST ALL WORKS WHICH CONTRAVENED THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE AND FOR BUILDINGS COMPLETED ON OR BEFORE THAT DATE ACTION WOULD BE RESTRICTED TO REMOVING ILLEGAL WORKS WHICH WERE A RISK TO LIFE AND LIMB.

REFERRING TO MR. LEUNG'S QUESTION, MR. MCDONALD SAID IT MAINLY RELATED TO THE VERY LARGE NUMBER OF POSTWAR DOMESTIC BUILDINGS CONSTRUCTED BEFORE AUGUST 1975.

+WHILE IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO FORECAST WHEN ILLEGAL BUILDING WORKS IN THESE PREMISES CAN BE BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL, IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS TO BE MADE IN THE NEXT SESSION FOLLOWING THE REVIEW I HAVE REFERRED TO, TOGETHER WITH A FURTHER EXPANSION OF THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE, WILL ENABLE SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS TO BE MADE IN THIS FIELD,+ HE ADDED.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 1978

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ENFORCEMENT OF BUILDING LEASE CONDITIONS

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THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON. DEREK JONES, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY THAT ADDITIONAL POSTS FOR THE ENFORCEMENT OF BUILDING LEASE CONDITIONS HAD BEEN CREATED AND RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING WAS PROCEEDING.

MR. JONES WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. FRANCIS TIEN CONCERNING THE USE OF GROUND FLOOR PARKING AREAS IN INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS AS GODOWNS AND MACHINE SHOPS.

HE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT TOOK A SERIOUS VIEW OF BREACHES OF LEASE CONDITIONS SUCH AS THE MISUSE OF PARKING AREAS IN INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS.

+THE REQUIREMENTS FOR GROUND FLOOR PARKING AREAS ARE PROVIDED TO ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE OFF-STREET LOADING AND UNLOADING FACILITIES ARE MADE AVAILABLE IN LARGE INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS,+ MR. JONES SAID.

+AND THE AIM OF THE GOVERNMENT IS STRICTLY TO ENFORCE THESE CONDITIONS, PARTICULARLY IN NEW BUILDINGS AND IN CASES WHERE IT IS CLEAR THAT BREACHES ADD SIGNIFICANTLY TO TRAFFIC CONGESTION.+

BUT, MR. JONES ADDED, THE PROCESS OF ENFORCEMENT DEPENDS IN PRACTICE ON THE AVAILABILITY OF SUFFICIENT EXPERIENCED STAFF AND OTHER COMPETING PRIORITIES FOR THEIR DEPLOYMENT.

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SELECTION OF AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT IN NT
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IT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TO PRESERVE VILLAGES WHEREVER POSSIBLE WITHIN AREAS SELECTED FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, THE SECRETARY FOR THE NEW TERRITORIES, MR. DAVID AKERS-JONES, SAID TODAY.

MR. AKERS-JONES STRESSED IN HIS REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. CHARLES YEUNG AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THAT THE SELECTION OF AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT WAS MADE VERY CAREFULLY.

VILLAGERS ARE CLOSELY AND INDIVIDUALLY CONSULTED WHERE THEIR OWN VILLAGE IS INVOLVED, AND RURAL COMMITTEES ARE CONSULTED WHERE GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS ARE CONCERNED, HE ADDED.

+IF WE COULD, WE WOULD CHOOSE AREAS WHICH DID NOT DISTURB PRIVATE RIGHTS AND ANCIENT VILLAGES, BUT THIS HAS NOT BEEN POSSIBLE,+ MR. AKERS-JONES SAID.

GENERALLY, HE EXPLAINED, MOST AREAS SELECTED FOR DEVELOPMENT CONSIST OF RECLAMATION OF THE SEA COUPLED WITH DEVELOPMENT OF THE ADJOINING LAND, AND DEVELOPMENTS AT SHA TIN AND TUEN MUN ARE TYPICAL EXAMPLES OF THIS.

HOWEVER, HE ADDED, MANY VILLAGES ARE WELL BELOW DEVELOPMENT LEVELS AND WOULD BE SUBJECT TO FLOODING, AND THERE MAY BE OTHER PRACTICAL REASONS FOR THEIR REMOVAL.

WITH REGARD TO VILLAGERS' REPRESENTATIONS, MR. AKERS-JONES SAID SOME TOWNS WERE COVERED BY STATUTORY PLANS UNDER THE TOWN PLANNING ORDINANCE WHICH PRESCRIBED THE PROCESS FOR PUBLIC COMMENT AND REPRESENTATION, WHILE OTHERS WERE COVERED BY LAYOUT PLANS WHICH WERE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE.

+BUT WHATEVER THE CASE, THERE WOULD BE CONSULTATION WITH LOCAL LEADERS AND AN EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION DURING THE PROCESS OF SELECTING A PARTICULAR AREA FOR DEVELOPMENT.+

THEREAFTER, HE SAID, DRAFT LAYOUT PLANS ARE DISCUSSED IN GENERAL TERMS WITH RURAL COMMITTEES AND COMMENTS FORWARDED TO THE PLANNING OFFICERS FOR CONSIDERATION.

+WHERE INDIVIDUAL VILLAGES ARE INVOLVED, WHICH MAY HAVE TO BE MOVED, VILLAGERS AND VILLAGE REPRESENTATIVES WILL BE INFORMED, PROPOSALS FOR REMOVAL DISCUSSED, AND, SO FAR AS IT IS POSSIBLE, LOCAL VIEWS ON A SITE FOR RE-LOCATION TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT,+ HE SAID.

MR. AKERS-JONES ADDED THAT THE RECENT APPOINTMENT OF DISTRICT ADVISORY BOARDS WOULD PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR MORE FORMAL AND EXTENSIVE CONSULTATION ABOUT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS.

+DISTRICT OFFICERS WILL BE INSTRUCTED TO DISCUSS LOCAL PLANS WITH THEIR ADVISORY BOARDS AND TO SEEK THEIR ADVICE,+ HE SAID.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 1978

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POLICY ON COMPUTERISATION OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

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THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON. SIR DENYS ROBERTS SAID TODAY IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TO USE COMPUTERS IF PRACTICABLE WHEN THIS WOULD SAVE STAFF COSTS OR PRODUCE QUICKER AND MORE RELIABLE RESULTS.

IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS FROM THE HON. S.L. CHEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, SIR DENYS SAID ALL PROPOSALS FOR COMPUTERISATION OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS HAD TO BE APPROVED BY A COMPUTER APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE.

HE NOTED THAT THE COMMITTEE COMPRISING THE SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATION, THE DEPUTY FINANCIAL SECRETARY AND THE SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, ALSO DETERMINED THE PRIORITY TO BE GIVEN IN EACH CASE.

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REVIEW OF HOUSING POLICIES FOR CIVIL SERVANTS

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THE GOVERNMENT IS REVIEWING ALL EXISTING POLICIES FOR THE HOUSING OF CIVIL SERVANTS TO DECIDE WHETHER THEY SHOULD BE MODIFIED AND, IF SO, HOW THESE MODIFICATIONS SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT.

THE SECRETARY FOR CIVIL SERVICE, THE HON. RON BRIDGE SAID THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. HILTON CHEONG-LEEN.

MR. BRIDGE SAID VIEWS OF THE MAIN STAFF ASSOCIATIONS HAD BEEN OBTAINED INFORMALLY AND HE EXPECTED THE REVIEW WILL BE COMPLETED BY THE MIDDLE OF THIS YEAR.

IN ANSWER TO A POINT RAISED BY MR. CHEONG-LEEN ON A LOAN SCHEME FOR ABOUT 8,000 LOCAL CIVIL SERVANTS, WHO ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR ANY FORM OF PUBLIC HOUSING OR HOUSING ALLOWANCES, TO PURCHASE THEIR OWN FLATS, MR. BRIDGE SAID IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO CONSIDER THE LOAN SCHEME TO THESE CIVIL SERVANTS AT PRESENT IN ISOLATION FROM THE TYPE OF ASSISTANCE GIVEN TO OTHER CIVIL SERVANTS.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 1978

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HOUSING AUTHORITY APPOINTS ITS OWN AUDITORS
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THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON. ALAN SCOTT, SAID TODAY THAT THE HOUSING AUTHORITY APPOINTED ITS OWN AUDITORS UNDER THE HOUSING ORDINANCE AND REVIEWED THE APPOINTMENT ANNUALLY.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. WONG LAM, WHO ASKED WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WOULD AGREE THAT THE ACCOUNTS OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY SHOULD BE AUDITED BY THE DIRECTOR OF AUDIT IN VIEW OF THE VERY HEAVY EXPENDITURE ON PUBLIC HOUSING.

MR. SCOTT SAID IT WAS THE CASE THAT VERY LARGE SUMS OF MONEY WERE ALLOCATED TO THE PROVISION OF PUBLIC HOUSING BUT A PRIVATE FIRM OF ACCOUNTANTS HAD CARRIED OUT THE AUDIT TASK SINCE 1954 TO THE SATISFACTION OF THE AUTHORITY.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE ACCOUNTS OF THE AUTHORITY ARE TABLED ANNUALLY IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

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NURSERY IN HOUSING ESTATES
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IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE EXISTING POLICY OF PROVIDING 1,000 MORE SUBVENTED NURSERY PLACES EACH YEAR, SUFFICIENT ACCOMMODATION MAINLY IN NEW PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES AND TEMPORARY HOUSING AREAS HAVE BEEN EARMARKED TO MEET REQUIREMENTS IN 1978/79, THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, THE HON. THOMAS LEE, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. KWAN KO SIU-WAH, MR. LEE SAID THAT THIS WOULD ENSURE THAT RESIDENTS OF THESE NEW ESTATES WHO WERE ELIGIBLE FOR USING SUBVENTED SERVICES WOULD HAVE THE SAME CHANCES OF GETTING THEIR CHILDREN INTO SUBVENTED PLACES AS THOSE IN EXISTING HOUSING ESTATES IN WHICH MOST OF THESE NURSERIES WERE LOCATED.

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ENFORCEMENT OF REGULATIONS ON NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN EACH CLASS
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THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO ENFORCE THE REGULATIONS SO FAR AS IS PRACTICAL CONCERNING THE PERMISSIBLE NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN EACH CLASS IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS ESPECIALLY IN THOSE CLASSES WITH BOUGHT PLACES.

THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, THE HON. KENNETH TOPLEY SAID THIS IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM REV. THE HON. JOYCE M. BENNETT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 1978

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EXPANSION OF DISTRICT COURT JURISDICTION
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THE GOVERNMENT IS TO CONSIDER THE ENLARGEMENT OF THE JURISDICTION OF THE DISTRICT COURT TO ENABLE IT TO DEAL WITH PROCEEDINGS OF ANNUAL RENT, RATEABLE VALUE OR ANNUAL VALUE OF UP TO \$15,000.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON. JOHN HOBLEY, STATED THIS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM DR. THE HON. HENRY HU.

AT PRESENT UNDER THE PARTITION ORDINANCE, THE DISTRICT COURT DEALS WITH PROCEEDINGS WHERE THE ANNUAL RENT, RATEABLE VALUE OR ANNUAL VALUE DOES NOT EXCEED \$5,000.

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MARRIAGE REGISTRIES
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THE CHIEF SECRETARY, THE HON. SIR DENYS ROBERTS SAID TODAY THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER OPENING MORE MARRIAGE REGISTRIES ON SUNDAYS IF THERE WAS SUFFICIENT DEMAND TO JUSTIFY IT.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL FROM THE HON. ALEX WU WHO ASKED WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER KEEPING A MARRIAGE REGISTRY BOTH IN KOWLOON AND THE NEW TERRITORIES OPEN ON SUNDAY MORNINGS IN VIEW OF THE GROWING POPULATION AND THE INCREASING DEMAND FOR THIS SERVICE IN THESE AREAS.

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AVERAGE TIME FOR ISSUE OF TRAFFIC OFFENCE SUMMONS
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THE AVERAGE PERIOD BETWEEN THE DATE OF A NON-FIXED PENALTY TRAFFIC OFFENCE AND THE ISSUE OF A SUMMONS WAS ABOUT THREE MONTHS, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON. JOHN HOBLEY SAID TODAY.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM REV. THE HON. JOYCE M. BENNETT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR. HOBLEY SAID ACCORDING TO CURRENT FIGURES PROVIDED BY THE POLICE, THE AVERAGE PERIOD BETWEEN THE DATE OF SUCH OFFENCE AND THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF A DEFENDANT IN A MAGISTRATE'S COURT WAS ABOUT FOUR MONTHS.

HE ALSO SAID THAT THE AVERAGE PERIOD BETWEEN THE DATE OF THE OFFENCE AND THE DATE FIXED FOR THE HEARING WHEN PROCEEDINGS ARE DEFENDED IS ABOUT FIVE MONTHS.

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TAX ON NON-PROFIT MAKING CLUBS

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THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT INCREASES IN PROPERTY TAX PAYABLE BY SOME NON-PROFIT-MAKING SPORTS AND RECREATION CLUBS HAVE CAUSED +GRAVE ADVERSE EFFECTS+, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON. CHARLES YEUNG, MR. HADDON-CAVE AGREED THAT THE INCREASES IN THE ASSESSABLE VALUES FOR SPORTS AND RECREATION CLUBS RANGED FROM FIVE TIMES TO A LITTLE OVER 20 TIMES, BUT POINTED OUT THAT THE GENERAL RUN OF INCREASES DID NOT EXCEED 10 TIMES.

+I MIGHT ADD THAT THE NUMBER OF CLUBS WHICH MAY, AS A RESULT, BE LIABLE FOR TAX AT OVER \$100,000 PER ANNUM IS VERY, VERY SMALL INDEED, AND I ONLY KNOW TWO CASES,+ HE SAID.

+AND IT IS, OF COURSE, OPEN TO A CLUB TO OBTAIN EXEMPTION FROM PROPERTY TAX BY ENSURING THAT LESS THAN HALF OF ITS INCOME IS DERIVED FROM VOTING MEMBERS, ALTHOUGH IT WILL THEREBY BECOME LIABLE TO PROFITS TAX FOR IT WILL NO LONGER BE REGARDED BY THE INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT AS A PRIVATE CLUB,+ HE ADDED.

REFERRING TO A POSSIBLE MISCONCEPTION, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY POINTED OUT THAT PROPERTY TAX WAS NO LONGER CHARGED ON RATEABLE VALUES.

+SINCE 1976-77 PROPERTY TAX HAS BEEN CHARGED ON QUITE SEPARATE ASSESSABLE VALUES, THAT IS TO SAY, VALUES WHICH, GENERALLY, ARE FIXED IN LINE WITH CURRENT MARKET RENTALS, BUT WHICH ALSO REFLECT THE EFFECTIVE RESTRICTIONS PROVIDED FOR UNDER THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) ORDINANCE,+ HE SAID.

MR. HADDON-CAVE ADDED THAT THE REASON FOR THE INCREASES WAS THAT PREVIOUS ASSESSMENTS WERE BASED ON AN OUTDATED RATING FORMULA WHICH HAD NOT BEEN REVISED FOR MANY YEARS.

WITH THE CHANGE-OVER FROM RATEABLE VALUES TO ASSESSABLE VALUES AS THE BASIS FOR PROPERTY TAX, VALUES HAD TO BE CALCULATED ON CURRENT MARKET VALUES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE INLAND REVENUE ORDINANCE, HE ADDED.

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AMENDMENT TO MTR PAYMENT GUARANTEES

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY ADOPTED A MOTION GRANTING THE GOVERNMENT THE AUTHORITY TO GIVE PAYMENT GUARANTEES TO A MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY CONTRACTOR, SIEMENS, WHOSE WORK FOR THE CORPORATION WILL BE FINANCED THROUGH AKA, A GERMAN CONSORTIUM BANK PROVIDING EXPORT CREDIT FACILITIES.

IN MOVING THE MOTION, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON. PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, SAID THE GUARANTEE ITEM TO BE AMENDED ALREADY PROVIDED AUTHORITY FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO GIVE PAYMENT GUARANTEE DIRECT TO AKA, BUT THE ORGANISATION WAS UNWILLING TO MAKE FUNDS AVAILABLE UNTIL THE GOVERNMENT ISSUED A SEPARATE GUARANTEE IN FAVOUR OF CONTRACTORS.

+THIS IS A PURELY TECHNICAL AMENDMENT, AND IT DOES NOT ADD TO THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF GOVERNMENT GUARANTEES WHICH THIS COUNCIL HAS APPROVED,+ HE SAID.

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GROWING RESPONSE TO TEXTBOOK SEMINAR

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INTEREST IS MOUNTING IN THE SEMINAR TO BE CONDUCTED THIS SATURDAY (JANUARY 14) BY THE ENGLISH SECTION OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S ADVISORY INSPECTORATE ON THE CHOICE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS.

MORE THAN 600 HEADS OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS HAVE REGISTERED SO FAR FOR THE SEMINAR WHICH WILL BE HELD AT THE GRANTHAM COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, KOWLOON.

THE SEMINAR IS DESIGNED TO OFFER THEM GUIDANCE IN MAKING THE CORRECT CHOICE OF TEXTBOOKS WRITTEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REVISED SYLLABUS AND BE READY IN MAY.

MRS. LOUISE MOK, DEPUTY CHIEF INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE TEXTBOOKS COMMITTEE WHICH REVIEWS AND APPROVES BOOKS FOR BOTH PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS ON ALL SUBJECTS, WILL BRIEF THE HEADS ON THE PRINCIPLES GOVERNING TEXTBOOK SELECTION.

THE HEAD OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL INSPECTION TEAM OF THE ENGLISH ADVISORY INSPECTORATE, MR. TONG WAI-KEUNG, WILL OUTLINE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS. THE TALKS WILL BE CONDUCTED IN CANTONESE.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO SEND REPRESENTATIVES TO COVER THE SEMINAR TO BE HELD BETWEEN 9.30 A.M. AND NOON ON SATURDAY AT THE GRANTHAM COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, GASCOIGNE ROAD, KOWLOON.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 1978

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

FIRE PREVENTION SURVEY IN QUARRY BAY
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THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT WILL CARRY OUT A FIRE PREVENTION SURVEY ON DOMESTIC PREMISES IN QUARRY BAY TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

THE OPERATION IS PART OF THE CURRENT FIRE PREVENTION CAMPAIGN WHICH IS AIMED AT DRIVING HOME THE AWARENESS OF THE DANGERS OF FIRE IN THE CROWDED MULTI-STOREY ENVIRONMENT.

YOU ARE INVITED TO SEND A REPORTER AND/OR PHOTOGRAPHER TO COVER THE SURVEY WHICH WILL START AT 9 A.M. TOMORROW. YOUR REPRESENTATIVES ARE ASKED TO REPORT TO THE FIRE SERVICES MOBILE COMMAND UNIT WHICH WILL BE SET UP AT THE JUNCTION OF KING'S ROAD AND MOUNT PARKER ROAD, QUARRY BAY. DIVISIONAL OFFICER KEN HODGKINS WILL BE ON HAND TO ASSIST THE PRESS.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

AWARD PRESENTATION AT CITY HALL
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AN AWARD PRESENTATION CEREMONY OF THE INTER-SCHOOL PROJECT COMPETITION ON OCEAN PARK ORGANISED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WILL BE HELD AT THE CITY HALL TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

MR. ARTHUR BROWN, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION (CHIEF INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS), AND SIR KENNETH FUNG, CHAIRMAN OF OCEAN PARK LTD., WILL SPEAK ON THE OCCASION.

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO SEND REPORTERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS TO COVER THE EVENT AT 10.45 A.M. TOMORROW IN THE CITY HALL EXHIBITION HALL, LOWER BLOCK.

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FIVE BILLS PASSED
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FIVE BILLS WERE PASSED INTO LAW IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THEY ARE THE CRIMES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1977, THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1977, THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND URBAN SERVICES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978, THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1977, AND THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978.

TWO OTHER BILLS WERE INTRODUCED FOR FIRST READING. THESE ARE THE HONG KONG AND SHANGHAI BANKING CORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978, AND THE MERCANTILE BANK NOTE ISSUE (REPEAL) BILL 1978.

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