



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 16, 1984

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GOVERNMENT DECIDES ON REGIONAL COUNCIL
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THE GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED IN FAVOUR OF A NEW REGIONAL COUNCIL, WITH APRIL 1986 AS THE DATE FOR ITS FORMAL ESTABLISHMENT, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON DENIS BRAY, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MR BRAY EXPLAINED THAT THE DECISION WAS BASED ON THE +OVERWHELMING DESIRE+ BY THE PEOPLE OF THE AREAS WHICH SUCH A COUNCIL WOULD SERVE.

HE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTIONS WERE THAT THE NEW REGIONAL COUNCIL WOULD BE COMPOSED OF FOUR TYPES OF MEMBERS:

- * TWELVE DIRECTLY ELECTED, CONSTITUENCY-BASED MEMBERS;
- * NINE REPRESENTATIVES ELECTED FROM THE NEW TERRITORIES DISTRICT BOARDS FROM AMONG THEMSELVES;
- * THREE EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS FROM THE HEUNG YEE KUK WHO WILL BE THE CHAIRMAN AND THE TWO VICE-CHAIRMEN; AND
- * TWELVE APPOINTED MEMBERS, THREE OF WHOM WILL INITIALLY BE MEMBERS OF THE HEUNG YEE KUK, ESPECIALLY CHOSEN TO REPRESENT ITS THREE CONSTITUENCIES.

+IN ORDER TO ALLOW SOME WORKING EXPERIENCE TO BE GAINED BEFORE THE FULL COUNCIL COMES INTO BEING IN APRIL 1986, THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO ESTABLISH A PROVISIONAL REGIONAL COUNCIL OF APPOINTED MEMBERS EARLY IN 1985, ALTHOUGH THE PRECISE DATE IS NOT SETTLED,+ MR BRAY SAID.

HE REPORTED THAT ELECTION FOR THE 12 DIRECTLY ELECTED MEMBERS WOULD BE CONDUCTED AT THE SAME TIME AS THOSE FOR THE URBAN COUNCIL IN MARCH 1986 AND THEY WOULD HOLD OFFICE FROM APRIL 1, 1986 WHEN THE NEW COUNCIL WOULD BE FORMALLY ESTABLISHED.

MR BRAY SAID THAT THE PRESENT BOUNDARIES OF THE URBAN COUNCIL'S JURISDICTION WOULD BE RETAINED.

ON THIS ISSUE, HE EXPLAINED THAT THE VIEWS OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS WERE UNEQUIVOCAL WHILE THE URBAN COUNCIL ITSELF DID NOT PRESS FOR ADJUSTMENT.

TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY EXECUTIVE SUPPORT FOR THE URBAN COUNCIL AND THE NEW COUNCIL, THE PRESENT URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND RECREATION AND CULTURE DEPARTMENT WOULD BE FORMED INTO TWO NEW DEPARTMENTS, EACH HEADED BY A CHIEF EXECUTIVE, ONE SERVING THE URBAN COUNCIL AND ONE THE REGIONAL COUNCIL, MR BRAY SAID.

HE SAID THERE WOULD ALSO BE A NEW SECRETARY WITH THE POLICY RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE MATTERS, AND CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL SERVICES.

/THE SECRETARY

THE SECRETARY WOULD ALSO EXERCISE A COORDINATING FUNCTION TO ENCOURAGE COOPERATION, CONSISTENCY AND THE BEST USE OF RESOURCES BETWEEN THE TWO DEPARTMENTS AND THE TWO COUNCILS.

THERE WOULD ALSO BE SOME CONSEQUENTIAL ADJUSTMENTS TO THE SCHEDULES OF RESPONSIBILITIES OF SOME OTHER SECRETARIES.

MR BRAY SAID THE DETAILED FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS WERE NOW BEING WORKED OUT AND WOULD BE PUT TO THE FINANCE COMMITTEE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

+LEGISLATION WILL BE REQUIRED TO ESTABLISH, FIRST THE PROVISIONAL COUNCIL AND THEN THE REGIONAL COUNCIL, AND WILL BE INTRODUCED BY THE GOVERNMENT FOR DEBATE IN THIS COUNCIL IN THE USUAL WAY,+ HE EXPLAINED.

TURNING TO OTHER ADMINISTRATION ISSUES, MR BRAY POINTED OUT THAT THE PROPOSAL TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF ELECTED MEMBERS ON DISTRICT BOARDS HAD BEEN WELCOMED WHILE THERE HAD BEEN NO DEMAND FOR A REDUCTION IN NUMBERS OR ELIMINATION OF THE APPOINTED MEMBERS.

+QUITE THE REVERSE. IT IS RECOGNISED THAT THE APPOINTED MEMBERS HAVE CONSIDERABLE EXPERIENCE AND MAKE VALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WORK OF THE BOARDS. THESE VIEWS ARE SHARED BY ELECTED MEMBERS, THE PUBLIC AND INDEED THE GOVERNMENT ALIKE,+ HE POINTED OUT.

THE GOVERNMENT'S AIM WAS THAT, AFTER THE MARCH 1985 ELECTIONS, THE BALANCE BETWEEN ELECTED AND APPOINTED MEMBERS WOULD BE 2 TO 1, WITH THIS RATIO TO BE APPLIED WITH FLEXIBILITY TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF SOME OF THE DISTRICTS, HE SAID.

THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES WOULD BE USED IN DETERMINING THE NUMBER OF ELECTED MEMBERS ON DISTRICT BOARDS:

- * IN THE URBAN DISTRICTS, THERE WILL BE ONE ELECTED SEAT FOR A POPULATION OF 25 000 TO 30 000 PEOPLE;
- * IN THE NEW TERRITORIES DISTRICTS, BECAUSE OF THE UNEVEN DISTRIBUTION AND CONTINUING GROWTH OF THEIR POPULATION, THE FORMULA OF ONE ELECTED SEAT FOR 25 000 TO 30 000 PEOPLE WILL BE APPLIED WITH FLEXIBILITY, TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION DIFFERING GEOGRAPHICAL, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CHARACTERISTICS;
- * WHERE THE DOUBLING OF ELECTED MEMBERS WOULD RESULT IN A DISTRICT BOARD BECOMING TOO LARGE AND UNWIELDY, THE SIZE OF THE BOARD WILL BE TRIMMED BY REDUCING SLIGHTLY THE OVERALL NUMBER OF MEMBERS WHILE RETAINING THE 2 TO 1 RATIO.

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+THE APPLICATION OF THESE GUIDELINES WILL MEAN THAT IN MARCH 1985, THERE WILL BE 235 DISTRICT BOARD SEATS UP FOR ELECTION, COMPARED TO THE PRESENT 132. THERE WILL BE A VERY SLIGHT REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF APPOINTED MEMBERS FROM 135 TO 132. THERE WILL THEN BE A TOTAL OF 367 UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS,+ MR BRAY SAID.

ON THE QUESTION OF WHETHER SOME LARGER DISTRICTS SHOULD BE SPLIT UP, HE REPORTED THAT NONE OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS WANTED TO SPLIT.

WHILE THE CASE FOR A SPLIT ON POPULATION GROUNDS SEEMED GOOD, THESE DISTRICTS HAD BEEN IN EXISTENCE SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CITY DISTRICT OFFICER SCHEME IN 1968 AND HAD A COHERENCE OF THEIR OWN.

HE TOLD THE COUNCIL THERE WAS THUS NO CHANGE PROPOSED TO THE EXISTING 10 URBAN DISTRICTS.

TURNING TO THE NEW TERRITORIES, HE SAID THE CASE WAS DIFFERENT FOR TSUEN WAN WHERE THE DISTRICT BOARD HAD AGREED THAT THERE SHOULD IN FUTURE BE TWO BOARDS -- ONE FOR TSUEN WAN TOWN AND THE OTHER COVERING KWAI CHUNG AND TSING YI.

HE REPORTED THAT NO OTHER CHANGE WAS PROPOSED IN THE NT DISTRICTS.

ON THE PROPOSAL THAT THERE SHOULD BE INCREASED DISTRICT BOARD INVOLVEMENT IN THE MANAGEMENT OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATION, MR BRAY SAID, +THIS OBVIOUSLY MAKES SENSE IN THE CASE OF NEW TOWNS SEPARATED FROM EACH OTHER BY MILES, BUT THERE ARE LOCAL VARIATIONS IN THE OLD URBAN AREAS TOO.

+THIS IDEA HAS BEEN WELCOMED AND SUGGESTIONS HAVE BEEN MADE AS TO HOW TO GO ABOUT IT. NO SWEEPING CHANGES ARE PROPOSED -- RATHER DETAILED CONSIDERATION OF PRACTICAL METHODS OF FITTING IN THE SERVICES OF BOARD MEMBERS IN VARIOUS FIELDS. THIS WILL BE TAKEN FURTHER IN THE COMING MONTHS IN CONSULTATION WITH ALL CONCERNED.

+NOW THAT WE CAN SEE THE WAY THROUGH TO COMPLETING THESE REFORMS AT THE REGIONAL AND DISTRICT LEVELS, WE ARE IN A POSITION TO CARRY FURTHER THE WORK OF INTRODUCING A MORE REPRESENTATIVE SYSTEM OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT.+

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CHECK FIRST ON 'BIRDS OF PASSAGE', AG WARNS PEOPLE
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THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON MICHAEL THOMAS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY THAT HE DID NOT PROPOSE IMPOSING SPECIAL CONTROLS ON VISITING LAWYERS AND OTHER CONSULTANTS COMING HERE TO OFFER ADVICE ON EMIGRATION MATTERS AND INVESTMENT PROCEDURES IN OVERSEAS COUNTRIES.

BUT HE TOLD PEOPLE WHO SEEK ADVICE ON EMIGRATION MATTERS TO EXAMINE THE CREDENTIALS OF ALL VISITING CONSULTANTS AND TO SATISFY THEMSELVES BEFORE PROCEEDING THAT THE SCALE OF CHARGES IS REASONABLE.

THE PEOPLE SHOULD ALSO CONSIDER USING THE SERVICES OF THOSE FOREIGN LAWYERS WHO HAVE PERMANENT OFFICES IN HONG KONG, MR THOMAS SAID.

MR THOMAS WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BY THE HON PAULINE NG CONCERNING +THE INCREASING NUMBER OF VISITING LAWYERS AND OTHER CONSULTANTS+ COMING HERE TO OFFER ADVICE TO RESIDENTS, AND GOVERNMENT ACTION IN THE MATTER.

THE ADMINISTRATION WAS WELL AWARE OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THESE +BIRDS OF PASSAGE+, WHOSE +PLUMAGE HAS MANY SHADES+ AND WHOSE +NESTING HABITS ARE VARIABLE+ -- BUT IN A FREE SOCIETY PEOPLE HAD THE RIGHT TO CONSULT WHOM THEY CHOSE ABOUT THEIR PRIVATE AFFAIRS, HE SAID.

+IT WOULD THEREFORE BE WRONG IN PRINCIPLE TO ATTEMPT TO CONTROL THE SUPPLY OF ADVICE OR THE ADVERTISING OF THE SERVICES OF ADVISERS,+ MR THOMAS SAID.

IN THE CASE OF SHORT TERM VISITING LAWYERS, THERE WAS ONE CAUSE OF FRICTION BECAUSE LAWYERS FROM SUCH COUNTRIES AS THE UNITED STATES, CANADA AND AUSTRALIA, WHO HAD ESTABLISHED A PERMANENT OFFICE IN HONG KONG, HAD VOLUNTARILY UNDERTAKEN TO THE LAW SOCIETY NOT TO ADVERTISE THEIR SERVICES.

+DESPITE THIS, MY INCLINATION IS NOT TO PROPOSE SPECIAL CONTROLS SOLELY APPLICABLE TO VISITING LEGAL EAGLES BECAUSE IT IS NOT REALLY FEASIBLE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THEM AND THE REST OF THE FLOCK OF CONSULTANTS GIVING ADVICE ON EMIGRATION AND FOREIGN INVESTMENT,+ HE SAID.

MANY OF THE VISITING CONSULTANTS, MR THOMAS POINTED OUT, HAD ACQUIRED GOOD REPUTATIONS.

+I SUSPECT THEY ADVERTISE LESS AND RELY ON RECOMMENDATIONS. NO DOUBT THERE ARE OTHERS WHOSE ADVERTISEMENTS ARE EYE-CATCHING AND CHARGE LARGE SUMS FOR INDIFFERENT SERVICES.

+BUT IT SEEMS THAT COMPLAINTS FROM DISSATISFIED CUSTOMERS ARE RARE,+ HE SAID.

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MOST TENANTS STILL GET SECURITY OF TENURE - LIAO
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THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, MR DONALD LIAO EMPHASISED TODAY THAT THE PROPOSALS UNDER THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984 WERE INTENDED SIMPLY TO CARRY THROUGH THE DISMANTLING OF RENT CONTROL, +AT A REGULATED PACE WITHIN A REASONABLE SPAN OF TIME, BUT WITH THE LEAST POSSIBLE ADVERSE SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES.+

+I SHOULD ALSO REITERATE THAT THE MAJORITY OF PROTECTED TENANTS WILL CONTINUE TO ENJOY THE DUAL SAFEGUARDS OF SECURITY OF TENURE, AND CONTROL ON RENT INCREASES LIMITED TO A MAXIMUM OF 30 PER CENT OF CURRENT RENT OVER TWO YEARS,+ HE SAID, WHILE MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL.

MR LIAO SAID THAT FOR A TENANT OF CONTROLLED PREMISES, NO STEP TOWARDS DECONTROL WAS TOO SMALL, WHEREAS MOST, IF NOT ALL, LANDLORDS OF SUCH PREMISES WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE ABOLITION OF THE LEGISLATION ALTOGETHER, SOONER, RATHER THAN LATER.

+I AM AFRAID THAT THE CONFLICT OF VIEWS AS BETWEEN LANDLORD AND TENANT WILL REMAIN EVER PRESENT. IN THE PRESENT SITUATION, HOWEVER, I BELIEVE THAT THE PROPOSALS ARE ABOUT RIGHT, HAVING REGARD TO THE INTERESTS OF BOTH LANDLORDS AND TENANTS,+ HE SAID.

HE RECALLED THAT WHEN BLANKET RENT CONTROL MEASURES WERE APPLIED IN 1979, IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT THERE WOULD BE A REVIEW OF THE OVERALL PROVISIONS OF RENT CONTROL LEGISLATION AND THEIR EFFECTS ON THE SUPPLY AND DEMAND OF HOUSING.

THE PRINCIPAL CONCLUSION OF THE COMMITTEE OF REVIEW, WHICH WAS ANNOUNCED AND ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT IN EARLY 1981, WAS THAT RENT CONTROL SHOULD GRADUALLY BE PHASED OUT AS CIRCUMSTANCES PERMITTED.

+THIS BILL, THEREFORE, IS YET ANOTHER STEP IN THAT DIRECTION,+ MR LIAO SAID.

HE EXPLAINED THAT THE GENERAL SOFTENING OF THE RENTAL MARKET, PARTICULARLY IN 1983, AND THE IMPROVED SUPPLY AND DEMAND SITUATION FOR HOUSING BOTH SHOWED THAT RENT CONTROL WAS NOW LESS NEEDED.

+IT WOULD BE OPPORTUNE THEREFORE TO CONTINUE THE PROCESS OF GRADUAL DECONTROL AND PUT RIGHT THE ANOMALY OF EXTREMELY LOW CONTROLLED RENTS IN ONE SECTOR, WHILE MAINTAINING THE EXISTING DEGREE OF PROTECTION TO THE MAJORITY OF TENANTS. AT THE SAME TIME, IT IS HOPED THAT THE IMPROVING ECONOMY WILL STIMULATE PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCE MORE HOUSING FOR THE FUTURE,+ HE SAID.

THE MAIN PROPOSALS OF THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984 WERE EXPLAINED BY MR LIAO AND THE COMMISSIONER OF RATING AND VALUATION IN A PRESS CONFERENCE EARLY THIS MONTH.

PUBLIC COMMENTS MAY BE MADE TO UMELCO, AT SWIRE HOUSE, CHATER ROAD, OR TO THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, AT THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES, LOWER ALBERT ROAD, HONG KONG.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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RELIEF MEASURES ON INCREASED RATEABLE VALUES

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THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR JOHN BREMRIDGE, TODAY MOVED A RESOLUTION IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, PROVIDING FOR RELIEF MEASURES DESIGNED TO SOFTEN THE IMPACT OF THE INCREASED RATEABLE VALUES IN 1984-85.

THESE RELIEF MEASURES COMPRISE:

- * REDUCTIONS IN THE GENERAL RATE AND URBAN COUNCIL RATE PERCENTAGES,
- * A 20 PER CENT LIMIT ON THE INCREASE IN RATE PAYMENT OVER THAT PAYABLE IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR,
- * AN INCREASE IN THE MINIMUM RATEABLE VALUE TO \$1 000, AND
- * A 7.5 PER CENT OR 15 PER CENT REDUCTION IN THE RATES PAYABLE ON TENEMENTS WITHOUT FILTERED WATER SUPPLY OR WITHOUT FRESH WATER SUPPLY RESPECTIVELY.

THE RELIEF MEASURES CAME INTO EFFECT ON FEBRUARY 29 AS A RESULT OF A PUBLIC REVENUE PROTECTION ORDER, SIR JOHN SAID.

DEMAND NOTES NOTIFYING RATEPAYERS OF THEIR NEW RATEABLE VALUES AND THE AMOUNT OF RATES PAYABLE FOR THE SECOND QUARTER OF 1984 WERE ISSUED THAT DAY TO MEET THE REQUIREMENT UNDER THE RATING ORDINANCE, HE ADDED.

+THE GENERAL RATES YIELD FOR 1984-85, WITH THE RELIEF PROVISIONS, IS ESTIMATED AT \$1.35 BILLION.

+THIS REPRESENTS AN INCREASE OF \$175 MILLION OVER WHAT MAY BE COLLECTED IN 1984-85 WITHOUT THE GENERAL REVALUATION OF RATEABLE VALUES,+ HE SAID.

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HEED INSTRUCTIONS, WATER WORLD USERS TOLD
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THE OCEAN PARK WAS AN EXCITING PLACE, BUT USERS OF ITS FACILITIES SHOULD HEED THE SIMPLE INSTRUCTIONS OF MANAGEMENT, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON DENIS BRAY, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON WONG LAM ON THE AMENITIES AND EQUIPMENT AT THE WATER WORLD OF THE OCEAN PARK, MR BRAY SAID THAT THE WATER WORLD WAS BASICALLY A SET OF SWIMMING POOLS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

ITS FACILITIES WERE NEW TO MOST PEOPLE IN HONG KONG, AND SPECIFIC MEASURES HAD BEEN TAKEN BY THE MANAGEMENT TO EDUCATE VISITORS IN USING THE FACILITIES AND TO REDUCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACCIDENTS, MR BRAY SAID.

MEASURES TAKEN INCLUDED THE POSTING OF LIFEGUARDS AT THE TOP OF WATER SLIDES TO REGULATE THE FREQUENCY OF USE, THE CORDONING OFF OF THE SHALLOW END OF THE WAVE POOL TO PREVENT VISITORS FROM JUMPING OR DIVING, AND THE POSTING OF NOTICES TO ADVISE HOW FACILITIES SHOULD BE USED, HE EXPLAINED.

+THERE IS A LIMIT TO WHAT THE MANAGEMENT CAN DO. AS A GOVERNMENT DIRECTOR OF THE BOARD OF OCEAN PARK, I CAN SAY THAT WE WANTED TO CREATE A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE COULD HAVE FUN IN SAFETY.

+IT IS AN EXCITING PLACE BUT USERS DO NEED TO PAY ATTENTION TO THE SIMPLE INSTRUCTIONS OF MANAGEMENT,+ MR BRAY SAID.

MR BRAY SAID THAT WATER WORLD OPERATED UNDER A SWIMMING POOL LICENCE ISSUED BY THE URBAN COUNCIL.

LICENCE CONDITIONS WERE MAINLY CONCERNED WITH HYGIENE STANDARDS, BUT DEALT ALSO WITH SUCH OTHER MATTERS AS SLIPPERY FLOORS, EMPLOYMENT OF LIFE GUARDS, AND THE SAFETY OF ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT.

MONTHLY INSPECTIONS WERE MADE TO ENSURE THE LICENSING CONDITIONS WERE COMPLIED WITH, HE SAID.

AS REGARDS THE STRUCTURAL SAFETY ASPECTS OF THE FACILITIES, MR BRAY SAID, THE GOVERNMENT WAS FULLY SATISFIED THAT THEY MET THE RELEVANT PROVISIONS OF THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE.

DISABLED DRIVERS EXEMPTED FROM TUNNEL TAX
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DR THE HON HARRY FANG TODAY MOVED AN AMENDMENT TO THE CROSS HARBOUR TUNNEL (PASSAGE TAX) BILL 1984 IN THE COMMITTEE STAGE TO EXEMPT DISABLED DRIVERS FROM PAYMENT OF THE PASSAGE TAX.

DR FANG EXPLAINED THAT THIS AMENDMENT WILL ALLOW A DISABLED DRIVER TO APPLY TO THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT FOR THE EXEMPTION.

SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE BILL IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, HE HIGHLIGHTED +ONCE AGAIN THE NEEDS OF THE DISABLED MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY FOR WHOM THE BENEFITS OF OUR SOCIETY ARE NOT ALWAYS AS READILY ACCESSIBLE AS THEY ARE TO THE ABLE-BODIED.+

+I AM GRATEFUL THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS CONTINUED TO PURSUE AN ENLIGHTENED POLICY IN TRYING TO ENSURE THAT THESE PEOPLE ARE ABLE TO HAVE THEIR FAIR SHARE OF LIFE'S OPPORTUNITIES,+ HE SAID.

DR FANG SAID THAT UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS HAD RECEIVED REPRESENTATIONS FROM CONCERNED INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATIONS ON WHAT THEY CONSIDERED AS UNFAIR DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE DISABLED WHO WERE UNABLE TO TAKE THE OPTION OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT.

+THE ADMINISTRATION HAS AGREED WITH US AND IN ADDITION TO AGREEING TO THE AMENDMENT FOR DISABLED DRIVERS HAS ALSO PROVIDED AN ASSURANCE THAT THE REHABUS SERVICE WILL BE SAFEGUARDED FROM INCREASED COSTS OF OPERATION THROUGH ADDITIONAL SUBVENTIONS.

+THIS IS MOST WELCOME AS IT WILL ENSURE THAT THOSE WITHOUT THE OPPORTUNITY OF OWNING THEIR OWN CARS WILL NOT HAVE TO PAY INCREASED FARES ON THE REHABUS TO TRAVEL TO WORK OR TO HOSPITALS AND CLINICS FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT,+ DR FANG SAID.

IN HIS SPEECH THE HON S.L. CHEN SAID HE BELIEVED THAT IT WOULD BE MORE SUCCESSFUL IF THE TAX WERE ONLY APPLIED DURING PEAK HOURS.

HE SAID SUCH A FLEXIBLE SCHEME WOULD SPREAD THE LOAD ON THE TUNNEL, ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO TRAVEL OUTSIDE PEAK HOURS, RATHER THAN PRICING THEM OUT OF THE TUNNEL COMPLETELY.

+THIS WOULD ALSO OBTVIATE THE NEED FOR ANY REFUND TO THE TUNNEL COMPANY AND WOULD GENERALLY HELP TO EVEN OUT THE PEAKS AND TROUGH OF ROAD USAGE WHICH ARE A CONSTANT FEATURE OF OUR TRAFFIC PATTERN,+ HE ADDED.

REFERRING TO THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT'S EARLIER STATEMENT ON THE INADEQUACY OF THE TUNNEL COMPANY'S COMPUTER SYSTEM FOR THE PEAK HOUR SCHEME, MR CHEN SAID, +IN A PLACE LIKE HONG KONG WHERE THE MOST SOPHISTICATED TECHNOLOGICAL SYSTEMS ARE AVAILABLE, SUCH INADEQUACY SEEMS SINGULARLY OUT OF PLACE.+

/HE ALSO

HE ALSO WELCOMED THE ASSURANCE THAT THE \$140 MILLION WHICH WERE EXPECTED TO BE COLLECTED IN TUNNEL TAXES WOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR TRANSPORT PURPOSES.

+I HOPE THAT THIS WILL MEAN A COMMITMENT TO THE PROVISION OF A SECOND FIXED HARBOUR CROSSING AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

+TO KNOW THAT THE PROCEEDS OF THIS TAX WILL BE GOING TOWARDS THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SECOND CROSSING RATHER THAN BEING LOST IN THE AMORPHOUS BODY KNOWN AS GENERAL REVENUE MAY SWEETEN THE PILL SOMEWHAT FOR ALL OF US WHO ARE GOING TO PAY,+ MR CHEN ADDED.

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EXEMPTION FOR DISABLED SUPPORTED
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THE ABOLITION OF THE TOLLS AND TOLL BOOTHS CALLED FOR BY REV THE HON PATRICK MCGOVERN WOULD INDUCE AN EVEN GREATER NUMBER OF VEHICLES, INCLUDING THOSE USING THE VEHICULAR FERRIES, TO BE DIVERTED TO USING THE TUNNEL, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON JUSTIN YUE, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MORE CONGESTION WOULD BE THE INEVITABLE RESULT, MR YUE SAID.

IN MOVING THE FINAL READING OF THE CROSS-HARBOUR TUNNEL (PASSAGE TAX) BILL 1984, MR YUE THANKED UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS FOR THEIR COMMENTS ON THE BILL.

+MORE SPECIFICALLY, I WISH TO ENDORSE WHAT DR HARRY FANG, MR S.L. CHEN AND MR WONG LAM HAVE SAID ABOUT ASSISTING THE DISABLED TO PLAY THEIR FULL PART IN THE WORK AND SOCIAL LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY,+ HE SAID.

THE GOVERNMENT ACCEPTED UNRESERVEDLY THE AMENDMENT TO THE BILL MOVED BY DR FANG TO EXEMPT DISABLED DRIVERS FROM PAYMENT OF THE PASSAGE TAX, HE ADDED.

+BUT, OF COURSE, NOT ALL THE DISABLED DRIVE. SOME RELY ON THE REHABUSES FOR THEIR TRANSPORT. THE ABSENCE OF ANY SPECIFIC PROVISION IN THE BILL FOR THESE BUSES DOES NOT MEAN THEY HAVE BEEN OVERLOOKED,+ MR YUE SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF THE GOVERNMENT ASKING THE HONG KONG SOCIETY FOR REHABILITATION TO PASS ON THE COST OF THE TAX TO THE USERS OF THE REHABUS SERVICE.

HE ASSURED THE COUNCIL THAT THE PASSAGE TAX WAS REGARDED AS A RECOGNISED COST FOR WHICH ADDITIONAL SUBVENTIONS WOULD BE MADE.

/HE ALSO

HE ALSO REFERRED TO SOME UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS' CONCERN ABOUT THE CROSS HARBOUR TUNNEL COMPANY'S COMPUTER SYSTEM AND ITS INABILITY TO HANDLE DIFFERENT TAX RATES FOR DIFFERENT PERIODS OF THE DAY, OR DIFFERENT TAX RATES FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LIGHT BUSES.

+HOWEVER, THE SYSTEM WAS DESIGNED TO CATER FOR THE COMPANY'S TOLL COLLECTION SYSTEM FOR WHICH IT REMAINS ADEQUATE.

+IT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN APPROPRIATE TO ASK THE CROSS HARBOUR TUNNEL COMPANY TO AMEND THE SYSTEM SOLELY FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S PURPOSE,+ MR YUE EXPLAINED.

HE ADDED THAT NONETHELESS, IF THE COMPUTER SYSTEM WAS TO BE REPLACED OR UPDATED FOR OTHER REASONS, HE WOULD DISCUSS WITH THE COMPANY HOW THE REVISED SYSTEM COULD TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S NEEDS.

ON THE NEED FOR A SECOND FIXED HARBOUR CROSSING MENTIONED BY MR WONG LAM, MR YUE POINTED OUT THAT HE HAD EXPLAINED EARLIER THAT THE STEERING GROUP WOULD SUBMIT A FINAL REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL BY SEPTEMBER.

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TWO UNOFFICIALS SPEAK AGAINST TUNNEL TAX BILL

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TWO UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS, REV THE HON PATRICK MCGOVERN AND THE HON WONG LAM, SPOKE AGAINST THE CROSS HARBOUR TUNNEL (PASSAGE TAX) BILL 1984 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

FR MCGOVERN SAID THERE WAS A SIGN OF A POLICY U TURN ON THE SELF-MADE RULE ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT FOR DECADES THAT VEHICLE AND OTHER TRANSPORT-RELATED TAXES SHOULD GO INTO GENERAL REVENUE, AND NOT BE EARMARKED FOR ROADS AND OTHER TRANSPORT RELATED EXPENDITURE.

HE SAID, +THIS GENERATION OF MOTORISTS HAS ALREADY PAID FOR THE EXISTING CROSS-HARBOUR TUNNEL. IT CONTINUES TO PAY GENEROUSLY INTO THE POCKETS OF THE CROSS-HARBOUR TUNNEL COMPANY'S SHAREHOLDERS, WHO HAVE LONG SINCE GOT BACK THEIR ORIGINAL INVESTMENT, WITH A HANDSOME PROFIT.

+WHAT THIS BILL PROPOSES IS THAT THIS SAME GENERATION OF MOTORISTS SHOULD NOW START PAYING FOR THE NEXT HARBOUR CROSSING.

+THEY WILL THUS BE PAYING FOR BOTH AT THE SAME TIME, ONE OF WHICH HAS ALREADY BEEN PAID FOR, AND THE OTHER OF WHICH DOES NOT YET EXIST, AND INDEED MAY NEVER COME INTO EXISTENCE IF THE PRESENT CONFIDENCE CRISIS CONTINUES.+

FR MCGOVERN STATED THAT ONE OF THE WORST ASPECTS OF THE BILL WAS THE UNCONVINCING ATTEMPT TO INTRODUCE IT UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT.

ON TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND REDUCING CONGESTION, HIS SUGGESTION WAS : +TAKE AWAY THE STOP-GO TOLL GATES AND RETURN THIS STRETCH OF ROAD TO THE PUBLIC, AND MAINTAIN IT OUT OF PUBLIC REVENUE LIKE ANY OTHER STRETCH OF ROAD.+

HE QUESTIONED THE ASSUMPTION BY THE GOVERNMENT THAT ANY CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF PRIVATE MOTORISTS MADE UNNECESSARY JOURNEYS ACROSS THE HARBOUR AT 10 DOLLARS PER TWO-WAY TRIP.

+OFF HAND, THE ONLY ONES I CAN THINK OF ARE THOSE WHO DRIVE TO THE SHA TIN RACECOURSE - HARDLY A TRIP OF NATIONAL NECESSITY,+ HE SAID.

+OTHER UNSATISFACTORY ELEMENTS INVOLVED IN THE BILL HAVE BEEN TEMPERATELY AND LOGICALLY DEALT WITH IN THE PETITION ADDRESSED TO MEMBERS BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION, WHOSE VIEWS ON THIS SUBJECT I HEARTILY ENDORSED,+ HE ADDED.

MR WONG LAM, WHO ABSTAINED FROM VOTING ON THE BILL, EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE PASSAGE TAX AS A SOLUTION TO THE CONGESTION PROBLEM WOULD BE SHORT-LIVED AND WOULD NOT HAVE A GREAT EFFECT.

ALTHOUGH SOME MOTORISTS MIGHT USE PUBLIC TRANSPORT FOR CROSSING THE HARBOUR, THEY MIGHT RETURN TO THEIR OLD HABIT, ONCE THEY BECAME ACCUSTOMED TO THE TAX.

+ANOTHER POSSIBILITY IS THE SHIFT OF CONGESTION FROM THE TUNNEL TO THE VICINITY OF VEHICULAR FERRY PIERS,+ HE SAID.

HE SUGGESTED THE CONSTRUCTION OF ANOTHER LINK BETWEEN HONG KONG ISLAND AND KOWLOON AS A SOLUTION TO THE CONGESTION PROBLEM.

THE WAY OF IMPOSING THE TAX WAS CONTRARY TO THE SPIRIT OF FAIR TAXATION, MR WONG SAID.

AS THE MAIN OBJECTIVE WAS AGAINST MOTORISTS WHO CAUSE CONGESTION, THOSE USING THE TUNNEL IN NON-PEAK HOURS SHOULD BEAR NO RESPONSIBILITY OF PAYING THE TAX, HE ADDED.

SINCE THE COMPUTER OF THE TUNNEL COMPANY WAS NOT CAPABLE OF DISTINGUISHING PEAK HOURS FROM NON-PEAK HOURS, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD FIRST SETTLE THE COMPUTER PROBLEM WITH THE COMPANY BEFORE STARTING TO IMPOSE THE TAX, HE SAID.

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BATTLE AGAINST HEPATITIS B OUTLINED

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A SPECIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE WAS SET UP EARLY LAST YEAR TO ADVISE THE GOVERNMENT ON AN OVERALL STRATEGY TO IMMUNISE CERTAIN HIGH RISK GROUPS IN THE COMMUNITY AGAINST HEPATITIS B.

THE COMMITTEE IS MADE UP OF EXPERTS FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG.

IN REPLY TO A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS RAISED BY DR THE HON HENRIETTA IP ON THE USE OF VACCINE IN THE PREVENTION OF HEPATITIS B, THE DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES, DR THE HON K.L. THONG SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY THAT TWO HIGH-RISK PRIORITY GROUPS HAD BEEN IDENTIFIED BY THE COMMITTEE FOR A PILOT VACCINATION PROGRAMME.

THE FIRST GROUP CONSISTS OF BABIES BORN TO MOTHERS WHO ARE CARRIERS OF THE DISEASE.

THESE BABIES ARE AT HIGH RISK OF BEING CHRONIC CARRIERS WHO ARE THE PRIME SOURCE OF INFECTION TO THE REST OF THE POPULATION LATER ON IN CHILDHOOD AND IN ADULT LIFE.

THE SECOND GROUP ARE HEALTH CARE WORKERS WHO ARE IN FREQUENT CONTACTS WITH BLOOD AND BLOOD PRODUCTS AND TISSUE FLUIDS IN THE COURSE OF THEIR WORK.

THE PILOT VACCINATION PROJECT WAS STARTED BY THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT IN APRIL 1983 TO GATHER LOCAL EXPERIENCE IN THE USE OF VACCINE AND TO DEVISE A COST-EFFECTIVE SCHEDULE.

DR THONG EXPLAINED THAT THE PROJECT WAS DESIGNED: TO SCREEN ABOUT 10 000 PREGNANT WOMEN IN THE KOWLOON HEALTH REGION AND TO VACCINATE BABIES BORN TO CARRIER MOTHERS AMONG THIS GROUP, AND ALSO TO OFFER VACCINATION TO ALL HEALTH CARE WORKERS IN THE GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS AND CLINICS WHO ARE AT RISK.

HE SAID THAT THE RESULTS OF THE PROGRAMME WERE EXPECTED TO BE READY FOR EVALUATION BY THE END OF THIS YEAR.

DR THONG ALSO POINTED OUT THAT A UNIVERSAL VACCINATION PROGRAMME AGAINST HEPATITIS B FOR THE WHOLE POPULATION WOULD INVOLVE ASTRONOMICAL SUMS WHICH WOULD RENDER THE WHOLE CONCEPT IMPRACTICABLE.

+THUS, THE PREFERRED AND REALISTIC STRATEGY FOR VACCINATION AS ADVOCATED BY WHO (WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION) IS TO ENSURE SELECTIVE IMMUNISATION FOR RISK GROUPS,+ HE SAID.

DR THONG ENVISAGED THAT IN THE LONGER TERM, THE VACCINATION PROGRAMME WOULD BE EXTENDED TO ALL NEWLY BORN CHILDREN OF CARRIER MOTHERS IN THE GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS AND ALSO TO SIMILAR HIGH RISK GROUPS IN THE SUBVENTED HOSPITALS.

/REGARDING THE

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REGARDING THE COST OF THE HEPATITIS B VACCINE, HE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD SPENT \$573 000 IN EACH OF THE PAST TWO FINANCIAL YEARS FROM 1982-84 FOR THE PURCHASE OF VACCINE.

A COURSE OF VACCINATION FOR AN ADULT COST \$515, AND FOR A NEW BORN CHILD \$536, INCLUDING HEPATITIS B IMMUNE GLOBULIN.

SO FAR 1 312 PEOPLE HAD COMPLETED THE COURSE OF VACCINATIONS.

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GPA COURSE MAY START IN 1987

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THE SUBJECT OF GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS (GPA) MAY REPLACE ECONOMIC AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS (EPA) IN FORMS IV AND V FROM SEPTEMBER 1987, THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, MR COLVYN HAYE, SAID AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON YEUNG PO-KWAN, MR HAYE SAID THE NEW SUBJECT MIGHT POSSIBLY BE OFFERED AS AN ALTERNATIVE OR IN PARALLEL TO EPA, JUST AS ECONOMICS AND EPA WERE.

+IF THE NEW SUBJECT IS INTRODUCED, IT WILL BE A TWO-YEAR COURSE WITH THE FIRST CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION IN 1989.

+I SAY 'IF' BECAUSE A NUMBER OF STEPS HAVE YET TO BE TAKEN BEFORE ANY PROPOSED TEACHING AND EXAMINATION SYLLABUS, INCORPORATING THE VERY IMPORTANT VIEWS OF SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS, RECEIVES THE FORMAL BLESSING OF THE DEPARTMENT, THE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AND THE HONG KONG EXAMINATIONS AUTHORITY,+ HE ADDED.

MR HAYE SAID THE INTRODUCTION OF A NEW SUBJECT DID NOT NECESSARILY REPLACE A KINDRED STUDY, AND PUPILS AND TEACHERS SHOULD WELCOME AN ADDITIONAL AND MANAGEABLE OPTION.

REPLYING TO A QUERY REGARDING TEACHERS OF GPA, MR HAYE SAID, +I HAVE EVERY CONFIDENCE IN THE ABILITY OF OUR TEACHERS TO HANDLE THE NEW SUBJECT.+

+THE TIMING I HAVE DESCRIBED WILL PERMIT THE DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLICATION OF TEXTBOOKS AND OTHER TEACHING MATERIALS FOR THE COURSE, AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING AND SEMINARS TO HELP TEACHERS TO ADJUST TO THE NEW SYLLABUS.

+THE TRANSITION WILL BE HELPED BY THE SIMILARITIES OF THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTIONS OF EPA AND GPA SO THAT CURRENT EPA TEACHERS SHOULD HAVE LITTLE DIFFICULTY IN SWITCHING TO GPA WITH THE SUPPORT OF FRESH MATERIAL,+ HE SAID.

MR HAYE ASSURED SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS THAT THEY WOULD BE PLAYING A SIGNIFICANT PART IN SHAPING THE TEACHING AND EXAMINATION SYLLABUSES FOR GPA.

+THEY WILL HAVE PLENTY OF NOTICE AND ADEQUATE PREPARATION FOR THE NEW SUBJECT,+ HE ADDED.

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SCREENING PROGRAMME FOR BABIES

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THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT HAD EARLY THIS YEAR STARTED A NEO-NATAL SCREENING PROGRAMME FOR CONGENITAL HYPOTHYROIDISM TO FACILITATE EARLY DIAGNOSIS AND MEDICAL TREATMENT OF INFANTS WHO MAY OTHERWISE SUFFER MENTAL RETARDATION.

THIS WAS DISCLOSED TODAY BY DR THE HON K.L. THONG, DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM DR THE HON HENRIETTA IP IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

THIS PHASE OF THE PROGRAMME, INITIALLY DESIGNED TO COVER ALL NEW-BORNS IN GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS AND MATERNITY HOMES, IS EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED BY JULY THIS YEAR.

THE NEXT PHASE OF THE PROGRAMME WOULD START SHORTLY AFTERWARDS, AND THE DEPARTMENT INTENDED TO INVITE SUBVENTED AND PRIVATE HOSPITALS AND MATERNITY HOMES TO PARTICIPATE IN IT, HE SAID.

WITH THIS CO-OPERATION, THE PROGRAMME SHOULD THEN BE ABLE TO COVER THE ENTIRE NEWBORN POPULATION, HE SAID.

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50KM/H GENERAL SPEED LIMIT FROM AUGUST

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FROM AUGUST THIS YEAR THERE WILL BE A GENERAL SPEED LIMIT OF 50KM AN HOUR ON ALL ROADS EXCEPT WHERE SPECIFICALLY VARIED BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR TRANSPORT AND SIGN-POSTED, THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WAS TOLD TODAY.

THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON JUSTIN YUE, REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON PETER WONG, SAID THAT ROADS WITH EXISTING SPEED LIMITS OF 30MPH WILL CONVERT TO THE EQUIVALENT OF 50KM AN HOUR AND THOSE WITH 40 MPH WILL CONVERT TO 70KM AN HOUR.

+THE MAIN POINT IS THAT THE NEW SYSTEM WILL BE CLEARER AND MORE CONVENIENT FOR MOTORISTS THAN THE PRESENT ONE WHICH IN SOME INSTANCES RELIES ON THE DISTANCE BETWEEN LIGHTING COLUMNS ON THE ROADS TO INDICATE SPEED LIMITS,+ MR YUE SAID.

MR YUE SAID ALSO THAT, GENERALLY, THE SPEED LIMIT ON A ROAD WAS RELATED TO THE DESIGN SPEED OF THE ROAD, THE ALIGNMENT AND THE ACCIDENT RECORD.

+FOR MOST ROADS IN THE URBAN AREA THE SPEED LIMIT IS 30MPH, OR 50KM/H IN FUTURE.

+THE HIGHER STANDARD MULTI-LANE ROADS PROHIBITED TO PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS WILL INITIALLY HAVE SPEED LIMITS OF 70KM/H.

+THE LATTER IS SLIGHTLY HIGHER THAN THE EXISTING 40MPH LIMIT, BUT ANY FURTHER CHANGE WILL HAVE TO BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED IN THE LIGHT OF EXPERIENCE,+ HE SAID.

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GAMBLING POLICY EXPLAINED

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THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ON GAMBLING HAS ALWAYS BEEN TO RESTRICT OPPORTUNITIES FOR GAMBLING BUT TO ALLOW CONTROLLED OUTLETS FOR SUCH GAMBLING ACTIVITIES AS EXIST, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON DENIS BRAY, SAID TODAY.

+IN PRACTICAL TERMS, THIS MEANS STRICT LAWS AND FIRM ENFORCEMENT ACTION AGAINST ILLEGAL GAMBLING ACTIVITIES, SUPPORTED BY THE PROVISION OF CONTROLLED ALTERNATIVES WHERE A COGENT NEED FOR SUCH ALTERNATIVES HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED.

+THIS POLICY, IN EXISTENCE FOR MANY YEARS, WAS LAST REVIEWED AND REAFFIRMED IN 1979,+ HE SAID.

MR BRAY WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ANDREW SO IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

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GOVERNMENT WANTS INSOLVENT INSURANCE FIRMS COVERED

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THE GOVERNMENT WAS EXAMINING THE POSSIBILITY OF REQUESTING THE MOTOR INSURERS' BUREAU TO EXTEND ITS AGREEMENT WITH THE GOVERNMENT SO AS TO COVER INSOLVENT INSURANCE COMPANIES, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON PIERS JACOBS, SAID TODAY.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON HO KAM-FAI, HE SAID ALSO THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE DISCUSSING THE MATTER FURTHER WITH THE INSURANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

HE SAID, VICTIMS OF ALL TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS WERE AT PRESENT ENTITLED UNDER THE TRAFFIC ACCIDENT VICTIMS ASSISTANCE SCHEME TO CLAIM COMPENSATION TO THE PRESCRIBED EXTENT WHETHER OR NOT AN INSOLVENT INSURANCE COMPANY WAS INVOLVED.

+IF AN INSURANCE COMPANY IS LIABLE, THEN THE ASSETS OF THAT INSURANCE COMPANY WILL BE AVAILABLE TO MEET CLAIMS IN THE EVENT OF THE COMPANY'S LIQUIDATION.

+UNHAPPILY, VICTIMS ARE UNLIKELY TO RECOVER THE FULL AMOUNT OF COMPENSATION DUE IF THE INSURANCE COMPANY IS INSOLVENT,+ HE SAID.

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MEDICAL REGISTRATION BILL PASSED WITH AMENDMENTS

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A BILL MAKING IT EASIER FOR PERSONS HOLDING OVERSEAS MEDICAL QUALIFICATIONS TO BE REGISTERED AS MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS IN HONG KONG WAS PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WITH THREE AMENDMENTS MADE BY UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS.

ONE CLAUSE OF THE MEDICAL REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984 IN ITS ORIGINAL WORDING WOULD GIVE THE MEDICAL COUNCIL THE POWER TO GRANT FULL EXEMPTION FROM ALL PARTS OF THE LICENTIATE EXAMINATION TO CANDIDATES IT THOUGHT FIT.

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE BILL, DR THE HON HARRY FANG SAID, +WHILE WE TRUST THE MEDICAL COUNCIL WILL ACT IN A RESPONSIBLE MANNER AND BE EXTREMELY CAREFUL IN GRANTING EXEMPTIONS, WE FEEL IT NECESSARY TO PROVIDE SOME PERIMETERS FOR DECISIONS ON EXEMPTION CASE, AS PRACTISED IN OTHER PROFESSIONAL BODIES.

+THIS VIEW WAS SHARED BY THE HONG KONG MEDICAL ASSOCIATION AND THE HONG KONG BRANCH OF THE BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION WHEN THEY PRESENTED THEIR VIEWS ON THE BILL TO US.+

DR FANG THUS MOVED AN AMENDMENT IN THE COMMITTEE STAGE TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT NO EXEMPTION FROM ANY EXAMINATION IN RESPECT OF MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE SHOULD BE GRANTED UNLESS THE CANDIDATE CAN SATISFY THE MEDICAL COUNCIL THAT HE HAS SUBSTANTIAL EXPERIENCE IN MEDICAL PRACTICE.

DR FANG REPORTED THAT ANOTHER AREA ON WHICH UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS HAD SOUGHT CLARIFICATION CONCERNED APPEAL PROCEDURES RELATING TO EXEMPTION MATTERS.

TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT APPEALS ON THESE MATTERS COULD GO UP TO THE MEDICAL COUNCIL, DR FANG MOVED ANOTHER AMENDMENT TO THE BILL.

JOINING THE DEBATE, DR THE HON HO KAM-FAI POINTED TO A PROJECTED SHORTFALL OF 920 DOCTORS BY 1993 IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR.

+UNLESS PLANS ARE MADE TO OVERCOME THIS SHORTFALL SOON, PLANNED MEDICAL SERVICES AND PROJECTS, LIKE NEW CLINICS, POLYCLINICS, HOSPITALS AND CHILD ASSESSMENT CENTRES WILL EITHER BE DELAYED OR CANCELLED ALTOGETHER, RESULTING IN A CRITICAL SHORTAGE OF PROVISION OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE PUBLIC,+ DR HO SAID.

THE AMENDMENTS IN THE BILL, HE POINTED OUT, AIMED TO FACILITATE THE REGISTRATION OF MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS HOLDING OVERSEAS QUALIFICATIONS BY REMOVING THE RESIDENTIAL REQUIREMENT FOR LICENTIATE EXAMINATIONS AND BY EMPOWERING THE MEDICAL COUNCIL TO GRANT EXEMPTIONS TO THE TEST OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AND EXTERNSHIP.

/+THESE WILL

+THESE WILL EFFECTIVELY SPEED UP THE LICENTIATE PROCESS, POSSIBLY TO ABOUT ONE-THIRD OF THE TIME REQUIRED UNDER THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS.

+IT IS HOPED THAT THESE AMENDMENTS WILL BRING ABOUT AN INCREASED SUPPLY OF DOCTORS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR WITH MINIMUM ACCEPTABLE STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE,+ HE SAID.

DR THE HON HENRIETTA IP IN HER COMMENT STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF +A CERTAIN STANDARD, A FAIR STANDARD AND THE LOCAL CHANGING DEMAND+.

+SUCH PURPOSES APPEAR SIMPLE AND THE BILL STRAIGHTFORWARD, BUT THE TASK OF THE MEDICAL COUNCIL TO EXECUTE SUCH IS BY FAR MORE DIFFICULT THAN IT MAY FIRST APPEAR.

+THE TASK IS MADE MORE DIFFICULT WHEN, FOR THE SAKE OF COMPLETENESS AND HIGH FLEXIBILITY, THE BILL ENCOMPASSES EXEMPTION CLAUSES WITHOUT ADEQUATELY SPELLING OUT CONCRETE GUIDELINES UNDER WHICH SUCH EXEMPTIONS ARE TO BE GRANTED. THIS OPENS THE BILL TO VARYING INTERPRETATIONS AND SUBSEQUENTLY TO CONTROVERSY,+ DR IP SAID.

WHILE EXPRESSING RESERVATIONS, SHE SAID THAT NEVERTHELESS, SHE SUPPORTED THE BILL FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

- * THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT HAS GIVEN THE ASSURANCE THAT FULL EXEMPTION WILL BE GRANTED ONLY ON RARE OCCASIONS.
- * INTERNAL GUIDELINES FOR EXEMPTIONS WILL BE WORKED OUT BY THE MEDICAL COUNCIL.
- * SHE HAS CONFIDENCE IN THE EXPERTISE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE MEDICAL COUNCIL IN NOT LIGHTLY EXECUTING FULL EXEMPTIONS.
- * THE +NO RESIDENTIAL QUALIFICATION+ AMENDMENT MUST BE REVIEWED IN LIGHT OF THE LOCAL CHANGING DEMAND OF DOCTORS, PARTICULARLY ON THE ANTICIPATED GRADUATION FROM THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY MEDICAL SCHOOL IN A FEW YEARS' TIME.

DR IP ALSO MOVED AN AMENDMENT TO THE BILL WHICH, SHE SAID, WAS TO ENSURE THAT A COMBINATION OF SURGICAL AND MEDICAL QUALIFICATIONS MUST COEXIST TO MAKE A GRADUATE FULLY QUALIFIED.

THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON HENRY CHING, THANKED MEMBERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT OF THE BILL.

ISLAND LINE ON SCHEDULE

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WHEN THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY ISLAND LINE OPENS IN JULY, 1985, IT WILL PROVIDE MUCH NEEDED RELIEF TO THE CORRIDOR ALONG THE NORTH SHORE OF HONG KONG ISLAND, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR JOHN BREMRIDGE SAID TODAY.

TABLING THE MTR CORPORATION'S ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR 1983 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, SIR JOHN SAID THE NEW LINE WOULD BE COMPLETED ON SCHEDULE AND WITHIN THE BUDGETED FIGURE OF JUST UNDER \$11 BILLION.

HE SAID THE MTRC LAST YEAR CARRIED 412 MILLION PEOPLE ON ITS TWO LINES, 17 PER CENT OVER THE 1982 FIGURE.

TOTAL FARE AND OTHER RECURRENT REVENUES ROSE BY 26 PER CENT TO \$1 035 MILLION WITH OPERATING PROFITS INCREASING TO \$253 MILLION, A 41 PER CENT IMPROVEMENT ON 1982, HE ADDED.

HOWEVER, THE MTRC STILL SUFFERED ON OVERALL LOSS OF \$535 MILLION DUE TO THE NEED TO SERVICE THE CORPORATION'S DEBTS OF \$14 BILLION.

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BUILDINGS (AMENDMENT) BILL EXPLAINED

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THE PURPOSE OF THE BUILDINGS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984 IS TO ENABLE THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL TO MAKE REGULATIONS, REQUIRING THE PROVISION OF REFUSE STORAGE CHAMBERS IN BUILDINGS AND SETTING OUT DESIGN CRITERIA FOR SUCH CHAMBERS.

THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON HENRY CHING, SAID THIS WHILE MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

+IT IS INTENDED THAT THE REGULATIONS WILL MAKE IT MANDATORY FOR ALL NEW BUILDING DEVELOPMENTS EXCEEDING A CERTAIN SIZE, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF CHURCHES, SCHOOLS, CARPARKS AND INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS, TO HAVE PROPERLY CONSTRUCTED REFUSE STORAGE CHAMBERS,+ HE TOLD THE COUNCIL.

THESE CHAMBERS WILL BE FOR THE TEMPORARY STORAGE OF REFUSE BEFORE ITS REMOVAL TO THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT'S REFUSE COLLECTION POINTS. +FOR VERY LARGE BUILDING DEVELOPMENTS, THE PROVISION OF VEHICULAR ACCESS WILL ALSO BE REQUIRED, SO THAT REFUSE COLLECTION VEHICLES MAY GAIN ACCESS AND PROVIDE A DIRECT COLLECTION SERVICE,+ MR CHING SAID.

/THERE IS

THERE IS AT PRESENT NO REQUIREMENT FOR THE PROVISION OF REFUSE STORAGE CHAMBERS IN BUILDINGS, AND BASKETS OF REFUSE ARE OFTEN LEFT IN ODD CORNERS AND PASSAGES BEFORE BEING MOVED TO REFUSE COLLECTION POINTS.

THIS PRACTICE IS ENVIRONMENTALLY OFFENSIVE, UNHYGIENIC, AND COULD BE DETRIMENTAL TO PUBLIC HEALTH, HE SAID.

+IT IS ENVISAGED THAT THE REGULATIONS WILL BE MADE AND PUBLISHED IN JUNE 1984 AND THAT THEY WILL COME INTO OPERATION ON JANUARY 1, 1985,+ MR CHING SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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BILL TO IMPROVE IMMIGRATION PROCEDURES

THE MAIN OBJECT OF THE IMMIGRATION (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1984 WAS TO AMEND THE IMMIGRATION ORDINANCE TO ENABLE THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT TO OPERATE IN MORE COST EFFECTIVE MANNER, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON, SAID TODAY.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, MR JEAFFRESON SAID NEW ARRANGEMENTS NOW FULLY INTRODUCED MEANT THAT ANNUAL SAVINGS OF ABOUT \$7 MILLION WERE BEING MADE IN RECURRENT EXPENDITURE OF THE DEPARTMENT.

FURTHER SUBSTANTIAL SAVINGS COULD BE MADE BY REALLOCATING CERTAIN INVESTIGATIVE DUTIES NOW PERFORMED BY IMMIGRATION OFFICERS TO IMMIGRATION ASSISTANTS.

TO ACHIEVE THIS, THE BILL PROPOSED THAT CERTAIN STATUTORY POWERS HELD BY IMMIGRATION OFFICERS BE EXTENDED TO IMMIGRATION ASSISTANTS.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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KCRC STAFF FULLY CAPABLE - SIR JOHN
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THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY CORPORATION HAD BUILT UP A NEW MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE FULLY CAPABLE OF OPERATING THE MODERN RAILWAY, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, SIR JOHN BREMRIDGE SAID TODAY.

TABLING THE KCRC'S ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR 1983 IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY SAID THAT THE TRANSFER OF 1 460 EX-KCR DEPARTMENTAL STAFF TO THE CORPORATION TOOK PLACE SMOOTHLY ON MAY 1 LAST YEAR.

THE CORPORATION'S PROGRAMME FOR ELECTRIFICATION AND MODERNISATION WAS NOW LARGELY COMPLETED, HE SAID.

+DAILY PATRONAGE GREW FROM 40 000 TO 100 000 AFTER ELECTRIFICATION TO TAI PO; TO 140 000 AFTER FULL ELECTRIFICATION; AND REMARKABLY STOOD AT 190 000 AT THE END OF THE YEAR, WHICH IS 30 PER CENT HIGHER THAN FORECAST,+ SIR JOHN SAID.

+THE MID-1980'S TARGET OF 250 000 IS WITHIN REACH,+ HE SAID.

+IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES A LOSS OF \$154 MILLION CAN BE REGARDED AS BUT A FIRST STEP TOWARDS A PROFITABLE RAILWAY.+

ON THE TUEN MUN LRT SYSTEM, HE SAID THAT THE CORPORATION WAS INVITED BY THE GOVERNMENT IN NOVEMBER 1983 TO BECOME THE OWNER-OPERATOR OF THE SYSTEM.

ITS DECISION WAS AWAITED WITH INTEREST, SIR JOHN SAID.

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SUPPORT SOUGHT FOR SEAFARERS' CONVENTION
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HONG KONG HAS ALWAYS FOLLOWED INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS ON THE SAFETY OF LIFE AND PROPERTY AT SEA, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON PIERS JACOBS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

IT WAS THEREFORE CONSISTENT WITH HONG KONG'S PRACTICE TO COMPLY WITH THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON STANDARDS OF TRAINING, CERTIFICATION AND WATCHKEEPING FOR SEAFARERS, WHICH CAME INTO FORCE INTERNATIONALLY ON APRIL 28, MR JACOBS SAID.

THE CONVENTION PRESCRIBES RECOGNISED STANDARDS FOR THE TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION OF SEAFARERS, INCLUDING OFFICERS AND RATINGS, WHO ARE INVOLVED IN WATCHKEEPING DUTIES, HE SAID, MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE MERCHANT SHIPPING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984.

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IF THE BILL IS PASSED, THE CONVENTION WILL BE EXTENDED TO HONG KONG THREE MONTHS AFTER THE NECESSARY REGULATIONS HAD BEEN MADE.

+FAILURE TO MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE OUR STANDARDS MIGHT WELL EXPOSE HONG KONG TO THE RISKS OF SANCTIONS BEING TAKEN AGAINST OUR SHIPS INTERNATIONALLY,+ MR JACOBS SAID.

THE BILL, ACCORDINGLY, ENABLES THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL TO MAKE REGULATIONS IN RESPECT OF THE MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS OF OFFICERS AND RATINGS, THE MANNING OF SHIPS, THE TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS AS LAID DOWN IN THE CONVENTION, HE SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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BILL SEEKS TO CORRECT ANOMALIES
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THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984 WAS TO REMOVE FROM THE PURVIEW OF THE COMMISSION PART-TIME MEMBERS OF THE LANDS TRIBUNAL, THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON DONALD LIAO, SAID TODAY.

+THESE MEMBERS ARE NOT LAWYERS AND SERVE ONLY WHEN THEIR EXPERTISE IS REQUIRED. THERE IS NO NEED TO INVOLVE THE COMMISSION IN THEIR APPOINTMENT OR CONDITIONS OF SERVICE,+ MR LIAO TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

HE SAID THE OPPORTUNITY WAS TAKEN TO CORRECT TWO ANOMALIES IN THE SCHEDULES -

- (A) TO CORRECT AN OMISSION OF THE OFFICE OF JUSTICE OF APPEAL FROM THE LIST OF JUDICIAL OFFICE HOLDERS; AND
- (B) TO DELETE THE OFFICE OF PRESIDENT OF THE TENANCY TRIBUNAL WHICH NO LONGER EXISTS.

DEBATE ON THIS BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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BILL PROVIDES USE OF EXPERTISE
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THE STAMP DUTY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984 WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

IN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON DONALD LIAO, POINTED OUT THAT APPEALS UNDER THE STAMP DUTY ORDINANCE SOMETIMES INVOLVE TECHNICAL PROBLEMS REGARDING THE VALUE OF LAND.

+SOME MEMBERS OF THE LANDS TRIBUNAL HAVE THE EXPERTISE WHICH WOULD ASSIST IN RESOLVING THOSE PROBLEMS.

+THIS BILL ENABLES THE DISTRICT COURT TO CALL UPON THAT EXPERTISE IN DECIDING IN THOSE APPEALS,+ MR LIAO SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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REVIEW POWER SOUGHT
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THE LANDS TRIBUNAL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984, WHICH AIMS AT ENABLING THE TRIBUNAL TO RECEIVE AND HEAR EVIDENCE ON REVIEW, WAS READ A SECOND TIME IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MOVING THE BILL, THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON DONALD LIAO SAID THE BILL WOULD MAKE THE POWERS OF THE LANDS TRIBUNAL IN THIS REGARD CONSISTENT WITH THOSE OF THE DISTRICT COURT.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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HOLIDAY FOR WORKERS
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THE PURPOSE OF THE EMPLOYMENT (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1984 IS TO BRING THE RELEVANT SECTIONS OF THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE INTO LINE WITH THE HOLIDAYS ORDINANCE, THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON RON BRIDGE SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR BRIDGE SAID THE HOLIDAYS ORDINANCE WAS AMENDED LAST YEAR TO ENABLE THE MONDAY FOLLOWING THE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY TO BE CELEBRATED AS A PUBLIC HOLIDAY.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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BANKING PROPOSALS BEING EXAMINED

THE GOVERNMENT IS NOW EXAMINING COMPREHENSIVE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY A BANK OF ENGLAND TEAM ON THE LOCAL BANKING SITUATION, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR JOHN BREMIDGE, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

SIR JOHN SAID THIS IN REPLY TO THE HON LYDIA DUNN WHO ASKED WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WAS SATISFIED WITH HONG KONG'S CURRENT SYSTEM OF PRUDENTIAL SUPERVISION ON DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES.

SIR JOHN POINTED OUT THAT IN HIS LAST BUDGET SPEECH, HE STATED THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT SATISFIED WITH THE PRESENT POSITION.

+HOW CAN WE BE IN THE LIGHT OF RECENT EVENTS -- NOT LEAST THE NEED TO TAKE OVER THE HANG LUNG BANK?

+THUS I SAID THAT, THE BANKING ORDINANCE HAVING BEEN INTRODUCED IN 1964, IT SEEMED SENSIBLE TO TAKE A LOOK AT WHERE WE STAND. A TEAM FROM THE BANK OF ENGLAND WAS INVITED HERE TO CONDUCT A REVIEW,+ HE SAID.

HE TOLD THE COUNCIL THERE WAS COMPLETE AWARENESS OF THE NEED TO IMPROVE SUPERVISORY ARRANGEMENTS.

+I SHALL BE SURPRISED IF FURTHER ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEGISLATIVE CHANGES ARE NOT IN DUE COURSE CONSIDERED APPROPRIATE,+ HE SAID.

BUT HE ADDED THAT CONSIDERABLE PRIOR CONSULTATION WOULD BE NECESSARY.

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FURTHER STEPS TAKEN AGAINST +LOAN SHARKS+

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THE MONEY LENDERS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984, WHICH WAS PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, WOULD DO AWAY WITH MORE LOAN SHARKS, THE HON SO KWOK-WING SAID AT THE COUNCIL MEETING.

THE MONEY LENDERS ORDINANCE PROVIDES THAT ANY PERSON WHO LENDS OR OFFERS TO LEND MONEY AT AN EFFECTIVE RATE OF INTEREST EXCEEDING 60 PER CENT A YEAR COMMITS AN OFFENCE, MR SO POINTED OUT.

HE SAID THAT SINCE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS ORDINANCE, MORE THAN 70 MONEY LENDERS HAD BEEN PROSECUTED.

TO RECOVER THE LOANS FROM DEBTORS WHO FAILED TO MAKE REPAYMENT, LOAN SHARKS HAD RESORTED TO INTIMIDATION, VIOLENCE AND OTHER CRIMINAL ACTIONS, MR SO SAID.

UNDER THE UNAMENDED ORDINANCE, MONEY LENDERS WHO CONTRAVENED ITS PROVISIONS WOULD GO UNPUNISHED IF THEY WERE NOT PROSECUTED WITHIN SIX MONTHS AFTER THE CONTRAVENTION.

WITH THE PASSAGE OF THE BILL, THIS LIMIT HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO TWO YEARS.

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BILL SEEKS TO AMEND DEFINITION OF 'STOCK'
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THE PROPOSED STAMP DUTY (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1984 SEEKS TO AMEND THE DEFINITION OF +STOCK+ IN THE ORDINANCE, TO REMOVE THE INHIBITIVE EFFECT OF THE UNINTENDED STAMP DUTY CHARGE ON FOREIGN CURRENCY AND BOND ISSUES, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR JOHN BREMRIDGE, SAID TODAY.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, SIR JOHN SAID THE OBJECT WAS TO AMEND THE STAMP DUTY ORDINANCE CONSEQUENT UPON THE ENACTMENT OF THE COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE 1984.

+THE LATTER, WHICH WILL TAKE EFFECT SHORTLY, REQUIRES COMPANIES TO KEEP A REGISTER OF DEBENTURE HOLDERS IN HONG KONG. THIS REQUIREMENT IS DESIGNED FOR THEIR PROTECTION.

+HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF THIS NEW REQUIREMENT, THE TRANSFER OF BONDS AND NOTES ISSUED BY A HONG KONG COMPANY WILL BECOME, QUITE FORTUITOUSLY, LIABLE TO STAMP DUTY.

+REPRESENTATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE TO THE GOVERNMENT THAT THE STAMP DUTY IMPLICATIONS WOULD CREATE A SERIOUS MARKET SETBACK FOR THIS TYPE OF INTERNATIONAL FINANCING WHICH, FOLLOWING EFFORTS BY THE BANKING INDUSTRY ENCOURAGED BY THE GOVERNMENT, HAS BEEN GROWING RECENTLY IN HONG KONG,+ HE SAID.

THE RELIEF PROPOSED WOULD HAVE NO ADVERSE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS BECAUSE NO DUTY WAS AT PRESENT GENERATED FROM THE TRANSFERS OF BONDS AND NOTES, HE SAID.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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SEVEN BILLS APPROVED
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SEVEN BILLS: THE DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984, THE MONEY LENDERS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984, THE IMMIGRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984, THE MEDICAL REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984, THE SMOKING (PUBLIC HEALTH) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984, THE APPRENTICESHIP (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984 AND THE CROSS-HARBOUR TUNNEL (PASSAGE TAX) BILL 1984, WERE PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

NINE OTHER BILLS WERE INTRODUCED AND READ A SECOND TIME, AND DEBATE ON THEM WAS ADJOURNED.

THEY ARE: THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984, THE LANDS TRIBUNAL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984, THE JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984, THE STAMP DUTY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984, THE STAMP DUTY (AMENDMENT) (NO 2) BILL 1984, THE MERCHANT SHIPPING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984, THE IMMIGRATION (AMENDMENT) (NO 2) BILL 1984, THE BUILDINGS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984 AND THE EMPLOYMENT (AMENDMENT) (NO 2) BILL 1984.

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CANADIANS URGED TO INVEST IN HK

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THE ACTING GOVERNOR, SIR PHILIP HADDON-CAVE, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) URGED CANADIAN COMPANIES PARTICIPATING IN THE CANADA EXPO '84 AT HONG KONG EXHIBITION CENTRE TO INVEST IN HONG KONG'S MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY.

SPEAKING AT THE EXHIBITION'S OPENING CEREMONY, SIR PHILIP SAID HONG KONG HAD A DIVERSIFIED ECONOMY, WITH AN AGGRESSIVE MANUFACTURING SECTOR, A SOLID CORE OF SERVICE INDUSTRIES WITH LINKS THROUGHOUT THE REGION AND THE WORLD, A RAPIDLY DEVELOPING INFRASTRUCTURE, AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS WHICH WERE AMONG THE WORLD'S BEST.

PUBLIC POLICIES WERE BASED ON THE TWIN CONCEPTS OF THE MARKET DISCIPLINED ECONOMY AND THE FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM, HE ADDED.

OVERSEAS PARTICIPATION IN HONG KONG'S MANUFACTURING SECTOR WAS ALREADY SUBSTANTIAL, SIR PHILIP SAID. SOME 550 FACTORIES WHOLLY OR PARTIALLY OWNED BY OVERSEAS INTERESTS EMPLOYED ABOUT 11 PER CENT OF HONG KONG'S INDUSTRIAL WORKFORCE, AND PRODUCED ABOUT 17 PER CENT OF ITS EXPORTS.

ALTHOUGH THERE WERE ONLY EIGHT FACTORIES IN HONG KONG INVOLVING CANADIAN INTERESTS, THERE HAD BEEN A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN INTEREST RECENTLY. SEVERAL CANADIAN COMPANIES WERE CONSIDERING INVESTMENT IN HONG KONG TO PRODUCE MICROCOMPUTERS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT, AND SEVERAL OF THE COMPANIES ALREADY HERE WERE CURRENTLY EXPANDING THEIR OPERATIONS.

SIR PHILIP SAID CANADA ALREADY FIGURED PROMINENTLY IN HONG KONG'S TRADE STATISTICS. IN 1983, CANADA WAS HONG KONG'S TENTH LARGEST TRADING PARTNER, AND THE TOTAL TWO-WAY TRADE AMOUNTED TO \$5.6 BILLION.

HE SAID HONG KONG SOUGHT FURTHER EXPANSION OF TRADE WITH CANADA.

HONG KONG MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES NEEDED CANADIAN RAW MATERIALS AND THE PEOPLE +HAD A REMARKABLE DEMAND+ FOR THE KIND OF CONSUMER GOODS PRODUCED BY THE COUNTRY.

+MOREOVER, OUR POSITION AS A MAJOR SHIPPING, FINANCIAL AND COMMUNICATIONS CENTRE ALSO OFFERS AN EXCELLENT MARKET OPPORTUNITY FOR CANADIAN EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES, MANY EXAMPLES OF WHICH ARE ON DISPLAY AT THIS EXPOSITION,+ SIR PHILIP SAID.

FOUR COMMENDED FOR CRIME FIGHTING

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FOUR MEN WHO HAD HELPED IN THE ARREST OF CULPRITS IN TWO ROBBERIES IN WAN CHAI WERE TODAY (WEDNESDAY) COMMENDED BY THE DISTRICT FIGHT CRIME COMMITTEE.

THEY WERE MR CHU YUNG-FAT, A DRIVER= MR LEUNG CHUN-NAM AND KWAN MAN-YUEN, STAFF MEMBERS OF A LOCAL BANK= AND MR LAM KIN-MAN, A BROKER.

THE FIRST INCIDENT OCCURRED ON THE MORNING OF JANUARY 22 WHEN MR CHU SPOTTED A PERSON SNEAKING OUT OF HIS EMPLOYER'S PREMISES IN BLACK'S LINK.

HE REPORTED THE CASE TO A POLICE OFFICER PATROLLING THE AREA. THE SUSPECT WAS SUBSEQUENTLY ARRESTED AND THE STOLEN PROPERTY RECOVERED.

THE SECOND INCIDENT INVOLVED A ROBBERY AT A BANK IN HENNESSY ROAD ON JANUARY 25. MR LEUNG AND MR KWAN, AS WELL AS MR LAM WHO WAS PASSING BY, CAUGHT THE SUSPECT AFTER A BRIEF CHASE.

AT THE COMMENDATION CEREMONY, THE DISTRICT OFFICER AND CHAIRMAN OF THE DISTRICT FIGHT CRIME COMMITTEE, MR LAM KAM-KWONG, PRAISED THE FOUR MEN FOR THEIR BRAVERY AND CIVIC-MINDEDNESS.

ALSO AT THE CEREMONY WERE THE ASSISTANT DISTRICT COMMANDER, MR KEVIN YEUNG= THE ASSISTANT DISTRICT OFFICER, MR FRANCIS HO= AND DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS.

LAST YEAR, 13 CITIZENS RECEIVED COMMENDATIONS FROM THE WAN CHAI DISTRICT FIGHT CRIME COMMITTEE.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

SEMINAR ON HYPERTENSION

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A SEMINAR, ENTITLED +THE CARE OF HYPERTENSION+, FOR OLD PEOPLE IN MONG KOK, WILL BE HELD AT THE CHAN HING SOCIAL SERVICES CENTRE IN FUK TSUN STREET AT 2 PM TOMORROW (THURSDAY).

THE SEMINAR WILL START OFF A HEALTH PROMOTION FORTNIGHT BEING ORGANISED BY THE LOCAL DISTRICT BOARD AND THE HONG KONG MEDICAL ASSOCIATION TO AROUSE RESIDENTS' AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD HEALTH.

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE SEMINAR.

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WORKSHOPS ON ADOLESCENCE FOR TEACHERS
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FOUR WORKSHOPS ON THE TEACHING OF HEALTH EDUCATION WILL BE RUN FOR PRIMARY FIVE AND SIX TEACHERS NEXT MONTH.

THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE WORKSHOPS IS TO ACQUAINT TEACHERS WITH THE NEWLY REVISED HEALTH EDUCATION SYLLABUS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS, PARTICULARLY IN THE AREAS RELATED TO PHYSICAL, SOCIAL AND MENTAL GROWTH OF THE YOUNG ADOLESCENT.

THE HALF-DAY WORKSHOPS WILL BE HELD ON JUNE 5 AND 6, AT THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, 4TH FLOOR, LEE GARDENS, HYSAN AVENUE, CAUSEWAY BAY, HONG KONG.

HEADS OF SCHOOLS WISHING TO NOMINATE TEACHERS TO ATTEND SHOULD SUBMIT THEIR APPLICATIONS TO THE INSPECTOR, SOCIAL STUDIES AND HEALTH EDUCATION SECTION, ADVISORY INSPECTORATE, EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, 5TH FLOOR, HYSAN AVENUE, HONG KONG, ON OR BEFORE MAY 24.

APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED ON A FIRST-COME-FIRST-SERVED BASIS. ANY ENQUIRIES MAY BE MADE TO THE SECTION ON 5-8392496-7.

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VOLUNTEERS SOUGHT FOR PROBATIONERS SCHEME
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VOLUNTEERS ARE BEING SOUGHT BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT TO HELP WITH REHABILITATION WORK UNDER ITS VOLUNTEER SCHEME FOR PROBATIONERS.

THEY SHOULD BE 21 YEARS OF AGE OR OVER AND POSSESS SECONDARY EDUCATION, WITH INTEREST IN HELPING OTHERS, PARTICULARLY YOUNG OFFENDERS.

APPLICATION FORMS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM ALL PROBATION OFFICES AND THE OFFICE OF THE VOLUNTEER SCHEME ON THE 7TH FLOOR OF CAUSEWAY BAY MAGISTRACY BUILDING.

COMPLETED FORMS SHOULD BE RETURNED TO THE OFFICE OF THE SCHEME BEFORE THE END OF THE MONTH.

THOSE SELECTED WILL BE THOROUGHLY BRIEFED BEFORE THEY START WORK.

+VOLUNTEERS PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN WIDENING PROBATIONERS' CONTACTS AND IN HELPING RE-INTEGRATE THEM INTO THE COMMUNITY,+ THE OFFICER IN CHARGE OF THE SCHEME, MR LIU KOON-KEUNG, SAID.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 16, 1984

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+THE RESPONSE IN PREVIOUS RECRUITMENT EXERCISES WAS ENCOURAGING AND I APPEAL FOR MORE PEOPLE TO TAKE PART IN THIS IMPORTANT WORK,+ HE SAID.

SOME OF THE 140 PARTICIPANTS IN THE SCHEME, WHO COME FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE, HAVE SERVED MORE THAN TWICE.

FURTHER ENQUIRIES ABOUT THE SCHEME SHOULD BE MADE TO MR LIU ON TELEPHONE 5-7955612.

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TSUEN WAN AND CENTRAL TRAFFIC CLEARWAY CHANGES
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FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY (MAY 18), CLEARWAY HOURS WILL BE CHANGED AT TAI HO ROAD IN TSUEN WAN BETWEEN CASTLE PEAK ROAD AND SHA TSUI ROAD.

THE NEW RESTRICTION HOURS WILL BE 7 AM TO 10 AM AND 4 PM TO 7 PM DAILY, DURING WHICH ONLY FRANCHISED BUSES WILL BE ALLOWED TO STOP FOR PASSENGERS OR GOODS WITHIN THE ROAD SECTION.

ALSO FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY (MAY 18), THE SECTION OF PEEL STREET IN CENTRAL FROM CAINE ROAD TO 30 METRES NORTH OF MOSQUE STREET WILL BE PROHIBITED TO VEHICLES OVER 5 TONNES GROSS.

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