



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 1981

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RENT BILL PASSED
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THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION)(AMENDMENT) BILL COMPLETED ITS PASSAGE THROUGH THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY, DESPITE OPPOSITION FROM SEVERAL UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS.

NINE UNOFFICIALS SPOKE DURING THE RESUMED DEBATE.

SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE BILL, THE SENIOR UNOFFICIAL MEMBER, THE HON OSWALD CHEUNG, SAID THE COMMITTEE OF REVIEW ON THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) ORDINANCE RECOGNISED THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH WOULD PLEASE ALL SECTORS OF THE COMMUNITY.

HE SAID: +THEY MADE A JUDGMENT AS TO WHAT WAS GOOD FOR THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE.

+NO REPRESENTATION OR SUGGESTION WENT BY DEFAULT.+

MR CHEUNG POINTED OUT THAT THE COMMITTEE, APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO LOOK INTO ALL ASPECTS OF CONTROL OF RENTS AND SECURITY OF TENURE 18 MONTHS AGO, CONSISTED OF PERSONS +WHO HAD NO BIAS ONE WAY OR THE OTHER+.

HE SAID MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE RECEIVED AN ENCOURAGING RESPONSE FROM A WIDE SPECTRUM OF THE COMMUNITY AND FORMED THREE SUB-GROUPS TO INTERVIEW ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO PUT FORWARD INTERESTING IDEAS AND SPECIFIC PROPOSALS.

THEY ALSO STUDIED A WIDE RANGE OF SUBJECTS TO GET THE NECESSARY BACKGROUND INFORMATION.

+HAVING CONSIDERED ALL THE REPRESENTATIONS AND SIFTED THE FACTS, THEY HAVE PRODUCED A REPORT WHICH WAS THOROUGH, AND, IN MY JUDGMENT, IMPARTIAL.

+THE ADMINISTRATION IN PUTTING FORWARD THIS BILL HAS SELECTED TO IMPLEMENT ONLY THOSE OF THE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH ARE FEASIBLE AND NOT UNDULY DISRUPTIVE,+ MR CHEUNG SAID.

THE REV PATRICK MCGOVERN, ARGUING AGAINST THE BILL, SAID THE SITUATION IN HOUSING WHICH IN JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1980 PROMPTED THE GOVERNMENT TO CONTROL ALL DOMESTIC RENT INCREASES WAS STILL THE SAME TODAY.

AND IT COULD BE ARGUED THAT THE SITUATION IS WORSE TODAY THAN IT WAS THEN, HE SAID.

+OUR HILLSIDES ARE COVERED MORE THICKLY THAN EVER WITH SQUATTERS, OUR ROOFTOP HUTS ARE GOING UP FROM SINGLE STOREY TO TWO OR EVEN THREE STOREYS.

/+FLATS ARE

+FLATS ARE NOT AVAILABLE FOR RENT AT PRICES WHICH PEOPLE CAN AFFORD TO PAY.+

HE SAID HE AGREED THAT NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO PHASE OUT RENT CONTROL.

FOR THE SAME REASONS, HE ADDED, NOW IS ALSO NOT THE TIME FOR ANY RELAXATION OF RENT CONTROL.

ON THE PROVISIONS OF THE BILL, FR MCGOVERN SAID HE AGREED TO EXTEND PART II OF THE EXISTING ORDINANCE FOR ANOTHER TWO YEARS, BUT OPPOSED THE RAISING THE BIENNIAL CEILING ON RENT INCREASES FROM 21 TO 30 PER CENT AND WITH ALL THE PROPOSED EXCLUSIONS, ESPECIALLY THE EXCLUSION OF NEW PREMISES GETTING FIRST OCCUPATION PERMITS.

HE SAID: +FIRST LETTINGS OF NEW BUILDINGS, AND NEW LETTINGS OF OLD BUILDINGS ARE ALREADY EXCLUDED UNDER THE PRESENT LAW.

+THE FURTHER EXCLUSIONS ARE BOTH UNNECESSARY AND HARMFUL.

+I PREDICT THAT JUST AS THE SITUATION GOT OUT OF HAND IN 1979 FORCING THE LAW TO INCLUDE ALL THAT HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN EXCLUDED, SO TOO IN A SHORT TIME TODAY'S RELAXATIONS WILL HAVE TO BE INCLUDED IN A FURTHER AMENDMENT.+

BY THAT TIME THE DAMAGE WOULD HAVE BEEN DONE AND RENTS WOULD HAVE RISEN TO A NEW HIGH LEVEL PLATFORM EVEN FURTHER OUT OF REACH OF THOSE WHO ARE ALREADY PAYING TOO HIGH A PROPORTION OF THEIR INCOME ON RENT, HE ADDED.

THE HON S.L. CHEN FELT THAT INCREASED SUPPLY OF DOMESTIC ACCOMMODATION WAS EVIDENTLY THE ONLY GENUINE SOLUTION TO HONG KONG'S HOUSING PROBLEM.

WHILE WELCOMING THE GOVERNMENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT EFFORTS SHOULD BE MADE TO PHASE OUT RENT CONTROLS AS SOON AS CIRCUMSTANCES PERMIT, HE REITERATED THAT MEASURES AIMED AT ACHIEVING A BALANCE BETWEEN THE SUPPLY AND DEMAND OF DOMESTIC PREMISES MUST BE TAKEN WITHOUT DELAY.

+THESE SHOULD INCLUDE INCREASES IN LAND SUPPLY AND PUBLIC HOUSING PRODUCTION, AN EXPANDED HOME-OWNERSHIP SCHEME WITH PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION AND, IF NECESSARY, APPROPRIATE ANTI-SPECULATION ACTIONS IN THE PROPERTY MARKET,+ HE SAID.

TURNING TO THE RENT INCREASE CEILING, MR CHEN APPRECIATED THAT IT WAS PRACTICALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO ARRIVE AT A RATE THAT WOULD BE FAVOURABLY ACCEPTED BY ALL.

HOWEVER, HE THOUGHT THE PROPOSED 30 PER CENT CEILING IS MORE REALISTIC GIVEN THE PRESENT STAGE OF ECONOMIC CONDITIONS.

+WE ARE TOLD THAT FACTORS INCLUDING THE BANK INTEREST AND INFLATION RATES, THE NOMINAL AVERAGE DAILY WAGE INDEX AND THE LIKELY FUTURE RATES OF INCREASE IN FAIR MARKET RENTS HAD ALL BEEN TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE OF REVIEW IN RECOMMENDING A SUITABLE RENT INCREASE CEILING.

+ALTHOUGH THE 30 PER CENT PROPOSAL IS SLIGHTLY BELOW THAT RECOMMENDED BY THE REVIEW COMMITTEE, IT IS STILL A DESIRABLE STEP IN RESTORING THE BALANCE OF INTERESTS BETWEEN LANDLORDS AND TENANTS.

+THE RAISING OF THE PERCENTAGE CEILING TO KEEP IN LINE WITH THE RATE OF INFLATION IN GENERAL WILL GIVE LANDLORDS AND POTENTIAL LANDLORDS A FAIR DEAL AND SUBSEQUENTLY ENCOURAGE THEM TO LET THEIR FLATS OUT.+

HE ALSO CONSIDERED THE PROPOSED EXCLUSION OF LUXURY PREMISES FROM RENT CONTROLS IN TWO STAGES SHOULD PROVIDE SUFFICIENT TIME FOR THOSE AFFECTED TO MAKE THE NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS.

AS TO THE REPOSSESSION OF RENTED ACCOMMODATION BY LANDLORDS, MR CHEN URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO PUT THE REVIEW COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION INTO LEGISLATIVE EFFECT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND TO EXTEND IT TO THE PUBLIC HOUSING SECTOR +SO THAT THOSE WELL-OFF TENANTS WHO CAN AFFORD TO OWN PRIVATE ACCOMMODATION CAN BE REQUIRED TO VACATE THEIR UNITS AND TO RELEASE THEM TO MORE NEEDY TENANTS.+

THE HON WONG LAM SUPPORTED THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSAL TO EXEMPT FROM RENT CONTROL HOUSES FOR WHICH OCCUPATION PERMITS ARE GRANTED ON OR AFTER JUNE 19, 1981.

HE SAID THIS WOULD STIMULATE DEVELOPERS TO BUILD MORE AND ALLOW LANDLORDS TO LET OUT THEIR HOLDINGS WITHOUT WORRY.

HOWEVER, AS TO GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSAL TO RAISE THE RATE OF INCREASE FROM 21 PER CENT TO 30 PER CENT EVERY TWO YEARS, MR WONG SAID HE WAS AT A LOSS TO UNDERSTAND HOW GOVERNMENT ARRIVED AT THIS NEW PERCENTAGE.

HE SUGGESTED THAT THE PERMITTED PERCENTAGE SHOULD BE ARRIVED AT BY A MORE SYSTEMATIC METHOD OF CALCULATION AND THAT THIS PERCENTAGE SHOULD BE REVISED UPWARDS OR DOWNWARDS WHERE APPROPRIATE AT PROPER INTERVALS.

ON THE EXEMPTION FROM CONTROL OF PREMISES WITH TOP RATEABLE VALUES, MR WONG SAID THAT MOST OF THE TENANTS, OR THEIR EMPLOYERS, SHOULD BE ABLE TO TAKE SUBSTANTIAL RENT INCREASES IN STRIDE.

+IT WOULD NOT BE TOO DIFFICULT FOR THEM, SHOULD THEY BE UNWILLING TO GO ON PAYING EXORBITANT RENTS, TO FIND SMALLER ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION,+ HE SAID.

EARLIER, MR WONG SAID THAT IN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES OF HONG KONG, A COMPLETE ABANDONMENT OF RENT CONTROL COULD VERY POSSIBLY LEAD TO VIOLENT FLUCTUATIONS IN RENTS AND EVICTIONS WHICH WOULD PRECIPITATE SOCIAL UNREST AND WAS THUS EXTREMELY UNDESIRABLE.

+IN SPITE OF SOME ADVOCATES OF DOING AWAY WITH ALL RENT CONTROL IMMEDIATELY ON THE GROUND OF FREE ECONOMY, I STILL THINK IT IS WISE TO MAINTAIN THE RENT CONTROL UNTIL THE END OF 1981,+ HE ADDED.

DR HO KAM-FAI SUPPORTED THE BILL ON THE CONDITION THAT NEW DOMESTIC PREMISES SHOULD ALSO BE BROUGHT UNDER RENT CONTROL AFTER THEIR FRESH OR FIRST LETTINGS.

HE SAID: +GIVEN THE FACT THAT SUPPLY PERPETUALLY LAGS BEHIND DEMAND, REMOVAL OF RENT CONTROL FOR NEW PREMISES WILL ENHANCE THE SPECULATIVE APPEAL OF THESE PROPERTIES.

+IT IS THEREFORE NOT UNREASONABLE TO EXPECT SPECULATIVE ACTIVITIES TO BECOME INTENSIFIED.+

BUT HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT MAKE ANY ATTEMPT TO CURB SPECULATION IN THIS REVIEW EXERCISE AND, AS A RESULT, THE END-USERS OF DOMESTIC ACCOMMODATION WILL BE VICTIMISED.

HE SUGGESTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD SERIOUSLY RE-CONSIDER APPLYING THE BIENNIAL 30 PER CENT RENT INCREASE CEILING TO NEWLY-BUILT PREMISES AFTER FRESH OR FIRST LETTINGS.

WHILE NOTING THE ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXEMPTION ARE TO ENCOURAGE DEVELOPERS TO PRODUCE MORE FLATS FOR THE RENTAL MARKET AND TO INDUCE OWNERS OF NEW PREMISES TO LET THEIR FLATS OUT, DR HO DOUBTED WHETHER THIS EXEMPTION PROVISION WILL SUBSEQUENTLY BRING ABOUT A STABILISING EFFECT ON THE PRESENT RENTAL LEVELS.

+IN A FREE MARKET, THE PRICE OF A COMMODITY IS TO A GREAT EXTENT DETERMINED BY THE FORCES OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND.

+STATISTICS IN THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF REVIEW SHOWED A SHORTFALL IN HOUSING OF ABOUT 204 000 FLATS IN 1980. THIS SHORTFALL WILL STILL REMAIN AT A HIGH LEVEL OF 137 000 IN 1985.

+GIVEN HOUSING SHORTAGE OF THIS MAGNITUDE, IT IS VERY UNLIKELY THAT RENTS FOR DOMESTIC ACCOMMODATION CAN BE STABILISED IN THE NEAR FUTURE DESPITE AN IMPROVED SUPPLY THAT MAY RESULT FROM THIS DECONTROL MEASURE,+ HE SAID.

DR HO ALSO FELT THAT DECONTROL OF NEW PREMISES WILL CREATE TWO DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF PRIVATE RENTED ACCOMMODATION UNNECESSARILY.

HE POINTED OUT THAT WHILE SITTING TENANTS CONTINUE TO ENJOY PROTECTION AND SECURITY OF TENURE, TENANTS IN THESE EXEMPTED PREMISES WILL SIMPLY LIVE AT THE MERCY OF THEIR LANDLORDS.

+IN THE END, A PROPORTION OF THE TENANTS IN THESE UNPROTECTED PREMISES WILL FIND THEMSELVES UNABLE TO AFFORD THE RENTS DEMANDED AND MAY BE FORCED TO SQUAT.

+THEY WILL EXACERBATE THE SITUATION OF PUBLIC HOUSING AND WILL PUT UNDUE PRESSURE ON THE GOVERNMENT TO ACCELERATE ITS BUILDING PROGRAMMES BEYOND ITS CAPACITY,+ HE SAID.

THE HON ALLEN LEE SAID HE COULD NOT SUPPORT THE PROPOSED RENT INCREASE FROM 21 TO 30 PER CENT BIENNALLY +BECAUSE IT CONCERNS THE INTEREST OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC+.

/HE SAID

HE SAID THAT WHILE RESPECTING THE FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE, IT WAS NOT NECESSARY AT THIS POINT IN TIME TO AMEND THE CURRENT LEGISLATION.

MR LEE RECALLED THAT WHEN THE EXISTING LEGISLATION ON RENT CONTROL WAS INTRODUCED, THE BOSSES OF THE LAND DEVELOPING COMPANIES SWAMPED THE UMELCO OFFICE AND GAVE VARIOUS JUSTIFICATIONS WHY RENT CONTROL SHOULD NOT BE INTRODUCED.

HOWEVER, AFTER THE LEGISLATION CAME INTO EFFECT AND DURING 1980, ALL THE LAND DEVELOPING COMPANIES RECORDED THEIR HIGHEST PROFITS IN HISTORY AND THEIR STOCKS SOARED TO AN ALL TIME HIGH RECENTLY IN THE HONG KONG STOCK EXCHANGE.

+WHAT A STRANGE PHENOMENON, WHO IS BEING HURT BY RENT CONTROL?+ HE ASKED.

MR LEE NOTED THAT AT THE CURRENT MARKET VALUE AND INTEREST RATE, PEOPLE EARNING AN INCOME OF \$10 000 PER MONTH WOULD HAVE A HARD TIME PAYING FOR THE DOWN PAYMENT.

THEY THEREFORE HAVE TO RENT A PLACE TO LIVE, HE SAID.

+WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE CURRENT RENT CONTROL SCHEME? WHY RAISE THE MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE INCREASE FROM 21 PER CENT TO 30 PER CENT BIENNALLY?

+IS GOVERNMENT PROJECTING THE INFLATION RATE FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS AT 14 PER CENT PER ANNUM?

+SINCE LANDLORDS CAN ASK FOR THE FAIR MARKET RENT IN THE FIRST LETTING, WHY ARE THERE SO MANY EMPTY FLATS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR?+

HE CONCLUDED THAT IT IS NOT A PROBLEM OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH RENT CONTROL NOR SECURITY OF TENURE.

+IT IS SIMPLY THE PRICE TO EITHER RENT OR PURCHASE IS TOO HIGH.

+I BELIEVE THESE EMPTY FLATS ARE IN THE HANDS OF DEVELOPERS AND SPECULATORS.

+IF ANY LEGISLATION IS NEEDED, IT IS TO LEGISLATE AGAINST PEOPLE WHO LEAVE THE FLATS EMPTY AND TO DISCOURAGE SPECULATION ACTIVITIES,+ HE SAID.

THE HON ANDREW SO PROPOSED THAT THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION)(AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE 1980 SHOULD REMAIN AS IT IS FOR AT LEAST TWO MORE YEARS.

+THIS WILL GIVE A LONGER BREATHING-SPACE TO TENANTS, INCLUDING FOREIGN INVESTORS IN HONG KONG WHO ARE UNDER GREAT PRESSURE OF HIGH RENT,+ HE SAID.

HE FELT THAT IN VIEW OF THE CURRENT SHORTAGE OF BOTH HOUSING AND LAND AND IN THE OVERALL INTEREST OF THE COMMUNITY, AMENDING RENT CONTROL +TO ATTAIN A REASONABLE BALANCE ON THE BENEFITS OF THE SECTORS CONCERNED+ IS ONLY AN EXPEDIENCY WHICH HAS THE DISADVANTAGE OF RASHNESS.

IF IT IS IMPLEMENTED, HE ADDED, A CHAIN REACTION WILL BE SET OFF, RESULTING IN THE BASIC LIVELIHOOD OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC BEING ADVERSELY AFFECTED.

MR SO SAID THAT IF THE ARGUMENT TO RELAX RENT CONTROL IS TO ENCOURAGE LANDLORDS TO LET OUT PREMISES, +THEN WE ARE ACTUALLY GIVING A FREE HAND TO SPECULATORS WHO HAVE BEEN MANIPULATING THE MARKET+.

+EXPEDIENT MEASURES ARE BAD MEASURES. SINCE EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT THE ULTIMATE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM IS TO INCREASE LAND SUPPLY AND HOUSE PRODUCTION, WE SHOULD WORK POSITIVELY IN THIS DIRECTION.+

HE ALSO URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO REVIEW ITS HIGH LAND COST POLICY THOROUGHLY +SO AS TO AVOID BEING LABELLED AS A GOVERNMENT WHICH PERMITS ITSELF TO UPHOLD HIGH LAND COSTS BUT DOES NOT ALLOW LANDLORDS TO INCREASE RENTS+.

MR BILL BROWN SAID HE DID NOT LIKE RENT CONTROLS, NOR DID HE LIKE TO SEE SO MANY OF OUR COMMUNITY SUFFERING FROM HOUSING PROBLEMS.

BUT, IN HIS VIEW, THE BILL +IS A SENSIBLE ATTEMPT TO BALANCE THE INTERESTS OF ALL CONCERNED WHILST THE PROBLEMS ARE STILL BEING TACKLED+.

HE OPINED THAT OUR HOUSING PROBLEMS WERE NOT LIKELY TO BE RESOLVED WITHIN THE NEXT TWO YEARS AND IT WOULD BE NAIVE TO BELIEVE THAT THESE TEMPORARY MEASURES WOULD NOT BE FURTHER EXTENDED.

+IF COMPLETE DECONTROL IS NOT GOING TO BE POSSIBLE FOR SOME TIME, THEN IT IS EVEN MORE NECESSARY TO ADJUST THE SYSTEM AT EACH EXTENSION TO SLOW DOWN THE RATE AT WHICH CONTROLLED RENTS FALL BEHIND MARKET RENTS, AND TO ENCOURAGE DEVELOPERS TO MAINTAIN PRODUCTION AND PLACE FLATS ON THE RENTAL MARKET.

+THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS IS ILLUSTRATED BY THE FACT THAT CONTROLLED RENTS TODAY ONLY AVERAGE ABOUT 40 PER CENT OF MARKET RENTS - AND THE PERCENTAGE IS ONLY 20 PER CENT IN THE CASE OF PRE-WAR PREMISES,+ HE SAID.

HE QUOTED STATISTICS TO SHOW THAT OF THE 620 000 HOUSEHOLDS IN PRIVATE HOUSING IN MARCH 1980, 311 000 OR ABOUT 50 PER CENT WERE TENANTS, INDICATING THE IMPORTANT ROLE PLAYED BY PRIVATE LANDLORDS IN OUR OVERALL HOUSING SITUATION.

HE HOPED THAT THE RECONVENING OF THE WORKING PARTY TO REVIEW THE HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME WOULD SOLVE THE HOUSING PROBLEMS OF THE MIDDLE CLASS WITHIN A REASONABLE TIME FRAME.

HE ALSO CALLED ON THE FINANCIAL COMMUNITY TO JOIN THE ESTABLISHED BANKS IN SUPPORTING THE SCHEME ON A MUCH LARGER SCALE THAN HITHERTO.

ON THE SUGGESTION THAT CHEAP LAND BE MADE AVAILABLE TO REDUCE THE COST OF HOUSING, MR BROWN CONTENDED THAT IT SHOULD NOT BE OVERLOOKED THAT IN THE PERIOD UP TO 1985 GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE ON CAPITAL ACCOUNT WILL BE LARGELY FINANCED BY THE REVENUE YIELD FROM LAND SALES.

+ANY SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION IN THE PRICE OF LAND MUST RESULT IN EXPENDITURE ON CAPITAL ACCOUNT BECOMING MORE DEPENDENT ON THE SURPLUS ON RECURRENT ACCOUNT.

+THE CONSEQUENCES TO OUR TAX STRUCTURE AND GROWTH RATE WOULD BE SEVERE,+ HE SAID.

HE URGED THAT THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON LAND PRODUCTION TO EXAMINE MORE CLOSELY THE ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR SHOULD BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY.

THERE IS OBVIOUSLY A NEED TO BALANCE THE DESIRE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR FOR PROFITS AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF GOVERNMENT TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC INTEREST, HE SAID.

+BUT IF THE WILL EXISTS THIS CAN SURELY BE ACHIEVED,+ HE ADDED.

THE HON CHAN KAM-CHUEN SAID A PIECE OF LEGISLATION IS ONLY GOOD WHEN IT IS FAIR TO ALL PARTIES AS FAR AS POSSIBLE.

HE POINTED OUT HOWEVER THAT A TOTAL VACANCY OF 17 000 FLATS AT THE END OF 1980 AND THE DEMOLITION OF A NEW AND UNOCCUPIED BUILDING JUST FOR THE SAKE OF CHANGING FROM DOMESTIC USE TO COMMERCIAL USE SHOW THAT RENT CONTROL IS AGAINST HUMAN NATURE AND INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES RESULTING IN A DWINDLING SUPPLY OF RENTAL ACCOMMODATION.

+RENT CONTROL ONLY BENEFITS THE SITTING TENANTS IN PROVIDING THEM WITH SECURITY OF TENURE AND A RENT LOWER THAN THE FAIR MARKET RENT.

+TO THOSE WHO DOUBT THE FAIRNESS OF THE 'FAIR MARKET RENT', THEY ARE ADVISED TO ENQUIRE ON THE ASKING RENT OF A SIMILAR FLAT WHICH IS IN THE SAME BUILDING OR ESTATE.

+THE PIECEMEAL AND INCOHERENT NATURE OF THE PRESENT RENT CONTROL LEGISLATION LEADS TO THE ILLUSION THAT IF ONE HOLDS ON TO SOMETHING WHICH ONE DOES NOT RIGHTFULLY OWN, IN THIS CASE, TENANTS OF PROTECTED PREMISES, ONE COULD MANAGE TO GET SOME ADVANTAGE OF COMPENSATION OUT OF IT.

+HENCE UNNECESSARY CONFRONTATIONS ARE CREATED BETWEEN LANDLORDS, PRINCIPAL TENANTS AND TENANTS AND THESE ADD UNNECESSARY LOAD TO THE WORK OF ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.+

HE THEREFORE THOUGHT THAT RENT CONTROL IS JUSTIFIABLE FOR SMALL FLATS IN THE SHORT TERM TO STOP STEEP INCREASES IN RENT OWING TO SUDDEN INCREASE IN DEMAND.

BUT THE FINAL SOLUTION TO THE HOUSING PROBLEM IS THE BUILDING OF MORE PUBLIC HOUSING AND HOME OWNERSHIP FLATS RATHER THAN RENT CONTROL WHICH SHOULD BE PHASED OUT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TAKING THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS INTO CONSIDERATION, HE SAID.

MR CHAN ALSO SUGGESTED THAT LUXURIOUS FLATS AND NEW DOMESTIC PREMISES BE DECONTROLLED.

HE POINTED OUT THAT TENANTS OF THE UPPER RENTAL BRACKET ARE USUALLY SUBSIDIZED BY MULTI-NATIONAL FIRMS OR GOVERNMENTS.

THERE IS NO SOUND ECONOMIC REASON WHY HONG KONG'S CORPORATIONS OR INDIVIDUALS SHOULD SUBSIDIZE THEM, HE SAID.

+THERE ARE PROS AND CONS IN SETTING UP ONE'S BUSINESS IN HONG KONG BUT ON WEIGHING ALL THE FACTORS, ONE WOULD FIND HONG KONG A BETTER PLACE, ESPECIALLY IF ONE TRADES WITH CHINA.

+THERE IS NO OTHER PLACE IN THE WORLD GEOGRAPHICALLY TO GIVE THE BEST OF TWO WORLDS.

+THE RENT FACTOR IS SELDOM A DECISIVE FACTOR BY ITSELF AND THE 'INVISIBLE' QUEUE OF CORPORATIONS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES TO SET UP BUSINESS HERE IS LONG AND I REGRET THAT ONLY THE FITTEST SURVIVIES.

+IN FACT, DECONTROL OF LUXURY AND NEW PREMISES MAY HELP TO INCREASE THE SUPPLY AND STABILISE THE RENTAL LEVELS SO THAT TIME MAY AGAIN BE RIGHT FOR PURCHASES,+ HE ADDED.

LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION)(AMENDMENT) BILL 1981

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THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON DONALD LIAO, SAID TODAY THAT THE RENT FOR A TYPICAL CONTROLLED PREMISES IF RAISED BY THE MAXIMUM RATE OF 30 PER CENT WOULD, AT THE NEXT INCREASE, AMOUNT TO 45.5 PER CENT OF THE MARKET RENT.

UNDER THE 21 PER CENT LIMIT THE PERCENTAGE WOULD HAVE BEEN 42.3.

+IN DOLLAR TERMS, IF A CONTROLLED RENT IS \$1 000 WHERE THE MARKET RENT IS ABOUT \$2 800, THE NEW RENT, WITH THE MAXIMUM INCREASE, WILL BE \$1 300, RATHER THAN \$1 210,+ HE EXPLAINED.

HE CITED THE EXAMPLE WHEN WINDING UP THE DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) (AMENDMENT) BILL.

MR LIAO SAID THE BEST INCENTIVE FOR OWNERS OF NEW FLATS TO PUT THEM ON THE RENTAL MARKET IS THE REMOVAL OF SUCH PREMISES FROM THE AMBIT OF THE RENT CONTROL LEGISLATION.

HE REITERATED THAT THE ONLY LONG TERM SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF HIGH AND INCREASING RENTS IS THE PRODUCTION OF MORE HOUSING FOR THE RENTAL MARKET.

HOWEVER, RECENT STATISTICS ON CONSTRUCTION OF PRIVATE HOUSING WERE FAR FROM ENCOURAGING, HE NOTED.

FOR THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF THIS YEAR, HE SAID, THE NUMBER OF UNITS IN NEW PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PROJECTS WITH CONSENT TO COMMENCE WORK HAD DROPPED BY NEARLY 27 PER CENT OVER THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR - FROM ABOUT 18 000 TO 13 000 UNITS.

+ALTHOUGH THE REASONS FOR THIS DROP CANNOT BE PINPOINTED IT IS CLEAR THAT EVERY OPPORTUNITY MUST BE TAKEN TO REMOVE POSSIBLE CONSTRAINTS ON THE PRODUCTION OF NEW FLATS,+ HE SAID.

MR LIAO NOTED THAT THE REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON LAND SUPPLY INDICATED THAT THERE WILL BE A STEADY SUPPLY OF SITES FOR PRIVATE HIGH DENSITY HOUSING OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS.

PRODUCTION OF PUBLIC HOUSING, BOTH FOR RENTAL AND FOR HOME OWNERSHIP, HE SAID, HAD REACHED A RECORD LEVEL OF 35 000 FLATS ANNUALLY. THIS WOULD NOT ONLY BE MAINTAINED BUT INCREASED WHEN POSSIBLE.

AS TO LUXURY PREMISES, MR LIAO SAID THAT THIS YEAR A TOTAL OF 1 455 UNITS OF 160 SQUARE METRES OR MORE WERE FORECAST TO BE PRODUCED, AND A FURTHER 1 635 NEXT YEAR. THE AVERAGE ANNUAL PRODUCTION OF SUCH LARGE UNITS FROM 1971 TO 1980 WAS 608 UNITS.

MR LIAO ADDED THAT THE TREND WAS FOR MORE SUCH FLATS OR HOUSES TO BE BUILT IN WHAT USED TO BE CONSIDERED +OUTLYING AREAS+ AND IF PROSPECTIVE TENANTS ARE TO BENEFIT FROM MORE FAVOURABLE RENTS THEN THEY MUST BE PREPARED TO LIVE IN THE NEW TERRITORIES RATHER THAN IN THE TRADITIONAL LUXURY HOUSING ENCLAVES OF HONG KONG ISLAND.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 1981

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NEW REGULATIONS ON FIRE PRECAUTIONS APPROVED
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A SEPARATE SET OF REGULATIONS ON FIRE PRECAUTIONS, REPLACING THE EXISTING PROVISIONS IN THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS REGULATIONS RELATING TO THE PREVENTION OF AND ESCAPE FROM FIRE IN REGISTRABLE WORKPLACES, WAS APPROVED AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

MOVING A MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS (FIRE PRECAUTIONS IN REGISTRABLE WORKPLACES) REGULATIONS 1981, THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON. J.N. HENDERSON, SAID THE NEW REGULATIONS ALSO INCORPORATE THE STANDARD FIRE PRECAUTION REQUIREMENTS WHICH AT PRESENT ARE ISSUED WHERE NECESSARY TO REGISTRABLE WORKPLACES BY NOTICE.

HE POINTED OUT THAT FIVE OF THE NEW REGULATIONS - REGULATIONS 4, 5, 6, 7 AND 8 - COVER THE SAME AREAS AS REGULATIONS 26, 27, 28, 29 AND 30 OF THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS REGULATIONS AND ALSO REPRESENT IMPROVEMENTS IN PRESENTATION AND DETAIL.

DETAILS OF THE FIVE NEW REGULATIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- * REGULATION 4 PROVIDES FOR PROPER DESIGN AND INSTALLATION OF DOORS.
- * REGULATION 5 REQUIRES PROPER MAINTENANCE OF FIRE ESCAPES WITHIN THE WORKPLACE.
- * REGULATION 6 EMPOWERS THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR TO REQUIRE THE PROVISION OF APPROPRIATE MEANS FOR FIGHTING FIRE.
- * REGULATION 7 DEALS WITH PROHIBITION OF SMOKING.
- * REGULATION 8 PROHIBITS UNAUTHORISED ALTERATIONS TO PREMISES THAT MAY CREATE SERIOUS FIRE RISK OR OBSTRUCTION OF FIRE ESCAPES.

/MR HENDERSON

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MR HENDERSON WENT ON TO SAY THAT FOUR OTHER NEW REGULATIONS PROVIDE FOR THE SAFE STORAGE OF INFLAMMABLE SUBSTANCES, THE PREVENTION OF NAKED FLAMES FROM IGNITING INFLAMMABLE VAPOURS OR SUBSTANCES AND FOR THE PREVENTION OF ESCAPE OF INFLAMMABLE VAPOURS. THEY COVER AREAS WHICH AT PRESENT ARE DEALT WITH BY STANDARD REQUIREMENTS CONTAINED IN NOTICES ISSUED TO REGISTRABLE WORKPLACES, AND ARE THEREFORE NOT NEW IN SUBSTANCE.

MR HENDERSON SAID ONE OF THE REGULATIONS PROVIDES FOR MAXIMUM PENALTIES OF \$10 000 IN CERTAIN CASES AND \$30 000 FOR MORE SERIOUS OFFENCES.

+BY HAVING A SEPARATE SET OF REGULATIONS, IT IS HOPED THAT MEASURES FOR THE PREVENTION OF FIRE IN REGISTRABLE WORKPLACES WILL HAVE A CLEARER LEGAL IDENTITY, WILL BE BETTER KNOWN AND WILL CREATE GREATER IMPACT,+ HE CONCLUDED.

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WIDER PLAN TO REDUCE FIRE HAZARDS

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A WIDER PLAN DESIGNED TO REDUCE FIRE HAZARDS IN COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS WAS BEING DRAWN UP, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON LEWIS DAVIES TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

SPEAKING AT THE SECOND READING OF THE FIRE SERVICES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1981, MR DAVIES ADDED THAT PROPOSALS FOR SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASED FINES FOR VARIOUS OFFENCES INVOLVING FIRE HAZARDS MAY BE INCLUDED IN A FURTHER AMENDING BILL.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 1981

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'UK-PROPOSED RECESSION CLAUSE INIMICAL TO HK'S INTERESTS'
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THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT CONSIDERS THAT ANY +RECESSION CLAUSE+ IN THE MULTI-FIBRE ARRANGEMENT, SUCH AS THAT FAVOURED BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, WOULD NOT ONLY BE INIMICAL TO HONG KONG'S INTERESTS, BUT WOULD ALSO BE UNWORKABLE, SAID THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF TRADE INDUSTRY AND CUSTOMS, THE HON L.W.R. MILLS, AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LYDIA DUNN, MR MILLS ADDED THAT FROM WHAT WAS KNOWN ABOUT THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY COMMISSION'S POLICY, THERE WAS NO PROPOSAL FOR A +RECESSION CLAUSE+.

MR MILLS POINTED OUT THAT THE UK SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRADE HAD HIMSELF ALSO SAID THAT +THE IDEA OF THE RECESSION CLAUSE DOES NOT COMMAND ELSEWHERE THE WIDESPREAD SUPPORT WHICH IT COMMANDS IN THE UK.+

ANSWERING A QUESTION PUT BY THE HON ALLEN LEE ABOUT A PROPOSED EXHIBITION CENTRE, MR MILLS SAID THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT ACCEPTED THAT THERE WAS A DEMAND -- EXISTING AND POTENTIAL -- FOR SUCH A FACILITY.

IT WAS PROCEEDING WITH THE STAGE II CONSULTANCY, THE PURPOSE OF WHICH IS TO DRAW UP SPECIFICATIONS FOR DEVELOPING A MULTI-STOREY COMPLEX TO INCLUDE AN EXHIBITION CENTRE ON A SPECIFIED SITE IN TSIM SHA TSUI, AND PROVIDE ESTIMATES OF CAPITAL AND OPERATING COSTS TO BE INCURRED, AS WELL AS REVENUE OBTAINABLE.

A NON-STATUTORY BOARD, HEADED BY MR M.G.R. SANDBERG, WAS SET UP TO OVERSEE THE STAGE II CONSULTANCY, AND SO FAR EIGHT FIRMS HAVE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN UNDERTAKING THE CONSULTANCY. A SHORT LIST OF FIVE OR SIX FIRMS WOULD BE DRAWN UP AND TENDERS INVITED.

+WE EXPECT THE APPOINTED CONSULTANTS TO START WORK IN OCTOBER AND A REPORT TO BE MADE TO THE GOVERNMENT EARLY NEXT YEAR,+ MR MILLS SAID.

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 1981

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MOVE TO STRENGTHEN LAW AGAINST MISUSE OF ARMS
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TWO BILLS, THE ARMS AND AMMUNITION BILL 1981 AND THE WEAPONS BILL 1981, WHICH SEEK TO STRENGTHEN THE LAW ON MISUSE OF ARMS AND IMITATION FIREARMS AND TO TIGHTEN SUPERVISION OVER THE USE OF MARTIAL ARTS WEAPONS, WERE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

AT THE SECOND READING OF THE BILLS, THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL THE HON G.P. NAZARETH SPOKE ABOUT THE CIRCUMSTANCE THAT CALLED FOR INCREASED SANCTIONS AGAINST THE ILLEGAL USE OF FIREARMS AND IMITATION FIREARMS.

HE SAID THAT IN 1977 THERE WERE 47 CASES OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY INVOLVING THE USE OF ARMS AND IMITATION FIREARMS. THIS WENT UP TO 77 IN 1978, 133 IN 1979 AND 194 IN 1980.

+IN THE MAJORITY OF CASES IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO ESTABLISH WHETHER THE OBJECT USED WAS A REAL OR IMITATION FIREARM. BUT CLEARLY THERE HAS BEEN A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN THE CRIMINAL USE OF BOTH FIREARMS AND IMITATION FIREARMS.

+AND IT IS TO THIS DISTURBING SITUATION THAT THE SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASED PENALTIES IN THE BILL ARE DIRECTED,+ MR NAZARETH SAID.

HE SAID THE ARMS AND AMMUNITION BILL 1981 HAD THE GENERAL OBJECT OF STRENGTHENING AND MODERNISING THE LAW RELATING TO ARMS AND AMMUNITION AND WOULD REPLACE THE PRESENT ARMS AND AMMUNITION ORDINANCE WHICH WAS ENACTED IN 1933.

ON THE WEAPONS BILL 1981, MR NAZARETH SAID A REVIEW OF THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF CONTROLS OVER BLADED WEAPONS HAD CONCLUDED THAT THERE WAS ONE AREA WHERE SOME SYSTEM OF CONTROL WAS NECESSARY IN THE INTEREST OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CRIME PREVENTION.

THIS AREA CONCERNS THE POSSESSION BY MARTIAL ARTS ESTABLISHMENTS OF THE RANGE OF WEAPONS TRADITIONALLY ASSOCIATED WITH MARTIAL ARTS.

+ALTHOUGH MANY MARTIAL ARTS ASSOCIATIONS ARE PERFECTLY RESPECTABLE AND PROVIDE A PLACE WHERE YOUNG MEN CAN ENGAGE IN AN ANCIENT AND WELL-RESPECTED FORM OF TRAINING IN SELF-DEFENCE, IT IS ALSO TRUE THAT MANY MARTIAL ARTS ASSOCIATIONS ARE A MEETING PLACE AND RECRUITING GROUND FOR ORGANISED GANGS OF THUGS - THE TRIADS,+ HE SAID.

+TOTAL ABOLITION OF WEAPONS CONTROL OVER THESE ESTABLISHMENTS IS LIKELY TO ENCOURAGE THE ACTIVITIES OF THE GANGS THAT INFEST SOME OF THEM AND ACT AS A SPUR TO RECRUITMENT, PARTICULARLY THROUGH THE ATTRACTION, EVEN FASCINATION, THAT MARTIAL ARTS WEAPONS APPEAR TO HAVE FOR OUR YOUTH.+

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UMELCO POLICE GROUP REPORT
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THE UMELCO POLICE GROUP IS GENERALLY SATISFIED WITH THE WORK OF THE COMPLAINTS AGAINST POLICE OFFICE - CAPO - AND REMAINS CONVINCED THAT TO TRANSFER THE INVESTIGATION OF POLICE COMPLAINTS TO A NON-POLICE BODY IS NEITHER PRACTICABLE NOR VIABLE.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR LEWIS DAVIES, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS (WEDNESDAY) AFTERNOON.

WHEN COMMENTING ON THE +REPORT OF THE UMELCO POLICE GROUP FOR 1980+ TABLED IN THE COUNCIL, MR DAVIES POINTED OUT THAT THE PUBLIC CONTINUES TO MAKE AN INCREASING USE OF THE POLICE COMPLAINTS MACHINERY.

+THE 1980 REPORT CONFIRMS THAT THE GROUP HAS CONTINUED TO PLAY AN IMPORTANT AND EFFECTIVE ROLE IN THE MONITORING OF THESE COMPLAINTS.

+I WISH AGAIN TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE DETAILED AND EXHAUSTIVE WORK PERFORMED BY THE GROUP AND TO ITS METHODOICAL AND THOROUGH EXAMINATION OF THE CASES BROUGHT BEFORE IT, A POINT ILLUSTRATED BY THE GROUP HAVING DEALT WITH 430 MORE CASES IN 1980 THAN IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR,+ MR DAVIES SAID.

THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS REGISTERED INCREASED BY 14 PER CENT FROM 2 290 TO 2 601, AND THE PATTERN OF COMPLAINTS ALSO REMAINED GENERALLY THE SAME.

IT WAS INDICATED THAT 2 728 COMPLAINTS CASES, INCLUDING 709 CASES CARRIED OVER FROM 1979 AND COVERING 3 453 SEPARATE POINTS OF COMPLAINT, WERE EXAMINED BY THE GROUP IN THE COURSE OF THE YEAR, LEAVING 582 OUTSTANDING AT THE YEAR END.

+OF THESE POINTS OF COMPLAINT, 368 WERE FOUND TO BE 'SUBSTANTIATED', A FURTHER 160 WERE CLASSIFIED AS 'NOT PROVEN', MEANING THAT CAREFUL INVESTIGATION HAD FAILED TO ADDUCE FACTS TO WARRANT CLASSIFICATION AS 'SUBSTANTIATED'. CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS OR DISCIPLINARY ACTION WAS TAKEN AGAINST 422 POLICE OFFICERS, COMPARED WITH 312 IN 1979. FOUR OFFICERS WOULD HAVE FACED DISCIPLINARY ACTION BUT CHOSE TO RESIGN. AND 2 109 POINTS OF COMPLAINT WERE CLASSIFIED AS 'UNSUBSTANTIATED', AND A FURTHER 136 WERE FOUND TO BE FALSE AND 678 WITHDRAWN,+ MR DAVIES TOLD THE LEGCO SESSION.

MR DAVIES WENT ON TO SAY THAT +A POLICE OFFICER IS ENTITLED TO THE SAME PROTECTION AT LAW AS ANY CITIZEN, AND THE NORMAL RULES OF EVIDENCE MUST BE APPLIED TO ANY COMPLAINTS AGAINST HIM WHICH IMPLIES CRIMINAL CONDUCT.+

IN CONCLUSION, MR DAVIES SAID THAT THE GROUP ACKNOWLEDGES THE CO-OPERATION AND ASSISTANCE IT RECEIVES AT ALL TIMES FROM CAPO, AND PAYS TRIBUTE TO ITS PROFESSIONALISM.

+I ECHO THIS TRIBUTE, AND LOOK FORWARD WITH ALL THOSE CONCERNED TO A FURTHER CONSOLIDATION AND CONTINUATION OF THE PROGRESS ACHIEVED BOTH BY THE UMELCO POLICE GROUP AND BY CAPO OVER THE LAST THREE AND A HALF YEARS.+ MR DAVIES SAID.

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ILLEGAL GAMBLING AT 'UNACCEPTABLY HIGH LEVEL'

ILLEGAL GAMBLING, THOUGH AT A LOWER LEVEL THAN THREE YEARS AGO, WAS STILL 'UNACCEPTABLY HIGH,' SAID THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON. G.P. NAZARETH, WHEN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE GAMBLING (AMENDMENT) BILL 1981 AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THE PROBLEM AREAS OF ILLEGAL GAMBLING ARE ILLEGAL BOOKMAKING AND ILLEGAL CASINO-TYPE GAMBLING, HE SAID.

THE AMENDMENT BILL IS INTENDED TO REMOVE TWO MAJOR WEAKNESSES IN ACTION THAT CAN BE TAKEN AGAINST THESE ACTIVITIES.

WITH REGARD TO ILLEGAL BOOKMAKING, CLAUSE THREE PROVIDES THAT A PERSON IN POSSESSION OF A BETTING SLIP IS PRESUMED TO BE IN SUCH POSSESSION TO ASSIST ANOTHER PERSON IN BOOKMAKING.

HOWEVER, TO PROTECT INNOCENT RACEGOERS WHO MAY HAVE MADE NOTES OF A BET FOR A FRIEND FROM PROSECUTION, AN AMENDMENT WILL BE MADE TO MAKE THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S CONSENT A PRE-REQUISITE TO PROSECUTION.

MR NAZARETH POINTED OUT THAT IT WAS FELT 'MOST UNLIKELY' THAT ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN AGAINST AN GENUINE PUNTER.

EVEN IN THE REMOTE EVENTUALITY THAT AN INNOCENT PUNTER WAS FOUND WITH A NOTE OF A BET FOR A FRIEND, HE WOULD ONLY HAVE TO SHOW THAT 'ON THE BALANCE OF PROBABILITIES THE BET WAS NOT RECEIVED BY WAY OF TRADE OR BUSINESS.'

REFERRING TO ILLEGAL CASINO-TYPE GAMBLING, HE SAID +FORMIDABLE MEASURES INVOLVING CONSIDERABLE INGENUITY ARE TAKEN BY ORGANISERS TO AVOID DETECTION AND PROSECUTION. PREMISES ARE ROTATED, OPERATING HOURS CHANGED, ONLY KNOWN CUSTOMERS ADMITTED, LOOKOUTS, WALKIE-TALKIE RADIOS AND TELEPHONE PAGING SYSTEMS ARE USED, CUSTOMERS ARE TRANSPORTED FROM PRE-ARRANGED PICK-UP POINTS AND ARE CONFINED TO THE PREMISES UNTIL GAMBLING IS COMPLETED.+

ALL THESE CALLED FOR 'EFFECTIVE DETERRENTS ONCE AN OFFENCE IS ESTABLISHED.'

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE EXISTING LAW PROVIDES MANDATORY FORFEITURE OF MONEY OR PROPERTY USED IN ILLEGAL GAMBLING, BUT THIS WAS DIFFICULT TO PROVE, AS VERY LITTLE MONEY IS EVER FOUND BY THE TIME POLICE ARE ABLE TO GAIN ENTRY TO THE PREMISES DUE TO DELIBERATE DELAYING TACTICS USED BY THE OPERATORS.

CLAUSE THREE OF THE BILL PROPOSES A PRESUMPTION THAT WHERE ENTRY OF THE POLICE IS PREVENTED, OBSTRUCTED OR DELAYED, ALL MONEY OR PROPERTY FOUND IN THE PREMISES IS PRESUMED TO HAVE BEEN USED FOR OR IN CONNECTION WITH GAMBLING.

DEBATE ON THE MOTION WAS ADJOURNED.

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CALL FOR MORE STAFF TO DEAL WITH APPLICANTS

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) PASSED THE SHIPPING AND PORT CONTROL (AMENDMENT) BILL, PROVIDING FOR MORE EFFECTIVE CONTROL OVER THE POSSESSION AND LICENSING OF VESSELS.

THE BILL ALSO RESTRICTS THE USE OF UNLICENSED MOTORISED PLEASURE CRAFT WHICH ARE EASILY REMOVED FROM THE WATER AND TRANSPORTED OR STORED ON LAND.

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE BILL, MR BILL BROWN RECALLED THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY HAD ESTIMATED THAT NO LESS THAN 3 000 PLEASURE VESSELS, OR ABOUT ONE THIRD OF ALL PLEASURE CRAFT PLYING HONG KONG WATERS, WERE CURRENTLY UNLICENSED.

+IT IS REASONABLE TO ASSUME, THEREFORE, THAT THE ENACTMENT OF THIS BILL WILL RESULT IN A LARGE NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS FOR LICENCES,+ HE SAID.

+AND THIS COULD WELL BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF PERSONS APPLYING FOR THEIR LOCAL ENGINEERS AND MASTER CERTIFICATES.+

MR BROWN SAID HE WAS TOLD THE WAITING TIME FOR SUCH A TEST IS SIX TO SEVEN MONTHS, AND HE CALLED FOR SUFFICIENT STAFF TO BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE MARINE DEPARTMENT TO IMPLEMENT THE PROPOSALS.

IN REPLY, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON LEWIS DAVIES, SAID MARINE DEPARTMENT'S LICENSING OFFICES WERE READY TO HANDLE APPLICATIONS FROM THOSE WHO ALREADY OWN PLEASURE VESSELS BUT HAVE NOT LICENSED THEM. IN FACT, THERE HAD ALREADY BEEN A SLIGHT INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS SINCE THE BILL WAS INTRODUCED.

MR DAVIES SAID IT WAS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT THE NUMBER OF PERSONS APPLYING FOR LOCAL ENGINEERS AND MASTERS CERTIFICATES WOULD INCREASE.

+A PROBLEM HAS BEEN CREATED IN PROVIDING FACILITIES FOR THESE EXAMINATIONS, DUE IN PART TO THE FACT THAT SOME PERSONS WHO ARRANGE TO TAKE THE EXAMINATION DO NOT SHOW UP FOR IT.

+HOWEVER FROM THE BEGINNING OF THIS MONTH EVENING SESSIONS FOR EXAMINATIONS HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED. I HOPE THAT THIS AND OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS WHICH ARE BEING MADE WITH THE DIRECTOR OF MARINE WILL COPE WITH THE DEMAND,+ HE ADDED.

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 1981

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AGREEMENT ON MEDICAL CARE IN UK
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HONG KONG VISITORS AND STUDENTS STUDYING IN THE UNITED KINGDOM WILL BE PROVIDED WITH +IMMEDIATELY NECESSARY MEDICAL TREATMENT+ BY RECIPROCAL AGREEMENT, IT WAS STATED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY MR OSWALD CHEUNG, THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, THE HON ERIC HO SAID HE WAS PLEASED TO GIVE THE ASSURANCE THAT VISITORS AND STUDENTS GOING FROM HONG KONG TO THE UK WOULD NOT SUDDENLY FIND THEMSELVES SUBJECTED TO FULL COST CHARGES IF THEY FALL ILL.

HE SAID: +EVER SINCE THE UNITED KINGDOM GOVERNMENT FIRST INDICATED ITS INTENTION TO INTRODUCE REGULATIONS TO CHARGE VISITORS FOR TREATMENT UNDER THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE, THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THEM OVER THIS MATTER.+

+AGREEMENT WAS REACHED IN PRINCIPLE AT THE DISCUSSIONS THAT PERSONS ORDINARILY RESIDENT IN EACH TERRITORY SHOULD BE PROVIDED WITH IMMEDIATELY NECESSARY MEDICAL TREATMENT DURING THEIR TEMPORARY STAY IN THE OTHER,+ HE SAID.

+OUR STUDENTS WILL BE COVERED BY THIS AGREEMENT,+ HE SAID.

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DRUGS +NOT A PROBLEM IN SCHOOLS+
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DRUG ABUSE IS NOT GENERALLY A PROBLEM IN OUR SCHOOLS AND THIS IS MAINLY BECAUSE OF THE PREVENTIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME, SAID THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR LEWIS DAVIES, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY MR R.H. LOBO IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR DAVIES POINTED OUT THAT +THERE IS AN ON-GOING INTENSIVE PROGRAMME OF PREVENTIVE EDUCATION TARGETED AT STUDENTS WHICH FOR 1981/82 INCLUDES SCHOOL TALKS, SEMINARS, PROVISION OF DRUG PREVENTION MATERIAL TO TEACHERS, PRODUCTION OF EDUCATIONAL FILM, A YOUTH PARTICIPATION SCHEME IN ANTI-NARCOTICS PUBLICITY PROJECTS, AN INFORMATION WALL CHART FOR DISPLAY IN SCHOOLS AND EXTENSIVE PUBLICITY THROUGH THE MASS MEDIA+.

AS FOR STUDENTS USING DANGEROUS DRUGS, MR DAVIES SAID, +THEY WOULD BE PROSECUTED, AND DEPENDING ON THE COURT'S VIEW OF THE CASE, SUBSEQUENT TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION COULD BE PROVIDED EITHER IN THE VOLUNTARY PROGRAMME OPERATED BY THE SOCIETY FOR THE AID AND REHABILITATION OF DRUG ABUSE OR IN THE CUSTODIAL PROGRAMME AT A DRUG ADDICTION TREATMENT CENTRE OPERATED BY THE PRISONS DEPARTMENT.+

IN EITHER CASE, CLOSE LIAISON BETWEEN THE AFTER-CARE OFFICERS, THE PARENTS AND THE SCHOOLS WOULD BE MAINTAINED THROUGHOUT THIS PROCESS.

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SERVICES +NOT COMPARABLE+
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IT WAS NOT APPROPRIATE TO COMPARE THE AUXILIARY MEDICAL SERVICE, WHICH IS PART OF THE ESSENTIAL SERVICES CORPS, WITH THE ST. JOHN'S COUNCIL FOR HONG KONG, WHICH IS A VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION, SAID DR THE HON. K.L. THONG, DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES, AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THIS WAS BECAUSE OF THE BASIC DIFFERENCES IN THEIR ORGANISATION AND ROLES, AS WELL AS THE SCOPE AND MAGNITUDE OF THEIR SERVICES, AS REFLECTED IN THEIR RESPECTIVE METHODS OF FUNDING, HE SAID.

IN REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON. CHARLES YEUNG, DR THONG POINTED OUT THAT AMS MEMBERS ARE OBLIGED TO TURN OUT FOR ACTIVE SERVICE WHEN REQUIRED, OR FACE A FINE OF \$1 000 OR IMPRISONMENT FOR SIX MONTHS, WHEREAS MEMBERS OF THE ST. JOHN'S COUNCIL SERVE VOLUNTARILY AND ARE NOT SUBJECT TO ANY ESSENTIAL SERVICES REGULATIONS.

+BOTH ORGANISATIONS, WITHIN THE RESOURCES BEING MADE AVAILABLE TO THEM FOR APPROVED ACTIVITIES, HAVE EACH IN THEIR OWN WAY MADE VALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE SERVICE OF THE COMMUNITY,+ HE SAID.

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CLOSE WATCH KEPT ON OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES
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THERE HAS BEEN NO UNDUE INCIDENCE OR REPORT OF LEAD POISONING OR OTHER SERIOUS INDUSTRY RELATED DISEASE, THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON. J.N. HENDERSON, SAID AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON. HENRY HU.

MR HENDERSON SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS AWARE OF THE HEALTH HAZARDS POSED BY THE ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY, WHICH WERE SIMILAR TO THE HAZARDS POSED BY OTHER INDUSTRIES WHERE DUST AND FUME ARE PRODUCED AND A VARIETY OF CHEMICAL SUBSTANCES ARE USED.

THE LEGAL BASIS FOR HEALTH PROTECTION IN THE WORKPLACE IS CONTAINED IN THE HYGIENE SECTION OF THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS ORDINANCE IN PARTICULAR REGULATION 33 DEALING WITH CONTROL OF +DUST OR FUME OR OTHER IMPURITY+.

INSPECTION BY THE FACTORY INSPECTORATE HELPED TO MAINTAIN STANDARDS, AND IN THE PAST TWO YEARS SOME 387 UNDERTAKINGS HAD BEEN REFERRED TO THE INDUSTRIAL HEALTH DIVISION FOR FURTHER SURVEY.

THE MAJORITY OF THESE WERE CONCERNED WITH ASSESSMENT OF VENTILATION SYSTEMS TO ENSURE MAXIMUM EFFICIENCY.

THE DIVISION WOULD INVESTIGATE ANY REPORT OF OCCUPATIONAL ILLNESS AND GIVE ADVICE ON HEALTH PROBLEMS TO EMPLOYER OR EMPLOYEE IF REQUIRED, SAID MR HENDERSON.

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 1981

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LEGISLATION ON WORK AT HEIGHTS CONSIDERED

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THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT IS CONSIDERING INTRODUCING LEGISLATION TO FURTHER ENSURE THE SAFETY OF PEOPLE WORKING AT HEIGHT ON CONSTRUCTION SITES.

THIS WAS DISCLOSED BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON J.N. HENDERSON, AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON HO KAM-FAI.

CONSIDERATION WAS BEING GIVEN, MR HENDERSON ADDED, TO PROVIDE MORE SPECIFICALLY AND IN MORE DETAIL FOR SAFE PLACES OF WORK ON CONSTRUCTION SITES, SUCH AS STABILITY OF WORKING PLATFORMS, USE OF SUSPENDED SCAFFOLDS AND USE OF SAFETY BELTS AND SAFETY NETS.

THE QUESTION OF SCAFFOLDING SAFETY WOULD ALSO BE FURTHER EXAMINED.

AN ANALYSIS CONDUCTED BY FACTORY INSPECTORATE OF ALL ACCIDENTS INVOLVING FALLS OF PERSONS FROM HEIGHT ON CONSTRUCTION SITES FOR THE FIRST HALF OF 1980 REVEALED THAT OUT OF THE 1 000 SUCH ACCIDENTS ONLY 47 - LESS THAN FIVE PER CENT - INVOLVED FALLS FROM SCAFFOLDS, MR HENDERSON SAID.

SPECIAL EMPHASIS WAS PUT ON SAFETY IN WORKING AT HEIGHT IN THE CURRENT INDUSTRIAL SAFETY PROGRAMME.

A CODE OF SAFE PRACTICES ON SCAFFOLDS AND PLATFORMS HAD BEEN DRAWN UP JOINTLY BY THE BUILDING CONTRACTORS' ASSOCIATION, THE HONG KONG SCAFFOLDING MERCHANTS GENERAL ASSOCIATION AND THE FACTORY INSPECTORATE OF THE DEPARTMENT.

PARTICULAR ATTENTION WOULD BE GIVEN TO THE PRACTICABILITY OF TRANSFERRING SOME PARTS OF THE SAFETY CODE INTO LAW.

MR HENDERSON EMPHASISED THAT IN THE LONG TERM, EDUCATION AND TRAINING SHOULD PLAY AN IMPORTANT PART IN IMPROVING THE SAFETY OF SCAFFOLDING WORKERS AS IN OTHER ASPECTS OF INDUSTRIAL SAFETY.

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MORE PUBLICITY FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION SCHEME URGED

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THE INTRODUCTION OF DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION WAS A MAJOR STEP IN THE EVOLUTION OF OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM, THE HON PETER C. WONG SAID.

AND HE HAD NO DOUBT THAT CONCERNED MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE REFORMS AND THE ENSUING BENEFITS THAT THEY WOULD BRING TO THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG.

HE CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO SPARE NO EFFORT IN PUBLICISING BOTH THE CONCEPT AND THE PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF THIS NEW SCHEME AND IN ENCOURAGING POSITIVE INVOLVEMENT IN DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION.

MR WONG WAS SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS BILL IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THE BILL WAS PASSED WITH THE ELECTORAL PROVISIONS BILL 1981 AND THE URBAN COUNCIL (AMENDMENT)(NO. 2) BILL 1981.

HE SAID THE LEGISLATION SCRUTINY GROUP OF UNOFFICIALS, OF WHICH HE IS CHAIRMAN, HAD DISCUSSED THE BILL WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND HAD RECOMMENDED THE FOLLOWING THREE CHANGES:

- * DELETION OF CLAUSE 27 WHICH DEALS WITH DISCRIMINATION AGAINST AN EMPLOYEE BY REASON OF HIS MEMBERSHIP OF A DISTRICT BOARD-
- * AMENDMENT OF CLAUSE 11, IN RESPECT OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE BY ELECTED MEMBERS, TO INCLUDE APPOINTED MEMBERS AS WELL- AND
- * AMENDMENT OF CLAUSE 6(1)(E) TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE NUMBER OF APPOINTED MEMBERS NOMINATED BY APPOINTED MEMBERS OF THE URBAN COUNCIL SHALL NOT EXCEED THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PERSONS WHO COULD BE ELECTED IN THE DISTRICT FOR WHICH THE BOARD IS ESTABLISHED AS MEMBERS OF THE URBAN COUNCIL.

ON THE FIRST AMENDMENT, MR WONG SAID THAT, UNDER EXISTING LEGISLATION, UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS OF OTHER GOVERNMENT BOARDS, COUNCILS OR ADVISORY BODIES ARE NOT ACCORDED SUCH PRIVILEGE.

+FURTHERMORE, EXPERIENCE HAS SHOWN THAT EMPLOYERS HAVE BEEN VERY CO-OPERATIVE AND THERE IS NO KNOWN INSTANCE OF DISCRIMINATION.

+GOVERNMENT WILL, OF COURSE, KEEP THE SITUATION UNDER REVIEW, AND SHOULD THE NEED ARISE APPROPRIATE SAFEGUARDS WILL BE LEGISLATED,+ HE SAID.

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 1981

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PUBLICITY ON ELECTIONS TO BE STEPPED UP
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SOME PUBLICITY HAS ALREADY BEEN UNDERTAKEN FOR GETTING PEOPLE TO KNOW ABOUT DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON DENIS BRAY SAID.

THANKING THE HON PETER WONG FOR HIS SUPPORT FOR THE DISTRICT BOARD BILL 1981, MR BRAY SAID SOME 180 000 PAMPHLETS HAVE BEEN DISTRIBUTED, SEMINARS HELD AND TELEVISION PUBLICITY PRESENTED.

+ALL THESE EFFORTS WILL BE STEPPED UP FOR THE REGISTRATION PERIODS AND IN THE RUN UP TO THE ELECTIONS,+ HE SAID.

HE DISCLOSED THAT THE FINANCE COMMITTEE WILL BE ASKED TO ALLOCATE SOME \$1.14 MILLION FOR EXTRA PUBLICITY.

MR BRAY WENT ON TO EXPLAIN IMPROVEMENTS BEING MADE TO ELECTION ARRANGEMENTS.

HE SAID: +REGISTRATION FORMS WILL BE AVAILABLE AT ALL DISTRICT OFFICES, POST OFFICES, AND PROBABLY MTR STATIONS AND BANKS AS WELL AS OTHER CONVENIENT SPOTS.+

+AN ARMY OF TEMPORARY STAFF WILL BE EMPLOYED TO GIVE THEM OUT TO MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES AND HOUSING MANAGERMENTS.

+AS FOR VOTING, NEARLY 300 POLLING STATIONS WILL BE OPEN BETWEEN 7 AM AND 10 PM,+ HE SAID.

THE BILL, AND THE ELECTORAL PROVISIONS BILL, 1981, AND URBAN COUNCIL (AMENDMENT) (NO.2) BILL, WERE APPROVED AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

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NT POSTAL SERVICE
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THE PROGRAMME TO PROVIDE A DOOR-TO-DOOR POSTAL DELIVERY SERVICE TO ESTABLISHED VILLAGES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES HAS BEEN PROGRESSING SATISFACTORILY, SAID THE HON D.G. JEAFFRESON, SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES.

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL HAS INVESTIGATED THE POSSIBILITIES OF PROVIDING MORE ESTABLISHED VILLAGES WITH DOOR-TO-DOOR DELIVERY SERVICES, AND HAS PLANS TO INCLUDE ANOTHER 76 VILLAGES IN THE NEXT PHASE OF THIS EXERCISE, HE SAID, IN REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON CHARLES YEUNG, AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

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ANTI-ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION MEASURES TO STAY

FORGERS AND THOSE BRINGING IN ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS WILL BE PURSUED RELENTLESSLY, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON LEWIS DAVIES, WARNED TODAY.

AND THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO TAKE ALL POSSIBLE AND PRACTICABLE STEPS TO REDUCE ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION, HE STRESSED.

+IT WILL MAINTAIN THE SECURITY FORCES ON THE BORDER TO ARREST PERSONS ON ENTRY. SHOULD PERSONS EVADE ARREST THEY WILL BE SOUGHT OUT IN THE URBAN AREAS AND AIDERS AND ABETTERS WILL CONTINUE TO BE IDENTIFIED AND PROSECUTED,+ HE SAID.

MR DAVIES GAVE THE WARNING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WHEN MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE IMMIGRATION (AMENDMENT) (NO.3) BILL WHICH, TOGETHER WITH THE CRIMES (AMENDMENT) BILL AND THE REGISTRATION OF PERSONS (AMENDMENT) BILL, PROVIDE TOUGHER PENALTIES AGAINST THE MANUFACTURE OR USE OF FORGED IDENTITY CARDS, OR OTHER DOCUMENTS OF PROOF OF IDENTITY.

HE NOTED THAT THE MEASURES INTRODUCED LAST OCTOBER FOLLOWING THE ABOLITION OF THE SO-CALLED +REACHED BASE+ POLICY, HAD SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED THE NUMBER OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS ATTEMPTING TO ENTER, AND HAD MADE IT EASIER FOR THE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES TO DETECT EVADERS.

INEVITABLY, HOWEVER, DEMAND FOR FORGED IDENTITY DOCUMENTS HAD INCREASED.

BETWEEN OCTOBER 23, 1980 AND MAY 31 THIS YEAR, HE SAID, 127 IDENTITY CARDS, 99 TRAVEL DOCUMENTS AND 50 DRIVING LICENCES HAD BEEN FOUND TO BE FORGED, RESULTING IN THE ARREST OF 186 PEOPLE.

UNDER THE THREE BILLS, THE MAXIMUM PENALTY FOR FORGING IDENTITY CARDS IS DOUBLED FROM SEVEN YEARS TO 14 YEARS IMPRISONMENT. THE SAME APPLIES TO DOCUMENTS ISSUED UNDER THE REGISTRATION OF PERSONS ORDINANCE, TRAVEL DOCUMENTS AND VIETNAMESE REFUGEE CARDS.

ANY PERSON FOUND IN POSSESSION OF ANYTHING FIT AND INTENDED FOR USE IN FORGERY WOULD BE LIABLE TO 14 YEARS IN JAIL. THE BURDEN OF PROOF IN ANY PROCEEDINGS FOR THIS NEW OFFENCE WOULD BE ON THE ACCUSED.

THE MAXIMUM PENALTY FOR POSSESSION WITHOUT LAWFUL EXCUSE OF FORGED IDENTITY CARDS OR OTHER DOCUMENTS ISSUED UNDER THE REGISTRATION OF PERSONS ORDINANCE IS TO BE RAISED FROM TWO YEARS' IMPRISONMENT AND A FINE OF \$5 000 TO SEVEN YEARS' IMPRISONMENT AND A \$50 000 FINE UPON CONVICTION ON INDICTMENT, OR TO TWO YEARS' IMPRISONMENT AND A FINE OF \$20 000 ON SUMMARY CONVICTION.

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HEAVIER PENALTIES PROPOSED TO STAMP OUT ILLEGAL CLINICS
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THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSES TO IMPOSE HEAVIER PENALTIES ON PERSONS OPERATING UNREGISTERED CLINICS AS A MEASURE TO STAMP OUT SUCH ILLEGAL PRACTICE.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE MEDICAL CLINIC (AMENDMENT) BILL 1981 THIS AFTERNOON, THE DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES, DR THE HON K.L. THONG, POINTED OUT THAT THE LEVEL OF PENALTY HAS REMAINED UNCHANGED SINCE THE LEGISLATION WAS ENACTED IN 1963.

+THESE PENALTIES ARE UNREALISTICALLY LOW AND HAVE DECLINED TO THE POINT WHERE THEY ARE NO LONGER A DETERRENT,+ HE TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

DR THONG SAID HE ENDORSED THE VIEW EXPRESSED BY A MAGISTRATE IN 1979 THAT +PATIENTS' LIVES WERE BEING PUT AT RISK AND THE PENALTY FOR PRACTISING AS A DOCTOR WITHOUT BEING REGISTERED WAS INADEQUATE.+

THE PROPOSED PENALTIES, INCLUDING BOTH FINE AND IMPRISONMENT, REPRESENT CONSIDERABLE INCREASES OVER THE EXISTING PENALTIES.

FOR THE MOST SERIOUS OFFENCE, THE BILL PROPOSES THAT THE MAXIMUM PENALTY TO BE INCREASED FROM A FINE OF \$1 000 AND THREE MONTHS' IMPRISONMENT TO \$50 000 AND FIVE YEARS.

THIS OFFENCE RELATES TO THE CARRYING OUT OR TAKING PART IN THE MANAGEMENT OF AN UNREGISTERED CLINIC OR DIAGNOSING, PRESCRIBING OR ADMINISTERING ANY TREATMENT IN AN UNREGISTERED CLINIC.

DR THONG SAID THE MOST COMMON TYPE OF OFFENCE THE POLICE HAS BEEN CALLED UPON TO DEAL WITH IN RECENT YEARS, INVOLVED UNREGISTERED CLINICS RUN BY UNREGISTRABLE PERSONS. THEY ARE OFTEN PEOPLE WHO ARE UNABLE TO PASS THE LICENTIATE EXAMINATION WHICH WOULD ENABLE THEM TO BE REGISTERED TO PRACTISE IN HONG KONG, HE SAID.

THE DIRECTOR POINTED OUT THAT THE LICENTIATE EXAMINATION HAS BEEN HELD EACH YEAR SINCE THE FIRST EXAMINATION IN 1977 AND THERE HAS BEEN AMPLE OPPORTUNITY FOR COMPETENT PRACTITIONERS TO QUALIFY IN ORDER TO PRACTISE LEGALLY.

/LAST YEAR,.....

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LAST YEAR, 70 PERSONS WERE CONVICTED OF OFFENCES UNDER THE MEDICAL CLINICS ORDINANCE, SEVERAL OF THEM FOR MORE THAN ONE OFFENCE.

DURING THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SESSION, DR THONG ALSO MOVED A RESOLUTION, PROPOSING HEAVIER FINE FOR OFFENCES UNDER THE ANTIBIOTICS ORDINANCE.

THE PRESENT PENALTY FOR UNAUTHORISED SALE AND SUPPLY AND POSSESSION OF ANTIBIOTICS IS \$1 000, AND THIS HAS REMAINED UNCHANGED SINCE 1955.

THE DIRECTOR SAID THIS FINE IS NOW CONSIDERED TO BE INADEQUATE AS A DETERRENT AND HE PROPOSED THAT IT BE INCREASED TO \$10 000.

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ELEVEN BILLS PASSED

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THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION)(AMENDMENT) BILL 1981 AND 10 OTHER BILLS WERE PASSED INTO LAW IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THEY ARE: THE DISTRICT BOARDS BILL 1981, THE ELECTORAL PROVISIONS BILL 1981, THE URBAN COUNCIL (AMENDMENT)(NO. 2) BILL 1981, THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND URBAN SERVICES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1981, THE SHIPPING AND PORT CONTROL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1981, THE SECURITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1981, THE ROAD TUNNELS (GOVERNMENT) BILL 1981, THE MOTOR VEHICLES INSURANCE (THIRD PARTY RISKS) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1981, THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1981 AND THE MAGISTRATES (AMENDMENT)(NO. 3) BILL 1981.

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SCHOOL PRINCIPALS URGED TO VOTE IN ELECTIONS

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SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN TSUEN WAN AND KWAI CHUNG DISTRICTS WERE TODAY (WEDNESDAY) ENCOURAGED TO REGISTER AND VOTE IN NEXT YEAR'S DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS.

THE APPEAL CAME FROM TSUEN WAN TOWN MANAGER, DR JAMES HAYES, AND KWAI CHUNG DISTRICT OFFICER, MR FRED TING, OVER LUNCH WITH ABOUT 30 PRINCIPALS.

+WE HOPE THAT THROUGH YOUR SUPPORT TEACHERS AND STUDENTS IN THE DISTRICT WILL BETTER UNDERSTAND THE DISTRICT BOARD AND ITS WORK,+ MR TING SAID.

HE ALSO TOLD THEM THAT BY ENCOURAGING EVERYONE TO REGISTER AND VOTE IN THE ELECTIONS THEY WOULD BE HELPING BOTH GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS TO MAKE TSUEN WAN A BETTER PLACE IN WHICH TO LIVE AND WORK.

DR HAYES SAID AT THIS STAGE LOCAL TEACHERS EXPERIENCED WITH ASSOCIATIONS AND IN DISTRICT WORK SHOULD BE SERIOUSLY THINKING OF STANDING FOR ELECTION.

THEY WERE ALREADY SHARING IN SUB-COMMITTEE WORK OF THE DISTRICT BOARD AND IN ORGANISING LOCAL CAMPAIGNS AND THE ANNUAL TSUEN WAN ARTS AND SPORTS FESTIVALS.

+IF THEY COULD STAND FOR ELECTION I FEEL THEY WOULD HAVE AN EVEN MORE VALUABLE ROLE TO PLAY IN THE COMMUNITY LIFE OF TSUEN WAN. PERSONS WHO ALREADY KNOW SOMETHING OF OUR WORK HAVE MOST TO GIVE,+ SAID DR HAYES.

FOR THE ELECTIONS, TSUEN WAN WILL BE DIVIDED INTO 10 CONSTITUENCIES, WITH SIX IN KWAI CHUNG, ONE ON TSING YI ISLAND AND THREE IN TSUEN WAN, TO INCLUDE MA WAN AND NORTH LANTAU.

REGISTRATION OF VOTERS WILL TAKE PLACE BETWEEN AUGUST 31 AND OCTOBER 11 AND THE ELECTION ON MARCH 4, 1982.

AT PRESENT TSUEN WAN DISTRICT BOARD HAS A MEMBERSHIP OF 30. THE NEW BOARD WILL HAVE 37 MEMBERS, COMPRISING 11 OFFICIALS, FOUR EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS, 12 APPOINTED MEMBERS AND 10 ELECTED UNOFFICIALS.

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PRISON SERVICE SEEKS RECRUITS

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THE PRISONS DEPARTMENT IS LOOKING FOR EDUCATED, MATURE AND RESPONSIBLE YOUNG MEN TO TAKE UP THE CHALLENGING WORK OF ASSISTANT OFFICERS.

+THE WORK OF A PRISON OFFICER IS VERY FULFILLING AND REWARDING,+ A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT SAID.

THE WORK OF TODAY'S MODERN PRISON SERVICE IS BEING INTRODUCED TO THE PUBLIC IN A SERIES OF PHOTOGRAPHIC DISPLAYS AT VARIOUS COMMUNITY CENTRES THROUGHOUT HONG KONG.

THE FIRST OF THE SERIES WILL BE HELD IN THE CHAI WAN COMMUNITY CENTRE FROM TODAY TILL FRIDAY, FROM 4 PM TO 10 PM DAILY. PRISON OFFICERS WILL BE PRESENT TO ANSWER ENQUIRIES AND HANDLE APPLICATIONS FROM VISITORS AT A MOBILE RECRUITMENT CENTRE.

OTHER DISPLAYS WILL BE AT:-

- * WESTERN DISTRICT COMMUNITY CENTRE, THIRD STREET, SAI YING PUN.
(JULY 15 - 17)
- * TAI HANG TUNG COMMUNITY CENTRE, TONG YAM STREET, TAI HANG TUNG.
(JULY 22 - 24)
- * KWUN TONG COMMUNITY CENTRE, TSUI PING ROAD, KWUN TONG.
(JULY 29 - 31)
- * NGAU TAU KOK ESTATE COMMUNITY CENTRE, ON TAK ROAD, NGAU TAU KOK.
(AUGUST 5 - 7)
- * LEK YUEN COMMUNITY CENTRE, SHA TIN.
(AUGUST 12 - 14)
- * PRINCESS ALEXANDRA COMMUNITY CENTRE, TAI HO ROAD, TSUEN WAN.
(AUGUST 19 - 21)
- * WONG TAI SIN COMMUNITY CENTRE, TSING TAK STREET, WONG TAI SIN.
(AUGUST 26 - 28)

+ANYONE INTERESTED IN TAKING UP THE CAREER CAN ALSO CONTACT THE DEPARTMENT'S RECRUITMENT OFFICE ON 5-938455 FOR AN APPOINTMENT, OR ANY OF THE CITY DISTRICT OFFICES FOR INFORMATION,+ THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

APPLICANTS SHOULD HAVE A GOOD PHYSIQUE AND BE PREFERABLY UNDER 35, AND HAVE A SECONDARY EDUCATION.

THE STARTING SALARY OF AN ASSISTANT OFFICER RANGES FROM \$1 870 TO \$2 065 DEPENDING ON QUALIFICATION.

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WORK ON SLIP ROAD

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THE GROUND-LEVEL SLIP ROAD LEADING FROM KENNEDY ROAD TO GARDEN ROAD WILL BE CLOSED TO TRAFFIC FROM 11.30 PM TOMORROW TO 6 AM ON FRIDAY FOR ROAD MAINTENANCE WORK.

KENNEDY ROAD MOTORISTS WERE ADVISED BY THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT TO APPROACH GARDEN ROAD VIA THE FLYOVER CONNECTING WITH UPPER ALBERT ROAD, GLENEALY AND LOWER ALBERT ROAD.

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