



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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IMPROVED HOUSING SUPPLY-DEMAND SITUATION SEEN
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THE SUPPLY AND DEMAND SITUATION FOR HOUSING HAD IMPROVED AND THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT THERE HAD BEEN A SOFTENING OF THE RENTAL MARKET IN THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON DONALD LIAO, SAID TODAY.

FOR THESE REASONS, AND IN THE LIGHT OF THE IMPROVING ECONOMY, FURTHER STEPS TO EASE RENT CONTROL WERE CONSIDERED APPROPRIATE, HE SAID, AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984.

MR LIAO THANKED MR PETER C. WONG AND DR HENRIETTA IP FOR THEIR +UNRESERVED SUPPORT+ OF THE BILL -- AND FR MCGOVERN TOO, FOR HIS +MILDER THAN USUAL OPPOSITION TO THE PROPOSALS.+

MR LIAO ALSO REFERRED TO FR MCGOVERN'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE +SPECTACULAR ACHIEVEMENT IN PUBLIC HOUSING,+ AND SAID THAT BECAUSE OF THE AVAILABILITY OF LAND AND THE EFFICIENCY OF THE PUBLIC HOUSING PRODUCTION PROGRAMME, HE FELT CONFIDENT THAT +THIS HIGH LEVEL OF PRODUCTION WILL NOT ONLY BE MAINTAINED BUT WILL BE IMPROVED BEFORE THE END OF THE DECADE.+

THE PROPOSALS IN THE BILL ARE AIMED AT BRINGING THOSE WHO ARE STILL PAYING EXCEPTIONALLY LOW RENTS TO MORE REALISTIC LEVELS, HE SAID.

ON ANOTHER POINT, MR LIAO SAID THAT THE LONG-TERM SOLUTION TO A POSSIBLE UPSWING IN THE RENTAL MARKET +MUST BE TO IMPROVE THE SUPPLY OF SUITABLE ACCOMMODATION, RATHER THAN TO PROLONG RENT CONTROL FOR A PARTICULAR SECTOR OF THE HOUSING MARKET.+

SINCE PUBLICATION OF THE BILL EARLY IN MAY, MEDIA REACTION HAD BEEN GENERALLY FAVOURABLE AND HE THOUGHT IT WAS FAIR TO SAY THAT THE PACKAGE HAD BEEN GENERALLY WELL RECEIVED, MR LIAO SAID.

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DEVELOPERS NEEDED FOR MORE HOUSES AND JOBS: DR IP
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HONG KONG NEEDED DEVELOPERS TO BUILD MORE HOUSES TO MEET NEEDS AND TO PROVIDE JOB OPPORTUNITIES, DR THE HON HENRIETTA IP SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

DECLARING HER INTEREST AS A DIRECTOR OF A COMPANY OWNING CONTROLLED PREMISES, SHE SAID THAT THE INCREASING SUPPLY OF HOUSING, AS SHOWN IN THE 1984 PROPERTY REVIEW, INHIBITED PROFITEERING, AND THAT RENT CONTROL, THEREFORE, GRADUALLY BECAME UNNECESSARY.

/DR IP'.....

DR IP, TOGETHER WITH THE HON PETER C. WONG, WAS SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984, AT THE RESUMED DEBATE TODAY.

SHE COMPLIMENTED THE ADMINISTRATION +IN PRODUCING SUCH A FINE PIECE OF LEGISLATION,+ WHICH WAS +SO METICULOUSLY WELL CALCULATED SO AS NOT TO BRING SIGNIFICANT HARDSHIP TO THE TENANTS AFFECTED.+

DR IP SAID THAT THE ONLY RESIDENTIAL PREMISES WHICH WILL BE COMPLETELY DECONTROLLED ARE THE LUXURY FLATS, +73 PER CENT OF WHICH ARE LET TO CORPORATIONS ANYWAY.+

MR WONG SAID THAT THE BILL MADE FURTHER AMENDMENTS TO THE PRINCIPAL ORDINANCE AS PART OF THE PROCESS OF CONTINUOUS REVIEW OF THE COMPLEX QUESTION OF RENT CONTROL.

DISCUSSING SOME OF THE NEW MEASURES IN THE BILL, HE SAID THAT FROM JULY 1 THIS YEAR ALL PRE-WAR BUSINESS PREMISES WILL BE DECONTROLLED OR EXCLUDED FROM PART I, BUT WILL BECOME SUBJECT TO PART V OF THE ORDINANCE, WHICH DEALS WITH NOTICE OF TERMINATION OF TENANCY.

SECTION 122 (1) (B) STIPULATES THAT THE NOTICE SHALL BE SERVED BY THE LANDLORD NOT LESS THAN SIX MONTHS, OR BY THE TENANT, NOT LESS THAN ONE MONTH, BEFORE THE DAY ON WHICH IT TAKES EFFECT.

MR WONG SAID THAT FROM DECEMBER 19 THIS YEAR, POST-WAR PREMISES WITH A RATEABLE VALUE OF \$35 000 OR ABOVE WOULD BE DECONTROLLED OR EXCLUDED FROM PART II, BUT WILL BE SUBJECT TO PART IV WHICH PROVIDES SECURITY OF TENURE AT THE PREVAILING MARKET RENT.

A NEW PROVISION, HE SAID, PERMITS THE TRANSFER OF TENANCIES FROM PART II TO PART IV.

+PART II RELATES TO CONTROLLED POST-WAR DOMESTIC PREMISES WHILE PART IV PROVIDES SECURITY OF TENURE AT THE PREVAILING MARKET RENT.

+THERE IS MERIT IN SUCH PROPOSAL AS IT ADDS FLEXIBILITY TO THE LEGISLATION. IT IS THEREFORE A MEASURE TO BE WELCOMED,+ HE SAID.

MR WONG SAID THAT UNOFFICIALS IN GENERAL SUPPORTED THE PROPOSALS IN THE BILL.

THE AD HOC COMMITTEE OF UNOFFICIALS SET UP TO STUDY THE BILL HAD ALSO CONSIDERED THREE RELATED BILLS: LANDS TRIBUNAL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984, JUDICIAL SERVICES COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984 AND STAMP DUTY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984.

THE AMENDMENTS, MR WONG SAID WERE +NON-CONTROVERSIAL+.

THE FIRST TWO BILLS RECTIFY CERTAIN OMISSIONS, WHILE THE THIRD EMPOWERS THE DISTRICT COURT TO CALL ON THE EXPERTISE OF THE LANDS TRIBUNAL TO ASSIST IN STAMP DUTY APPEALS.

NOT TIME TO EASE RENT CONTROL: FR. MCGOVERN
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IT WAS NOT THE TIME TO EASE RENT CONTROL WHEN THE SUPPLY OF HOUSING WAS FAR SHORT OF BOTH THE DEMAND AND THE NEED, THE REV. THE HON. PATRICK MCGOVERN, SAID TODAY.

OPPOSING THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION)(AMENDMENT) BILL 1984, AT THE RESUMED DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, FR. MCGOVERN SAID THAT IN SPITE OF SPECTACULAR ACHIEVEMENTS IN PUBLIC HOUSING, THERE WERE STILL HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE UNABLE TO RENT OR BUY A DWELLING AT A PRICE THEY COULD AFFORD.

+WHILE THIS REMAINS SO, AND FOR OTHER REASONS WHICH I HAVE GIVEN REPEATEDLY SINCE 1977, AND WHICH IN MY JUDGEMENT ARE STILL VALID, BUT WHICH I WILL NOT REPEAT TODAY, I INTEND TO AGAIN VOTE AGAINST THIS BILL AS I HAVE DONE AGAINST FOUR OF ITS PREDECESSORS,+ HE SAID.

THE BILL, FR. MCGOVERN SAID, CONTAINED SOME GOOD POINTS, ESPECIALLY THE CONTINUATION OF SOME RENT CONTROL OVER SOME PROPERTY. BUT PART II WAS WRONG IN PRINCIPLE IN THAT IT FURTHER EASED THE WAY FOR AN INCREASE IN RENT TOWARDS THE STILL 'UNFAIR MARKET RENT', WHEN WHAT THE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF VIRTUALLY HOMELESS PEOPLE NEEDED WAS A DECREASE IN RENTS TO A LEVEL THEY COULD AFFORD.

+AT A TIME LIKE THIS WHEN THE SUPPLY IS FAR SHORT OF BOTH THE DEMAND AND THE NEED, IT IS NOT THE TIME TO EASE CONTROL. I WILL NOT GO OVER ALL THAT GROUND AGAIN,+ HE SAID.

IN WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS A +BRIEF WORD OF WARNING+, FR. MCGOVERN SAID. +IF, AS SOME PEOPLE HOPE, AS A RESULT OF THE GREATER AVAILABILITY OF LAND, AND THE BEGINNING OF THE END OF THE MOST RECENT RECESSION, THE PROPERTY MARKET AGAIN PICKS UP, THE INCREASES IN RENT ALLOWED TODAY ARE SUCH THAT THEY COULD BECOME EXCESSIVE IF OR WHEN RENTS GO NOTABLY UP AGAIN.

+I REMIND YOU OF THE CONCESSIONS TO LANDLORDS IN THE BILL OF JUNE 1977. AT THE TIME THEY SEEMED SMALL, YET BY DECEMBER OF THAT SAME YEAR GOVERNMENT HAD TO PROPOSE A BLANKET RENT CONTROL ON ALL POSTWAR PREMISES.

+SOMETHING SIMILAR COULD HAPPEN AGAIN.+

FR MCGOVERN SAID THAT SPECULATORS WERE A HARDY LOT AND HAD PROVED BEFORE THAT THEY COULD +MAKE A QUICK RECOVERY AT THE SIGHT OF THE POSSIBLE CURE OF ANOTHER QUICK BUCK.+

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BILL ALSO HELPS DETER TAX AVOIDANCE
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FOR PROFITS TAX PURPOSES, THE COMMISSIONER OF INLAND REVENUE WILL EXAMINE EACH CASE CAREFULLY TO DETERMINE WHETHER A BUSINESS IS CARRIED ON IN HONG KONG, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, THE HON SIR JOHN BREMRIDGE, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

SIR JOHN WAS SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984 WHICH, AMONG OTHER THINGS, PROPOSED TO CHARGE TO PROFITS TAX SUMS RECEIVED BY, OR ACCRUING BY WAY OF INTEREST TO, BUSINESSES CARRIED ON IN HONG KONG.

THESE SUMS HAD PREVIOUSLY ESCAPED THE TAX NET, EITHER BECAUSE THE DEPOSITS WERE DENOMINATED IN A FOREIGN CURRENCY, OR BECAUSE OF THE APPLICATION OF THE ARTIFICIAL +PROVISION OF CREDIT+ TEST.

EXPRESSING HIS DETERMINATION TO COUNTER TAX AVOIDANCE, SIR JOHN SAID, +I AM SURE THAT THE BILL WILL IN PART HELP TO ACHIEVE THIS OBJECTIVE WITHOUT HINDERING GENUINE BUSINESS BORROWINGS OR DAMPENING THE INTEREST OF POTENTIAL FOREIGN INVESTORS IN HONG KONG.

+IT IS WORTH BEARING IN MIND THAT COMPLICATED LAW ARISES ONLY FROM THE NEED TO COUNTERACT BYZANTINE AVOIDANCE MEASURES.+

NOTING THE CONCERN THAT HAD BEEN EXPRESSED OVER THE PHRASE +CARRYING ON BUSINESS IN HONG KONG+, HE SAID THIS WAS A TECHNICAL EXPRESSION WELL KNOWN IN TAXATION LAW WHICH, HOWEVER, WAS +UNFORTUNATELY NOT CAPABLE OF PRECISE DEFINITION.+

+THE QUESTION AS TO WHETHER A PERSON IS OR IS NOT CARRYING ON A BUSINESS IN HONG KONG CAN ONLY BE DETERMINED BY TAKING INTO ACCOUNT ALL THE RELEVANT FACTS OF THAT SITUATION.

+HOWEVER, I CAN ASSURE HONOURABLE MEMBERS THAT THE COMMISSIONER OF INLAND REVENUE WILL, AS USUAL, EXAMINE EACH CASE CAREFULLY,+ SIR JOHN SAID.

THE COMMISSIONER WILL ALSO ISSUE A DEPARTMENTAL INTERPRETATION AND PRACTICE NOTE GIVING GUIDANCE ON THIS MATTER AFTER THE ENACTMENT OF THE BILL.

+I CONFIRM ALSO THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WILL REMAIN OPEN TO FURTHER REPRESENTATIONS IF UNFORESEEN PROBLEMS ARISE,+ SIR JOHN SAID.

THE COUNCIL PASSED THE BILL INTO LAWS, INCORPORATING AMENDMENTS PROPOSED BY UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS.

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MEASURES AGAINST TAX AVOIDANCE MUST BE FAIR
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IT IS THE DUTY OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO ENSURE THAT MEASURES TO COUNTER TAX AVOIDANCE ACHIEVE THEIR OBJECTIVE IN A MANNER THAT IS FAIR, AND IS SEEN TO BE FAIR, TO ALL TAX PAYERS, THE HON BILL BROWN SAID TODAY.

HE WAS SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE MOTION AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984 IN HIS CAPACITY AS THE CONVENER OF THE COUNCIL'S AD HOC GROUP.

+THE AD HOC GROUP IS SATISFIED, SUBJECT TO THE AGREED AMENDMENTS TO BE PASSED AT THE COMMITTEE STAGE, THAT THE BILL NOW MEETS THESE CRITERIA,+ HE SAID.

THE AGREED AMENDMENTS WERE MOVED BY THE HON PETER C. WONG AND THE HON PETER POON.

MR BROWN POINTED OUT THERE HAD BEEN SIGNIFICANT REFINEMENTS TO THE BILL.

THE BILL, AS ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED TOGETHER WITH THE PUBLIC REVENUE PROTECTION (INLAND REVENUE) ORDER ON MARCH 30, CONTAINED PROVISIONS WHICH WERE RETROSPECTIVE IN THAT CERTAIN ITEMS WERE NEWLY BROUGHT TO CHARGE WITH EFFECT FROM A DATE PRIOR TO APRIL 1, 1984.

THE ADMINISTRATION HAS MADE REFINEMENTS TO THE ORIGINAL DRAFT OF THE BILL TO REMEDY THIS PARTICULAR ISSUE.

HE ALSO APPLAUDED THE ADMINISTRATION FOR MAKING PROVISION FOR FOREIGN TAX RELIEF.

+ALTHOUGH THESE AMENDMENTS WILL NOT PLEASE EVERYONE, THEY DO REMOVE MOST GENUINE BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS FROM THE AMBIT OF THE NEW PROPOSALS,+ HE SAID.

+UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS BELIEVE THE REFINEMENTS ARE A SENSIBLE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS HIGHLIGHTED BY PUBLIC DEBATE, AND THEY THEREFORE SUPPORT THEM,+ HE ADDED.

HOWEVER, MR BROWN STRESSED THAT IN LEGISLATION OF THIS NATURE ACTUAL EXPERIENCE OF ITS WORKING WOULD PROBABLY REVEAL THE NEED FOR FURTHER FINE-TUNING.

+ONE AREA THAT I BELIEVE WILL REQUIRE WATCHING IS THE POSSIBLE IMPACT OF THE DECISION TO DISALLOW FOR TAX RELIEF INTEREST PAID BY A HONG KONG SUBSIDIARY OR ASSOCIATED COMPANY TO AN OVERSEAS PARENT,+ HE SUGGESTED.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT IT SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE TO PROVIDE A PRECISE DEFINITION OF THE TERM +CARRYING ON BUSINESS IN HONG KONG+ IN THE CONTEXT OF TAX LEGISLATION.

/+THE WORRIES

+THE WORRIES EXPRESSED IN THIS CONNECTION THEREFORE REMAIN, BUT UNOFFICIAL MEMBERS HAVE BEEN GIVEN AN UNDERTAKING THAT A 'DEPARTMENTAL INTERPRETATION AND PRACTISING NOTE' WILL BE ISSUED SO THAT THE PUBLIC WILL BE AWARE OF THE INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT'S CURRENT INTERPRETATION OF THIS SIMPLE PHRASE - A PHRASE THAT HAS SUCH CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE AS TO WHETHER TAX IS OR IS NOT PAYABLE,+ HE SAID.

TURNING TO THE SUBJECT OF THE TERRITORIAL SOURCE CONCEPT, MR BROWN SAID THAT UNOFFICIALS HAD ALREADY MADE THEIR POSITION CLEAR ON THE NEED NOT TO COMPROMISE THIS CORNERSTONE OF HONG KONG'S TAX LEGISLATION.

HE ADDED, +WE WERE MOST SATISFIED BY THE UNEQUIVOCAL UNDERTAKING GIVEN BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY IN THIS COUNCIL ON APRIL 25, 1984 WHEN HE REITERATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT 'REMAINED WEDDED TO THE PRINCIPAL THAT TAXATION SHOULD ONLY BE APPLIED TO INCOME ARISING FROM HONG KONG.+

HE SAID THAT THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY HAD UNDERLINED THIS COMMITMENT BY STATING CATEGORICALLY THAT NO PROPOSALS MADE BY HIM TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL WOULD INCLUDE CHANGES TO THE BASIC TERRITORIAL SOURCE CRITERION.

+I MENTION THIS AFTERNOON PARTLY TO UNDERLINE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE UNDERTAKING MADE, AND PARTLY BECAUSE IT DOES ANSWER - AND ANSWER MOST SATISFACTORILY - MANY REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED ON THIS KEY ISSUE,+ HE SAID.

THE HON PETER C. WONG, ALSO SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE MOTION, OUTLINED THE BACKGROUND LEADING TO THE INSERTION OF A NEW CLAUSE 4A WHICH WOULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF EXEMPTING UNIT TRUSTS FROM TAX LIABILITY IN RESPECT OF SUMS RECEIVED OR ACCRUED BY WAY OF INTEREST.

HE SAID THAT THE UNIT TRUST INDUSTRY HAD PUT FORWARD POWERFUL ARGUMENTS THAT IN THE INTERESTS OF HONG KONG AS A FINANCIAL CENTRE, CERTAIN CONCESSIONS SHOULD BE MADE SO THAT IT WOULD BE VIABLE FOR THE INDUSTRY TO CONTINUE TO OPERATE IN HONG KONG.

+THE AD HOC GROUP HAS CAREFULLY STUDIED THE INDUSTRY'S REPRESENTATION, AND AFTER CONSULTATION WITH THE ADMINISTRATION, COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT HAVING REGARD TO THE UNIQUE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE UNIT TRUST INDUSTRY, IT APPEARS THAT IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE TO GRANT SOME MEASURE OF RELIEF,+ HE ADDED.

HE RECALLED THAT AS A RESULT OF THE ENACTMENT OF THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL IN 1983, THE POTENTIAL LIABILITY TO PROFITS TAX ON GAINS DERIVED FROM THE DISPOSAL OF SECURITIES OF A UNIT TRUST HAD BEEN REMOVED. AND HE CONSIDERED THIS AS A RECOGNITION OF THE UNIQUE POSITION OF UNIT TRUSTS.

+WHEN THE PRESENT BILL WAS PUBLISHED, THE INDUSTRY MADE FURTHER REPRESENTATION EMPHASISING THAT IF THE POTENTIAL LIABILITY OF HONG KONG UNIT TRUSTS TO TAX ON INTEREST INCOME REMAINS, THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG'S UNIT TRUST INDUSTRY WILL BE DIMINISHED, TO THE DISADVANTAGE OF THE FINANCIAL SECTOR AS A WHOLE.

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+IT IS NOT DIFFICULT TO ENVISAGE THAT UNLESS SOME CONCESSION IS MADE IN THIS AREA, IT IS LIKELY THAT NEW FUNDS WILL NOT BE ESTABLISHED IN HONG KONG AND MANY EXISTING FUNDS WILL BE FORCED TO RELOCATE OUT OF HONG KONG,+ HE SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THIS COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED BY SIMPLY CHANGING THE HONG KONG TRUSTEE TO AN OVERSEAS TRUSTEE.

+BEARING IN MIND THAT THE REVENUE IMPLICATIONS OF EXEMPTION FROM PROFITS TAX IN RESPECT OF UNIT TRUST INTEREST INCOME WOULD BE MINIMAL, AND THE USEFUL PART WHICH THE INDUSTRY PLAYS IN RELATION TO HONG KONG'S POSITION AS AN INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL CENTRE, THE AD HOC GROUP HAS RECOMMENDED TO THE GOVERNMENT THAT THERE IS A CASE FOR SOME CONCESSION TO BE MADE,+ HE SAID.

THE HON PETER POON MOVED AN AMENDMENT TO THE EFFECT THAT THE INTEREST PAYMENT IN RELATION TO PUBLICLY LISTED DEBENTURES ISSUED BEFORE APRIL 1, 1984 WILL BE ALLOWED AS A TAX DEDUCTION.

+THIS IS ONLY FAIR AS SUCH DEBENTURES WERE ISSUED FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSE AND WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE OF GOVERNMENT'S ATTENTION TO DISALLOW SUCH INTEREST,+ HE SAID.

ON THE BILL AS A WHOLE, HE AGREED WITH MR BROWN'S VIEW THAT +WE MUST WAIT AND SEE HOW THE NEW LAWS OPERATE AND LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE.+

CALLING FOR THE EARLY ISSUANCE OF THE PRACTICE NOTES, MR POON SAID +BUSINESSMEN SHOULD BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND CLEARLY WHAT THEIR TAX LIABILITY WOULD BE IF THEY WERE TO ENGAGE IN PARTICULAR TRANSACTIONS.

+IN THIS REGARD, IT IS MOST ESSENTIAL THAT PROPERLY DETAILED CLARIFICATIONS BE MADE IN THE PRACTICE NOTES TO BE ISSUED BY THE COMMISSIONER OF INLAND REVENUE ON THE NEW AMENDMENTS,+ HE ADDED.

THE HON RITA FAN ABSTAINED FROM VOTING ON THE MOTION.

SHE EXPRESSED APPREHENSION THAT THE FINANCIAL BENEFITS GENERATED MIGHT WELL BE OFFSET BY THE COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THE LEGISLATION AS WELL AS THE LIKELY UNFAVOURABLE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL RAMIFICATIONS.

OUTLINING HER RESERVATIONS, SHE SAID, +I AM IN FAVOUR OF ANY ANTI-TAX-AVOIDANCE MEASURES TO PROTECT THE GOVERNMENT'S REVENUE; AND AT THIS POINT IN TIME, WE ARE ALL PAINFULLY AWARE OF THE NEED TO GENERATE MORE REVENUE IN ORDER TO OFFSET OUR DEFICIT AS FAR AS POSSIBLE.

+HOWEVER, I, FOR ONE, WOULD PLACE PRIORITY ON THE MAINTENANCE OF HONG KONG AS A MAJOR FINANCIAL CENTRE, AND WOULD JEALOUSLY GUARD OUR SIMPLE AND COMPARATIVELY LOW TAX SYSTEM AS A MEANS TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE.+

/DESPITE THE

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DESPITE THE ASSURANCES GIVEN BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY AND THE COMMISSIONER OF INLAND REVENUE THAT THERE WAS NO CHANGE IN OUR TERRITORIAL TAX CONCEPT, SHE SAID THAT THE QUESTION REMAINED WHETHER THE DECISION TO TAX OFF-SHORE INTEREST WOULD AFFECT BUSINESS IN HONG KONG.

WHILE SEEING CERTAIN JUSTIFICATIONS FOR TAXING OFF-SHORE INTEREST EARNED BY FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, MRS FAN SAID SHE COULD NOT SEE ANY RATION OF INCLUDING OFF-SHORE INTEREST INCOME DERIVED BY NON-FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE TAX NET, OTHER THAN TO GENERATE MORE REVENUE.

SHE SAID THE GROWING COMPLEXITY OF THE TAX LAW MIGHT WELL PROMPT HONG KONG BUSINESSMEN, WHO IN THE PAST HAD NOT BEEN INTERESTED IN TAX AVOIDANCE, TO FIND IT NECESSARY TO CONSIDER TAX PLANNING, IN ORDER TO PREVENT THEIR NORMAL COMMERCIAL TRANSACTIONS FROM BEING CAUGHT UNEXPECTEDLY BY THE NEW LEGISLATION.

+AGAIN, WHETHER THIS WILL HAVE ANY DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON HONG KONG'S ECONOMY AND THE INLAND REVENUE SYSTEM REMAINS TO BE SEEN,+ SHE SAID.

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HONG KONG'S ARTS IMAGE ENHANCED - WU
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THE EXPLOSION OF INTEREST IN THE PERFORMING ARTS OVER RECENT YEARS HAD ENRICHED THE COMMUNITY AND ENHANCED THE IMAGE AND REPUTATION OF HONG KONG ABROAD, THE HON ALEX WU SAID TODAY.

SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE HONG KONG ACADEMY FOR PERFORMING ARTS BILL 1984, MR WU WHO IS CHAIRMAN OF THE PROVISIONAL COUNCIL OF THE ACADEMY, SAID HE BELIEVED THIS INTEREST WOULD CONTINUE TO GROW WITH THE INCREASING ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ARTS IN THEIR VARIOUS FORMS.

THE ACADEMY WOULD HAVE THE FUNCTIONS OF TRAINING FUTURE PERFORMERS AND TEACHERS, ASSISTING IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF TALENT AT PRE-TERTIARY LEVEL, ENCOURAGING THE HIGHEST STANDARD OF PROFESSIONALISM IN THE PERFORMING ARTS COMPANIES, AND FOSTERING A BETTER UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATION OF THE ARTS.

+THE ULTIMATE AIM OF THE ACADEMY IS TO TRAIN STUDENTS SO THAT THEY WILL ACHIEVE LASTING FULFILMENT IN A SATISFYING CAREER AND WILL THEREBY SERVE THE WHOLE COMMUNITY OF HONG KONG,+ MR WU SAID.

HE SAID WHEN THE ACADEMY'S FIRST STUDENTS GRADUATE IN FOUR YEARS TIME, THERE WOULD BE A WIDE VARIETY OF OUTLETS AND A STEADY DEMAND FOR THEIR PARTICULAR EXPERTISE.

/+THEY WILL

+THEY WILL BE ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE GROWTH AND THE LOCALISATION OF OUR PERFORMING GROUPS AND COMPANIES,+ MR WU SAID.

+THE ACADEMY THEREFORE MERITS EQUAL ATTENTION AND SUPPORT AS THAT GIVEN TO INSTITUTIONS WHICH TRAIN PROFESSIONALS FOR OTHER SECTORS OF THE COMMUNITY.+

HE ALSO MENTIONED THAT THE HONG KONG ACADEMY OF BALLET AND THE HONG KONG CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC WERE BEING SUBSUMED BY THE ACADEMY, THUS ENSURING THE ENDEAVOURS OF ALL THOSE CONCERNED WITH THE TWO BODIES WOULD BE CONTINUED.

MR WU EXTENDED THANKS TO ALL WHO HAD +GIVEN SUPPORT, GUIDANCE AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE PROVISIONAL COUNCIL TOWARDS MAKING THE ACADEMY A REALITY.+

ALSO SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE BILL, DR HON HO KAM-FAI SAID THE ACADEMY WAS A WITNESS TO GOVERNMENT'S POLICY INTEREST IN ARTS BY PROVIDING FACILITIES AND FINANCIAL SUBSIDIES TO A WIDE SPECTRUM OF ARTS ACTIVITIES.

+I NOTE WITH PRIDE THAT HONG KONG HAS ESTABLISHED ITSELF AS A CULTURAL LEADER IN THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN REGION,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID THAT THE PROPOSED ACADEMY FOR PERFORMING ARTS WOULD ENHANCE THE STATUS OF HONG KONG AS A CULTURAL CENTRE IN ASIA.

HE ADVOCATED THAT THE ACADEMY SHOULD ADOPT A LIBERAL EDUCATION POLICY TO MAXIMISE ITS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE LOCAL PERFORMING ARTS.

HE SUGGESTED THAT ALONGSIDE THE CURRICULUM CONSTRUCTED FOR SCHOOL LEAVERS GIFTED IN THE PERFORMING ARTS, A SET OF SPECIAL PROGRAMMES, CONTAINING PART-TIME AND REFRESHER COURSES, MUST BE DESIGNED TO UPGRADE THE LEVEL OF SKILL AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE VARIOUS LOCAL PERFORMING ARTS ORGANISATIONS.

+AN ACTIVE LINK AND CONSULTATIONS WITH MAJOR ARTS INSTITUTIONS OVERSEAS MUST BE MAINTAINED AS A MEANS TO KEEP OUR PERFORMING ARTS IN LINE WITH INTERNATIONAL TREND AND STANDARDS,+ HE SAID.

HON MRS SELINA CHOW SAID THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ACADEMY WAS IN ANSWER TO PRESENT DEMAND AND IN ANTICIPATION OF THE RAPID GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE PERFORMING ARTS.

+APART FROM CATERING TO THE ASPIRATIONS AND TALENT OF OUR YOUNG ARTISTS TO BECOME PROFESSIONAL PERFORMERS IN MUSIC, ACTING, DANCE IT AIMS ALSO TO TRAIN DIRECTORS, PRODUCERS, DESIGNERS, COMPOSERS AND DRAMATISTS WHO ARE THE OFF STAGE ARTISTS, LESS VISIBLE BUT EQUALLY IMPORTANT TO THE PERFORMANCE,+ SHE SAID.

SHE BELIEVED THIS WOULD ACHIEVE THE DESIRABLE EFFECT OF OFFERING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES NOT ACCORDING TO WHO COULD BEST AFFORD THEM BUT TO THOSE WHOSE TALENTS WERE MORE DESERVING.

/SHE MENTIONED

SHE MENTIONED THAT AT FIRST SHE HAD CONSIDERED THE PROPOSED ANNUAL FEE PER PERSON OF HK\$5 000 TO BE ON THE HIGH SIDE.

HOWEVER, I AM PERSUADED THAT IT IS REASONABLE SINCE, COMPARATIVELY SPEAKING, A STUDENT AT THE ACADEMY REQUIRES MORE INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION THAN HIS COUNTERPART IN OTHER POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS.

+IN ADDITION I HAVE BEEN ASSURED THAT SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS WILL BE READILY AVAILABLE TO THE TALENTED YOUNGSTERS WHO ARE FINANCIALLY IN NEED OF SUCH ASSISTANCE,+ SHE SAID.

MRS CHAN SAID ALSO THAT THROUGH RELENTLESS EFFORTS BY THE URBAN COUNCIL, GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR, THE PERFORMING ARTS SCENE HAD GONE THROUGH A METAMORPHOSIS SO STUNNING THAT HONG KONG WAS NOW COMPARABLE TO ANY OTHER MAJOR CITIES IN THE WORLD IN TERMS OF THE LEVEL OF ACTIVITIES MAINTAINED.

+VERY FEW CITIES IN THE WORLD CAN BOAST OF THE EXTENSIVE NETWORK OF ARTS FESTIVALS UNDERTAKEN ON THE CENTRAL, REGIONAL AS WELL AS DISTRICT LEVEL AS WE DO,+ MRS CHOW SAID.

MOVING THE COMMITTEE STAGE AND THIRD READING OF THE BILL, THE HON DENIS BRAY, SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, SAID 1 400 ENQUIRIES HAD ALREADY BEEN RECEIVED FOR THE 70 VACANCIES IN THE ACADEMY FOR PERFORMING ARTS IN SEPTEMBER THIS YEAR.

MR BRAY SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN SOME COMMENT ABOUT THE COST OF RUNNING THE COURSES IN THE ACADEMY.

+THEY WILL BE HIGH BUT WE HAVE TO RECOGNISE THAT DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES DO INVOLVE DIFFERENT COSTS IN TRAINING.

+THE SIZE OF THE ACADEMY IS MODEST. WE HAVE ALREADY SEEN THAT THERE WILL BE SOME COMPETITION FOR ENTRY. WE KNOW THAT THERE IS IMMENSE TALENT IN HONG KONG.

+IT WOULD DO LESS THAN JUSTICE TO THESE GIFTED YOUNG PEOPLE TO FAIL TO BRING OUT THEIR BEST AND BRING THEM UP TO WORLD STANDARDS. THIS WE AIM TO DO,+ MR BRAY SAID.

REFERRING AGAIN TO THE COST OF FEES, MR BRAY SAID THAT USUAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR ASSISTANCE WOULD BE OFFERED TO THOSE WHO COULD NOT AFFORD IT.

HE ALSO GAVE ASSURANCE THAT IT WAS THE INTENTION OF THE PROVISIONAL COUNCIL THAT EQUAL EMPHASIS BE GIVEN TO EASTERN AND WESTERN ART FORMS.

MR BRAY SAID THAT IT WAS JUST THREE YEARS AGO THAT A SUGGESTION BY THE JOCKEY CLUB THAT IT WOULD BE PREPARED TO FUND SUCH AN ACADEMY WAS ACCEPTED, AND THE ACADEMY WAS NOW ALREADY TAKING IN THE FIRST STUDENTS FOR SEPTEMBER.

HE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE WARM WELCOME GIVEN TO THE ACADEMY BY THE COUNCIL MEMBERS.

IMPORTANT CHANGES TO EVIDENCE RULES
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THE NEW PROPOSALS IN THE EVIDENCE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984 INTRODUCED IMPORTANT CHANGES WHICH WOULD FACILITATE THE TENDERING OF EVIDENCE, PARTICULARLY IN CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS, THE HON PETER C. WONG SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE BILL, HE SAID THAT ITS MAIN OBJECTIVE WAS TWOFOLD: TO AMEND THE EXISTING RULES OF EVIDENCE RELATING TO THE PROOF OF RECORDED INFORMATION, AND TO PROVIDE A NEW PROCEDURE FOR OBTAINING EVIDENCE OUTSIDE HONG KONG FOR USE IN CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS IN HONG KONG.

HE ADDED THAT THE PROVISIONS HAD BEEN CAREFULLY STUDIED BY THE COUNCIL'S LEGISLATION SCRUTINY GROUP AND CONSULTATIONS WITH THE ADMINISTRATION HAD RESULTED IN SEVERAL AMENDMENTS.

THE AMENDMENTS ARE:

- * CLAUSE 4 - NEW SECTION 19A (1) ALLOWS FOREIGN DOCUMENTS CERTIFIED BY THE CHIEF SECRETARY TO BE PRODUCED IN COURT. A NEW SUBSECTION (4) WILL BE INSERTED REQUIRING 14 DAYS' NOTICE IN WRITING OF THE INTENTION TO TENDER SUCH DOCUMENT. IT WAS CONSIDERED THAT TO ENSURE FAIRNESS, APPROPRIATE NOTICE SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE OPPOSITE PARTY.
- * CLAUSE 7 - IN SUBSECTION (3) (B) (II), THE WORDS 'IF FOUND' WILL BE DELETED AND SUBSTITUTED BY THE PHRASE 'IF SUCH A PERSON IS FOUND'. THIS CHANGE SERVES TO REMOVE ANY AMBIGUITY THAT MIGHT ARISE.
- * CLAUSE 7 - SUBSECTION (13) WILL BE AMENDED TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE DEFINITION OF 'COMPUTER' IN SUBSECTION (12) TO BE AMENDED BY A RESOLUTION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

+MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATION SCRUTINY GROUP ARE SATISFIED THAT THE BILL HAS ACHIEVED ITS OBJECTIVE AND WILL FURTHER STRENGTHEN OUR LEGISLATION IN THIS IMPORTANT AREA OF THE LAW, + MR WONG SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAD UNDERTAKEN TO DRAW UP GUIDELINES WITH RESPECT TO THE PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE APPLICABLE TO THE NEW SECTION 19A (1).

+FOREIGN DOCUMENTS TO BE PRODUCED IN COURT MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A CERTIFICATE PURPORTING TO BE SIGNED BY THE CHIEF SECRETARY.

+MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATION SCRUTINY GROUP ARE CONCERNED THAT UNLESS CLEAR GUIDELINES ARE DRAWN UP, THE DEFENDANT OR HIS LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE MAY BE CONFRONTED WITH BUREAUCRATIC OBSTACLES, + HE SAID.

MOVING THE THIRD READING OF THE BILL, THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON GERALD NAZARETH, EXPLAINED FURTHER THAT NEW SECTION 19A (1) SEEKS ONLY TO PROVIDE A SIMPLE MEANS OF GETTING FOREIGN DOCUMENTS ADMITTED IN EVIDENCE IN CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS.

+ALL THAT IS REQUIRED IS A CERTIFICATE FROM THE CHIEF SECRETARY THAT THE FOREIGN DOCUMENT HAS BEEN RECEIVED BY HIM IN CONNECTION WITH THOSE CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS.

+THE NEW SECTION VERY SENSIBLY LEAVES IT TO THE COURT TO DETERMINE THE WEIGHT OR PROBATIVE FORCE TO BE GIVEN TO THE DOCUMENT,+ MR NAZARETH SAID.

ON THE PROPOSAL FOR 14 DAYS NOTICE, HE SAID IT CORRESPONDS TO A SIMILAR PROVISION IN NEW SECTION 22A (6) AND +FITS WELL INTO THE SCHEME OF THE BILL.+

+HOWEVER, AS A BUREAUCRAT OF LONG STANDING, I FIND MYSELF LESS ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE GROUP'S FEARS THAT WITHOUT GUIDELINES, DEFENDANTS OR THEIR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVES MAY BE CONFRONTED WITH BUREAUCRATIC OBSTACLES.

+NONETHELESS, I CONFIRM THAT GUIDELINES WILL BE PRODUCED. THESE I HOPE WILL MAKE IT ABUNDANTLY CLEAR THAT NO BUREAUCRATIC OBSTACLES ARE INTENDED, OR INDEED WILL BE PERMITTED,+ MR NAZARETH SAID.

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PROGRESS MADE ON HOUSING COOPERATIVE ISSUE
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SOME PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS ABOUT WHETHER CIVIL SERVANTS' HOUSING COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES WHICH HAD FULLY REPAID THEIR LOANS, SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO SELL OR REDEVELOP THEIR PROPERTIES, THE SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, THE HON MARTIN ROWLANDS, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

DURING 1982 AND 1983, DISCUSSIONS WERE HELD WITH THE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS INVOLVED, WITH MANY OF THE COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES, WITH THE COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES FEDERATION AND WITH STAFF SIDE REPRESENTATIVES, MR ROWLANDS SAID, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON ANDREW SO.

+THESE HAVE LED TO THE FORMULATION OF PROPOSALS WHICH, IF APPROVED, WOULD PERMIT THE LEGAL TITLE TO CIVIL SERVANTS' COOPERATIVE HOUSING SCHEME FLATS TO BE TRANSFERRED, SUBJECT TO CERTAIN CONDITIONS, TO INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES, WHO WOULD THEN BE FREE TO DISPOSE OF THEIR FLATS,+ MR ROWLANDS SAID.

THE PROPOSALS WOULD ALSO ENABLE THE OWNERS TO REDEVELOP THEIR PROPERTIES.

+I PROPOSE TO ISSUE NEXT MONTH A CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT FORMALLY INVITING THE VIEWS OF ALL CIVIL SERVICE HOUSING COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES AND THE STAFF SIDE ON THESE PROPOSALS.

/+ACTION THEREAFTER

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+ACTION THEREAFTER WILL DEPEND ON THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT,+ HE SAID.

IF THE PROPOSALS FOUND FAVOUR, THE NEXT LIKELY STEP WOULD BE THE DRAFTING OF AMENDMENTS TO THE COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES ORDINANCE, AND A REFERENCE TO THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL FOR ADVICE AS TO WHETHER AN AMENDING BILL SHOULD BE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, HE SAID.

MR ROWLANDS ADDED THAT HE WAS IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE REGISTRAR OF COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES WHO ADMINISTERS THE ORDINANCE.

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+HAWKERS WERE NOT BEING CHASED+
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HAWKERS INVOLVED IN TWO MUCH-PUBLICISED ACCIDENTS WERE NOT ACTUALLY BEING CHASED BY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS, THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WAS TOLD TODAY.

THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON HENRY CHING, WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON PETER POON WHO WANTED TO KNOW, IN VIEW OF RECENT ACCIDENTS, WHAT WAS BEING DONE TO REMOVE SUCH DANGER IN THE FUTURE.

MR CHING SAID THAT IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO BRING AN OFFENDER BEFORE THE COURTS WITHOUT FIRST APPREHENDING HIM: +AND IT WOULD PERHAPS BE NAIVE NOT TO EXPECT HIM AT LEAST TO ATTEMPT TO AVOID BEING TAKEN.+

IT WAS IN RUNNING AWAY THAT THE DANGER AROSE.

+I KNOW OF NO WAY OF REDUCING THIS POTENTIAL DANGER IN THE CASE OF ILLEGAL HAWKERS, OTHER THAN BY THEIR COMPLETE AND SPEEDY REMOVAL FROM OUR STREETS,+ SAID MR CHING.

IN ONE CASE, SAID MR CHING, THE HAWKER RAN WITH COMPLETE DISREGARD FOR THE SAFETY OF OTHERS SIMPLY ON SIGHTING GENERAL DUTIES TEAM OFFICERS AT THE OTHER END OF THE STREET.

+GENERAL DUTIES TEAMS ARE UNDER STANDING INSTRUCTION TO FIT THEIR ACTIONS TO THE PREVAILING CIRCUMSTANCES AND THEY DO NOT GIVE CHASE WHEN BY SO DOING THEY MIGHT CREATE A HAZARDOUS SITUATION.

+COLD COMFORT THOUGH IT MIGHT BE, I MUST STRESS THAT THERE IS A DUTY ON THE PART OF EVERY PERSON IN A PUBLIC PLACE TO EXERCISE CARE, CAUTION AND CONDISERATION AND TO BE ALERT AT ALL TIMES TO WHAT IS HAPPENING AROUND HIM,+ SAID MR CHING.

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QUESTION OF DANGEROUS CONSUMER PRODUCTS EXPLAINED
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THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT ITSELF KEEP A CENTRAL RECORD OF ACCIDENTS CAUSED BY THE USE OF DANGEROUS CONSUMER PRODUCTS, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON PIERS JACOBS, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THE CONSUMER COUNCIL, HOWEVER, INCLUDES AMONG ITS STATUTORY FUNCTIONS THE RECEIVING AND EXAMINING OF COMPLAINTS BY CONSUMER OF GOODS AND SERVICES, MR JACOBS ADDED.

+IN THIS CONTEXT, THE COUNCIL KEEPS A RECORD OF ALL COMPLAINTS RECEIVED, INCLUDING DETAILS OF ANY ACCIDENTS INVOLVED,+ HE SAID, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON SELINA CHOW.

+THE CONSUMER COUNCIL, A WHOLLY SUBVENTED ORGANISATION ESTABLISHED BY THE GOVERNMENT, PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN PROTECTING THE PUBLIC BY UNDERTAKING EXTENSIVE PRODUCT TESTING,+ HE POINTED OUT.

THE COUNCIL PUBLISHES ITS FINDINGS, AND IN A NUMBER OF CASES, ITS PUBLICITY IN RELATION TO THE DANGERS OF USING A PARTICULAR PRODUCT HAS LED TO THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE PRODUCT FROM THE MARKET OR ITS IMPROVEMENT TO AN ACCEPTABLE STANDARD OF SAFETY.

+IN AREAS OF MAJOR PUBLIC CONCERN, SUCH AS GAS WATER HEATER SAFETY, THE GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN DIRECT STEPS TO ELIMINATE THE SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF UNSAFE PRODUCTS.

+AS I MENTIONED IN THIS COUNCIL ON JANUARY 11 THIS YEAR, FURTHER LEGISLATION ON GAS SAFETY IS PLANNED,+ MR JACOBS SAID.

HE SAID IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S BELIEF THAT DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF THE WIDE RANGING PROBLEM OF PRODUCT SAFETY WERE BEST DEALT WITH BY THE PARTICULAR DEPARTMENTS CONCERNED.

+FOR EXAMPLE, THE DIRECTOR OF ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL SERVICES IS NOW PREPARING DRAFTING INSTRUCTIONS FOR NEW REGULATIONS WHICH WILL IMPOSE STANDARDS FOR CERTAIN ELECTRICAL FITTINGS AND APPLIANCES,+ HE ADDED.

MR JACOBS THANKED THE CONSUMER COUNCIL FOR REGULARLY DRAWING THE GOVERNMENT'S ATTENTION TO PRODUCTS WHICH, IF DEFECTIVE OR WRONGLY USED, COULD REPRESENT A THREAT TO THE CONSUMER.

PRESCRIPTION FOR BETTER LAW
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A BILL TO CLEAR UP AN ANOMALY IN THE LAW WHEREBY A PATIENT CAN BE THEORETICALLY LIABLE TO PROSECUTION FOR POSSESSION OF ANTIBIOTICS OR POISONS ISSUED BY PRESCRIPTION WAS READ A SECOND TIME IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MR HENRY CHING EXPLAINED THAT UNDER THE ANTIBIOTICS ORDINANCE AND THE PHARMACY AND POISONS ORDINANCE, THE POSSESSION OF VARIOUS SPECIFIED ANTIBIOTIC SUBSTANCES AND POISONS IS PROHIBITED.

A COURT JUDGEMENT IN SEPTEMBER 1982 HAD DRAWN ATTENTION TO THE FACT THAT PROHIBITION MAY BE TAKEN TO APPLY TO A PATIENT WHO POSSESSES THEM EVEN IF HE DOES SO AS A RESULT OF A PROPERLY ISSUED PRESCRIPTION.

THE ANTIBIOTICS, PHARMACY AND POISONS (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL 1984, READ A SECOND TIME TODAY, STATES THAT POSSESSION WITH A PRESCRIPTION IS NOT AN OFFENCE.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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AVERAGE FINE FOR PORNO VIDEO TAPES: \$2 500
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FINES IMPOSED BY COURTS IN CASES CONCERNING THE SALE OR RENT OF PORNOGRAPHIC VIDEO TAPES AVERAGED \$2 500, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON DENIS BRAY, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HOWEVER, FINES AS HIGH AS \$51 500 AND IMPRISONMENT FOR SIX MONTHS HAD BEEN PASSED IN SERIOUS CASES, HE SAID.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHEUNG YAN-LUNG, MR BRAY SAID THE MAXIMUM PENALTY WAS A FINE OF \$100 000 AND THREE YEARS' IMPRISONMENT.

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OWNERS ADVISED ABOUT AIR-CONDITIONERS
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OWNERS OF AIR-CONDITIONERS WHICH FALL FROM BUILDINGS CAN BE FINED AND IMPRISONED, SAID THE SECRETARY FOR LANDS AND WORKS, THE HON NICKY CHAN, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HE WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON F.K. HU WHO WANTED TO KNOW WHAT MEASURES ARE TAKEN TO ENSURE THAT AIR-CONDITIONERS ARE SECURELY INSTALLED - PARTICULARLY IN HIGH-RISE BUILDINGS.

/MR CHAN

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MR CHAN SAID THAT INDIVIDUAL AIR-CONDITIONERS, SUCH AS THOSE COMMONLY INSTALLED IN WINDOW OPENINGS OR PURPOSE BUILT APERTURES, WERE CONSIDERED 'PLANT' RATHER THAN PART OF THE ACTUAL BUILDING AND, THEREFORE, DETAILS OF THEIR FIXING DID NOT HAVE TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE BUILDING AUTHORITY.

IF A COMPLAINT IS RECEIVED ABOUT AN AIR-CONDITIONER WHICH APPEARS TO BE FIXED IN A DANGEROUS MANNER, AND INSPECTION BEARS THIS OUT, THEN POLICE WILL CLEAR THE AREA BELOW UNTIL IT IS MADE SAFE, HE SAID.

THE PROBLEM OF FALLING AIR CONDITIONERS IS, AT PRESENT, MINIMAL, SAID MR CHAN, BUT UNDER THE SUMMARY OFFENCES ORDINANCE: +IF ANYTHING IS DROPPED OR ALLOWED TO FALL FROM A BUILDING TO THE DANGER OF ANY PERSON IN OR NEAR A PUBLIC PLACE, THE PERSON WHO DROPS THAT THING OR ALLOWS IT TO FALL COMMITS AN OFFENCE AND IS LIABLE TO A FINE OF \$10 000 AND IMPRISONMENT FOR SIX MONTHS.+

+IT IS IN THE OWNERS' INTEREST TO ENSURE THAT THEIR AIR-CONDITIONERS ARE SECURELY INSTALLED AND THAT THE FIXINGS ARE REGULARLY CHECKED AND MAINTAINED,+ HE SAID.

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GARRISON'S ROLE EXPLAINED

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THE PRIMARY ROLE OF THE ARMED SERVICES, OF WHICH THE GOVERNOR IS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, IS TO ASSIST THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT TO MAINTAIN SECURITY AND STABILITY IN HONG KONG, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, THE HON DAVID JEAFFRESON, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

ANSWERING A QUESTION FROM THE HON MR CHAN YING-LUN, HE SAID: +IN PRACTICE, THEY ASSUME THIS ROLE ACTIVELY ONLY WHEN THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT ASKS THEM TO DO SO AND THEY WOULD THEN ACT IN SUPPORT OF THE POLICE AND THE OTHER CIVIL POWERS.

+THEIR OTHER MAIN TASK IS TO HELP THE ROYAL HONG KONG POLICE FORCE TO COMBAT ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION INTO HONG KONG. THEY ALSO PLAY AN ACTIVE PART IN HELPING GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS IN COMMUNITY WORK, FOR EXAMPLE HILL FIRE FIGHTING, BUILDING BRIDGES IN VILLAGES AND WELFARE PROJECTS.+

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HAWKERS CONTRIBUTE \$1 BILLION TO ECONOMY
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LAST YEAR HAWKERS CONTRIBUTED ABOUT \$1 BILLION TO HONG KONG'S ECONOMY, REPRESENTING ABOUT 0.6 PER CENT OF TOTAL GDP, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, THE HON PIERS JACOBS, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

HAWKERS' ACTIVITIES ARE INCLUDED UNDER THE ECONOMIC SECTOR DESCRIBED AS +WHOLESALE AND RETAIL, IMPORT/EXPORT TRADES, RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS+, MR JACOBS SAID, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON WONG PO-YAN.

HE ADDED THAT BECAUSE EARNINGS FROM HAWKERS, PARTICULARLY PART-TIME HAWKERS, WERE DIFFICULT TO MEASURE, THE ESTIMATE MIGHT NOT BE VERY PRECISE.

+IT IS OBTAINED ON THE BASIS OF INFORMATION ON THE NUMBER OF FULL-TIME HAWKERS AND THEIR AVERAGE EARNINGS GATHERED THROUGH THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT'S GENERAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY.

+IN COMPILING THIS ESTIMATE NO DISTINCTION IS MADE BETWEEN LICENSED AND UNLICENSED HAWKERS,+ MR JACOBS EXPLAINED.

IN RECENT YEARS, THE ESTIMATED CONTRIBUTION OF HAWKERS TO THE GDP HAD RISEN IN ABSOLUTE TERMS BUT HAD REMAINED FAIRLY STABLE IN RELATIVE TERMS, HE SAID.

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GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBLE FOR ROAD SIGNS

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THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ERECTION OF ROAD SIGNS INCLUDES SIGNS DIRECTING TRAFFIC TO THE VEHICULAR FERRIES, THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON ALAN SCOTT SAID TODAY.

+THE GENERAL PRACTICE IS THAT SIGNS GIVING DIRECTIONS TO TRUNK ROUTES ARE MORE PROMINENT THAN THOSE GIVING DIRECTIONS TO SECONDARY ROUTES.

+IN THIS CONTEXT THE CROSS-HARBOUR TUNNEL FORMS PART OF ROUTE 1, THE MAJOR TRUNK ROUTE LINKING HONG KONG ISLAND WITH KOWLOON, WHEREAS THE VEHICULAR FERRY ROUTES ARE NOT SECTIONS OF TRUNK ROUTES,+ HE SAID, REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON K.C. CHAN.

THE SIGNS TO THE FERRIES, HE SAID, ARE LOCATED ON DISTRICT DISTRIBUTOR ROADS LEADING TO THE FERRY TERMINALS, ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT MOTORISTS WILL KNOW BROADLY IN WHICH DISTRICTS THE FERRY TERMINALS ARE LOCATED.

/+THUS NEITHER

+THUS NEITHER TAI KOK TSUI NOR MONG KOK DISTRICTS HAVE SIGNS TO THE VEHICULAR FERRIES; WHEREAS THERE ARE 32 DIRECTIONAL SIGNS IN YAU MA TEI, KOWLOON CITY AND KWUN TONG TO GUIDE MOTORISTS TO THE FOUR FERRIES IN THESE AREAS,+ HE SAID.

REPLYING TO ANOTHER QUESTION BY MR CHAN, HE CONFIRMED THAT SPEED CHECK SIGNS WERE NOT INCLUDED AS PRESCRIBED TRAFFIC SIGNS IN THE ROAD TRAFFIC LEGISLATION.

THE POLICE, HE SAID, MADE A REGULAR PRACTICE OF DISPLAYING THESE SIGNS NOT ONLY TO GIVE ADVANCE WARNING OF SPEED DETECTION MEASURES, BUT ALSO TO REMIND MOTORISTS OF THE NEED TO OBEY THE SPEED LIMIT ON THE ROAD.

THE SIGNS ARE PLACED AT THE SIDE OF THE ROAD WHERE MOTORISTS ARE USED TO LOOKING FOR INFORMATION, RATHER THAN ON THE TOP OF POLICE VANS WHERE THEY WOULD IN ANY CASE BE LESS VISIBLE.

+IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO PRESCRIBE SPEED CHECK SIGNS IN THE LEGISLATION, BECAUSE THEY ARE ADVISORY BY NATURE AND DISCRETIONARY IN USE.

+THE SPEED LIMIT SIGNS (WHICH ARE PRESCRIBED) PROVIDE THE BASIS FOR PROSECUTION OF OFFENDERS,+ HE SAID.

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WATCH KEPT AGAINST JOBS FOR 11'S
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THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT CHECKED ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS IN FACTORIES WHILE CARRYING OUT ROUTINE VISITS TO CHECK ON BREACHES OF LABOUR LEGISLATION, COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON RON BRIDGE SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE DEPARTMENT'S LABOUR INSPECTORS MADE ABOUT 100 000 SUCH VISITS A YEAR TO ABOUT 60 000 FACTORIES, WITH EACH FACTORY VISITED ON AVERAGE ONCE EVERY SEVEN MONTHS, HE SAID.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON CHEUNG YAN-LUNG, MR BRIDGE SAID: +IN ADDITION TO THESE VISITS, THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT ALSO COOPERATES WITH THE POLICE AND IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT IN SPECIAL ANTI-ILLEGAL IMMIGRATIONS CAMPAIGNS.

TWELVE SUCH CAMPAIGNS HAD BEEN CONDUCTED, EACH LASTING ABOUT THREE DAYS AND COVERING ABOUT 5 000 FACTORIES IN ADDITION TO OTHER PLACES OF EMPLOYMENT, HE SAID.

AND SO FAR, 47 EMPLOYERS HAD BEEN PROSECUTED BY THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT IN CONNECTION WITH THE EMPLOYMENT OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS SINCE PART IVB OF THE IMMIGRATION ORDINANCE CAME INTO EFFECT IN NOVEMBER 1980, THE AVERAGE FINE FOR THE CASES HAD BEEN ABOUT \$1 000, MR BRIDGE SAID.

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13, 1984

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PLAN TO REQUIRE DATING OF FOOD PACKAGES
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AMENDMENT REGULATIONS ARE ALREADY BEING DRAFTED TO MAKE THE DATING OF MILK AND OTHER FOOD PACKAGES A LEGAL REQUIREMENT, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, THE HON HENRY CHING, SAID TODAY.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON PAULINE NG, WHO SUGGESTED ALSO THAT SUCH LABELLING BE IN CHINESE AS WELL AS IN ENGLISH, MR CHING SAID THAT VERY CAREFUL CONSIDERATION WOULD BE GIVEN TO THE QUESTION OF THE LANGUAGE TO BE USED FOR COMPLYING WITH THE PROPOSED REGULATIONS.

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TEN BILLS PASSED AND ONE INTRODUCED
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TEN BILLS WERE PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY.

THEY ARE: THE DUTIABLE COMMODITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984, THE DUTIABLE COMMODITIES (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1984, THE INLAND REVENUE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984, THE EVIDENCE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984, THE HONG KONG ACADEMY FOR PERFORMING ARTS BILL 1984, THE FIXED PENALTY (TRAFFIC CONTRAVENTIONS) (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1984, THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONSOLIDATION) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984, THE LANDS TRIBUNAL (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984, THE JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984 AND THE STAMP DUTY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1984.

ONE BILL, THE ANTIBIOTICS, PHARMACY AND POISONS (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL 1984, WAS INTRODUCED AND READ A SECOND TIME AND DEBATE ON IT WAS ADJOURNED.

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13, 1984

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GOVERNOR RETURNS TOMORROW

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THE GOVERNOR, SIR EDWARD YOUDE, WILL RETURN FROM PEKING TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AFTER THE LATEST ROUND OF SINO-BRITISH TALKS.

HE WILL BE TRAVELLING ON FLIGHT CA 101, ETA 11.15 AM.

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FEWER REPORTS ON YOUTH DRUG LINKS

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IN THE FIRST QUARTER THIS YEAR, 226 PEOPLE UNDER THE AGE OF 21 WERE NEWLY REPORTED FOR INVOLVEMENT IN DRUGS, DOWN 21 PER CENT ON THE SAME QUARTER OF 1983, THE COMMISSIONER FOR NARCOTICS, MR GORDON MORTIMER, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

WHILE THE NUMBER REPRESENTED A DECLINE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ONE AND A HALF YEARS, IT WAS STILL TOO HIGH, MR MORTIMER SAID, IN AN ADDRESS TO THE LUNCH MEETING OF THE LIONS CLUB OF VICTORIA.

IN THE SAME QUARTER, 410 KG OF ILLICIT HEROIN WAS SEIZED, OR 56 PER CENT OF THE SEIZURES IN THE WHOLE OF 1983, WHICH WAS ITSELF A RECORD YEAR, HE SAID.

ALL THESE WERE PARTICULARLY ENCOURAGING SIGNS, HE SAID.

MR MORTIMER APPEALED TO PARENTS, TEACHERS AND EMPLOYERS TO SAFEGUARD THE YOUNG BY STEERING THEM AWAY FROM DRUGS.

HE SAID THAT HONG KONG HAD EARNED INTERNATIONAL ACCLAIM FOR ITS WORK IN THE FIELD OF TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION OF DRUG ABUSERS.

IN 1983, OVER 15 000 ADMISSIONS TO THE VARIOUS TREATMENT PROGRAMMES WERE RECORDED AND, ON AVERAGE, ABOUT 12 700 ADDICTS WERE RECEIVING SOME FORM OF TREATMENT, REHABILITATION AND AFTERCARE EACH DAY.

+THIS SAYS MUCH FOR HONG KONG'S PROGRESS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF ITS TREATMENT FACILITIES, COMPARED WITH THE SITUATION 11 YEARS AGO WHEN ANNUAL ADMISSIONS WERE BELOW 2 000,+ MR MORTIMER SAID.

HE SAID THAT WITH PROPER MEDICAL CARE AND ATTENTION, DETOXIFICATION COULD USUALLY BE ACHIEVED IN ABOUT 10 DAYS.

/BUT HE

BUT HE STRESSED THAT WHETHER THE FORMER ADDICT COULD OVERCOME HIS PSYCHOLOGICAL DEPENDENCE AND ABSTAIN FROM DRUG WOULD DEPEND UPON HIS OWN MOTIVATION, THE COUNSELLING AND GUIDANCE HE WAS GIVEN, AND THE EFFORT WHICH BOTH HE AND SOCIETY MADE IN SECURING HIS REINTEGRATION INTO THE COMMUNITY.

+IN HONG KONG WE HAVE ADOPTED A MULTI-MODALITY APPROACH IN THE TREATMENT OF DRUG ADDICTION,+ MR MORTIMER SAID.

HE EXPLAINED THAT THIS APPROACH WAS BOTH NECESSARY AND EFFECTIVE AS ONE FORM OF TREATMENT SUITABLE FOR SOME ADDICTS MIGHT NOT BE SUITABLE FOR OTHERS BECAUSE OF DIFFERENCES IN AGE, HISTORY OF ADDICTION, PERSONAL BACKGROUND, EMPLOYMENT AND OTHER CHARACTERISTICS.

THERE ARE THREE MAJOR TREATMENT PROGRAMMES IN HONG KONG : A COMPULSORY PLACEMENT PROGRAMME OPERATED BY THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, AN OUT-PATIENT METHADONE PROGRAMME PROVIDED BY THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT, AND A VOLUNTARY IN-PATIENT AND COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAMME RUN BY THE GOVERNMENT-SUBVENTED SOCIETY FOR THE AID AND REHABILITATION OF DRUG ABUSERS (SARDA).

IN 1983, A TOTAL OF 2 116 INMATES WERE ADMITTED TO THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT'S TREATMENT CENTRES, WITH 1 092 CASES UNDER TREATMENT WHEN THE YEAR BEGAN.

FROM THE START OF THE PROGRAMME IN 1969 TO THE END OF 1983, 21 423 DISCHARGEES COMPLETED THE STATUTORY ONE YEAR PERIOD OF AFTERCARE.

SARDA PROVIDES THE LARGEST OF THE VOLUNTARY IN-PATIENT TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION SERVICES IN HONG KONG.

THE SOCIETY OPERATES TWO IN-PATIENT TREATMENT CENTRES, ONE FOR MEN ON SHEK KWU CHAU AND THE OTHER FOR WOMEN AT WAN CHAI.

BOTH CENTRES ARE ORGANISED AS THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITIES AND CAN CATER FOR 500 MALE AND 30 FEMALE PATIENTS.

SINCE SARDA STARTED ITS TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMME IN 1963, A TOTAL OF 16 613 ADDICTS HAVE USED ITS IN-PATIENT SERVICES.

+IN ORDER TO ENCOURAGE FEMALE DRUG ABUSERS WHO ARE EXPECTANT OR NURSING MOTHERS, AND TO FOSTER A CLOSER AND HEALTHIER MATERNAL RELATIONSHIP, A MOTHER-CHILD PROGRAMME WAS STARTED IN LATE 1980.

+SO FAR, 22 CHILDREN AGED FOUR OR UNDER HAVE BEEN ADMITTED TO THE WOMEN'S TREATMENT CENTRE WITH THEIR MOTHER UNDER THIS PROGRAMME,+ MR MORTIMER SAID.

THERE ARE VARIOUS OTHER ORGANISATIONS WHICH OFFER TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION SERVICES TO DRUG ADDICTS ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS.

/+ALTHOUGH THESE

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+ALTHOUGH THESE OPERATIONS DEAL WITH A RELATIVELY SMALL NUMBER OF ADDICTS, THEIR DEDICATED AND EFFECTIVE EFFORTS, AND THE SELFLESS COMMITMENT OF THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR OPERATING THEM, HAVE CONTRIBUTED MUCH TO HONG KONG'S LONG BATTLE AGAINST DRUG ADDICTION,+ HE SAID.

THESE ORGANISATIONS INCLUDE CARITAS LOK HEEP CLUB, HAVEN OF HOPE HOSPITAL, HONG KONG CHRISTIAN SERVICE TUNG FOOK HOUSE, THE HONG KONG DISCHARGED PRISONERS' AID SOCIETY, LING OI YOUTH CENTRE, OPERATION DAWN AND WU OI CHRISTIAN CENTRE.

+ALTHOUGH THE LONG-TERM OBJECTIVE IS TO ASSIST PATIENTS TO DETOXIFY AND ACHIEVE A DRUG-FREE STATE, IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT THIS WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE FOR A SIGNIFICANT SEGMENT OF THE ADDICT POPULATION.

+WITH RESPECT TO SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES, IT IS CONSIDERED VITALLY IMPORTANT TO PROVIDE A READILY ACCESSIBLE, LEGAL, MEDICALLY SAFE AND EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVE TO CONTINUED ILLICIT SELF-ADMINISTRATION OF HEROIN TO EVERY SINGLE ADDICT.

+THE WIDESPREAD NETWORK OF METHADONE CLINICS EFFECTIVELY MEETS THIS NEED,+ HE SAID.

THE USE OF METHADONE FOR TREATMENT OF DRUG ADDICTS ON AN OUT-PATIENT BASIS WAS STARTED IN HONG KONG IN LATE 1972.

SINCE THEN THE PROGRAMME HAS EXPANDED RAPIDLY TO COPE WITH THE INCREASE IN DEMAND FOR TREATMENT FACILITIES, MAKING IT NOW THE LARGEST OF THE TREATMENT PROGRAMMES IN HONG KONG.

THERE ARE NOW 24 OUT-PATIENT METHADONE CLINICS IN THE TERRITORY, IN OPERATION SEVEN DAYS A WEEK.

DURING 1983, THE DAILY AVERAGE ATTENDANCE AT THESE CLINICS WAS 6 303, COMPARED WITH THE 1982 AVERAGE OF 6 976.

+THUS, DESPITE THE CONTINUING AVAILABILITY AND LOW PRICE OF ILLICIT HEROIN IN 1983, THE NUMBER OF ADDICTS WHO SOUGHT METHADONE TREATMENT REMAINED AT A RELATIVELY HIGH LEVEL,+ MR MORTIMER SAID.

IN MARCH 1984, WHEN THERE WAS AN ACUTE SHORTAGE OF HEROIN DUE TO RECORD SEIZURES, THE DAILY ATTENDANCE WAS OVER 10 000. IT IS NOW ABOUT 7 400 A DAY.

HE SAID THAT HONG KONG'S TREATMENT PROGRAMMES WERE CLOSELY LINKED WITH A VARIETY OF AFTERCARE SERVICES, RANGING FROM COUNSELLING AND EMPLOYMENT TO LODGING, FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES.

+FOR MANY ADDICTS, SUCH SERVICES ARE ESSENTIAL TO HELP THEM RE-INTEGRATE INTO SOCIETY AND TO PREVENT THEM FROM RELAPSING TO DRUGS,+ HE SAID.

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MP'S SEE WELFARE SERVICES

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS SUB-COMMITTEE ON RACE RELATIONS AND IMMIGRATION TODAY LOOKED AT GOVERNMENT AND VOLUNTARY WELFARE SERVICES.

THE VISITORS WENT FIRST TO THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT'S LAI CHI KOK FIELD UNIT WHERE THEY SAW STAFF DEALING WITH ENQUIRIES AND APPLICATIONS RELATING TO PUBLIC ASSISTANCE, OLD AGE AND DISABILITY ALLOWANCES.

THE MP'S THEN WENT TO THE LAI KOK COMMUNITY HALL WHICH SERVES AS A FOCAL POINT FOR CULTURAL, RECREATIONAL AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES. THEY LATER VISITED THE LAI KOK HOSTEL FOR THE ELDERLY WHERE MORE THAN 80 PEOPLE LIVE. THE CENTRE IS RUN BY CARITAS, A VOLUNTARY AGENCY SUBVENTED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

EARLIER THE MP'S WERE BRIEFED BY THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, MR JOHN CHAMBERS.

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FARMERS TO VISIT UNITED STATES

FIFTEEN FARMERS WILL LEAVE ON FRIDAY FOR THE UNITED STATES ON A STUDY TOUR ORGANISED BY THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT AND THE FEDERATION OF VEGETABLE MARKETING CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES.

THE TOUR, THE SEVENTH SINCE 1977, WILL LAST TWO WEEKS. AT A CEREMONY PRIOR TO THE GROUP'S DEPARTURE, THE DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES, DR JOHN RIDDELL-SWAN, PRESENTED A BANNER TO THE FARMERS.

HE TOLD THE GATHERING THAT THE MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THESE TOURS WERE TO ENABLE FARMERS TO OBSERVE ADVANCED CULTIVATION TECHNIQUES, TO BROADEN THEIR OUTLOOK AND TO GET AN INSIGHT INTO THE LIFE-STYLE OF THEIR COUNTERPARTS ELSEWHERE.

+THE TOURS ALSO PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE EXCHANGE OF KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE BETWEEN LOCAL AND OVERSEAS FARMERS,+ DR RIDDELL-SWAN SAID.

PREVIOUS TOURS HAD BEEN VERY SUCCESSFUL, HE SAID, AND FARMERS HAD BROUGHT BACK USEFUL TECHNICAL KNOW-HOW WHICH THEY HAD SHARED WITH OTHERS.

/+THIS IS

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+THIS IS THE FIRST AGRICULTURAL TOUR TO THE UNITED STATES AND IT IS THE DEPARTMENT'S INTENTION TO ORGANISE VISITS TO AS MANY 'NEW' COUNTRIES AS POSSIBLE.+

WHILE IN THE UNITED STATES, THE GROUP, ACCOMPANIED BY MR TONY TAO, AGRICULTURAL OFFICER, WILL VISIT VEGETABLE FARMS, A PRODUCTION RESEARCH LABORATORY, A FRUIT AND VEGETABLE INSECT RESEARCH LABORATORY, CO-OPERATIVES, GROWERS' AND SHIPPERS' ASSOCIATIONS AND WHOLESALE FACILITIES IN CALIFORNIA.

THEY WILL ALSO MEET AMERICAN OFFICIALS WHO WILL BRIEF THEM ON AGRICULTURE IN THE COUNTRY.

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'CARE' RESIDENTS TOLD TO CARE

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CHEUNG CHAU RESIDENTS WERE TODAY URGED TO USE A NEW OFFICE IN THE SAI WAN CARE (CO-OPERATIVE FOR AMERICAN RELIEF EVERYWHERE) VILLAGE.

THE CALL CAME FROM THE ISLANDS DISTRICT OFFICER, MR WILLIAM YAP, WHEN HE OPENED THE TWO-STOREY OFFICE BUILDING AT SAI WAN.

HE SAID THE OFFICE WOULD ENABLE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS OF THE VILLAGE TO DEAL WITH LOCAL MATTERS AND WOULD ALSO PROVIDE VENUE FOR VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS TO PLAN AND ORGANISE RECREATIONAL AND SPORTS ACTIVITIES.

HE SAID THE LOCAL DISTRICT BOARD HAD BEEN SET UP TO INSTIL A SENSE OF BELONGING AND TO HELP IMPLEMENT PROJECTS MORE EFFECTIVELY. +THE NEW OFFICE WILL PROVIDE A VENUE TO HELP VILLAGERS TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL.+

MR YAP ALSO URGED RESIDENTS TO REGISTER AS VOTERS IN AUGUST AND TO VOTE IN NEXT YEAR'S ELECTIONS.

WITH THE RECENT COMPLETION OF AN EXTENSION PROJECT, THE CARE VILLAGE NOW PROVIDES HOMES FOR ABOUT 3 000 PEOPLE ON CHEUNG CHAU.

OTHER GUESTS AT TODAY'S CEREMONY WERE THE DISTRICT LANDS OFFICER, MR W.L. PIERCY, OFFICIALS OF THE CHEUNG CHAU RURAL COMMITTEE AND SEVERAL DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS.

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MARKET FACILITIES TO BE REVIEWED
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CENTRAL AND WESTERN DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS WILL CONSIDER MARKET FACILITIES IN SHEUNG WAN AT THEIR MEETING TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AFTERNOON.

THEY WILL ALSO DISCUSS THE ALLOCATION OF \$150 000 FOR A BASKETBALL COURT AT SAI WOO LANE AND \$50 000 FOR A PLAY AND SITTING-OUT AREA AT TSZ MI ALLEY.

TWO URBAN COUNCILLORS, MR KWAN LIM-HO AND MR TONG KAM-BIU, WILL ATTEND THE MEETING TO EXPLAIN THE COUNCIL'S POLICY ON THE MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL OF HAWKERS.

AT THE MEETING, MEMBERS WILL ALSO BE BRIEFED ON A PUBLICITY PROGRAMME TO BE LAUNCHED IN THE DISTRICT FOR THE COMING REGISTRATION OF VOTERS AND NEXT YEAR'S DISTRICT BOARD ELECTIONS.

OTHER ITEMS ON THE AGENDA WILL INCLUDE THE URBAN COUNCIL'S CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAMME, NAMING OF A NEW ROAD AT QUEENSWAY AND PROGRESS REPORTS ON THE BOARD'S COMMITTEES.

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CONTINUOUS VIGILANCE AGAINST UNSAFE FOOD
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THE URBAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT'S EFFORTS TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC FROM UNSAFE FOOD ARE PURSUED WITH DETERMINATION AND IMPARTIALITY, THE DIRECTOR OF URBAN SERVICES, MR GRAHAM BARNES, SAID TODAY.

SPEAKING AT THE INAUGURATION CEREMONY OF THE HONG KONG FOOD TRADERS' ASSOCIATION, MR BARNES SAID: +WITH THE GROWING KNOWLEDGE OF THE EFFECTS OF FOOD ON THE PEOPLE WHO EAT IT, THE USD AND THE URBAN COUNCIL HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF A WATCHDOG TO ENSURE THAT FOOD IS DEALT WITH HYGIENICALLY AND DOES NOT CONTAIN SUBSTANCES HARMFUL TO HEALTH.

+THE FACT IS THAT MODERN SCIENCE HAS DONE MUCH FOR THE FOOD INDUSTRY -- NOT LEAST, IT HAS MADE IT POSSIBLE TO PRODUCE FAR MORE FOOD MORE EFFICIENTLY FOR THE RAPIDLY INCREASING POPULATION OF THE WORLD - BUT IN SOME CASES IT HAS SOME DRAWBACKS, IN THAT THE CONSEQUENT PRODUCTS MAY CONTAIN SUBSTANCES THAT MAY BE HARMFUL TO HUMAN HEALTH.

+WHEN WE KNOW THIS, WE HAVE TO ACT -- REASONABLY WE THINK, BUT SOMETIMES FAST AND IT MAY PUT A STRAIN ON SUPPLIES, UNTIL, AS USUALLY HAPPENS, SCIENCE MOVES IN AGAIN TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM.

+THIS WATCHDOG FUNCTION WE MUST PURSUE QUITE FIRMLY AND IMPARTIALLY, NOT AT THE BEHEST OF SENSATIONAL NEWS REPORTS BUT BECAUSE IT IS A NECESSARY DUTY OF A PUBLIC HEALTH AUTHORITY.+

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DB WORK ASSESSED

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A THREE-WEEK SURVEY HAS BEEN LAUNCHED TO EVALUATE RESIDENTS' UNDERSTANDING AND AWARENESS OF THE WORK OF THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT BOARD.

WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT, A RANDOM SAMPLE OF 1 000 HOUSEHOLDS HAS BEEN SELECTED, REPRESENTING ABOUT TWO PER CENT OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS IN THE DISTRICT.

IN THE NEXT THREE WEEKS, STAFF OF THE DISTRICT OFFICE WILL VISIT HOMES TO INTERVIEW FAMILIES.

A DISTRICT OFFICE SPOKESMAN SAID THE BOARD HAD DEVOTED A LOT OF EFFORT TO PROMOTING THE WELL-BEING OF RESIDENTS SINCE IT WAS SET UP IN 1981.

+IT IS TIME TO GAUGE PUBLIC RESPONSE TO THE WORK DONE BY THE BOARD AND TO IDENTIFY AREAS REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ATTENTION,+ HE SAID.

+THE FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY WILL PROVIDE A VALUABLE INFORMATION TO HELP FUTURE PLANNING+.

THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY WILL BE ANALYSED NEXT MONTH AND A REPORT WILL BE PRESENTED TO THE BOARD IN AUGUST.

MISS GRACE YU, OF THE DISTRICT OFFICE, 5-540271, WILL ANSWER ANY ENQUIRIES DURING OFFICE HOURS.

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LADY YOUDE OPENS CUHK RESEARCH FACILITY

THE OPENING OF THE EAST BLOCK OF THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY SCIENCE CENTRE MARKED ANOTHER STAGE IN THE UNIVERSITY'S PROGRAMME OF PROVIDING ACADEMIC RESEARCH FACILITIES, LADY YOUDE SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

+IT ALSO REFLECTS THE GOODWILL AND GENEROSITY OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT IN PROMOTING THE EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THIS SOCIETY,+ SHE SAID.

OFFICIATING AT THE OPENING OF THE NEW BUILDING, LADY YOUDE SAID THAT THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG HAD BEEN ENGAGED IN RESEARCH INTO CHINESE MEDICINE SINCE 1973 AND HAD GAINED MUCH RECOGNITION IN THIS FIELD.

REFERRING TO THE CHINESE MEDICINAL MATERIALS RESEARCH CENTRE LOCATED ON THE SECOND AND THIRD FLOORS OF THE SIX-STORY BUILDING, SHE SAID THE OPENING OF THE CENTRE WAS ANOTHER SYMBOL OF HONG KONG'S UNIQUE POSITION AS A MEETING PLACE OF THE CULTURES OF BOTH EAST AND WEST.

LADY YOUDE ALSO WELCOMED TO HONG KONG THE MANY DISTINGUISHED GUESTS ATTENDING THE INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON CHINESE MEDICINAL MATERIALS RESEARCH.

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ADVANCE WELFARE PAYMENTS
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A SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) THAT PEOPLE ON PUBLIC ASSISTANCE WHO ARE TO RECEIVE PAYMENT ON JUNE 16, 17 AND 18 CAN CASH THEIR COUPONS ON JUNE 13, 14 AND 15 RESPECTIVELY, OR AFTER, AT THE DESIGNATED POST OFFICES, NEW TERRITORIES DISTRICT OFFICES OR TREASURY SUB-OFFICES.

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ELECTRONICS SURVEY FIELD WORK STARTS
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FIELD WORK ON THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE MANPOWER SITUATION AND TRAINING NEEDS OF THE ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY BEGAN TODAY AND WILL GO ON TILL JUNE 22.

+A WELL-TRAINED WORKFORCE IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY TO REMAIN COMPETITIVE AND TO MOVE UP-MARKET,+ A SPOKESMAN FOR THE ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY TRAINING BOARD OF THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL SAID TODAY.

HE ALSO STRESSED THAT INFORMATION GATHERED WOULD BE HANDLED IN STRICT CONFIDENCE AND WOULD BE PUBLISHED ONLY IN THE FORM OF STATISTICAL SUMMERIES WITHOUT REFERENCE TO INDIVIDUAL ESTABLISHMENTS.

CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT OFFICERS WILL CALL ON THE EMPLOYERS TO COLLECT QUESTIONNAIRES AND HELP COMPLETE THE FORMS.

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TEACHERS' PROJECTS FOR DISPLAY
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THE INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WILL HOLD AN EXHIBITION OF TEACHING AIDS, PROTOTYPE INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND RELATED PROJECTS BY 200 EXPERIENCED PRIMARY AND SECONDARY LANGUAGE TEACHERS NEXT WEEK.

THE TEACHERS HAVE JUST COMPLETED A 16-WEEK REFRESHER COURSE ORGANISED BY THE INSTITUTE ON PRESENT TRENDS IN LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODOLOGY.

IT IS ALSO THE INSTITUTE'S AIM, IN RUNNING THE COURSES EACH YEAR, TO INTRODUCE TEACHERS TO NEW PERSPECTIVES IN LANGUAGE LEARNING.

THE EXHIBITION WILL BE HELD FROM 9 AM TO 5 PM FROM JUNE 19 TO 21 AT THE INSTITUTE IN PARK-IN COMMERCIAL CENTRE, 21ST FLOOR, 56 DUNDAS STREET, KOWLOON.

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SICK WOMAN AIRLIFTED FROM FISHING VESSEL
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A WOMAN CREW MEMBER OF A HONG KONG LICENSED FISHING VESSEL 50 MILES EAST OF HONG KONG, NEAR PEDRO BLANCO, WAS LIFTED BY ROYAL HONG KONG AUXILIARY AIR FORCE HELICOPTER THIS MORNING FOR TREATMENT IN QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL.

THE EMERGENCY AIRLIFT WAS IN RESPONSE TO A CALL RECEIVED BY THE PORT COMMUNICATIONS CENTRE AT 9.05 AM THAT THE WOMAN WAS SUFFERING FROM SEVERE ABDOMINAL PAINS.

A MARINE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THAT A FIXED WING AIRCRAFT AND A HELICOPTER OF THE RHKAAF WERE IMMEDIATELY SENT FROM KAI TAK AIRPORT, AT 9.10 AM.

THE SICK WOMAN WAS ADMITTED TO QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL AT 10.45 AM.

SHE WAS IN SATISFACTORY CONDITION AT 6.45 PM TODAY.

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KWUN TONG TRAFFIC PLAN
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SPECIAL TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE IMPLEMENTED FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY (JUNE 15) TO IMPROVE TRAFFIC CIRCULATION IN KWUN TONG INDUSTRIAL AREA.

THE FOLLOWING ROADS WILL BE DESIGNATED RESTRICTED ZONES DURING THE HOURS SPECIFIED:

- FROM 7 AM TO 10 AM AND 4 PM TO 7 PM DAILY:
- * THE SECTION OF LAI YIP STREET FROM ITS JUNCTION WITH HOI BUN ROAD TO A POINT ABOUT 20 METRES NORTH OF THE SAME JUNCTION.
- * THE SECTION OF SHUN YIP STREET BETWEEN WAI YIP STREET AND HOI BUN ROAD.
- * THE SECTION OF HOI BUN ROAD FROM ITS JUNCTION WITH LAI YIP STREET TO A POINT ABOUT 25 METRES WEST OF ITS JUNCTION WITH SHUN YIP STREET.
- * THE EASTBOUND CARRIAGEWAY OF HOI BUN ROAD FROM ITS JUNCTION WITH LAI YIP STREET TO A POINT ABOUT 25 METRES EAST OF THE SAME JUNCTION.
- FROM 7 AM TO 7 PM DAILY:
- * THE SECTION OF WESTBOUND CARRIAGEWAY OF HOI BUN ROAD BETWEEN HOW MING STREET AND LAI YIP STREET.

/WITHIN THESE

WITHIN THESE RESTRICTED ZONES, DRIVERS OF ALL MOTOR VEHICLES EXCEPT FRANCHISED BUSES AND THOSE AUTHORISED IN WRITING BY THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT, WILL BE PROHIBITED FROM PICKING UP OR SETTING DOWN PASSENGERS OR LOADING OR UNLOADING GOODS.

TRAFFIC-SIGNAL CONTROL WILL BE INTRODUCED AT THE JUNCTION OF LAI YIP STREET AND HOI BUN ROAD, THE JUNCTION OF HOI BUN ROAD AND SHUN YIP STREET, AND THE JUNCTION OF WAI YIP STREET AND SHUN YIP STREET.

THERE WILL BE NO RIGHT-TURNS FROM LAI YIP STREET SOUTHBOUND INTO WAI YIP STREET WESTBOUND, FROM LAI YIP STREET NORTHBOUND INTO WAI YIP STREET EASTBOUND, AND FROM WAI YIP STREET WESTBOUND INTO LAI YIP STREET NORTHBOUND.

THE FOLLOWING BUS ROUTES WILL BE DIVERTED FROM FRIDAY:

<u>ROUTES NO.</u>	<u>DIVERSION ROUTE</u>
KMB ROUTE 6E	ON JOURNEY TO CHEUNG SHA WAN: TO BE DIVERTED VIA KWUN TONG ROAD, LAI YIP STREET, HOI BUN ROAD, SHUN YIP STREET, WAI YIP STREET TO PROCEED ON ITS ORIGINAL JOURNEY.
KMB ROUTE 14B	ON JOURNEY TO NGAU TAU KOK: TO BE DIVERTED VIA WAI YIP STREET, HOW MING STREET, HOI BUN ROAD, LAI YIP STREET, ELEGANCE ROAD TO PROCEED ON ITS ORIGINAL JOURNEY.
KMB ROUTE 14X	ON JOURNEY TO JORDAN ROAD FERRY: TO BE DIVERTED VIA KWUN TONG ROAD, FLYOVER, KAI FUK ROAD, AIRPORT TUNNEL TO PROCEED TO ITS ORIGINAL JOURNEY.
KMB ROUTE 15X	ON JOURNEY TO TSIM SHA TSUI: TO BE DIVERTED VIA KWUN TONG ROAD, FLYOVER, KAI FUK ROAD, AIRPORT TUNNEL TO PROCEED TO ITS ORIGINAL JOURNEY.

THE FOLLOWING MAXICAB ROUTE WILL BE DIVERTED FROM FRIDAY:

<u>ROUTE NO.</u>	<u>DIVERSION ROUTE</u>
KOWLOON MAXICAB ROUTE 26M	ON JOURNEY TO KAI FUK TEMPORARY HOUSING ESTATE: TO BE DIVERTED VIA LAI YIP STREET, HOI BUN ROAD, SHUN YIP STREET, WAI YIP STREET AND SHEUNG YEE ROAD TO PROCEED TO ITS ORIGINAL JOURNEY.

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MOTORISTS INTENDING TO RIGHT-TURN FROM LAI YIP STREET SOUTHBOUND INTO WAI YIP STREET WESTBOUND ARE ADVISED TO USE LAI YIP STREET, HOI BUN ROAD, SHUN YIP STREET AND LEFT-TURN INTO WAI YIP STREET.

MOTORISTS INTENDING TO RIGHT-TURN FROM LAI YIP STREET INTO WAI YIP STREET EASTBOUND ARE ADVISED TO USE HOI BUN ROAD, SHUN YIP STREET AND RIGHT-TURN INTO WAI YIP STREET.

MOTORISTS INTENDING TO RIGHT-TURN FROM WAI YIP STREET WESTBOUND INTO LAI YIP STREET NORTHBOUND ARE ADVISED TO USE WAI YIP STREET, HOW MING STREET, HOI BUN ROAD AND LAI YIP STREET.

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FLYOVER TRAFFIC PROHIBITION
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FROM 10 AM ON FRIDAY (JUNE 15), TAI HO ROAD FLYOVER IN TSUEN WAN WILL BE PROHIBITED TO ALL PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES EXCEPT THOSE AUTHORISED IN WRITING BY THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT.

ON FRIDAY AND SATURDAY (JUNE 15 - 16), THE SECTION OF JUNCTION ROAD BETWEEN FU MEI STREET AND WANG TAU HOM EAST ROAD WILL BE TEMPORARILY CLOSED TO TRAFFIC FROM 1.15 AM TO 5.15 AM, TO FACILITATE CONSTRUCTION WORK.

DURING THE ROAD CLOSURE, MOTORISTS ON JUNCTION ROAD HEADING FOR KOWLOON TONG AREA WILL BE DIVERTED TO USE WANG TAU HOM EAST ROAD AND FU MEI STREET.

MOTORISTS ON JUNCTION ROAD HEADING FOR KOWLOON CITY AREA WILL BE DIVERTED TO USE FU MEI STREET AND WANG TAU HOM EAST ROAD.

ON FRIDAY (JUNE 15), A NEW PUBLIC LIGHT BUS STAND WILL BE PROVIDED AT HUNG MIN COURT IN YUEN LONG, AND A NEW TAXI STAND, AT KIN TAK STREET, YUEN LONG.

A TOTAL OF 37 PRIVATE CAR PARKING METERS WILL BE INSTALLED IN YAU MA TEI DISTRICT TO RATION THE USE OF ON-STREET PARKING SPACES.

THESE TWO-HOUR PARKING METERS, WHICH CHARGE \$1 FOR 30 MINUTES, WILL START TO OPERATE FROM 2 PM ON FRIDAY (JUNE 15).

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